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NKU looks at former students

Project offers incentives for finishing interrupted degrees

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HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Northern Kentucky University is paying former students to finish their degrees - at least partly.

Project Graduate is a new initiative to encourage former students to complete their degrees. In return, they will receive a \$1,000 scholarship as well as other benefits.

"In some cases, we have been able to allow students to re-enter under their former catalogs," said Vicki Culbreth, NKU's director of educational outreach. "This can help prevent them from losing credits that used to count toward their major but do not under new program requirements."

Culbreth said Project Graduate is part of the Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education's Double the Numbers Campaign.

"For the state to truly compete economically, we must literally double the number of adults with bachelor degrees by 2020," she said. "This will put us at the national average for percent of population with a bachelor degree. But if you look at population projections, there simply are not enough traditional-age students in the pipeline - now in or soon to be in high school - to achieve that goal. There are, however, more than half a million adults in Kentucky who started a degree but did not finish.

"Encouraging them to return to college is a top priority for all Kentucky institutions, including NKU."

NKU has contacted 611 former students to inform them of the program.

"We ran a list for this program of adults - age 25 plus - living in Kentucky who had been enrolled at NKU between 1989 and 2004, who had 90 or more hours but had not achieved a bachelor degree. There were 611 names on the list," said Culbreth.

To qualify for Project Graduate, students must have 90 or more credit hours earned at NKU (which can include transfer hours prior to enrollment at NKU) but no bachelor's degree, a minimum grade-point average of 2.0, not have been enrolled in the past four years, and be a resident of Kentucky.
