

competela

POWERED BY THE UNIVERSITIES OF LOUISIANA

Annual Report 2019 - 2020

Contact

University of Louisiana System

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CompeteLA.org

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA
SYSTEM
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 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.

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President's Statement

The skills that accompany a bachelor's degree—effective communication, sound decision making, critical thinking, cultural competency, and adaptability—are the keys to success as technology rapidly advances and the needs of employers evolve. For Louisiana to be competitive in the 21st century economy, we must purposefully and dramatically increase the educational attainment level of our people. Focusing solely on the traditional college-aged population will not move the needle fast enough.

Meeting the challenge and promise of this new reality, the Universities of Louisiana created a game-changing intervention to ensure Louisiana is fully prepared for the future of work. Compete LA is a program artfully designed for those Louisianians with some college credit and no degree, all 653,000 of them. The program recognizes that adults who want to return to school have significantly more competing priorities than the traditional student and provides solutions including a personal coach, reduced tuition rates, and adult-friendly programs.

The need is evident as students have poured into the program the past 19 months. We have benefited from incredible leadership at the System level with the team who designed the program—Dr. Jeannine Kahn, Dr. Claire Norris, and Cami Geisman. The program has thrived under the leadership of Katie Barras and our five magnificent coaches. Beginning Jan. 2021, the program welcomes a new director, Katie Dawson. Katie most recently led the thriving ULM online program and is an expert in adult education. We are excited to have someone so passionate about helping students succeed at the helm.

In the following pages, please enjoy a recap of the program to date. We look forward to future iterations of this annual report as we grow Compete LA to its full potential and celebrate its graduates.

For your future. For our future.

Sincerely,

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



Dr. Jim Henderson



Growth



Compete LA was launched in May 2019 and has created a proven system of student recruitment and re-enrollment. Over the past 15 months, Compete LA has focused on building a robust programmatic framework and breaking down barriers to student re-enrollment. The team has achieved impactful innovations including, but not limited to:

1

Revised ULS **Debt Policy** to allow students with debt access to their transcript and the ability to re-enroll at a ULS institution

2

Initiated and expanded marketing and recruitment campaigns to reach Louisiana's 653,000 adult learners with some college but no degree

3

Launched **Flat Rate Tuition** across all nine ULS campuses, making tuition and fees more affordable and transparent amongst member institutions

4

Launched the Compete LA CRM system to manage prospective and enrolled students

5

Constructed a **live data exchange** between the Compete LA CRM and each campus student information system to provide daily data to inform coaching and promote student success

6

Developed the **Compete LA App** to provide prospective students a mobile method for learning more about returning to school and the degree programs in Compete LA



Timeline

2018 - 2020



May 2018

Program concept

Aug. 2019

Compete LA coaches hired

March 2019

Program Director hired

Dec. 2019

First program graduate

April 2019

Application fee waived for program students

May 2020

Reduced flat rate tuition announced

May 2019

First student applied

Sept. 2020

Compete LA Academy launch

Stats

2,873

Total Students

809

University Applicants

29

Graduates

479

Students Enrolled

27,391

Number of Emails Sent

76.1

Average Credit Hours Completed

Compete LA App	December 31, 2020
Total Downloads	1,477 Unique Users
Unique Text Message Campaigns	295
Unique Students Messaged by Coaches	4,213
Total Messages Exchanged Via SMS	38,400
Total Messages In App	10,700

Systemwide Snapshot

Overview	May 1, 2019 - December 31, 2020
Total Contacts	2,873
Total Prospects	4,522
Cumulative Referrals	1,076
Cumulative Applicants	809
Cumulative Admitted	713
Cumulative Enrolled	479

Demographics	December 31, 2020
Female	73%
Male	27%
Black	43%
White	50%
Other	7%
% of Student Parents	68%
% of Non-Parenting Students	32%

Academic Overview	December 31, 2020
Flat Rate Eligible	89%
Classroom Preference- Online	92%
Classroom Preference- Hybrid	5%
Classroom Preference- Face to Face	3%



Meet Katie Dawson

Assistant Vice President for Academic Innovation and Learning

Katie Dawson is Compete LA's new director and the former Compete LA campus lead for University of Louisiana Monroe. Compete LA would not be possible without the partnership of our nine member institutions. We work with dedicated teams at each university who provide top-notch service to our Compete LA students. Having a direct connection to troubleshoot various challenges has been vital to navigating re-entry for many of our students. Below, Katie shares her experience with the program from the campus perspective.



"Working with the UL System to establish the Compete LA program has been a validating experience. Our campus has worked hard to attract and serve adult students in online and on-campus programs, and to have this initiative and team to work with has been rewarding. Coordinating efforts on our campuses gave us the opportunity to elevate the importance of the re-enrollment of adult students. We want students who return to our campus to be successful and to graduate with a degree. We've been able to work with the UL System staff and our sister institutions to discuss and implement best practices for adult student re-entry in the recruitment, admission and enrollment processes; create pathways back to our institutions for those adults not yet ready to be admitted; and have focused on reducing the academic, technological, and intrapersonal barriers adults returning to higher education face."



Katie Dawson



Meet the Coaches



Brandy Gros

Q. What's the most common barrier you find your students have to overcome for re-enrollment and how do you help the student over that barrier?

A. Finance is a big barrier for many students. Compete LA offers affordable options and the coach's role is to empower students by providing information to make the best decision in regards to finances and returning to college.



Julia Hamilton

Q. Briefly share a student story that inspired you.

A. One of my students was taking nine hours and considering dropping a class. She had recently started a new job and was having trouble balancing the course loads with work and family. The hurricane outages had left her with no internet, and she had fallen behind. She decided to reach out to her instructors about the delays in submitting assignments and push through and stick to her schedule, and says she is now only two courses away from her bachelor's degree.



Mary Love

Q. What is your favorite part of your job as a Compete LA coach?

A. Working directly with students, listening to their stories, offering hope and encouragement, and finally offering a practical path forward to help them achieve their goals.



Melissa Stafford

Q. This program takes effort at the campus level too. Tell us about one of your allies on the campus and how they go above and beyond to assist Compete LA students.

A. Fall 2020 was tremendously challenging for our entire state but for one Northwestern online student living in the Lake Charles area, Hurricane Laura displaced her family to a hotel in the New Orleans area. When the hotel business center did not offer enough time for her to complete her classwork, University of New Orleans Compete LA lead, Mary Beth Marks, worked to get her access to the library on campus.



Felicia Young

Q. How do you think your coaching impacts a student's re-enrollment journey?

A. When a student decides to re-enroll, they have taken the first step in changing their lives. But when a student decides to re-enroll with the assistance of a Compete LA Coach, they are not taking that first step alone. Many students rely on the experience of their coach and take comfort in having someone help them navigate the process. Students have shared with me that the best part of this journey was the honesty and transparency of our program. No hidden agendas; we're only here to help them succeed.



2019-2020 Graduates

Shelby Allen
Renee Arsement
Taquila Babin
Starr Babineaux
Audrey Barnes
Kari Borden
Kimberly Chapman
Christina Clary
Ashley Comeaux
Donald Davenport
Tyreetta L. Sam Davis
Katrina Denman
Hollis Fousse
Kristin Garlington

Zachary O'Neal Hannibal
Misty Hollis
Jordan Jackson
Lisa Jones
Amiee McFarland
Alexander Monteleone
Thomas Ortiz
Sydney Rainwater
Alethia Smith
Whitney Stewart
George Stoulig
Tabitha Taylor
Paul M. Trahan
Tamara Youngblood



Taquila Babin
Class of 2020



Taquila's Story

Watch Taquila's Story here.

Ten years ago an unexpected pregnancy led Taquila Babin to withdraw from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette when she was just seven courses shy of earning her degree in broadcast journalism. But in December 2020, she brought her 10-year-old daughter Rhian along with her to pick up her cap and gown on campus.

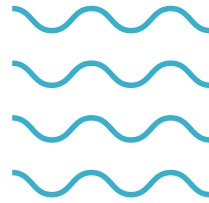
In the decade since she withdrew, Babin's family continued to grow while her degree remained unfinished. Even though the demands of motherhood and a busy life, she kept her goals in the back of her mind.

"I did not want to be at home. That was not my dream," she said. "But starting a family, things got put to the back seat. My husband would mention going back to school to me, my brothers would mention it. I just didn't know how."

Babin's husband heard about Compete LA on the radio and things started to fall into place. She joined the program and met her coach who assured her the credits she had already earned would still be accepted after her time away. Babin credits her Compete LA coach for the push she needed to finish her degree.

"I felt like she really wanted me to succeed. She really wanted me to finish, and having that positive support after being out so long and that positive interaction made a world of difference."

Babin said after she left school 10 years ago, she "felt like a failure" for not graduating. But with renewed support from Compete LA coaches, she was able to achieve her lifelong goal of completing her degree. She earned her degree in general studies from UL Lafayette last month. The story doesn't end there. Her husband is exploring options to return to school through Compete LA Academy (See p. 11).



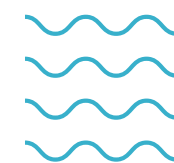
competela Academy

Finish your degree.
Start without deadlines.



Compete LA Academy

Compete LA Academy was introduced as a solution for students who want to begin taking classes immediately or those who need to raise their GPA before admission to their chosen institution.



In the News

Compete LA has attracted coverage from local, regional and national media. To view these articles and more visit CompeteLA.org/press.

Forbes

Oct 8, 2020, 06:00am EDT | 834 views

**We Want You Back:
How The University Of
Louisiana System Will
Reengage Learners**

**University of Louisiana
System Launches Online Re-
entry Academy to Boost
Degree Completion**

**How colleges are reenrolling
stopped-out students during the
pandemic**

**UL System schools drop price of tuition by nearly 45% for adults
returning to school**

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