The results of the annual Six-Week Survey indicate that financial issues are one of the top two reasons students leave the University.

Georgia State and UNC Charlotte developed successful degree completion programs that assist students in financial difficulty. Georgia State found that 70% of the award recipients remain on track and graduate. A similar program at UNC Charlotte reported 95% of award recipients graduated. The Association of Public Land Grant Universities conducted a nine campus study and found 93% of the students receiving a completion grant were retained or completed their degree. The Great Dane Completion Grant seeks to support persistence and degree attainment by funding the financial gap for junior and senior students who are within 45 credits of graduation.

At the end of the fall 2018 semester, 527 students had outstanding account balances which resulted in financial holds (not including parking charges). Of those 527 students, 392 or 74% withdrew or did not return. Juniors and seniors accounted for 40.4% of all financial holds. A deeper analysis of financial hold data shows that 170 students, of which 46.5% were juniors and seniors, owed the University less than $1,000. Of the 170 students owing less than a $1,000, 110 (64.7%) withdrew or did not return to the University. While there are many factors affecting persistence and graduation, the inability to pay is clearly one of greatest barriers to student success.

The Great Dane Completion Grant, administered by the Office of Financial Aid, would be available to junior and seniors who:

- Are within 45 credits of graduating and in good academic standing;
- Have earned 75 or more credits toward their degree and are on track for graduation, preference will be given to seniors who have earned the highest number of credits;
- Owe less than $1,000 in tuition, room, board, and fees to the University;
- Have met with a financial aid counselor and have exhausted all other forms of financial aid; and
- Participated in the Smart Tracks financial literacy program.