

# Commission for **Adult Learners**

## 2009 Incentive Grant Recipient Information

### **One University-Transitioning from in-person to online learning, the RN to BSN Program**

*Jane A. Owens, Ed. D, Senior Director, Continuing Education  
Penn State Abington*

Frankford Hospital Diploma School is a longtime and highly valued client of Penn State Abington. This internal partnership between the School of Nursing, World Campus, and Penn State Abington has taken years of planning. Now that we have a go ahead from all parties, we are eager to start with a successful series of hybrid courses leading to the World Campus, RN to BSN degree.

The money requested will support the marketing and offering of two information sessions intended to recruit students into the degree. Not only will this be advantageous to the individual students who choose to participate, it will also enhance and extend the long-term relationship with our loyal client.

### **Adult Learner Computer Skills Training**

*Kathy Eberhardt, Adult Center Counselor/Advisor;  
Anna Rose Eckenrode, Education & Training Specialist  
Penn State Altoona*

As a recruitment and retention initiative, the training program is devised to target both currently enrolled and incoming SU/FA 2009 adult learners, and provide computer skills training to them. The focus is on areas that adults have requested and identified as needed areas. The four training sessions will include: Introduction to Computers; navigating eLion and ANGEL; Mastering Power Point; Utilizing Webmail, Word, Excel. The sessions will consist of four 1.5-hour, early-evening sessions, which will enable the adults to come after school or work.

### **Professional Writing Certificates**

*Kimberly Blockett, Assistant Professor of English;  
Pamela Main, Writing Center Coordinator  
Penn State Brandywine*

The Brandywine English faculty plan to offer a certificate program in professional writing with three options: business, grant, or media writing. The program will provide adult learners (degree or non-degree) an opportunity for practical, professional development. Moreover, we anticipate that the program will be a gateway for learners who may benefit from smaller accomplishments before undertaking the larger challenge of a degree program. Our campus successfully administers several certificate programs in Business, Education, Human Development and Family Studies, Engineering, and Medical Sciences. A Professional Writing program is an appropriate complement to Brandywine's established commitment to continuing education. As with our current degree programs, we will assess recruitment and retention each academic year.

### **Academic Reference Tool Decal**

*Biddy Brooks, Director, Center for Adult Students*

*Penn State Erie, The Behrend College*

Where is my email? Why am I not receiving emails that other adults are getting? I need to file my bill. Where is this ANGEL my instructor keeps referring to? These are all phrases voiced by many adult learners. As part of Behrend's Academic Enhancement Series, at the beginning of each semester a workshop is held on utilizing ANGEL, eLion and WebMail. All new students and those who have been away from the college at least three years are invited and encouraged to attend. The workshop focuses on these important tools and how they will become a part of the student's everyday arsenal. Until students become familiar with these applications it is easy to get web addresses and functions confused. To that end we have developed a handy reference that will list the web address of each application along with a short descriptive phrase of the application. The Academic Reference Tool Decal also will list the college's website along with the contact information for the Center for Adult Students.

### **Synchronous Mathematics Tutoring**

*Janice E. Smith, Learning Center Coordinator*

*Penn State Harrisburg*

The Learning Center at Harrisburg provides online synchronous writing tutoring using Adobe Connect to students when face-to-face sessions are an inconvenience or impossible because of schedules or distance. This service began as a pilot in the fall of 2007. This service is used by a limited number of students, primarily adult learners. It is, however, an important way to deliver writing tutoring to students who would be unable to use the service otherwise. The protocols, needed equipment, and problem-solving were developed with the support of the Faculty Center. We would like to extend the synchronous tutoring to math students and are applying for a grant to purchase the equipment to make the delivery on non-text content possible. This service will not be exclusive to adult students, but they are expected to be the primary users.

## **Tracking the Career and Educational Trajectories of Adult Learners Post graduation**

*Jennifer Parker Talwar, Associate Professor of Sociology, Faculty Coordinator (OLEAD program);*

*David Livert, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Faculty Coordinator (OLEAD program);*

*Jessica Kirkwood, Coordinator of Career and Internship Services;*

*Tiffany Cresswell-Yeager, Director of Student Affairs*

*Penn State Lehigh Valley*

As adult learners become a greater proportion of the college population and as measures are put into place to accommodate and assess educational curricula, goals, and learning outcomes, there remains a need to understand and assess the practical outcomes of obtaining a Penn State college degree. This project proposes to develop and establish a system for tracking the career and educational trajectories of adult learners who have graduated from Penn State Lehigh Valley. “Strategies of Excellence” underscore Penn State’s new strategic plan as it was presented to the University Faculty Senate by President Graham Spanier on January 27, 2009. Post graduation tracking ought to become a vital measure for achieving some of the plan’s goals concerning “student recruitment,” “enhancing student success,” “advancing academic excellence,” and “serving the people of the commonwealth and beyond.” Career tracking data, for instance, should be seen as vital to the future recruitment and retention of the adult learner in an increasingly competitive market economy. But perhaps more importantly are the broader programmatic and academic benefits: Tracking adult learners provides a means for continuing engagement with our graduates with positive implications for academic advising and career services, curricular development, funding opportunities, and enhanced industry and community relations. The development of a system of career tracking of adult learners at Penn State Lehigh Valley could be viewed as a pilot version for greater application across the university, as a whole.

**New Opportunities**

*Elodia Barajas, Penn State Student, YCSD Special Programs Coordinator;*

*Monica M. Grigera, PSY, Latino Counselor;*

*Judy Woods, PSY, Continuing Education Program Coordinator*

*Penn State York*

Many English Language Learner adult students have difficulty making the transition to college. This program attempts to assist students in the target population in the transition to college with academic advising, career exploration, study sessions, admissions orientation, financial aid information, and math and English refresher courses.

A minimum of ten and a maximum of fifteen underrepresented adult learners will participate in the Bridge to New Opportunities program. This program will address the transition to college and consists of three components:

- Non-credit college ESL course (15 hours)
- Non-credit math refresher course (15 hours)
- College orientation (5 hours) Meeting with an Academic Advisor, Library workshop, meeting with admissions, campus tour, financial aid, cultural event, and reception at the end of the program.