

College for America at SNHU: Degree Programs that Work for Working Adults

The Challenge

Working adults are an underserved population that traditional course-based higher education has not typically supported. These potential students must overcome major obstacles to attain a college degree. Barriers include a lack of college affordability, inflexible and inconvenient schedules, and learning outcomes that lack relevance in their workplaces.

The Solution

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) created College for America (CfA) to meet workforce needs and to provide more working adults a path to earn a college degree based on what they can demonstrate they know and can do rather than how many lectures they have attended. CfA removes three major barriers to a college-level education for working adults: costs they can't afford, schedules that don't work for them, and learning outcomes that lack workplace applicability.

Learning Impact/Outcomes

CfA's unique competency-based curriculum and assessment model supports its six flexibly-paced, fully online degree programs. Each program is based on students demonstrating mastery of 120 competencies by completing authentic, workplace-relevant, scenario-based projects. Students submit (and resubmit) their deliverables to be evaluated by Faculty Reviewers until they have demonstrated mastery of every competency in their degree program. This scalable model reduces tuition costs while increasing access to rigorous, high-quality education.

CfA's Learning Management System (LMS) is a custom solution based on the Salesforce Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. Along with diverse IT systems we have integrated, the LMS enables CfA to deliver personalized learning at scale.

As of November 2016, 68% of our students are first-generation college students and 97% are employed full-time in at least one job. Here are some additional statistics about the students CfA serves:

- ★ 88% are over age 24
- ★ 75% are women
- ★ 30% identify as African American
- ★ 15% identify as Hispanic
- ★ Average age: 37.3 years

Return on Investment

CfA students are charged \$1,500 per six-month term during which they may master as many competencies as they are able. They incur no additional charges or fees to attend CfA and are not responsible for any textbook or lab costs. On average, students graduate in 2.1 years.