



# Penn State

## Commission for Adult Learners

### General Meeting Minutes

**Date:** September 18, 2024,

**Time:** 10:30AM – 11:30 AM

CAL Members: JoAnn Kelly, Biddy Brooks, Brian Cameron, Shannon Corkery, Trisha Everhart, Debra Flaig, Bill Fritz, Adrienne Goldsberry, Chuck Greggs, Julie Heaton, Erin Hendrick, Ruth Ann Herstek, John Holst, Melissa Kunes, Leslie Laing, Sheri Matter, Eugene McFeely, Esther Prins, Robin Wright, Michele Rice, Nadia Richardson, Jungwoo Ryoo, Renee Thornton-Roop, Michael Vicaro, Gina Wahlen, Tracie White, Michelle Wiley

Attendees: Jessica O'Brien, Bill Fritz, Tracie White, Michele Rice, Chuck Greggs, JoAnn Kelly, Adrienne Goldsberry, Renee Thornton-Roop, Erin Hendrick, Michelle Wiley, Biddy Brooks, Trisha Everhart, Debbie Flaig, Sheri Matter, John Holst, Julie Heaton, Gina Whalen, Esther Prins, Nadia Richardson

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

#### Goals for This Academic Year

- year, the focus was on evaluating transfer credits for prior learning and eliminating barriers in the process.
- Subcommittee Structure: Discuss how to best structure subcommittees to effectively communicate with sponsors, the executive committee, and broader leadership.
- Degree Flexibility and Transfer Credit: Highlighted the importance of transfer credits and increasing degree flexibility. One unit is creating a short resource to aid departments in handling transfer credits or prior learning assessments.
  - A new tool to assist with transfers will soon be available. Behrend offers flexible degree options, similar to the World Campus model, allowing students to create personalized majors.
  - Behrend is set to pilot inter-domain courses, with gen-ed scholars reviewing additional credits.
- In the meeting with President Bendapudi, challenges related to enrollment due to financial constraints were discussed. Emphasized the need for philanthropic support and scholarships, especially for adult learners who often face financial hurdles.
- Subcommittees Overview: Existing subcommittees include Recruitment, Strategic Communications, Removing Barriers, Hendrick Conference, and Adult Learner Engagement & Outreach.
  - Considered whether a subcommittee should focus specifically on supporting adult learners with academics, acknowledging that roles vary across campuses and lack cohesion.
  - Suggested categorizing subcommittees as either inward- or outward-facing to address potential overlaps.

- Resource Inventory: Many units are creating inventories of available resources. There is an abundance of resources, and the focus should be on supporting and promoting those already known.
- Committee Structure and Goals:
  - Consider the structure of committees and subcommittees and how to present our work to university leadership to gain support.
  - Suggest having committees ready to activate when needed while initially focusing on collective goals for the year. Avoid forming unnecessary committees.
- A degree audit tool is in progress for prospective students.
- Discussed aligning classroom and co-curricular activities. The course review may be brought to the faculty senate or the curricular affairs committee. Esther will forward a synopsis to the appropriate person.

### **Role of CAL Sponsors Discussion**

- Engagement with Sponsors: Clayton Steen, VP for enrollment management services at World Campus, suggested considering how we interact with sponsors and which individuals should attend meetings regularly.
  - Discussed whether to invite sponsors to all meetings or only to specific ones relevant to their interests. The consensus was to opt for the latter approach.
- Understanding Sponsor Roles: Newer members lack a clear understanding of sponsors' current roles. Sponsors are meant to represent university areas impacting adult learners and have historically contributed to the commission's operating budget. The budget model is currently changing.
- The website has an updated list of sponsors who assist with implementing ideas, providing guidance, and offering funding. Consider focusing sponsorship efforts on more student-facing roles.
- Noted that the Commission for Women has sponsors. This structure could be reviewed for ideas.

### **Next Steps**

- Establish goals and determine committee structures.
- Engage senior leadership about their initiatives for adult learners.
- Organize subcommittees around the established goals.

Agreement: All members agreed with these next steps.

### **Announcements**

- Bill is finalizing last year's CAL Annual Report, which will be ready for review before the next meeting.

### **Adjournment**