



Commission for Adult Learners
November 10, 2010
324 Outreach Building, University Park
10:30 a.m.
Minutes

Attended: Ann Williams, Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Gary Lawler, Rachel Stover, Anna Griswold, Linda Higginson, Deb Straussfogel, Karen Sones, Armand Dotsey, Jane Ashton, Martha Aynardi (by phone), Leslie Laing, Keith Hillkirk (by phone), Careen Yarnal, and Judy Wills (Note taker)

Unable to attend: Martha Jordan, Jane Owens, Amy Pancoast, Karen Pollack, Beth Ann Delaney, Paul deGategno, and Spencer Lewis

- 1) Ann Williams called the meeting to order and gave the following announcements:
 - Dr. Craig Weidemann is able to attend the December 9 meeting to hear committee reports on the Faculty Senate Recommendations. Committee chairs should submit reports to Ann Williams and Martha Jordan by November 22 and copy Judy Wills.
 - Jane Owens and Martha Jordan are attending the CAEL International Conference. They will meet with representatives from the University of Wisconsin to discuss how to possibly duplicate some of Wisconsin's work with the Lumina Foundation. Also, together with Bill Curley, they will present on Adult Learners.
 - Leslie Laing shared report of annual student lunch with Vice Presidents held during Non-Traditional Students' Week at University Park. Laing gave brief biographical background for each of the eight student attendees who met with Dr. Weidemann and their concerns: tuition debt, childcare availability, that student rate tickets funded in part by the student activity fee are limited to one per student per event, lack of family-oriented activities timing of classes, parking, tutoring, gym references, inappropriate references used by faculty that made them feel invisible in the classrooms. The group discussed the concerns raised and what to do with the information. Careen Yarnal will talk with Student Activity Fee Board about the possibility of obtaining additional tickets at reduced rate to allow family or guests to attend. Anna Griswold will talk with Laing about Work Study deadline. Ann Williams suggested having the concerns raised at a future Academic Leadership Council or Council of Campus Chancellors and inviting Laing present on the topic. Ann Williams will ask Martha Jordan about the possibility of a Newswire article per suggestion by Linda Higginson.

- Martha Aynardi got recent request to re-establish the Adult Student Organization on her campus.
 - Keith Hillkirk reported that the AEC at Penn State Schuylkill organized a Safe Trick-or-Treat event with 300-400 participants.
 - Ann Williams reported that she, Keith Hillkirk, and Martha Jordan met with Dr. Rob Pangborn, Karen Schultz, Shelie Waite, and Cathy Schwab around e-Petition Course Substitution on November 8. Keith Hillkirk shared a brief history of the progress to date and what issues need to be addressed. He pointed out that per Dr. Pangborn, 75% of students entering a campus with previous credits stay at the campus. The sticking point on the process is having someone to take ownership. To avoid confusion, the process will be called 'E-Substitution' instead of 'E-Petition'. A follow-up meeting will be held to try to make progress. Information will be shared as it becomes available.
- 2) Linda Higginson requested to revise the October 13, 2010 minutes to remove a sentence that was in procedure and not policy regarding the discussion on foreign language requirements. The amended minutes were approved by voice vote.
- 3) Committee reports and Faculty Senate Recommendations progress discussion.
- a) Faculty Engagement—Lori Bechtel-Wherry and Keith Hillkirk gave summary.
- The committee will focus on faculty issues around PLA and the PLA committee will focus on non-faculty issues to avoid overlap.
 - Martha Aynardi shared her findings from conversations with Terry Speicher, Penn State Berks, and their use of credit by exam in Engineering.

Approximately three to four students per year attempt credit by exam; 75% of them are adult students. Terry interviews a student who inquires about credit by exam to assess if it's appropriate. He shares the syllabus and course objectives with the student.

Based upon his experience, Terry recommends credit by exam for lower division courses and for gen ed. courses particularly.

He also recommends that faculty compensation and/or incentives would be key for credit by exam to grow.

- Karen Pollack reported that 13 World Campus students received credit by exam last year. 11 of 13 were gen ed courses.
- Careen Yarnal inquired about faculty incentives and noted how important they will be for this to grow. We reviewed current policy and procedure which directs \$30 per credit to the Registrar's office. Careen noted there may be additional ways to incentivize faculty and stressed how important that will be.
- Martha Aynardi observed that one option might be to compensate faculty who would build pools of exam questions for various courses. We discussed security issues which would need to be addressed.

- The committee agreed that for credit by exam to grow at Penn State the following areas would need to be addressed, amongst others:
 - Website transparency and user friendliness
 - Faculty incentives—Paul noted that another incentive could be opportunities for degree program enrollment growth.
 - Linking with certain student prospect sub-sets such as veterans
- Before the next committee meeting, Keith will communicate with Mike Dooris in University Planning and Assessment to see if there are additional data that may be helpful to us.
- Keith Hillkirk shared data on utilization of Credit by Exam. In 2009, 182 students used this option. 142 of them were located at 4 campuses: 78 at University Park, 27 at York, 21 at Berks, and 16 from World Campus. He will contact Sharon Christ to find out what may contribute to its use at York. Jane Ashton noted that 2008 had the highest numbers, with decline since.
- Anna Griswold will reference cost savings of using Credit by Exam in the Financial Aid Task force report for Faculty Senate.
- Per policy 4250, departments decide whether to accept credit by exam. Suggestion was made to include in the Faculty Senate report a request to make the process more centralized.
- Rachel Stover will look into how many competitors accept Credit by Exam.

- b) Financial Aid Task Force—Anna Griswold reported that in the interest of time, the committee’s report for Faculty Senate will stay within the charge of staying within existing options and tied to academics.
- Focus will be on availability of funding, service needs, list of issues or questions to address in order to expand.
 - Not sufficient aid available to meet need
 - Adult learners carry a higher debt load and may use as a family revenue stream. Aid is tied to grades.
 - Students taking courses but not interested in a degree do not qualify for aid.
 - Students with less than six credits (five is graduate student) do not qualify for aid.
 - Unmet need creates life pressure and affects retention.
 - Dropping- or stopping-out creates ramifications.
 - Service needs of those students defined as adults vary widely creating challenge in determining best approach to reach them.
 - The group discussed whether there is adequate facilitation of networking for adult learners. Suggestions included peer mentoring, adult-specific orientation with possibility of offering online, expanding role of AECs to provide basic student aid services.
 - There is concern that the pace at which adults take courses cause some to reach their aggregate limit before completing their degree.

Ann Williams reported that Lehigh Valley and Berks does First-Year session for adults, comprised of two four-hour courses and the remainder online.

Suggestion was made for a group similar to Lion Ambassadors for adults that could be a connector to resources available.

Martha Aynardi shared information from the Innovative Advising conference and Leslie Laing remarked that the Transitions Steering Team is also beginning to work on similar initiatives.

Careen Yarnal asked about the possibility of having a section of the adult web site set aside for faculty.

- Leslie Laing commented that workshops offered on technology have had low attendance. She suggested trying to build awareness of the training available online through LYNDAs.
- Question came up about the need for a Director or Curricular/Co-Curricular services. This topic will be revisited at a future meeting.

c) Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)—Linda Higginson

- Betsy Esposito is co-chairing the committee. She is a well-known advocate of Prior Learning Assessment.
- A PLA Task Force has been created, to be lead by Jane Owens, Martha Jordan, and Betsy Esposito. The group is charged with assessing Credit by Exam and PLA availability on five pilot degrees.
- Jane Owens and Betsy Esposito presented on PLA at the DUS conference.
- Jane Owens is meeting with the University of Wisconsin's Program Director for guidance on replicating their work with the Lumina Foundation.
- Suggestion was made to incorporate PLA into marketing tools that the University uses.
- Suggestion was made for CAL to go beyond focus on awareness building and data collection.

d) Hendrick Conference Planning—Leslie Laing shared updates on planning of the May 16, 2011 conference.

- Theme for the conference will be “Enhancing the Educational Experience of Adult Learners”
- The conference planner has presented two budget proposals which have new fees and costs which will impact registration fees. The committee is considering alternate revenue structures.
- Dr. Ted Bonar, Center for Deployment Bethesda, MD will be invited to present on veterans issues for our luncheon address.
- The committee will invite members working on the Faculty Senate Recommendations to participate in the opening session.

e) Nominating Committee

- AnnWilliams reviewed the duties of the nominating committee per the Commission's bylaws. Nominating committee will be Keith Hillkirk, Amy Pancoast, Careen Yarnal, Linda Higginson, and Armand Dotsey.
 - The committee will assist in selecting of the Shirley Hendrick award. The awards process and web site are under development and Judy Wills will share with committee members when available.
- 4) Keith Hillkirk shared figures on responses received to-date on the Faculty Senate pilot survey conducted at Altoona, Schuylkill, and Lehigh Valley campuses. Sixty one completes have been received. Copy of the survey was distributed for members to review. In the interest of time, update on October 25 and 27 AEC Regional meetings will be shared instead at the December meeting.
- 5) Ann Williams thanked committee chairs and members for the hard work on the Faculty Senate recommendations within the short timeline and adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Wills