

Viewpoints

There is satisfaction in finishing the race

Top of Utah Voices



Michael Vaughan

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Commentary

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accounting degree.

With the support of her husband, Lezli was able to devote more time to her studies in 2004. For the past four years Lezli has pursued her dream with admirable diligence. Lezli has never earned a grade lower than an "A" while attending WSU. This term, she was selected as the outstanding graduate

by the faculty of WSU's School of Accountancy.

In looking back on her path to a college degree, Lezli said, "The hardest part for me will be graduation. I will miss the professors, my peers and the challenges. I love learning, and I realize that I am so much more than I was four years ago, thanks to a lot of really great people. I will miss the whole college experience."

Lezli's story is similar to the stories of many Weber State students who face a variety of challenges in their pursuit of a college degree.

The list of challenges facing WSU's students is

one student. Lezli Atkinson dropped out of Pleasant Grove High School more than 20 years ago. Regrettably, more and more Utah students are choosing to drop out of high school. Yet, unlike many students who drop out, Lezli returned to school. In 1984, she received an accounting clerk certificate from Utah Technical College. Nineteen years later, Lezli entered Weber State and took a developmental math class. Completing developmental math allowed her to move on to college algebra, a significant requirement for her goal of earning an



long and varied. Nearly one-fourth of our first-year students interrupt their studies to serve missions for the LDS Church. While ecclesiastic service is common in Utah, the number of WSU students choosing to serve LDS missions is relatively high among Utah's public universities. Other

WSU students interrupt their studies for military service. More than 1,000 students are veterans of the U.S. military.

The number of WSU students who work while attending college is among the highest in the nation.

More than 87 percent work. Astonishingly, 37 percent work full-time. Balancing work and school makes the "race" to a college degree just a little harder.

Each runner progresses at a different pace. Some move fast and direct.

Others follow a slower and more circumscribed path. Whatever path they have followed, on May 2 more than 2,000 WSU students will cross the finish line and earn their college degrees.

A few years ago, the celebrity Oprah Winfrey ran her first marathon. After the race, she said, "Life is a lot like a marathon. If you can finish a marathon, you can do anything you want."

I am going to paraphrase Ms. Winfrey and say the key to doing anything you want is completing the "marathon" which leads to a college degree.

I congratulate the WSU graduates, and all students, who have completed that race.

