



Commission for Adult Learners  
April 13, 2011  
324 Outreach Building, University Park  
10:30 a.m.  
*Minutes-Draft*

Attended: Anna Griswold (Chair-Elect), Jane Ashton, Martha Aynardi (by phone), Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Paul deGategno (by phone), Gloria Deschler, Armand Dotsey (by phone), Linda Higginson, Keith Hillkirk, Martha Jordan, Leslie Laing, Gary Lawler, Spencer Lewis, Jane Owens, Amy Pancoast, Karen Pollack, Karen Sones, Rachel Stover, Debra Straussfogel, Judy Wills (note taker)

Guests: Madlyn Hanes, Terrell Jones, Rob Pangborn, Jennie Ishler, Nate Porter, Lynn Melander Moore

Unable to attend: Beth Ann Delaney, Ann Williams, Careen Yarnal

- 1) Anna Griswold called the meeting to order, welcomed guests, and invited attendees to introduce themselves.
  - a) Announcements-
    - a) The location change for the June 8 will be 324 Outreach Building. The Commission's web site is updated to reflect the change. Sponsors Craig Weidemann and Damon Sims will attend. The meeting will include lunch.
    - b) The group approved minutes from March 16, 2011 by voice vote.
    - c) Chair-elect ballot results—Keith Hillkirk announced that Dr. Gary Lawler will be Chair of the 2012-13 Commission.
- 2) Presenters
  - a) Adult Learners Data Report--Rachel Stover, Assistant Director, Institutional Data Management & Analysis
    - Stover shared definition for adult learners for reporting purposes, an adult learner profile, undergraduate adult learner trends, and undergraduate credit delivery method distribution. Data was unduplicated for summer, fall, and spring semesters for credit

courses. Stover will drill down for additional details and re-distribute to the Commission and sponsors.

- Stover also shared specific details by campus. Question came up regarding academic achievement statistic. Stover will investigate and report back.
- Stover requested feedback on the presented data and urged members to use caution in how the information is used, noting that this is the first draft put together per the request of campuses. Her team worked with campuses to refine the data points reported. Stover noted that a new Business Intelligence format in development will make data simpler to sort and analyze per data needs.

Madlyn Hanes asked about a figure mentioned elsewhere that reported a drop in adult learner enrollments since 1997-98. Stover agreed to look at available information for the time frame to confirm the accuracy of the figure.

b) Adult Learner Research Results--Jennie Ishler, Market Research Manager, and Nate Porter, Market Research Associate

- Nate Porter shared results “Reengaging College Stopouts” from a web-based panel survey. Porter will send detail of demographic breakdown of the panel.
- Topics included prior experience with college, goals and motivations for returning, preferred delivery methods, and anticipated obstacles to returning and assistance for success.
- Summary findings were provided:  
38% would return for career goal; 39% for personal goal

Those most likely to return within next twelve months have been out of school less than two years.

60% of those likely to return want a bachelor’s degree, and 30% want an associate’s degree.

Finances and work/family commitments are major reasons respondents stopped and are also the biggest barriers to returning and completing degree.

Overcoming these barriers will require: access to more financial aid, availability of courses at convenient times/locations, courses available in a variety of delivery modes, simple PLA and transfer

credit policies, and more acceptance of PLA and credit from other institutions.

- 3) Faculty Senate Recommendation updates—Informational update is scheduled for April 28.
  - a) Faculty Engagement—Keith Hillkirk and Lori Bechtel-Wherry summarized the recommendation for use of Credit by Exam. The committee learned from discussion with program coordinators at Berks and York campuses that the Program Coordinator is key in using Credit by Exam as a recruiting tool. The committee also recommends developing a guide based on the one published by Ohio State University to use as an internal communication in building awareness within the University community, then to market the opportunity to prospective students. The committee also stressed the importance. Dr. Pangborn noted that maintaining consistency could be potential problem.
  - b) Financial Aid Task Force—Anna Griswold reviewed the committee’s work to identify ways to improve existing services and challenges presented to cohort of adult learners. The committee suggests exploring alternative allocation of resources and scholarships available to adult learners. The committee recommends hiring and developing additional financial aid staff for Outreach. They also recommend developing a model of collaboration between academic advising and financial aid staff in determining clear pathway of degree attainment to prevent stop-outs. They also recommend addressing need for financial literacy as means of educating learners about use of loans.
  - c) Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)—Jane Owens distributed the committee’s recommendation to begin with an inventory, perhaps of pilot select campuses and degrees and seek the Commission’s sponsor support in obtaining necessary endorsement of senior leadership to guarantee successful completion of a University-wide inventory. Owens also shared context and recent CAEL study showing ‘adult undergraduates who receive prior learning credit are more than twice as likely to graduate as their non-prior learning credit peers. Moreover, they complete a bachelor’s degree 2.5 to 10 months faster and an associate degree up to 4.5 months faster than their non-prior learning peers.’ (CAEL, ‘Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success; A 48-Institution Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes,’ February 2010.)

- 4) Additional updates

- a) Faculty Survey-Martha Jordan shared background of the survey development and reviewed survey results from pilot of three campuses conducted in Fall 2010 and requested sponsors' help to obtain approval to send updated version University-wide. The group discussed question of whether response is a good representation and meaningful to intended outcome. Suggestion was made possibly to let campuses handle. Dr. Hanes suggested considering what the Commission expects to learn and what they will do with the information before seeking to proceed.
  - b) Hendrick Conference—Leslie Laing reported that registration is open for the conference and encouraged members to forward the notice to list serves with interest in adult learners. The conference will be held May 16, 2011 at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel.
- 5) Anna Griswold adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Wills