

## Commission on Adult Learners

### Annual Report 2014-2015

The Commission for Adult Learners continued the work which was started last year and prior, and initiated new initiatives to support the University's commitment to adult learners. Much of the activity was completed through standing committees of the Commission.

The Hendrick conference was again an important culminating activity for the Commission. The opening session included remarks from Dr. Michele Rice as Director of Prior Learning. The 2015 Shirley Hendrick Award recipient was Dr. Nels Shirer, associate dean for education in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences. After a variety of breakout sessions, including presentations from each of the Commission's committees, the lunch program featured remarks from Provost Nicholas Jones, Ryan Hendrick (Shirley Hendrick's grandson), and keynoter speaker Scott Sheely, who addressed enhancing adult career pathways. The adjusted final attendance number was 230. Commission financial support was \$6,971.62. Assessment survey results indicated overall satisfaction with the conference/program. Meeting attendees especially liked the new approach of inviting sessions/panels to engage more people. Judy Wills chaired the conference planning committee.

Diane Chamberlin chaired the Awards and Recognition committee this year. The committee worked to update criteria for the Shirley Hendrick award to include innovation. The committee solicited and reviewed nominations and selected Dr. Hampton N. 'Nels' Shirer as the recipient. Based on the updated award process, one additional nominee was invited to present at the conference and was recognized with a certificate of congratulations at the session.

Sueann Doran led the Military Support Services Committee, newly named the Military and Veteran Support Services Committee. This committee surveyed student satisfaction based on findings of the survey of certifying officials last year. With assistance from the Student Affairs' assessment office, the committee distributed the survey to military and veteran students University-wide and results were received in April. The committee presented two topics at the Hendrick conference: "Adult Education Boot Camp-Basic Information to Ensure Veterans' Success" and "Panel Discussion on Veterans and Military Students."

Pat Shope chaired the Committee on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), which monitored the progress on prior learning assessment. The committee recommended that the Commission continue to work on the implementation of last year's recommendations from the University Task Force on Prior Learning Assessment. Two proposals have been enacted thus far. The University hired a Director of Prior Learning Assessment in Undergraduate Education, Dr. Michele Rice, who will join the PLA Committee. Also, Dr. Rice will have each campus and college identify a champion for PLA for that specific location.

Following the work of this committee, and in keeping with the imperatives announced by Dr. Barron as he started his presidency at Penn State, Commission leadership determined that a major initiative this year should incorporate Dr. Barron's imperative for improved Access and Affordability, specifically

addressing adult learners. Dr. Baron addressed the Commission on these topics, and received feedback from the Commission.

An Access and Affordability Task force was also created under the leadership of Francis Achampong. The task force examined barriers and developed strategies to address them. The group's report was presented to the Commission sponsors and discussed in detail at the May 11 meeting.

The Commission worked to continue publishing an adult learner fact sheet this year. Three editions were produced, September 2014, January 2015 and May 2015. The May fact sheet was provided to attendees and has a military focus. All editions are available on the Commission's web site.

As continuation of work on the Plan to Implement a University Faculty Senate Advisory and Consultative Report, "Recommendations for Enhancing the Educational Experience of Adult Learners," the Commission sponsored and supported development of a dedicated web site by Daad Rizk concerning financial literacy. This effort was financially supported by the Commission.

This has been quite a productive year. In addition to the initiatives undertaken the Commission met with all of its sponsors during the year and at the final meeting on May 11. Invited members of the CAL leadership attended the luncheon sponsored by the Board of Trustees for the equity commissions. CAL also began the process of monitoring new academic programs designed to serve adult learners as they are distributed to campuses through the Office of Undergraduate Education P-3 process. The Commission also monitored the work of the General Education Task Force, especially as it relates to engaged scholarship. CAL also was informed about updates on campus articulation agreements and the Course Substitution Request System (CSRS) pilot. The Commission also heard updates from its representatives working on Review Teams for the Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State.

Respectfully Submitted,

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