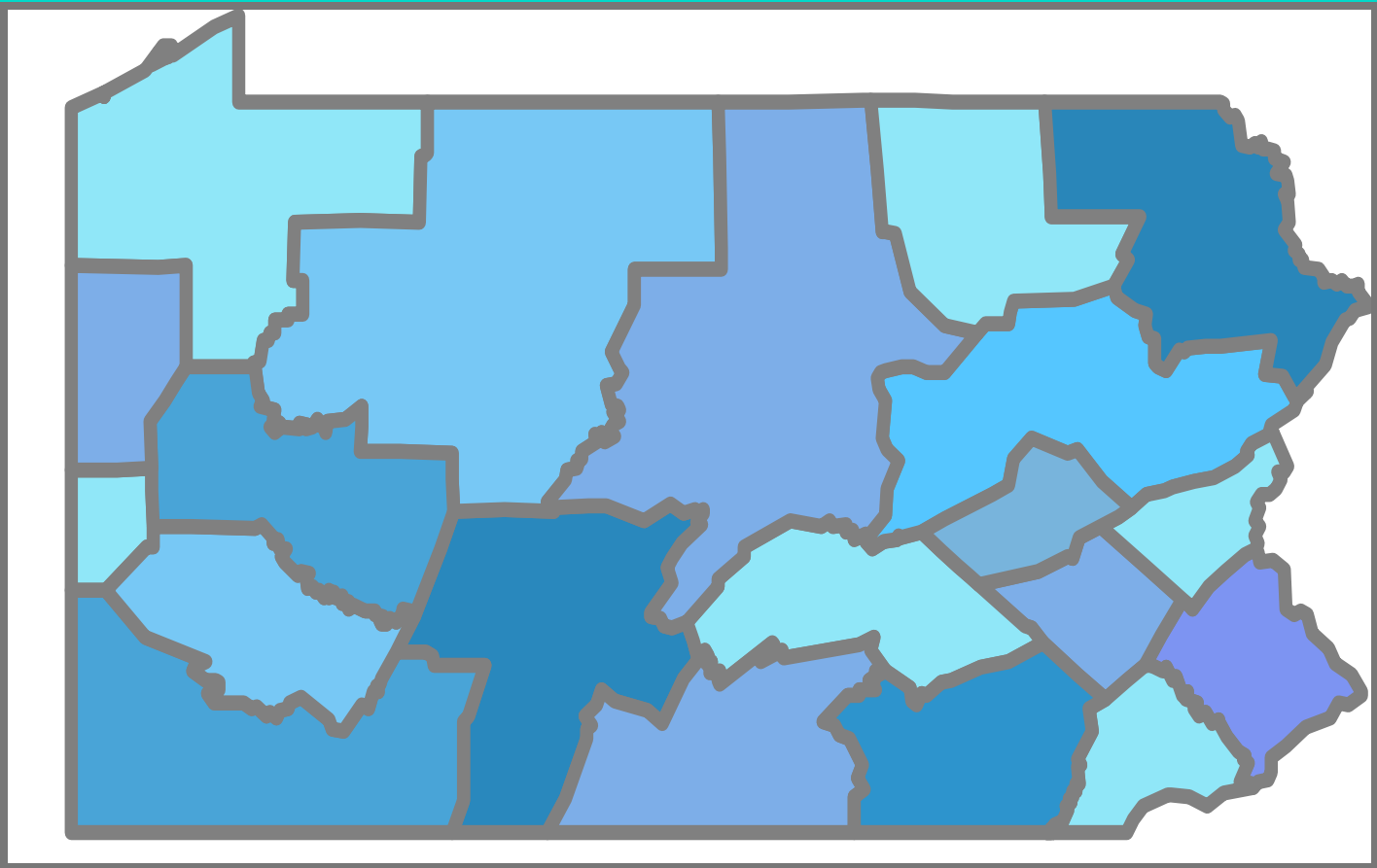# Best Practices

Post-Secondary Adult Learner Environment at The Pennsylvania State University

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Best Practices

Post-Secondary Adult Learner Environment at The Pennsylvania State University

Best Practices in the Adult Learner Environment at Penn State[1]

Background and Methodology

In late 2005 and early 2006, Penn State Outreach conducted a study of the adult learner environment at Penn State. As part of the data collection for this study, a representative team[2] from Outreach visited the 19 Commonwealth Campuses, Penn State Great Valley, and select Penn State University Park units for two-hour-long discussions with campus and unit leaders. Campus participants in the interviews included chancellors, academic, enrollment management, continuing education, and other staff members (see appendix A for a list of participants). This report cites selected best practices as learned from these conversations. While there can be no one set of best practices applicable across the Penn State campuses, the compilation of these practices could be the impetus for improvement processes where applicable.

The best practice portion of the study began with an exploratory review of the transcripts that Outreach team members had written while and after leading each discussion. "Best practices" was not a formal area in their question set for campus interview participants. Further, campuses could have engaged in activities that they did not mention to team members. Coding for best practices and gaining insight into these transcripts enabled us to build from the ground up, on several levels, a set of themes that best practices could fit into. Using NVIVO as a qualitative research tool, the best practices team—through research, data collection, consultation, and process analysis—identified a series of practices that the team believes have contributed not only to improved education experiences for adult learners but also to better ways of attracting and retaining adult students at the respective campuses. The software helped organize the team's thoughts and incidences of best practices that were evident. Coded items were isolated from the campus and transcript authors to maintain a sense of separation to prevent outside interference or influence. It is important to remember that the themes evolved from the data.

The overall aim of the project was to use what we know about adult learners to improve their education experience, from development of programs for them to their treatment on campus. There are no metrics involved with the discovery; however, we were able to determine, in some cases, that a best practice occurred on more than one campus. As with all qualitative research, this report is exploratory in nature, and measuring practices is not in its scope.

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[1] "Best practices" was not a formal area in the question protocol for campus interview participants. Campuses could have engaged in activities that they did not mention to team members. This report cites best practices as learned from these conversations. As with all qualitative research, this report is exploratory in nature, and measuring practices in not in its scope.
[2] The interview teams included Charlene Harrison, Betsy Esposito, William Curley, Ed Donovan, Laura Bernhard, Colette Rozo, and Talat Azhar. Not all members were present at each interview.

The themes and best practices in this report, as noted earlier, evolved from the ground up. In reading the transcripts from the various campus visits, we learned of campuses that found unique ways to look at problems. The best practices cited in this report show that these positive anomalies are key to a way of effecting organizational change.

Implications for Practice

Drawing from these best practices, we can sum up the need for better collaboration at all levels (Hawley, Sommers, Meléndez, 2005): between Penn State campuses, Penn State with other academic institutions, Penn State with potential outside client organizations on a local and statewide basis (Oberman, Hill, Curley, 2005), Penn State with potential students, and Penn State with current students. Collaboration is enabling communication, coordination, and sharing of information and knowledge so that each person can be more effective in his/her roles and responsibilities. Collaboration will enable productivity, enabling campuses to *maximize* their roles and responsibilities by providing the means to be more effective in their tasks.

There are three key elements to maximizing enrollments throughout the Penn State system: innovation, opportunity, and return on investment.

I.   Innovation is key because it allows us to leverage investments in human, financial, and technology assets to gain a strategic competitive advantage. The campuses, with their respective best practices, exhibit this trait of innovation. We need to share those innovative best practices with each other throughout the Penn State system.

II.   Opportunity is key: it means understanding business opportunities and directing individuals to leverage existing assets, and using best practices to maximize enrollments. When a campus holds a successful open house and invites other campuses to join them for the next one, we have an exciting example of working together to make the most of resources. This best practice example typifies the final key: revenue through a return on investment.

III.   Return on investment (ROI) is key because we need to ensure the best return while efficiently managing expenses.

One of the most crucial challenges is to transition the campus cultures toward having these best practices accepted throughout the Penn State system. We have campuses in economies that are in a state of instability that are determining what their niche is, exhibiting the *flywheel effect* (Collins, 2001), and making something happen.

Detailed Findings

As noted above, this report based upon qualitative research, is exploratory in nature and measuring practices is not in its scope. In general, all campuses are engaged in some level of effort to attract and retain adult learners but are often constrained by resources, geographical location, emphasis on traditional student enrollments, and a lack of adult programs among other things.

It is also important to point out that the list of best practices highlighted here is not exhaustive but did lead to the development of seven themes. The first best practice theme focuses on the campus culture, the second on strategic partnerships, the third on institutional commitment, the fourth on policy and procedures, the fifth on program mix, the sixth on financial issues, and the seventh on marketing. Thus, the best practices project addressed multiple elements of issues confronting Penn State.

The themes and best practices in this report, as noted earlier, evolved from the ground up. In reading the transcripts from the various campus visits, we learned of a few individuals who found unique ways to look at problems that seemed impossible to solve. The best practices cited in this report show that these positive anomalies are the key to a better way of effecting organizational change.

Theme 1: Campus Culture and Environment

A look at the descriptors for best practices that fit around the theme of campus culture or environment showed that there might be a subtext around building a community and making adults feel included. Examples of community building on the Penn State campuses are family nights, adult student lounges, adult learner orientation programs, adult learner honor societies and student organizations, and adult learner Web sites. Additionally, when University staff attempted to make adult learners' lives simpler with financial aid workshops, career-focused seminars, help with skill building, or alternative class hours (such as accelerated, evening, or weekend classes), a positive tone was felt throughout the interviews. Many of the best practices creating a better culture for adult learners, cited in the main body of this report, are noted in CAEL's *Principles in Practice: Assessing Adult Learning Focused Institutions* (CAEL, 2005).

Adult Student Organizations

- Because of its service-area demography and campus history of serving a large adult learner population, *Penn State Shenango* prides itself on personalizing the campus experience for the adult learner from prospective student to actual enrollee. *Penn State Shenango* has student support groups called Adults Seeking Knowledge (ASK) and Women in Transition (WIT), and family programming to support retention efforts and improve the campus culture for adults. Their admissions office remains open four evenings a week, and faculty are hired based on their ability to work well with a diverse student body.
- Several other campuses identified their adult student organizations. They include *Penn State DuBois*: Terrific Nontraditionals; *Penn State Erie, The Behrend College:* Returning Adult Student Organization; and *Penn State Worthington Scranton*: Veteran's Club and Non-Traditional Student Organization.
- Several campuses have chapters of Alpha Sigma Lambda (ΑΣΛ), the national honor society for adult learners. *Abington; Berks; Delaware County; Erie, The Behrend College; Hazleton; Mont Alto; Schuylkill;* and *York* have ΑΣΛ chapters and seek to involve family members and friends in their induction ceremonies. The ΑΣΛ society induction provides an opportunity for academic recognition of both full-time and part-time adult learners.

Evening Hours

- Several other campuses maintain evening hours in critical offices. They include *Penn State Beaver* and *Penn State Delaware County*: offer academic advising in the evening and by appointment, evening/weekend hours available at their Admissions, Registrar, and Financial offices; plus, evening hours available at their library and computer lab. *Penn State Hazleton* and *Penn State McKeesport*: offer evening hours for their library and computer labs.
- *Penn State World Campus* has extended advising hours available in the evenings and weekends. They send e-mails to students reminding them to register.

Service

- *Penn State Lehigh Valley* campus focuses on quality customer service—an identified campus strength. Their underlying assumption is that two things are important to the adult learner—his/her time and money. The campus promotes a one-stop-shop philosophy. Knowing that many adults will be transfers, the admissions staff at *Penn State Lehigh Valley* know that adults will ask how many credits will transfer, how will they meet degree requirements, and how long will it take them to earn a degree. Their transfer counselor works behind the scenes with their program coordinators to determine how the transfer credits labeled general education will actually meet the degree requirements of the majors offered.
- An admissions counselor at *Penn State Fayette,* and an adult learner advocate at *Penn State DuBois,* practice the one-stop shop concept. The DuBois position is centrally funded with the office holder splitting time between St. Marys continuing education center and the DuBois campus where his office is located with the other student services offices.

- *Penn State Berks, Penn State Delaware County, Penn State Harrisburg,* and *Lehigh Valley* have designated admissions staff members as transfer counselors.
- The *Penn State New Kensington* continuing education department delivers textbooks to adult students.

Communications

- As sustaining adult student organizations became more challenging, *Penn State Abington* developed a virtual organization using Angel technology to encourage information sharing among adult learners and staff. The expectation is that adults enrolled in evening and weekend courses will feel more engaged in campus life.
- *Penn State Lehigh Valley* has a <u>Student Handbook for Adult Learners</u> and an advanced-standing student packet. At *Penn State Abington,* a handbook for adult learners is available in print and online.
- *Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Penn State Berks, Penn State Altoona,* and *Penn State Abington* have developed adult learner–focused Web sites.
- *Penn State Altoona, Penn State Berks,* and *Penn State University Park* have established adult learner listservs and find them to be successful vehicles to communicate information.
- *Penn State Mont Alto* customizes its admissions office's letters and other communications to adult, transfer, and traditional-age applicants through paid accept status.
- *Penn State New Kensington* sends a series of three letters to adults who have expressed interest in the campus.
- The Office of Veteran's programs at University Park sends mailings to recently released veterans who are Pennsylvania residents. *Penn State Hazleton, New Kensington, Worthington Scranton,* and *York* send second, follow-up letters to veterans from their service areas.

Programming

- *Penn State Altoona* developed a "No Pressure Math Refresher" course for adults who need to brush up on their math skills. The average enrollment is around eighteen, the cost is $50, and the course is jointly promoted by Continuing Education and the Adult Center.
- *Penn State Berks* has received Incentive Grant Funds from the Commission for Adult Learners to support health and wellness programs for adult students. The staff conduct late-afternoon programming for their adult students focusing on technology, career services, and more in an effort to better connect the students with the campus. They provide their adults with an online newsletter, listserv, and adult focused Web site.
- The *Penn State Abington* staff has provided early morning coffee and program flyers to SEPTA (train) riders.
- *Penn State Beaver* and *Penn State Mont Alto* have created adult learner lounges.
- The *Penn State Beaver* campus offered a fall 2005 orientation program for adult learners on a Saturday morning; the program was technology-focused, featured financial aid information, and involved currently enrolled students.

- The *Penn State DuBois* campus conducts an Adult Learner Week, involving faculty, staff, enrolled and prospective adult learners, and others. *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* holds family nights to make adults feel like a part of the campus.
- The *Penn State Abington* staff takes advantage of the opportunity to reaching the parents (potential adult learners) of incoming traditional-age freshmen through summer FTCAP sessions and Student Affairs Office newsletters to families; both credit and noncredit programs for adults are promoted.

Theme 2: Strategic Partnerships

Best practices in this area involved collaboration or, to borrow from Jim Collins, the level 5 leadership quality of *clock building* and not *time telling* (Collins, 2001). Certain campuses are not worried about getting credit or being blamed, but about reaching out to adults and taking entrepreneurial steps to make things happen almost like Jim Collins' flywheel paradigm. Examples could be the campuses where success begets success. Officials reached out and now watch client companies and client competitors come to their campuses for training. The best practice of developing partnerships includes creating ongoing relationships, visiting clients, and using sources such as CareerLink and community colleges on a regular basis. In some cases, perhaps again in flywheel fashion, a step-up pattern has evolved—developing and promoting programs that lead to further programs.

Campuses & Best Practices: Theme 2, Strategic Partnerships

Intra-institutional partnerships
- *Penn State Great Valley* took the lead in establishing a regional alliance of colleges and universities that has enabled them to approach business and industries about holding on-site college fairs and/or meeting with employees to discuss educational options—by itself, with select members of the alliance, or with all partners. (*Penn State Great Valley, Penn State Abington,* and *Penn State Delaware County*)
- *Penn State Great Valley, Penn State Abington,* and *Penn State Delaware County* co-hosted open houses at their campuses in January 2006. They pooled advertising dollars to advertise in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.
- *Penn State Altoona*'s Adult Center and its continuing education office have a mutual interest in scheduling courses that accommodate adult learners. Courses and locations (on campus or at the Downtown Conference Center) are jointly promoted.
- *Penn State Erie, The Behrend College*'s Center for Adult Students' works with the

admissions office regarding adult applicants and paid accepts. The campus's continuing education office promotes the new Center for Adult Students in its radio advertising, on its Web site, and through student referrals.

Partnerships with other colleges and universities

- Many campuses have determined that articulation agreements with community colleges are beneficial in the recruitment of adult-learner transfer students. Those campuses also expressed the importance of having a regular presence on the community college campuses, providing advising to those students who plan to transfer, and generally building a good partnership. In many instances, campuses with articulation agreements become preferred partners of the community college. Their relationships are advertised and enable the campuses to participate in select college-based events. (*Penn State Abington, Penn State Beaver, Penn State Berks, Penn State Harrisburg, Penn State Hazleton, Penn State Lehigh Valley, Penn State New Kensington, Penn State Schuylkill, Penn State Wilkes-Barre,* and *Penn State Worthington Scranton*)
- *Penn State Hazleton*'s physical therapist assistant program has an articulation agreement with College Misericordia's master's degree program in physical therapy.
- *Penn State New Kensington* has hosted a visit of the current president of Westmoreland County Community College; a similar visit is planned for the president of the Community College of Allegheny County (Pittsburgh). Four to five of the *New Kensington campus'* majors align nicely with the community college programs. The director of academic affairs has begun establishing relationships with community college faculty to familiarize them with the campus's unique resources, including the digital communications lab.
- *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* works closely with the local community college and has both formal and informal articulation agreements. Each summer the campus sends invitations to community college graduates, encouraging them to consider enrollment in a baccalaureate degree program at the campus.

Partnerships with businesses, governmental agencies, and others

- *Penn State Worthington Scranton* is the only institution in the area doing community outreach. The campus has a partnership with Lackawanna County libraries, and the staff has delivered informational programs on-site, including programs on interview skills, résumé preparation, and career exploration.
- *Penn State Mont Alto* has a continuing education presence at the Franklin County Career and Technology Center. The campus feels that it preempted Harrisburg Area Community College's moving into the area by offering noncredit programs and certificates, including welding and carpentry, at this off-campus site. These programs are in response to requests from local companies, such as Mack Truck and Industrial Maintenance. The nondegree welding program may lead to Penn College offering an associate degree in welding to meet local workforce needs.
- Similarly, several campuses viewed relationships with local CareerLink offices as a way to increase adult learner enrollments. The importance of a regular presence at the CareerLink site was stressed (*Penn State Beaver; Penn State DuBois; Penn State*

Fayette, The Eberly Campus; Penn State Lehigh Valley; Penn State McKeesport; and *Penn State Worthington Scranton*). *Penn State Lehigh Valley*'s connection to the local CareerLink office resulted in the development of a unique licensed practical nurse program, the first of its kind in the state.

- *Penn State Fayette*'s partnerships with area hospitals and United Parcel Service have resulted in extending degree programs to those off-site locations.
- Educational Opportunity Centers, federally funded TRIO[3] programs designed to provide information and counseling to adults who would like to go to college or other postsecondary educational institutions are situated on the *Penn State Beaver, Penn State Fayette*, and *Penn State McKeesport* campuses.
- *Penn State Wilkes-Barre's* continuing education staff recruits adults at companies that offer tuition reimbursement by selling the idea of education through certificate completion, working with employees to get them interested, involving flexible faculty, and enrolling these students for business certificates. The continuing education staff track the certificate students, and when the students near completion of a certificate program, the continuing education staff notify the campus admissions staff, who contact the students regarding admission to an associate or baccalaureate degree program.
- *Penn State York* offers both an associate and a baccalaureate degree program on-site at Harley-Davidson.

Theme 3: Institutional Commitment

Institutional commitment could be seen in the measures taken by campuses in support of making adult learning happen. One-stop shops are key for busy adults that have limited amounts of time to rush around to several offices and buildings to learn how previous credits meet degree requirements, understand admission and financial aid application processes, and obtain information about advising and class registration. Another great example of institutional commitment comes when campuses hire faculty that recognize the importance of adult learners to the campus health.

Committees

- *Penn State Abington, Penn State Beaver, Penn State Berks, Penn State Hazleton, Penn State Lehigh Valley, Penn State New Kensington,* and *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* have campus recruitment and/or retention committees.

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[3] TRIO proposed for discontinued funding by the Bush Administration in the 2007 Federal Budget. (See OMR Research Portal articles: March 2, 2006)

One-stop shops

- To improve services to prospective and enrolled adult learners, some campuses have established adult centers/one-stop shops. Staff, and sometimes space, have been allocated for this effort at *Penn State Abington, Penn State Altoona, Penn State Erie, Penn State Shenango, Penn State University Park, State College Continuing Education,* and *Penn State World Campus*.
- *Altoona's* Adult Center staff conduct one-on-one FTCAP sessions with new adult learners. The staff explain placement test scores, advise on first-semester scheduling, and provide continuity from initial contact through the first semester. *Penn State Altoona*'s Division of Undergraduate Studies allocates spaces in designated courses for first-time, new admits.

Faculty, staff, and programs

- Full-time faculty at *Penn State DuBois* teach daytime and evening classes, and at the St. Mary's location. St. Mary's adjunct faculty are mentored by full-time faculty. Furthermore, campus faculty commitment to the recruitment and retention of their students is apparent in program schedules that enable students to earn associate and baccalaureate degrees through evening-only enrollment.
- *Penn State Harrisburg* conducts 15 "Coffee Break" sessions per year with local industries.
- *Penn State Hazleton* attends "Adult Transfer Nights" at the Berwick and Nanticoke campuses of Luzerne County Community College.
- *Penn State Abington, Penn State Altoona, Penn State Beaver, Penn State DuBois, Penn State Fayette, Penn State McKeesport,* and *Penn State Worthington Scranton* have identified admissions counselors to work specifically with adult and/or transfer applicants.

Theme 4:   Policy and Procedures

When campuses adopt policies, practices, and procedures that are supportive of adult learners their chances of enrolling and retaining adult students are enhanced. Examples of these policies and practices included accelerated classes offered in seven (e.g., OLEAD) or eight-week periods, evening and weekend classes in addition to daytime classes, and courses offered in other alternate schedule formats. Programs that can be completed entirely in the evening often were favored by working adults. Campuses offering alternative class times mentioned hiring faculty who knew that this teaching schedule was expected of the faculty.

Scheduling

- *Penn State Altoona*'s Continuing Education offers half-semester courses (lasting for seven weeks of the semester) for students interested in adding another course to their schedule and for students who dropped a course and need to add a class to keep enrollment at half- or full-time status for financial aid purposes. *Penn State New Kensington* and *Great Valley's* courses are offered routinely on a seven-week schedule. At off campus sites, *Penn State Fayette* offers courses on an eight-week, accelerated schedule.
- *Penn State Harrisburg, Penn State New Kensington,* and *Penn State York* course schedules are prepared with three-year course projections available so that the part-time learner can plan for program completion. *Penn State World Campus* provides their evening students with course maps covering several semesters.
- *Penn State Harrisburg* majors have a professional slant to them. Internships and externships are an integral component of the technology majors and are doable for both full-time and part-time students in day or evening enrollment.
- *Penn State Shenango* has stopped distinguishing between resident instruction and continuing education. They have fused the student body because some adult learners sought full-time day schedules, while some traditional-age students were working and wanted to come to campus at night. As a result, course and program scheduling is relatively fluid between day and evening.
- *Penn State Fayette, The Eberly College*'s directors of academic affairs and continuing education work together to offer courses during the day, in the evening, and on weekends.

Transfer articulation

- *Penn State Harrisburg* has developed its own transfer credit articulation table for schools from which its students commonly transfer. *Harrisburg's* long-standing relationship with Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) has resulted in advising guides for each of Harrisburg's majors, listing the courses that may be completed at HACC which can meet Harrisburg's degree requirements. Other campuses such as *Penn State Delaware* and *Lehigh Valley* also spoke of the importance of advising guidelines.

Programming

- *Penn State Erie, The Behrend College* conducts an annual program for all nondegree students in an attempt to move them into degree status.
- *Penn State Schuylkill's* Learning Center offers three-50 minute workshops on topics such as doing PowerPoint presentations with animation and using Angel that provide technology training to adult students. This programming was funded initially by a Commission for Adult Learners' Incentive Grant.

Theme 5: Program Mix

Step-up programs are of note in this segment. Campuses seemed enthusiastic about their success in developing a pattern of stepping up and encouraging stepping up in various support capacities. The programs mentioned, in a best practices sense, include the business certificate that steps into an associate degree, the upcoming non credit LPN program, potential professional master's degrees, and *Great Valley's* master's in leadership. A best practice mention from the *Graduate School* was the faculty designation of "professional instructor," which enables the hiring of professional practitioners as faculty in professional master's degree programs. This best practice could be adopted as a means to overcome problems in finding quality teachers. *Graduate School* officials indicated that developing certificates is "nimble," provides "fast retooling," and that certificates "fit a niche market." They went on to speak of the need for finding the right champion among the faculty ranks to shepherd a graduate certificate program through the implementation process.

Campuses and Best Practices: Theme 5, Program Mix

Course Scheduling

- *Penn State DuBois* ensures program/course articulation between the St. Marys site and the campus course offerings so that students (about 50 percent of the students dual enroll at the two locations) can meet program goals. Their HDFS and Business degrees offer weekend courses. Also, their associate degree in Liberal Arts offers weekend courses.
- The master's degree in education at *Penn State Harrisburg* can be completed entirely at night.
- *Penn State Great Valley's* business division offers most of its courses in the evening or on Saturdays over a seven-week period. A seven-week evening class meets two evenings per week for three hours each night. Saturday classes meet for six hours.
- *Penn State Harrisburg* Continuing Education offers an accelerated associate degree program on-site at the Hershey Medical Center. The courses are offered in seven-week increments so that students can take two courses in a semester.
- *Penn State Fayette* offers courses on Saturday mornings.
- *Penn State Mont Alto* offers a weekend college with success, while *Penn State Worthington Scranton's* competition is offering weekend college courses. "Adults find the weekend college model attractive. They can attend class on Friday evenings and Saturdays and complete an associate degree in business in three years."

New programs

- *Penn State Altoona; Penn State Beaver; Penn State Erie,The Behrend Campus; Penn State Fayette, The Eberly College; Penn State Harrisburg; Penn State Hazleton;* and *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* suggested that Penn State consider use of accelerated programs since many competitors offer accelerated programs. *Penn State Worthington Scranton* suggested offering accelerated programs in business and health care fields. At the *New Kensington campus*, officials have learned that adult learners really like

the seven-week schedule they are offering for some of the OLEAD courses.

- Officials at *Penn State Delaware County* suggested using blended programs as opposed to accelerated programs to "leapfrog" over the competition.
- *Penn State Abington* mentioned that alternative programming, such as night and weekend classes, would help as they grow. Only three of the *Abington campus'* programs cannot be completed in the evening and/or on the weekends.

Academic programs

- *Penn State York* campus programming has been built on the concept of stepping up from certificates to degrees; the engineering technology, biological sciences, and human development programs are good examples.
- *Penn State Fayette* is an active player in workforce development; has re-established the associate degree in mining engineering technology in response to regional employment needs.
- Graduate certificate programs are owned by the departments, not the *Graduate School,* and can be developed and approved rather quickly.
- *Penn State Lehigh Valley* is the first campus to offer a noncredit LPN program. It features evening and weekend clinical experiences which enable working adults to continue employment.
- *Penn State Great Valley* found an innovative way to help adult learners allay their fears of the GMAT for admission to the MBA program; the school offers a 15-credit business certificate that completely transfers to the MBA program and allows students to build confidence to take the GMAT that so many adult learners fear.
- *Penn State York* suggested greater use of the Penn State e-Learning Cooperative for future programs as a means to establish better communication and sharing of courses between campuses.

Theme 6: Financial Issues

The overlying financial issue or best practice at many campuses was working with various groups on deferment of tuition for students with tuition reimbursement from their employers or another third party. Campus staff talked about being flexible and the need to work with sometimes as many as forty to seventy companies in their areas to enroll students in a flexible fashion. Examples of flexibility range from having letters from companies stating what a respective tuition benefit is, to having a form to be filled for billing the company directly, bypassing the learner except for the student's portion of the bill. Flexibility is needed to combat the competition's lower tuition charges. Some campuses waive student activity fees entirely for students taking courses off campus, or the application fees for applicants in financial need. Others absorb the fee associated with credit card payment. *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* mentioned a step-up scholarship of $1,000 awarded over two semesters that has been successful for them. The scholarship, offered upon completion of a certificate, helps pay for continued education toward a degree.

Tuition reimbursement

- Because some competitors offer tuition discounts, *Penn State Erie, The Behrend Campus* has positioned itself competitively by establishing tuition reimbursement relationships with the human resources offices in as many as forty companies. The campus bursar's office either bills the company, or the company pays the student, who then pays *Penn State Erie*. Some companies will pay the $45 tuition deferment fee.
- For students who attend courses off campus, *Penn State Abington* asks for $100 up front and the remainder of the tuition is collected when the employer reimburses the student.
- For those who qualify for tuition reimbursement, *Penn State Beaver* and *Penn State New Kensington* allow those students to sign a promissory note.
- *Penn State Delaware County* only requires 1/3 down and the remainder due at the end of the semester for students who qualify for tuition reimbursement.
- *Penn State Fayette* sends the tuition bill directly to employers for those who qualify for tuition reimbursement.
- *Great Valley* only requires $25 up front and the remainder when the employer reimburses the school for those who qualify for tuition reimbursement.
- The *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* staff asks students with employer reimbursement to provide a letter from the company. The financial officer accepts the letter in lieu of payment until reimbursement.
- To first-time students who are veterans and having difficulty starting their benefits, *Penn State Worthington Scranton* extends a tuition deferment plan similar to the one extended to students with employer reimbursement.

Scholarships and grants

- *Penn State Abington* has scholarships available to adult transfer students.
- *Penn State Erie, The Behrend College* has scholarships available to their part-time students.
- The *Delaware County Campus* has succeeded in obtaining funding from a community philanthropic organization that they use to fund $500 grants to adult learners.
- *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* offers an adult "Step-Up Scholarship" to help students who complete a certificate and enroll in a degree program. This is a one-time scholarship for adults with a 3.0 or higher GPA. They receive $1,000, distributed in $500 amounts for two semesters.

Fee waivers

- Some campuses waive the student activity fee for students taking off-campus courses (*Penn State Beaver* and *Penn State Wilkes-Barre*).
- *Penn State Abington, Beaver, and New Kensington* occasionally waive the application fees for adults.

Child care

- *Penn State York* and *New Kensington* provide child-care stipends to eligible students.

 Funds for the stipend come from the chancellor (50 percent) and the campus student activity fee fund (50 percent). The child-care provider is paid directly with the stipend amount determined by the student's number of credits/noncredit hours in the semester.

- *Penn State Fayette* has a childcare facility on campus.

Theme 7: Marketing

Campuses use various means to stretch their limited marketing resources. Several campuses mentioned that in lieu of print advertising, word of mouth is frequently their best way to share information among faculty, students and their peers, and advisers. Multiple campuses regularly visit CareerLink offices to share information. Many campuses use faculty to help promote adult learning efforts by hiring faculty who will teach in the evenings and on weekends and get the word out. A few campuses use direct marketing methods such as postcards in addition to word of mouth to get the messages out regarding campus programs. Many campuses hold programs focused on career-oriented themes and topics such as financial aid and technology for prospective students on and off campus. These programs are a good way to reach adult learners.

Campuses & Best Practices: Theme 7, Marketing

Program-specific marketing
- *Penn State Altoona* promotes their OLEAD program.
- *Penn State Beaver* promotes their master's in Education degree program.
- *Penn State York* promotes their Business and Management noncredit offerings.

Mailing houses
- *Penn State Abington* contacts a mailing house for labels to send to adult students.
- The *Penn State Berks* campus purchases a list of names based on age, income, and educational level from a mailing house and sends a postcard to each name on the list.

Creative advertising approaches
- *Penn State Lehigh Valley* strategically uses its limited advertising dollars by developing fact sheets, by direct-mailing four-color postcards to graduates of the community colleges and campus degree programs, by placing ads in penny sheets, and by "gorilla marketing" at alumni events and the local mall. The campus experienced an increase in applications after running a week's worth of radio ads.
- *Penn State Abington* held a successful open house and did joint advertising with *Penn State Great Valley* and *Penn State Delaware County* for open houses on their respective campuses. These campuses are not alone in holding open houses: *Penn State Beaver; Penn State DuBois; Penn State Erie, The Behrend College; Penn State Fayette, The Eberly College; Penn State McKeesport, Penn State Mont Alto, Penn*

State New Kensington; Penn State Shenango; and *Penn State Wilkes-Barre* also mentioned holding open houses for adult learners.

- *Penn State Beaver; Penn State Berks; Penn State Erie, The Behrend College; Penn State McKeesport; Penn State Schuylkill;* and *Penn State Shenango* have used the adult TV commercial created by university marketing to recruit adult students. Several of these campuses and others also have created post cards and used existing University adult recruitment materials.

<u>The personal touch</u>

- *Penn State Shenango* mentioned that word of mouth is the method of "advertising" that has worked well for their nursing program. *Penn State Shenango* also hires faculty who understand the importance of diversity, of being supportive of adult learners, and of getting the word out about courses and program offerings.
- *Penn State Fayette, The Eberly College* held a focus group with an adult student angle to learn what needs to be improved.
- *Penn State McKeesport* has hired a professional intern to recruit adult students.
- *Penn State Erie, The Behrend College's* marketing toward adult programs takes a multitiered approach to expand knowledge of the adult learner services office. *Penn State Erie* uses a Web site, radio spots, referrals, and staff involvement with programs.

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Fall 2005 Campus Visit Attendees			
Campus		Name	Title
Abington			
	Dr.	Karen Wiley Sandler	Chancellor
	Mr.	Dale Hollenbach	Senior Director of Operations
	Ms.	Carol Kalos	Enrollment Counselor
	Mr.	Chuck Marsh	Director of University Relations
	Mr.	Dan Meuleners	Chief Finance Office
	Ms.	Lynell Morris	Adult Counselor
	Dr.	Samir Ouzomgi	Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
	Dr.	Jane Owens	Senior Director of Continuing Education
	Ms.	Jackie Payrow	Adult/Transfer Counselor
	Ms.	Joan Raudenbush	Registrar
	Ms.	Gale Siegel	Senior Director of Student Affairs
Altoona			
	Dr.	Lori Bechtel	Chancellor
	Ms.	Kathy Eberhardt	Adult Center Counselor
	Mr.	Rich Shaffer	Director of Enrollment Management
	Mr.	Jack Sinclair	Director of Continuing Education
Beaver			
	Dr.	Gary Keefer	Chancellor
	Ms.	Suzann Balogh	Adult Student and Full-Time Employee
	Dr.	Donna Kuga	Director of Academic Affairs
	Ms.	Susan McCleary	Registrar
	Ms.	Karen Morris	Faculty Member, Former Adult Learner, and Adult Advocate
	Mr.	Dan Pinchot	Director of Enrollment Management
	Ms.	Gretchen Samchuck	Advising Program Coordinator
	Ms.	Marian Vendemia	Director of Continuing Education
Behrend College			
	Dr.	Jack Burke	Chancellor
	Ms.	Biddy Brooks	Director Center for Adult Students
	Dr.	David Christiansen	Director of Academic Affairs
	Ms.	Peggy McCarthy	Director of Continuing Education
Berks			
	Dr.	Susan Speece	Chancellor
	Dr.	Martha Aynardi	Biology Instructor and Adult Student Contact
	Mr.	Walt Fullam	Director of Continuing Education
	Dr.	Blaine Steensland	Director of Student Affairs/Director of Enrollment Management

Fall 2005 Campus Visit Attendees		
Campus	Name	Title
Delaware County		
Dr.	Sophia Wisniewska	Chancellor
Ms.	Deb Erie	Director Student and Enrollment Services
Dubois		
Dr.	Anita McDonald	Chancellor
Dr.	Rob Loeb	Director of Academic Affairs
Mr.	John Piccolo	Director of Continuing Education
Ms.	Diana Ricotta	Continuing Education
Mr.	Scott Yeager	Adult Admissions Counselor within Continuing Education
Fayette		
Dr.	Gregory Gray	Chancellor
Ms.	Jessica Becker	Continuing Education
Mr.	Lou Ridgley	Admissions Counselor
Mr.	Joe Segilia	Director of Continuing Education
Great Valley		
Dr.	Diane Disney	Chancellor
Dr.	Ellen Foster Curtis	Division Head of Management
Ms.	Lee Dougherty	Interim Director of Continuing Education
Ms.	Nancy Hesford	Director of Marketing and Communications
Ms.	Carla Holway	Director of Enrollment Management
Dr.	David Russell	Senior Division Head Engineering and Information Science
Harrisburg		
Dr.	Madlyn Hanes	Chancellor
Ms.	Rebecca Gardner	Director of Marketing
Dr.	Don Holtzman	Director of Enrollment Management
Ms.	Karen Karnes	Assistant Director of Continuing Education
Dr.	Tom Streveler	Director of Admissions
Dr.	Robert Surridge	Special Assistant
Hazelton		
Dr.	John Madden	Chancellor
Dr.	Monica Gregory	Director of Academic Affairs
Dr.	Dwayne Hilton	Director Student and Enrollment Services
Ms.	Sally McGuire	Director of Continuing Education
Lehigh Valley		
Dr.	Ann Williams	Chancellor
Ms.	Kathy Eck	Registrar
Dr.	Roger Egolf	Special Assistant to Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Ms.	Kim Golden-Benner	University Relations and Event Planning
Mr.	Emory Guffrovich	Admissions Counselor
Ms.	Cynthia Johnson	Transfer Adviser

		Fall 2005 Campus Visit Attendees	
Campus		**Name**	**Title**
	Ms.	Priscilla Johnson	Assistant Director Division of Undergraduate Students and evening administrator
	Mr.	Brian Mauro	Director of Student Affairs
	Mr.	Ken McGeary	Director of Continuing Education
McKeesport			
	Dr.	Curtiss Porter	Chancellor
	Ms.	Lou Anne Caligiuri	Interim Director Student and Enrollment Services
	Ms.	Jean Jacobs	Continuing Education
	Dr.	Susan Lewis	Director of Continuing Education
	Mr.	Rick Roberts	Director of Academic Advancement Programs
	Dr.	Margaret Signorella	Director of Academic Affairs
Mont Alto			
	Dr.	David Gnage	Chancellor
	Dr.	Francis Achampong	Director of Academic Affairs
	Ms.	Andrea Christopher	Director of Student Affairs
	Ms.	Barbara Seyter	Director of Enrollment Management
	Ms.	Theresa Shank	Interim Director of Continuing Education
New Kensington			
	Dr.	Larry Pollock	Chancellor
	Ms.	Theresa Bonk	Director of Student Affairs
	Ms.	Patty Brady	Director of Enrollment Management
	Mr.	Jason Bush	Director of Business
	Dr.	Arlene Hall	Director of Academic Affairs
	Ms.	Pat Hollinger	Continuing Education
	Ms.	Nancy Miller	Assistant Director of Continuing Education
Schuylkill			
	Dr.	Keith Hillkirk	Chancellor
	Mr.	Jerry Bowman	Director of Enrollment Services
	Mr.	David Holden	Director of Continuing Education
	Dr.	De'Edra Lewis-Johnson	Assistant Director of Student Support Services
	Mr.	Matthew Swatchick	Director of Student Affairs
	Ms.	Joyce Zajac	Coordinator of Center for Academic Achievement
Shenango			
	Dr.	Fred Leeds	Chancellor
	Dr.	Kevin Berland	Interim Director of Academic Affairs
	Mr.	Chuck Greggs	Admissions Counselor
	Ms.	Peggy McCann	Associate Director of Admissions
	Dr.	Jane Williams	Director Student and Enrollment Services, Registrar, and CE contact

Fall 2005 Campus Visit Attendees		
Campus	Name	Title
University Park Continuing & Distance Education		
Dr.	Gary Miller	Associate Vice President for Continuing and Distance Education
Ms.	Jean McGrath	Director of Student Services, World Campus
Dr.	Peter Rubba	Senior Director of the World Campus
Dr.	Wayne Smutz	Senior Director of Continuing and Professional Education
University Park Undergraduate Education		
Dr.	Mary Beth Crowe	Assistant Vice Provost
Dr.	Randy Deike	Assistant Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Ms.	Anna Griswold	Assistant Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Student Aid
Dr.	Eric White	Executive Director, Division of Undergraduate Studies, Associate Dean of Advising, and affiliate Assistant Professor of Education
University Park Graduate School		
Dr.	Regina Vasilatos Younken	Sr. Associate Dean
Dr.	Mark Wardell	Assistant Dean
Wilkes-Barre		
Mr.	John Barnes	Admissions
Ms.	Kathie Flanagan-Herstek	Director Student and Enrollment Services
Ms.	Ina Lubin	Director of Continuing Education
Dr.	Wesley Parks	Interim Director of Academic Affairs
Ms.	Janet Rosenbaum	Assistant Director of Continuing Education
Ms.	Jennifer Stombaugh	Registrar
Worthington-Scranton		
Dr.	Mary-Beth Krogh-Jespersen	Chancellor
Dr.	Margo Bergman	Business Faculty Member
Ms.	Kim Briskie	Adult Student
Dr.	William Bryan	Director Student and Enrollment Services
Mr.	Jack Coyle	Public Information Assistant
Mr.	Gary Edstrom	Financial Aid
Ms.	Sandy Feather	Associate Director of Admissions
Ms.	Sue Fitch	Continuing Education Staff
Ms.	Dawn Gomez	Career Services
Mr.	Gene Grogan	Business Officer
Mr.	Leon John	Assistant Director of Programs and Unions

Fall 2005 Campus Visit Attendees		
Campus	Name	Title
	Ms. Mary Lou Kelly	Coach
	Dr. Michael Mahalik	Director of Academic Affairs
	Mr. Jeff Mallas	Assistant Director of Athletics
	Ms. Tara Morgan	Nurse
	Ms. Maria Russoniello	Development
	Ms. Angela Shuback	Continuing Education Staff
	Ms. Bonnie Urzen	Admissions Counselor
	Ms. Kim Vangarelli	Director of Continuing Education
	Ms. Margaret Williams	Continuing Education Staff
York		
	Dr. Joel Rodney	Chancellor
	Dr. Sharon Christ	Director of Student and Enrollment Services
	Ms. Bea Landis	Assistant Director of Continuing Education
	Dr. Joe McCormick	Director of Academic Affairs