

Plan to Implement the University Faculty Senate Advisory and Consultative Report, Recommendations for Enhancing the Educational Experience of Adult Learners: July, 2012 Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. Identify best practices for advising adult learners interested in degree-seeking programs

STATUS

Promoted by ACUE and the CAO, Undergraduate Education (Linda Higginson) surveyed DAA's, Advising Programs Coordinators and others at the campuses to better understand issues, challenges and effective practices concerning adult learners.

NEXT STEPS

Results will be compiled into best practices and presented to ACUE in fall 2011. Request that ACUE recommend a process for implementing best practices at all campuses. **Action by ACUE is still pending but is still on their agenda to move this forward.**

RECOMMENDATION

2. Promote focused degree-completion programs tailored toward the adult learner while maintaining academic standards associated with a Penn State Degree.

STATUS

The Adult Degree Completion Task Force (chaired by Mukund Kulkarni and Wayne Smutz) is developing a completion program in Allied Health that has been identified through market research as fulfilling a workforce need. A prior learning assessment will also be included in this program as a way to decrease the amount of time/tuition needed to complete the degree. Kulkarni and Smutz provided update to the 2011-12 Commission Members. Discussion on this topic continues in the Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses.

NEXT STEPS

Commission should review and assess the final Task Force report.

RECOMMENDATION

3. Conduct a system-wide audit of the academic colleges and departments to identify those courses eligible for credit by examination (Senate Policy 42-50) and Credit by Portfolio (Senate Policy 42-97) and provide the information to all units that advise/counsel adult learners.

STATUS

Outreach has hired a prior learning assessment coordinator, Dr. Pat Shope, who has begun to compile an online resource of courses eligible for Credit by Exam or Credit by Portfolio.

NEXT STEPS

Website will be created to provide to all unites that advise/counsel adult learners.

RECOMMENDATION

4. Expand the network of faculty who work with eligible students through Credit by Examination and/or Credit by Portfolio.

STATUS

Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator will collaborate with the academic units and campuses to identify and expand a network of faculty to work with students on Credit by Exam and Credit by Portfolio.

NEXT STEPS

Dr. Shope is making presentations to each campus' leadership team, as well as to faculty and administrative groups to create a more involved awareness with PLA.

RECOMMENDATION

5. Expand alternative course and program delivery methods and scheduling in those academic units where adult learners are concentrated.

STATUS

Completed – Video Learning Network (VLN) has been implemented at 18 campuses and was officially launched in fall of 2012. Academic Outreach has hired a VLN Coordinator to expand the network at interested campuses.

NEXT STEPS

Completed.

RECOMMENDATION

6. Incentivize the teaching of adult learners to attract faculty to teach hybrid, evening and non-traditional courses.

STATUS

World Campus Faculty Capacity Task Force has identified ways to incentivize faculty teaching online courses. The Commission completed a survey of all University-wide faculty teaching undergraduates during the 2011-12 year to explore how Penn State can support and guide faculty who engage with adult learners. Survey results were received by the Commission. The Commission for Adult Learners is collaborating with the Schreyer Institute on development of faculty workshops. Workshops were piloted with the School of Nursing faculty, with plans to expand to other academic areas.

NEXT STEPS

The Committee on Faculty Engagement will review and evaluate outcomes from the pilot program to determine next steps.

RECOMMENDATION

7. Explore the expansion of already-existing financial aid services available to adult learners.

STATUS

In collaboration with the University Office of Student Aid, a student financial services unit has been created in the World Campus/Continuing Education to address specific needs of adult learners. A position has been approved to offer student loan counseling and financial literacy programs for adult learners. The position is expected to be filled during the 12-13 year.

NEXT STEPS

Completed.

RECOMMENDATION

8. Explore expanding the services currently offered to adult learners such as the creation of adult learner lounges with the possibility of subsidized day care.

STATUS

Survey of adult students completed by Student Affairs and the campuses has determined that adult students would like more adult-focused academic programs offered rather than services.

NEXT STEPS

Completed.