

## CU to recruit students to come back and finish degrees

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BOULDER, Colo. -

The University of Colorado will recruit students who dropped out of college to come back and finish their degrees, setting up a concierge-like service to link them with academic advisers and help them find financial aid.

The state awarded CU a \$25,000 grant to help bring back students who are 75 percent done with their degrees and earned at least a "C" average, but never made it all the way to graduation.

The Boulder campus has a pool of about 900 students who left CU between 2002 and 2006 -- and didn't graduate from other schools -- that it will try to bring back. Staff members will try tracking down the former students, perhaps even through Facebook, according to university officials.

The Department of Higher Education awarded four \$25,000 grants to state colleges, including CU.

Similar degree-completion programs will be launched at Adams State College and Metropolitan State College of Denver. The University of Northern Colorado will use its grant to recruit Hispanic students, with the Greeley campus helping them earn degrees in science, technology and math fields.

David Skaggs, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, said the grant is part of a larger effort to grow the state's percentage of college graduates.

Higher education officials want to increase the percentage of adults with a college degree in the state to 55 percent by 2025, which is a campaign supported by Gov. Bill Ritter. Now, about 40 percent of Colorado adults have completed college -- earning at least an associate's degree -- while 37 percent have done so nationwide, according to a state report.

Anne Heinz, CU's dean of continuing education, said the university will try to get its former students back in college, even if it's not on the Boulder campus. Advisers will work one-on-one with students, and refer them to other colleges or universities if CU doesn't seem to be a good fit, Heinz said.

"We want to try and understand why they didn't finish, and provide support so that they can earn their degrees," Heinz said.

Heinz said that having a college degree opens up more career options.

A study from the College Board in 2006 showed that people with bachelor's degrees earned 73 percent more over the course of a working life than their peers who earned only a high school diploma.

The continuing education office awards \$100,000 in scholarships every year to students who are considered "non-traditional" because they are 22 years or older.

CU will begin locating former CU students this month, with hopes to re-enroll students next year.

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The expression "the value of education" is often bandied about by the talking head windbag politicos when justifying yet another increase in taxes and more spending on education. However, it's not so much the value as the "cost" of education has far and away outstripped the benefits. Costing over \$25,000 dollars per semester, after tax dollars too mind you, what does it buy you? In reality, not too much.

Sure, there are the standard "system-regulated" jobs that require certification and credentials like accountants, lawyers and doctors. Except for the latter, personally, I can't imagine why anybody would want to do the others for a career? I digress. Seriously, the higher education state college system is a racket engineered to siphon parent's cash that isn't otherwise taxed away from them. It's just another extension of the bureaucracy.

The cost of a car. The cost of a house. The cost to feed and house and family of four for one year! It's insane. The overhead is crushing us all.