

competeLA

POWERED BY THE UNIVERSITIES OF LOUISIANA



Annual Report

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA

S Y S T E M

FOR YOUR FUTURE. FOR OUR FUTURE.



Compete LA is a program housed in the University of Louisiana System. It is designed to re-engage the 653,000 Louisianians with some college credit but no degree.

Recognizing both the challenges and opportunities in assisting adult learners with degree completion, Compete LA offers discounted flat-rate tuition, innovative course schedules and delivery, effective student support systems through its personal coaching model, and closer connections to community partners to provide returning adults an opportunity to earn a college degree.

— President’s Statement —

Another great year for Compete LA is in the books. Since 2019, we’ve touched nearly 6,000 students seeking the right opportunity to complete their bachelor’s degrees. We have celebrated more than 280 students as they finally realize their dreams (full list of grads on page 18) and another 1,000 have made progress toward completion.

With each student we serve, we are gaining a better understanding of the challenges they face and making changes to the policies and practices that stand in their way. We heard from our students that financial burdens were the primary barrier keeping them from returning to school. In response, we elevated one of our coaches, Brandy Gros, to the position of financial aid and student support specialist. She connects with all Compete LA students to ensure they are aware of scholarships and other financial aid opportunities. Our commitment is to work every day to make a pathway forward for Louisianians to enjoy a more economically secure future.

Compete LA is a key component in the Universities of Louisiana’s goal to graduate the most educated generation in Louisiana’s history. No matter the degree program, our member institutions guarantee their graduates leave with the core competencies necessary for career success—critical and creative problem solving; effective communications; cultural competence; adaptable resilience; and self-reflective awareness. Imparting these skills ensures Louisianians have the tools to successfully compete in not only today’s workplace but in the workplace of the future.

In the following pages we will share more about Compete LA through statistics, student stories, and coach testimonials. In 2022, we launched CLASS, a custom CRM system that assists our coaches in better serving students. We continued our corporate partnership concept that affords Louisiana companies a seamless opportunity to share Compete LA with their employees while reminding their workforce about available educational benefits. Finally, we received a national grant that will allow us to assist students with debt repayment and other school-related expenses.

We hope you will join us in being a champion of Compete LA. Everyone knows someone fit for this program. Our ask of you? Simply send them our way.

For your Future. For our Future.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jim Henderson
President & CEO, University of Louisiana System

Director's Message

Our team has been hard at work implementing a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This system is designed to maximize workflows and automations so that the Compete LA Coaches can spend time working directly with students. CLASS enhances the connection that we have to each of the nine UL System member institutions, and houses the data exchange where we receive real-time updates on Compete LA students as they apply, enroll and graduate. The data exchange is one of the most crucial parts of our process; it allows us to give right-time communication and nudges to move adults forward toward degree progress.

CLASS differs from other CRMs on the market because it's been specifically designed for re-engaging stopped-out students. We're working with Flightpath Academics to incorporate processes, feedback loops, and expanded user accounts and account capabilities. By the end of the 2023 calendar year CLASS will be a solution available to other institutions looking to better engage adult learners. Because of the UL System's involvement in designing CLASS, Compete LA will benefit from a revenue-share model with Flightpath Academics for its first five years on the market. Revenues will help fund the growth, expansion, and sustainability of Compete LA.

Compete LA Student System class

This work would be impossible without the support of the UL System member institutions. Special thanks to our team of campus leads.

Daphne Williams, Grambling State University

Donna Thomas & Jerona Washington, Louisiana Tech University

Wendi Prater, McNeese State University

Erica Howell, Nicholls State University

Laurie Morrow & Stephanie Henson, Northwestern State University

Kay Maurin & Jordan Doucet, Southeastern Louisiana University

Claire Arabie & Dawn Benoit, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Joanna Hunter & Ida Gaines, University of Louisiana Monroe

Colm Joyce & Deon Bergeron, University of New Orleans



Katie Dawson

Assistant VP for Academic
Innovation and Learning



Compete LA Snapshot

Student Demographics



5,839

APPLICATIONS



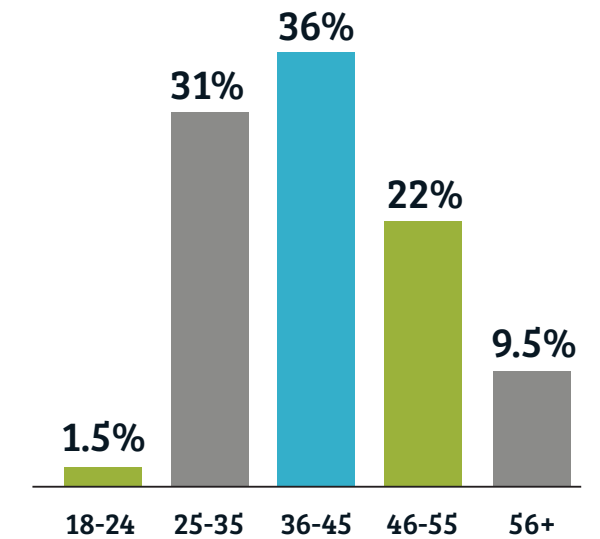
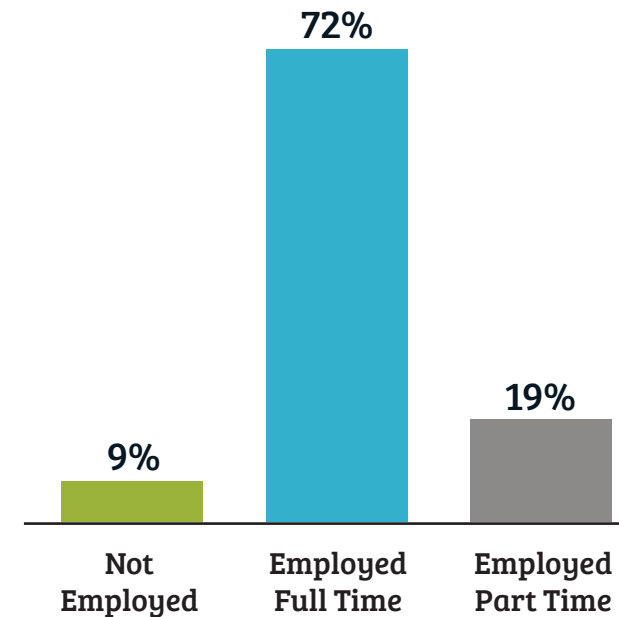
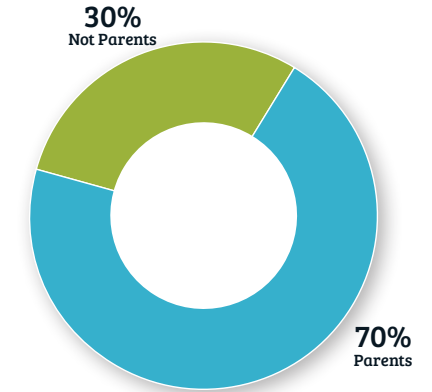
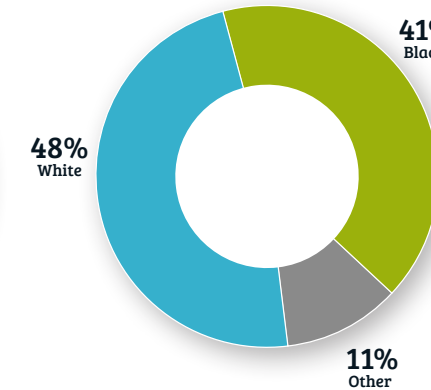
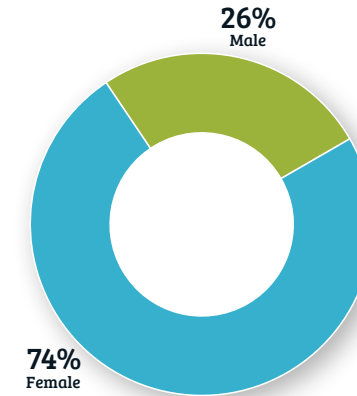
283

GRADUATES



1,051

ENROLLMENTS



Meet the Team



Katie Dawson
Assistant VP for Academic
Innovation and Learning



Brandy Gros
Financial Aid and Student Success
Specialist



Melissa Stafford
Coach



Cami Geisman
VP for External Affairs



Jeannine Kahn
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs



Claire Norris
VP for Advancement



Mary Love
Coach



Julia Hamilton
Coach



Clarence Sutton
Coach



Katelyn Wilkerson
Communication Director



Joy Samuel
Administrative Assistant



Alyssa Coats
Graphic Designer and Brand Manager

From Our Coaches

Brandy Gros

Financial Aid and Student Success Specialist

Financial aid can be daunting.



In 2022, Compete LA recognized that the primary barriers that keep students from returning to finish their degrees are financial. To work toward solving this issue and get students the help they need, Compete LA Coach Brandy shifted to a new role. As Financial Aid and Student Success Specialist, she is charged with assisting students in:

- FAFSA completion and correction
- Reviewing financial aid award packages
- Completing university financial aid forms, e.g. authorizations and appeals
- Federal and local loan eligibility, deferment and forbearance
- Alternative loan consultations

Most importantly, Brandy is a resource for each and every Compete LA student who has questions about paying for school.

Melissa Stafford on Student Success

"My students have many obligations tugging on their time such as full-time jobs and are often caregivers to their children and parents. One recent Northwestern State graduate in Radiology Science worked full time during the COVID-19 pandemic and still maintained a 3.6 GPA. The student checked in with me every semester, and I was so happy to hear how great he was doing in his classes. It is a privilege to witness our students' successes, and occasionally, we are invited to their celebrations."

Clarence Sutton on Campus Allies

"Our campus partners are truly awesome! They are really responsive as far as doing tasks such as program-specific transcript reviews and ensuring our data is accurate. They are also willing to reach out to students directly if needed."

Mary Love on Coaches' Impact

"Coaches help turn vague dreams into actionable plans. We help them consider schools or degree programs that they may not have been aware of before, since we search across all nine schools in the System for the right match for them. We help them understand how community college can be a stepping stone to a four-year degree, working with advisors from both schools to make sure that all courses taken at the community college contribute to the four-year degree plan. I never want a student to take a course that's not part of their long-term plan."

Julia Hamilton on Overcoming Barriers

"Many of my students have a GPA below the minimum requirement. We discuss the circumstances that contributed to their lack of Financial Aid eligibility, how things are different for them now, why they want a college degree, and their options moving forward. These options include appealing an admission denial, academic renewal, and/or taking courses through Compete LA Academy or a community college to boost their GPA before applying to university."



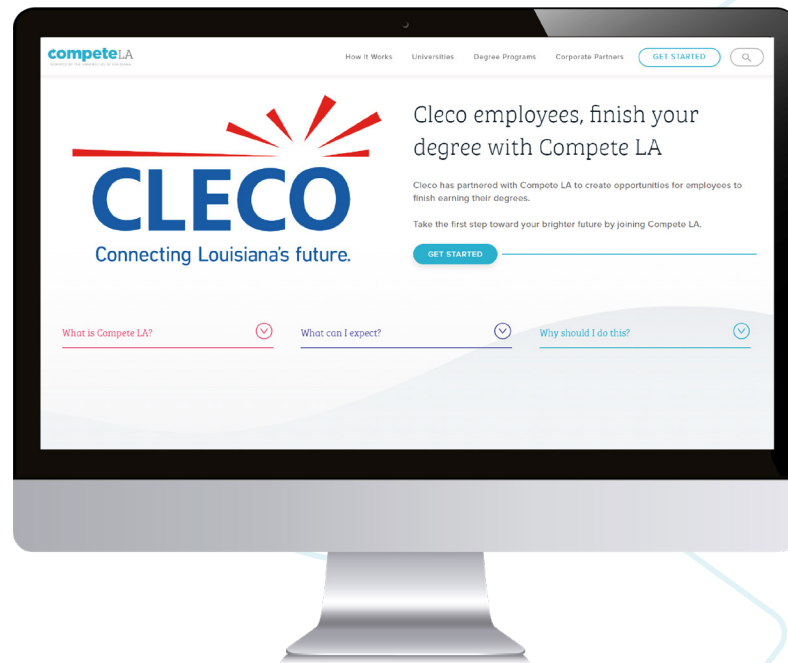
Corporate Partners

The Compete LA Corporate Partnership model was created as a mutually beneficial venture to help business entities strengthen their employee bases through education while allowing Compete LA to work toward creating a more educated Louisiana. Studies have shown that an organization's buy-in and support of an employee's education improves overall employee retention and serves as a powerful recruitment tool for new employees.

Many companies offer educational benefits such as tuition reimbursement, educational leave, and planned wage increases upon completion of a bachelor's degree. Partnership with Compete LA is a natural fit to encourage employees' degree completion.

How it works

Partners receive a free co-branded webpage that features the organization's unique educational benefits with flexible content opportunities including the ability to feature industry-specific degree programs.



State Employee Highlight

meet Robert

Robert Boudreaux learned about Compete LA through his employer. He works full time as a master welder for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development of Sulphur. Through a Corporate Partnership with the State of Louisiana, information about Compete LA was added to State employees' pay stubs. Robert saw the message—and the rest is history.

When Robert re-enrolled at McNeese after 10 years, everything was different. He had no idea where to start. His coach, Brandy Gros, was there to help him along the way. He graduated with an Associate of General Studies in December 2022 and will earn a Bachelor of General Studies in May 2023. With a bachelor's degree in hand, he plans to move up in his job.

"I believe this is what a college degree proves and shows. It's the work ethic, multitasking and pushing through hard times that this diploma represents. It's more than classes and college credits—it's dedication and perseverance."

Corporate Highlight

Compete LA partnered with Louisiana Healthcare Connections in August to connect employees with a path to complete their degrees. Louisiana Healthcare Connections encourages its workforce to further their professional development through education and provides benefits for employees wishing to return to school. Full-time employees are eligible for up to \$5,000 annual tuition reimbursement.

"There is no better asset than a college degree," said President and CEO of Louisiana Healthcare Connections Jamie Schlottman. "Here at Louisiana Healthcare Connections, we are passionate about our team members getting every opportunity to grow professionally and advance their career. Highlighting our educational benefits through a partnership with Compete LA was a great opportunity we couldn't pass up."



Partnering with Compete LA gives your employees the opportunity for more. Is your business interested in nurturing your employees' professional growth? An investment in employee education produces higher levels of job satisfaction, improving retention in turn.

Visit the link below to express your interest in becoming a Compete LA corporate partner.
competela.org/corporate-partners



283

Total Compete LA Graduates

2022 Graduates

Kimberly Abernathy, UL Lafayette
Jodi Adams, McNeese
Stacy Adcock, ULM
Cecilia Allen, UNO
Heather Alvarez, UNO
Yvette Arceneaux, ULM
Adrina Armour, UNO
Jillian Arnold, McNeese
Cara Bacque, Northwestern State
Travis Ballard, ULM
Blake Barousse, McNeese
Alyssa Billings, ULM
Robert Boudreaux, McNeese
Miracle Boyd, UL Lafayette
Meridith Branscum, UL Lafayette
Sarah Broussard, UL Lafayette
Taylor Broussard, UL Lafayette
Jeremiah Burns, ULM
Jana Butler, UL Lafayette
Britney Campbell, McNeese
Wendy Che, ULM
Rebecca Clark, Northwestern State
Courtney Clark, UL Lafayette
Cheryl Clay, ULM
Bree Comeaux, UL Lafayette
Alicia Davis, Northwestern State
Kathleen Dean, Nicholls
Laigha DeRouen, UL Lafayette
Nicholas Dix, ULM
Katie Durio, UL Lafayette
Mandy Estes, McNeese
Melanie Fontenot, UL Lafayette

Dante Fox, LA Tech
Christina Galindo, UL Lafayette
Kimi Gallup, Nicholls
James Gee, ULM
Samantha Gomes, UL Lafayette
Britney Grant, Northwestern State
Ashley Gray, UNO
Angela Greer, LA Tech
Nina Griffin, Northwestern State
Angela Guillory, McNeese
Francesca Harrington, McNeese
Shrecca Harris, Northwestern State
Nicquita Harris, LA Tech
Amelia Haynes, ULM
Brittany Hetrick, LA Tech
Matthew Hill, ULM
Brandy Hogan, ULM
Heather Hotard, Nicholls
Reginald Howard, McNeese
Teresa Jackson, ULM
Vickie Jacquet, UL Lafayette
Danielle Johnson, Nicholls
Raylon Joseph, UL Lafayette
Jeremiah Juneau, Northwestern State
Shameeka Kaufman, UL Lafayette
Ashley Kent, ULM
LeVante' Kimber, Northwestern State
LeighAnn LaCour, ULM
Alexander Lazard, UNO
Sherrill Lazard, UL Lafayette
Brittney LeBlanc, Nicholls
Ceria LeDay, McNeese

Givanni Lewis, UNO
Ashley Lewis, ULM
Mary Lofton, Northwestern State
Courtney Lormand, ULM
Nakia Marshall, LA Tech
Linda McCloud, McNeese
Angela McDaniel, Northwestern State
Kelly McGowan, UNO
Alyssa McMurray, UL Lafayette
Suzette Meche, UL Lafayette
Chase Menard, UL Lafayette
Melina Messier, Northwestern State
Christopher Messner, ULM
Darrel Metoyer, LA Tech
Dawn Miller, Northwestern State
Damion Mitchell, UL Lafayette
Michelle Moltz, McNeese
Amanda Mouton, UL Lafayette
Ashley Myers, UNO
Michelle Novak, Southeastern
Ben Olivier, UL Lafayette
Brandi Painter, Nicholls
Calvin Petty, ULM
Anne Peyton, UL Lafayette
Cynthia Pixley, UL Lafayette
Timothy Puckett, ULM
Erin Reed, McNeese
Christina Rhoda, Northwestern State
Trui Riley Vaughn, UL Lafayette
Damon Rios, Nicholls
Priscilla Roberts, Northwestern State
Tanya Robins, UL Lafayette

Victoria Robinson, ULM
Kristin Rounds, Nicholls
Diana Ruben, Southeastern
Christopher Ruckert, UNO
Katelyn Segura, UL Lafayette
Christine Semien, UL Lafayette
Tristen Shanks, ULM
Laura Skaggs Bowling, UL Lafayette
Katelyn Steelman, Northwestern State
Brandie Stelly, UL Lafayette
Ryan Stillwell, LA Tech
Samantha Thibodeaux, Nicholls
Yolanda Thierry, McNeese
Kimberly Tresner, UL Lafayette
Hannah Underwood, LA Tech
Melony Walls, Northwestern State
Andrew Warner, LA Tech
LaShina Warren, ULM
Laura Weatherford, Northwestern State
Hollie Weaver, McNeese
Trevor Whatley, Northwestern State
Crystal White, UL Lafayette
Shundolyn Williams, ULM
Karen Williams, ULM
Victoria Williams, UL Lafayette
Lindzay Leigh Wilmore, ULM
Jamie Wilson Freeland, ULM
Etienna Wright, Northwestern State
Toniequa Yates, Nicholls
Richard Young, UL Lafayette
Tamara Youngblood, ULM
Joshua Zuber, Northwestern State

2021

Graduates

Mary Alexander, UL Lafayette
Jamie Allbritton, ULM
Zachary Badon, UL Lafayette
Dorrice Baker, Grambling
Zandrea Batiste, Nicholls
Brittany Benoit, UL Lafayette
Amber Beridon, UL Lafayette
Donna Bliss, Northwestern State
Hannah Brousseau, UL Lafayette
Geraldlyn Broussard, McNeese
Christopher Brown, Grambling
Jerrica Bryant, UL Lafayette
Denise Cady, ULM
Ciaran Carbery-Shaha, LA Tech
Sandrea Carston, ULM
Diana Chaisson, Nicholls
Felisha Charles, UL Lafayette
Kayla Chavis, McNeese
Jeremy Clack, ULM
Candice Collins, Southeastern
Justin Cormier, UL Lafayette
Ashley Courvelle, McNeese
Kristen Crain, UNO
Kaylyn Crosby, Nicholls
Dustin Davis, Southeastern
Matthew Doucet, UL Lafayette
Caroline Drazek, UNO
Daniel Duggan, Northwestern State
Christina Easley Elahi, ULM
Anne Falterman, Nicholls
Heidi Foley, UL Lafayette
Sydney Fontenot, McNeese
Jacques Fontenot, UL Lafayette
Charles George, UL Lafayette
Sherri Green, McNeese
Tyler Hanks, UL Lafayette

Jessica Hannan, UNO
Yvette Henry, UNO
Cheryl Himel, Southeastern
Amy Hymel, ULM
Jordan Istre, UL Lafayette
Kenneth Jenkins, Southeastern
Rebecca Jennings, ULM
Eukeitha Jiles, LA Tech
Robin Joseph, Nicholls
Carrie Kibodeaux, McNeese
Treone Larvadain, Northwestern State
Brianna Lasalle, UL Lafayette
David Lavergne, UL Lafayette
Whitney Lawson, UL Lafayette
Vernon Ledoux, UL Lafayette
Kristen Leger, UL Lafayette
Robert Lejeune, McNeese
Kelly P Lowery, ULM
Sharde Maheia, ULM
Rian Marshall, Northwestern State
Michele McCann, Northwestern State
Amiee McFarland, Northwestern State
Derek Messelt, LA Tech
Latonia Mims, Grambling
Chasity Mitchell, UNO
Elizabeth Moore, Northwestern State
Celia Morell, UNO
Keion Morgan, UNO
Angela Morgan, UL Lafayette
Veronica Moss, Grambling
Louise Moss, Grambling
Myca Moss, ULM
Sheri Myers, LA Tech
Rachael Oden, Southeastern
Greggory Palmer, UNO
Krista Parker, ULM

Kristin Prejean, Northwestern State
Pamela Rachal-Hendricks, Northwestern State
Kanika Revels, Northwestern State
Ramona Ringle, ULM
Andrew Roesky, UNO
Megan Russell, ULM
Alyssa Schneider, Southeastern
Kelly Scott, Southeastern
Christine Semien, Grambling
Jawatha Shannon Forrest, ULM
Sidni Shorter, UL Lafayette
Roishetta Sibley, McNeese
Lindsey Steed, Nicholls
Kendyl Stevenson, Northwestern State
Adrienne Stokes, UL Lafayette
Monica Taylor, Grambling
Hunter Thibodeaux, UL Lafayette
Mark Thompson, UL Lafayette
Charlette Thorne, ULM
Renesha Tobias, ULM
Iam Tucker, UNO
Kevin Vandivier, Nicholls
Katy Verlander, Northwestern State
Jarreau Villere, Nicholls
Jessica Vincent, UL Lafayette
Amanda Walker, LA Tech
Staci Wilkins, UL Lafayette
Aubrey Williams, LA Tech
Grant Williams, Nicholls
Abbie Williams, ULM
Caroline Withers, UL Lafayette
Jaymie Wright, Northwestern State
Janice Zachery, UL Lafayette

Shelby Allen, LA Tech
Renee' Arsement, McNeese
Kevin Babers, LA Tech
Taquila Babin, UL Lafayette
Aubrey Barnes, UL Lafayette
Kari Borden, McNeese
Caroline Branch, Southeastern
Jasmine Bush, UNO
Niakia Channell, LA Tech
Erica Cockerhem, UL Lafayette
Allison Cole, Northwestern State
Ashley Comeaux, UL Lafayette
Donald Davenport, Grambling
Caitlan Dayton, ULM
Katrina Denman, Northwestern State
Hollis Fousse, McNeese
Kristin Garlington, McNeese
Shayla Gipson, Grambling
Alexis Green, Northwestern State
Misty Hollis, ULM
Jaleshia Jackson, ULM
Jordan Jackson, UL Lafayette

Patricia Johnson, Northwestern State
Michael Johnson, McNeese
Bennie Jones, LA Tech
Lisa Jones, ULM
Joyce Kenney, LA Tech
Claire Lalande, UL Lafayette
Alexander Monteleone, UL Lafayette
Patrice O'Bryan, ULM
Jarrad Pitcher, LA Tech
Scott Pratt, LA Tech
Sydney Rainwater, McNeese
Ashley Rees, UL Lafayette
Mary Russel, LA Tech
Tyreetta Sam-Davis, Nicholls
John Silver, Nicholls
Alethia Smith, UNO
Whitney Stewart, Northwestern State
George Stoulig, Southeastern
Paul Trahan, Nicholls
Marie Wesley, McNeese
Shuntella Wiggins, Grambling
Alverio Woodfork, Grambling

Neha Chitrakar, Nicholls
Christina Clary, LA Tech
Gary Faciane, UL Lafayette

Elizabeth Henriott, Southeastern
Thomas Ortiz, Southeastern
Tabitha Taylor, Southeastern

Addressing State's Workforce Needs

As Louisiana faces critical workforce shortages in education and healthcare, Compete LA offers traditional and nontraditional pathways to teaching, nursing, and other healthcare professions.

Graduates:

8



NURSES

3



TEACHERS

Current Students:

14 Nursing Majors 124 Healthcare Majors

38 Education Majors

*Numbers reflect education majors only. Many of our graduates go on to become teachers through alternative certification pathways.

meet Richard

Richard Young wanted to finish the bachelor's degree he'd had on hold for 20 years. His daughter, Angelique Young, wanted a new direction and career opportunities. Their unique needs led them to the same path: the Bachelor of General Studies online at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Now the father-daughter Ragin' Cajun Grads are celebrating their achievements together.

The idea of completing his bachelor's degree had been buzzing in Richard's head for years, but without a way to earn his degree while working full time and being present for his children, it was just background noise. Then in 2020, Richard saw an ad for Compete LA and decided it was time.

"I think that I had run out of excuses not to go back and finish, and then this cost-effective solution introduced itself."

meet Laura

Laura Weatherford of Natchitoches graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting from Northwestern State with the help from Compete LA. After a bout with esophageal cancer, finishing her degree was an extremely high priority bucket list item.

After seeing her mom's accomplishment, Laura's daughter was inspired to re-enroll at Northwestern State through Compete LA.

"I wanted to finish what I started 35 years ago at NSU. I wanted the ability to be more self-sufficient for the future if needed. Compete LA definitely offered incentive and encouragement to make this happen."

meet Darrel

Darrel Metoyer is a proud Louisiana Tech University graduate who earned his degree with help from Compete LA last year. After starting his degree in 1983, life got in the way, but today he is a proud college grad.

"On November 19th, I will be a 57-year-old college graduate, and it definitely corrects one of my biggest regrets in my lifetime of not completing my degree. This program has been incredible, and I cannot begin to thank you for your support during this journey."

NASH Catalyst Fund

Compete LA was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the National Association of System Heads' Catalyst Fund. Through pooled philanthropic support, NASH recognizes and incentivizes the development of big ideas that have the potential to be scaled across systems around the country.

Awarded to 13 programs nationwide deemed hotspots of best practices, NASH's Catalyst Fund encourages broad engagement of NASH members nationwide in sharing promising practices that lead to equitable student success outcomes that are scalable within and across public higher education systems. Proven successful programs were selected with the potential for catalytic impact in meeting NASH's measurable goals.



“To be among the first round of Catalyst Fund grant recipients is a tangible recognition of the work we do at the University of Louisiana System,” said Dr. Jim Henderson, UL System president and CEO. “Much of our focus is on scalability, and these funds will allow us to continue creating opportunities and solutions to more citizens.”





REFER A FRIEND

Do you know someone with some college credit but no degree? Compete LA wants to meet them! Send them to our website at CompeteLA.org, or scan the QR code below to submit their info so we can reach out.



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CompeteLA.org

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