



Penn State

Commission for Adult Learners

General Meeting Minutes

Date: November 20, 2024

Time: 10:30 – 11:30AM

Attendees: JoAnn Kelly, Bidy Brooks, Brian Cameron, Shannon Corkery, Trisha Everhart, Debra Flaig, Bill Fritz, Adrienne Goldsberry, Chuck Greggs, Julie Heaton, Ruth Ann Herstek, John Holst, Melissa Kunes, Leslie Laing, Sheri Matter, Esther Prins, Robin Wright, Michele Rice, Nadia Richardson, Renee Thornton-Roop, Gina Wahlen, Michelle Wiley, Renata Engel, Jeff Adams

Welcome

October Minutes Approval

- Motion: John Holst
- Second: Bill Fritz
- Approved

Remarks from Sponsors

Renata Engel expressed gratitude for the Commission's work throughout the year.

- The focus is on the importance of strategic planning, student success, and fostering a sense of belonging, with a particular emphasis on adult learners and their unique needs.

Jeff Adams underscored the broad benefits of targeted support and the importance of including distance education in strategic planning.

- He also stressed the importance of Universal Design that while focused on adult learners, positively impacts all students.

Student Aid Overview – Melissa Kunes

Melissa provided updates that reflect significant changes and challenges in the FAFSA process, with both positive and negative impacts on students and institutions.

The discussion covered several key points about the changes in the FAFSA and the increase in Pell Grant recipients:

- **Increase in Pell Recipients:** Due to the new Student Aid Index (SAI), there has been a significant increase in Pell Grant recipients across different campuses.
- **Statistics:** The university has seen an increase of nearly 4,000 Pell Grant recipients, resulting in approximately \$11 million more in revenue for the fall semester alone.
- **Impact of Changes:** While some students have been negatively impacted by the new formula, the overall increase in Pell Grant recipients is notable.
- **Legislative Push:** There is a push from the financial aid community and some legislators to revert or change some of the new formula changes.
- **Future Statistics:** Melissa Kunes will present updated statistics for adult learners in March.
- **Program Impact:** The increase in Pell Grant recipients is expected to lead to more students being eligible for programs like the Smart Track to Success.

State Aid and Grant Funding:

- **Student Protection:** The Office of Student Aid is working with the Bursar's Office to ensure students are not negatively impacted by the delay in state grant funding. This includes not assessing late fees and allowing students to schedule spring 2025 classes despite any outstanding balances.
- **Estimated Grants:** Students have been given estimated state grants based on earlier information, but the accuracy of these estimates is uncertain.
- **Advance Refunds:** In cases where state grants would have provided refunds for living expenses, the university is offering advances from its funds, with the understanding that students will repay these advances once the actual grants are awarded.

Secretary Position – JoAnn Kelly

- The secretary position is vacant
- CAL is asking for a volunteer to fill the role

Announcements

- Julie Heaton mentions her participation in a financial literacy and student loan repayment community of practice organized by the Department of Education. She suggests combining insights from this and other community practices for a spring meeting.

- Bill Fritz reminds everyone about the Shirley Hendrick Award nominations, encouraging submissions by the end of the semester.

Adjournment