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Commission released study of part-time students to Indiana General Assembly

INDIANAPOLIS, IND - The Indiana Commission for Higher Education released its findings on a study of Indiana's non-traditional adult students, along with recommendations for ways to help increase the state's college completion rates through academic and financial support designed specifically for that population. The study identifies that for every student that goes to college part-time every semester, there is another with blended enrollment – attending full-time whenever possible but dropping to part-time for certain semesters.

"We often over simplify how students are earning their post-secondary credentials, thinking of full-time students as recent high school graduates and part-time students as working adults. In fact, those lines are incredibly blurry," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education, Teresa Lubbers. "This report looks broadly at all non-traditional students and their barriers to completion. The recommendations are designed to bring the state of Indiana closer to our 60 percent attainment goal by 2025."

Findings:

- There are two types of part-time students: those who are exclusively part-time and those who fluctuate between full-time and part-time depending on the semester (referred to as a switcher in the report).
- Exclusive part-time and switcher students demonstrate significant financial need, with little distinction between the two groups.
- Switchers are six times more likely to complete a 2-year degree and more than 20 times more likely to complete a 4-year degree when compared to students who always attend part-time.

Recommendations:

- Create and guide students to academic structures that support continuous full-time enrollment or more structured part-time enrollment.
- Align state and institutional services and resources to address non-academic challenges facing non-traditional students.
- Redesign the existing part-time grant with additional flexibility to meet adult students' needs including allowing switchers to participate and extend the application deadline to August 1 (full time students must file by March 10).

To learn more about the report and recommendations, visit: <http://www.in.gov/che>