



Commission for Adult Learners  
September 19, 2012  
208 The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel  
10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Minutes

Attended: Gary Lawler, (Chair); Jane Ashton, Martha Aynardi, Diane Chamberlin, Gloria Deschler, Sueann Doran, Arthur Durham, Anna Griswold, Rachel Heverly, Durell Johnston, Martha Jordan, Apryl Kadish, Leslie Laing, Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Paula Pierce, Karen Pollack, Tara Scales Williams, Pat Shope, Karen Sones, Ken Thigpen, Judy Wills (Notes), Ken Womack

Unable to attend: Francis Achampong, Paula Hogard, Bert McBrayer, Sherry Robinson, Maria Schmidt, Kevin Snider

- 1) Dr. Gary Lawler called the meeting to order and welcomed new and returning members.
  - a) Members in attendance introduced themselves and noted their term of service to date with the Commission.
  - b) Arthur Durham, our student member, shared the story of his educational path and goals.
  - c) Sueann Doran and Apryl Kadish shared how their respective offices at Penn State DuBois and Penn State Fayette are structured to serve adults.
    - i) Kadish reports directly to the Director of Student Enrollment Management and partners with Chancellor Achampong and two student veteran organizations.
    - ii) Doran saw need to combine services of the Office for Adult Students and Veteran Services and works closely with her campus admissions office to coordinate students' use of support services. Members approved minutes of June 13, 2012, as submitted, by voice vote.
  - d) Lawler proposed updating Article 1 of the Constitution to formalize sponsors' vision of having the Commission serve as a repository of information for adult-focused initiatives University-wide.
    - i) Goals would be to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication, and create a means of gaining any needed support from the Commission's sponsors.
    - ii) After discussion, the proposed addition under the purpose would read: The Commission will 'serve as a repository and facilitating body for all adult learner-focused initiatives University-wide.'
    - iii) Judy Wills will send ballot for member vote, and results will be shared at the October 17 meeting.
    - iv) Members suggested adding a dedicated tab to the Commission's web site to house list of initiatives as a starting point. Additional ideas include using Angel groups and creating a Share Point sight.
    - v) Paula Milone-Nuzzo suggested engaging and expanding network of Adult Enrollment coordinators as a communications channel. Apryl Kadish further suggested reminding campuses of the Adult Enrollment Coordinator network's purpose.

- 2) Commission goals for 2012-13, Gary Lawler and Martha Jordan.
  - a) Lawler reviewed goals to increase use of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).
    - i) The existing Credit by Exam (CrX) form is triplicate, a goal would be to streamline process and update the form.
      - (1) Lawler would like to update the language on the form to match the current University structure.
      - (2) The existing form is triplicate and the goal would be to create a single-page sheet.
      - (3) Verification of signatures would be a potential obstacle to manage.
      - (4) Any updates would require ACUE approval.
    - ii) After streamlining the process, next steps would be to increase awareness of PLA and engagement across all levels of the University.
    - iii) Second phase of the initiative would be to increase PLA through Credit by Portfolio Assessment.
  - b) Another goal for the 2012-13 Commission is to revamp the Incentive Grant program to bolster the number and quality of proposals which promote more systemic ways to help adult learners. Regional brainstorming meetings may be held.
  - c) Lawler would also like to find ways to increase recognition of best practices through the Commission's awards program.
  - d) Martha Jordan noted that the Commission will continue to use results of the Fall 2011 survey of faculty. Paula Milone-Nuzzo is hosting a workshop this fall in the School of Nursing. The workshop was created in partnership with the Schreyer Institution for Teaching Excellence.
  - e) Jordan noted the Commission's goal to host a successful Hendrick conference in Harrisburg, as a means of showcasing ways to share best practices of adult learner recruitment and retention. At the summer discussion with sponsors, Commission leaders discussed utilizing the proximity to state offices and invite keynote and other speakers for the conference. The conference date is Thursday, May 9, 2013, at Penn State Harrisburg. The final Commission meeting for 2012-13 will be a dinner meeting the evening before, also at Penn State Harrisburg, with sponsors invited to attend both events.
- 3) PLA Overview—Pat Shope (Handouts)
  - a) Shope reviewed progress of PLA initiative since she started in the newly created position in February 2012.
  - b) Shope's immediate goal is to increase faculty awareness that PLA procedures are already in place at the University.
  - c) She recently took OL 2000 Workshop and offered suggestions of how PLA could be incorporated into workshop material.
  - d) Shope is looking at current trends and initiatives in higher education such as MOOCs as they relate to PLA.
  - e) She has goal of visiting every campus, starting as a dialogue with four or five champions of the process.
  - f) University-wide in 2012, there were 496 successful PLA assessments from all means of evaluation: CRX, Credit by Portfolio Assessment, CLEP, Advanced Placement and DANTE.
  - g) One challenge is to clarify the definition of PLA as credits awarded for successful assessment of college level learning. A common misconception is that credit is for 'life experience.'
  - h) Shope is investigating process if a student at a campus should inquire about PLA for a program based at University Park.
  - i) She noted that best option for creating a list of programs would be listing what programs for

which the nature could never have the option of PLA rather than try to create a comprehensive list of those which could.

- j) One challenge is determining how PLA affects transfer credits as part of strategy.
  - k) Shope noted that PASHHE recently signed an agreement with Learning Counts, which assesses PLA and stressed the importance of developing a sound strategy going forward. Currently there are not Big 10 counterparts to use as benchmark. University of Wisconsin is slightly ahead of Penn State for increased PLA efforts.
  - l) Wills will send Shope's handouts electronically with draft minutes.
- 4) Lawler introduced committee chairs and reviewed assignments. Committees gathered for discussion during lunch and reported back on discussions.
- a) Hendrick Conference Planning—Judy Wills, Chair
    - i) The group discussed challenge of framing agenda for location outside University Park to factor in travel needs. The conference will be held Thursday, May 9, 2013, at Penn State Harrisburg.
    - ii) The committee will look at number of breakout sessions and general workshops to increase networking opportunities. Increased invited sessions with targeted topics may be used.
    - iii) A first-timers session may be added.
  - b) Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)/Faculty Engagement—Pat Shope, Chair
    - i) These two committees will merge in their work toward common goals
    - ii) One project will be creation of a web site for PLA with both student-facing and staff-facing components.
    - iii) Pilot adult learner workshop will be held in November.
  - c) Awards –Paula Pierce, Chair
    - i) The committee will focus on the Shirley Hendrick Award first due to its timeliness.
    - ii) Goal is to seek means to increase recognition for good work done on behalf of adult learners
    - iii) The committee will work to revamp the Incentive Grant program.
- 5) New Business--Lawler announced an upcoming Quality Advocates session on “Here Comes Generation A: What Faculty Say About Adult Learners” October 25. Martha Aynardi, Martha Jordan, Pat Shope, Karen Pollack and Jane Owens will participate in the panel discussion. Attendance by Adobe Connect is offered.
- 6) Lawler adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Wills