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Society honors adult students

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HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Northern Kentucky University's non-traditional students are getting some recognition.

The school is now home of the newest chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda, an honor society for adult students who achieve and maintain high scholastic standards.

"Although there are other honor societies with chapters at NKU, we felt this was the appropriate one to recognize the accomplishments of adult students in PACE (Program for Adult Centered Education) because it is the largest and oldest honor society for the part-time student," said Vicki Culbreth, NKU's executive director of education outreach.

Culbreth describes PACE as a "lock-step program that allows adults to take classes in eight-week blocks and move right from one class into the next."

She said induction into Alpha Sigma Lambda is unique.

"While all students work hard at NKU, adult students have an extra burden in that they have so many other demands on their time, like the need to support a family while continuing their education," she said.

Inductees to the society have to be in the top 10 percent of students in the PACE program, and have completed 24 semester hours at NKU along with 12 hours in the liberal arts or sciences.

Twenty-three students were inducted this term.

Michelle Gunkel, of Butler, was an inductee and the first Outstanding PACE Student of the Year. The 40-year-old is a technical service representative at Applied Industrial Technologies in Florence.

"Although I do not have children, like most of the other PACE students, I do work full time Monday through Friday, 8-5," Gunkel said. "In addition to working full time, my commute time is 45 minutes to work in the morning and then another 45 minutes after class at 9:30 in the evening, which makes for a long day."

Gunkel began at NKU before PACE's existence.

"I picked up a brochure about PACE on campus one evening and called the next day," she said. "The schedules of classes were all laid out and there was an end date in sight. Going part time, taking traditional 16-week classes, was not going as fast as I wanted; and figuring out when the classes I needed were going to be offered was tedious."

Gunkel, who is scheduled to graduate in June 2009, said induction into Alpha Sigma Lambda is motivating.

"I am proud and honored to be a Nu Kappa Pi member of the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society," she said. "It has definitely inspired me to continue to achieve my 4.0 GPA."
