



COMMISSION FOR ADULT LEARNERS
September 9, 2009
Senate Room,
The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel
Minutes

Attended: Keith Hillkirk, Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Sharon Christ, Bob Farrell, Karin Foley, Galen Grimes, Anna Griswold, Linda Higginson, Theodora Jankowski, Martha Jordan, Leslie Laing, Spencer Lewis, Michael Mahalik, Jacob Moore, Joann Olson, Jane Owens, Amy Pancoast, Joel Rodney, Karen Schultz, Laura Swinyer, Judy Wills (Note taker)

- 1) Keith Hillkirk called the meeting to order.
- 2) Members introduced themselves and stated what campus they were from. Student members gave background on their decision to return to school as adult learners.
- 3) The minutes for June 3, 2009 were approved by voice vote.
- 4) Keith Hillkirk expressed appreciation to members for their willingness to serve on the Commission. The group discussed goals for the year around recruitment and retention of adult learners:
 - a. Make Penn State as user-friendly as possible for adult learners.
 - b. Make recommendations to policy developed by the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and Faculty Engagement (FE) committees.
 - c. Address financial aid for adult learners.
 - d. Help the Hendrick Conference planning committee boost attendance and possibly include more students.
 - e. Possibly expand the number of Commission sponsors. Keith Hillkirk and Martha Jordan will meet with the current sponsors before the next Commission meeting..

Other ideas:

- a. Building a pre-admission tool that would do an unofficial degree audit before admission. Concern was expressed about the time lag for admissions at Penn State compared to competitor institutions. This may be something the PLA committee can address.
- b. Concern that some community colleges are accepting college credits for high school courses and the implications.
- c. Concern about how to best simplify and streamline processes within the context of political pressures while remaining transparent.
- d. Keith Hillkirk asked members to consider the discussion from a cultural perspective and how to be adult learner friendly without compromising quality.

5) Announcements

- a. Martha Jordan reported that she and Bill Curley formed an Adult SIT (Strategic Implementation Team) around the 2005 SWOT document. Craig Weidemann and Keith Hillkirk charged the group that will be charged with developing a focused action plan geared to increasing the University-wide enrollment of this important population. Barbara Sherlock facilitated the discussion in August and sub-committees are forming. They will write an executive summary this fall to be compiled and distributed to central administrators. Martha will share the report with the Commission when available. Members who would like to be part of the next steps may contact Martha Jordan.
 - b. Two printed articles were shared with members: A Penn State Live article on CLEP Testing Centers and a Chronicle of Higher Education article. (Attached)
- 6.) Committee chairs gave overview of their goals and members moved into committee discussions over lunch. Committee chairs reported back on lunch discussions.

Faculty Engagement—Co-chairs Theodora Jankowski, Bob Farrell

- Will look at common problems adult learners have in the classroom.
- Will continue to work on the faculty survey currently in the works.

- Will compile a student version of the handbook appendix.
- Will look at whether the adult learner experience at campuses differs from that at University Park.

Hendrick Conference Planning—Co-chairs Sharon Christ, Leslie Laing

- Will continue to showcase best practices, possibly adding a pre-conference networking opportunity for AECs and presentation of best practices by Incentive Grant recipients
- Will consider adding a student track to the conference
- May consider seeking corporate sponsorships to keep registration fee increases to a minimum.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)—Chair Jane Owens

- Will consider what a good year would look like and how to measure it
- Will try to identify a co-chair or advocate with experience to advance ideas internally to faculty
- Will sort through issues raised as short-, intermediary-, or long-term to develop strategy for policy recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned 12:55 p.m.

The next meeting will be October 14, 10:30-noon, 324 Outreach Building, University Park.