

## **Non Traditional Learners**

- Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he/she finished high school)
- Attends part-time for at least part of the academic year
- Does not enroll in a post secondary education directly after high school
- Enrolls in trade programs rather than degree programs
- Works full time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled
- Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid
- Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but may also be caregivers of sick or elderly family members)
- Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and has dependents)
- Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school)
- Many nontraditional students drop out in their first year of study as many nontraditional students find themselves unprepared for the rigors of college level coursework

***An adult learner is a person who is 18 years and up who is involved in forms of learning.***

According to the Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success, the typical college student is not an 18 year old, full time student who has limited family and financial obligations.

- More than 1/3 of undergraduate students were over the age of 25, nearly 25% were parents and half of those parents were single parents
- Part time enrollment, by some definitions a determining factor of non-traditional status, may account for a large portion of college students  
Forty-six percent of postsecondary students were enrolled part time
- A considerably higher percentage of part-time students are enrolled in 2 year colleges compared to public four year institutions

**References:** National Center for Education Statistics. "Nontraditional Undergraduates", Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (p.2). Access 17 June 2013  
(<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/20022012.pdf>)