



Commission for Adult Learners
June 9, 2010
Senate Room, Conference Center Hotel
University Park
Minutes-Draft

Attended: Keith Hillkirk (Chair), Anne Williams, Karin Foley, Sharon Christ, Joann Olson, Amy Pancoast, Linda Higginson, Jacob Moore, Bob Farrell, Galen Grimes, Martha Jordan, Jane Owens, Theodora Jankowski, Laura Swinyer, Joel Rodney, Judy Wills (Recorder)

Unable to attend: Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Karen Schultz, Anna Griswold

Guests: Rachel Stover, John Romano, Damon Sims, Craig Weidemann

1. Keith Hillkirk called meeting to order and asked for announcements
 - a. Martha Jordan announced a new hire into a shared position between Office of Student Aid and Outreach has been created to focus on adult learners.
 - b. Congratulations to graduate student member Joann Olson who has completed her doctorate.
2. Members approved the minutes of April 14 by voice vote.
3. Rachel Stover, Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Institutional Data Research presented an overview of University-wide undergraduate adult learner data from Budget Academic Year 2008/09.
4. The report showed adult learner profile information, undergraduate trends, and undergraduate credit delivery methods. **Judy Wills will post the report on the 'Resources' page of the Commission's web site.**
 - a. Ms. Stover is the Outreach liaison to the Budget Office to interpret adult learner data.
 - b. Martha Jordan will have reports for campus Adult Enrollment Coordinators ready to send in about a week.
 - c. Members discussed the idea of pulling a yearly report by campus for Commission use and possibly creating a new committee to sort through the information.
5. Other items

- a. Conflict Final Exams and the Adult Learner--Leslie Laing shared details of a student scenario in which the student had a conflict with a final exam scheduled during the student's work hours. Current procedures do not clearly define the steps students should take to escalate unresolved conflicts for final exam schedules. Members discussed how similar matters are handled at campuses. **Action item: Next year's Faculty Engagement committee will explore whether to recommend an update to currently published procedural information.**
 - b. Course substitution recommendation report--Sharon Christ and Bob Farrell shared the report on the University-wide ePetition Project (attached.) Members discussed how to best present to sponsors for proceeding with next steps. Sharon Christ moved that the Commission support and endorse a request to automate the course substitution process. The motion was approved. Bob Farrell will present the motion to the Commission sponsors at lunch.
 - c. Transition to 2010-11. Keith Hillkirk welcomed Anne Williams as the 2010-11 Commission Chair. He remarked on the progress made this year and looks forward to continued progress in the upcoming year. Dr. Williams distributed a copy of the 'Plan to Implement the University Faculty Senate Advisory and Consultative Report, *Recommendations for Enhancing the Educational Experience of Adult Learners*, March 16, 2010' to be used in determining Commission focus.
6. Lunch with sponsors and Year-end Reports. Dr. Craig Weidemann, Dr. John Romano, and Mr. Damon Sims joined members for lunch. Committee chairs gave year-end reports (attached)
- a. Faculty Engagement, Theodora Jankowski and Bob Farrell
 - b. Hendrick conference planning, Sharon Christ and Leslie Laing
 - c. PLA, Jane Owens
 - d. Year in retrospect, Keith Hillkirk
 - e. Course Substitution ePetition motion, Bob Farrell

Sponsor response

- a. Craig Weidemann did not recall receiving information on the Faculty Survey. **Martha Jordan will resend message.** Dr. Weidemann also extended thanks to Dr. Hillkirk for his work as chair and Dr. Romano for his sponsorship of the Commission and suggested inviting Associate Deans to join the Commission for its future work to help implement the Faculty Senate recommendations.
 - b. John Romano suggested benchmarking other institutions to help develop next steps for the Course Substitution ePetition recommendation. He also noted emphasis should be made that automating is for ‘credit for prior learning’ and not ‘credit for experience.’
 - c. Damon Sims noted that the Commission’s function is to serve as advocates for adult learners and that sponsors role is ‘Super Advocate.’ Dr. Weidemann added that discussions are underway to add a possible fifth sponsor.
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7. Keith Hillkirk thanked outgoing members Sharon Christ, Bob Farrell, Karin Foley, Galen Grimes, Theodora Jankowski, Joel Rodney, Karen Schultz and student members Joann Olson, Jacob Moore, and Laura Swinyer for their service and work on the Commission. The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Wills

Commission for Adult Learners
University wide ePetition Project
May, 2010

This report is a formal request for the sponsors of the Commission for Adult Learners - Dr. Rob Pangborn, Dr. John Romano, Mr. Damon Sims, and Dr. Craig Weideman - to move the university-wide ePetition project forward by a) suggesting a chair of a development group that would work with Ron Rash, Senior Director, AIS in b) reviewing the project's potential and preparing an ePetition design.

Background

The topic of a university wide e-petition system was first presented to the Commission for Adult Learners in 2007-08 as evidenced in the 2007-08 Commission for Adult Learner Annual Report (page 4):

Example: the Award of Transfer Credits

In the recent past a number of issues "perceived" as having negative effects on adult learners have been brought to the attention of the Commission. However, to determine what is "myth," and what is "fact," it was necessary to invite Penn State experts on key topics to provide a balanced and objective explanation of these issues.

One example investigated in depth this year was the negative perception of the process by which Penn State University awards credit for prior learning, particularly transfer credits. To illustrate, it had been reported to CAL on numerous occasions that the transfer credit process employed by Penn State is more cumbersome, unclear, and time consuming than that of our competitor institutions. Consequently, it was argued, Penn State lost potential adult learners to competitors.

After presentations by Penn State experts who manage the transfer credit process, the Commission members realized that the Penn State review of credits earned elsewhere is relatively efficient and relatively flexible in the application of transfer credits toward the completion of a degree. However, improvements are possible, including moving the review process from a paper to an online process so the review can be completed more quickly, and providing clear explanations about the process on the *It Shows* Web site. The Commission therefore recommended to the University Registrar the creation of a university-wide online E-Petition Course Substitution System modeled on the system developed in the College of Health and Human Development. Also, the Commission will continue to seek ways to more effectively help adult students understand the process for awarding credit and guide them through the process. The exploration of related issues will continue in 2008-09, and will guide the addition of new information on the *It Shows* Web site and training for advisors and Adult Enrollment Coordinators.

Following an informational session on course substitution, a formal recommendation to develop a university-wide system was sent by Sandra Gleason, 2007-08 CAL Chair, to Karen Schultz, University Registrar, in April 2008 (See Appendix A). In fall, 2008, the recommendation was shared with Ron Rash, Senior Director, Administrative Information Services, who advised that the most direct way to have action started is to have the CAL sponsors send a request to him asking that ITS/AIS participate in a) reviewing the request, b) preparing an initial design, c) developing an estimate of the resources required to build such a service, and d) indicating what other offices should be involved. The sponsors could also suggest a chair of the initial effort. The chair is generally not an IT

person since the development of customer requirements, process, and logic is best served by a program area specialist.

In February, 2009, after a discussion with Rob Pangborn, Ron convened a committee to discuss the scope and goals of the project, identify the primary stake holders, suggest which department or University academic unit would be the logical “owner” of such a system, and which University unit(s) and executive(s) would be responsible for providing resources that might be necessary to develop and maintain such a system. The committee met in April and July of 2009 and authored a “Course Substitution Process-Evaluation” document (See Appendix B) detailing what is currently available, what would be involved in developing a new system, and a recommendation to build upon the existing ePetition system and make it available university-wide.

Appendix A
Recommendation for University-wide Adoption of ePetition for Course Substitution
System

Commission for **Adult Learners**

April 3, 2008

TO: Karen Schultz, University Registrar
FROM: Sandra E. Gleason, 2007-08 Chair, Commission for Adult Learners
SUBJECT: Recommendation for University-wide adoption of ePetition for Course Substitution
System

Recommendation

The members of the Commission for Adult Learners recommend unanimously the University-wide adoption of an online ePetition for Course Substitution System.

Rationale

All academic units have the authority to substitute courses in a student record based on University Senate policy #82-60 "Exception to Degree Requirements" (http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/separate_policy/82-60.htm). With the exception of the College of Health and Human Development (CHHD) these course substitutions currently are completed using paper forms, which is a very time-consuming process. In 2005 the College of Health and Human Development records manager designed an electronic system for all CHHD academic advisers at any campus location to submit course substitutions via a secure Web site. According to statistics maintained by the CHHD records manager, the time to process course substitutions was reduced from days when paper forms were sent through campus mail to minutes via the electronic pathway approval process.

At this time the College of Health and Human Development is the only Penn State college using an online ePetition for Course Substitution System. However, other colleges, including the College of IST, are exploring the creation and implementation of their own programs for course substitutions. Consequently, the Commission for Adult Learners concluded that it is time to institute the ePetition System for University-wide adoption for standardization and consistency in the process.

The rapid processing of course substitutions is particularly important as Penn State strives to increase the enrollment of undergraduate adult learners in a highly competitive environment. Our competitor institutions across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania often complete the course substitution process more rapidly than can be done through the sometimes cumbersome and not-so-user-friendly Penn State system. The perception that other institutions of higher learning are more "adult friendly" because of their more rapid review process has resulted in some adults enrolling elsewhere.

The recommended online system will expedite the petitioning process for all undergraduate students, including adult learners, by quickly substituting coursework to report on a student's degree audit and permit calculation to graduation in an efficient and effective manner. Because the ePetition for Course Substitution System and the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) are used in conjunction to update degree audits, it is recommended that the Office of the University Registrar support and monitor the development of this new University-wide, course-substitution system.

Appendix B
Course Substitution Process – Evaluation

Overview

Dawn Boyer was asked by the Commission for Adult Learners to gather a small group together to explore if there is interest in adopting a University wide system for Course Substitutions. This is **not** the Faculty Senate Petition process.

A meeting was held on July 23, 2009 with the following people:

Mary Ellen Bayuk – Behrend

Dawn Boyer – ITS

Richard Brungard – World Campus

Karen Craig - Health and Human Development

Gail Gilchrest - Commonwealth Campuses

Linda Higginson – Division Undergraduate Studies

Vanessa Wade – Health and Human Development

Rachel Zimmerman – World Campus

Current Systems

- **e-Petition** - The College of Health and Human Development (HHD) has developed a web-based system called e-Petition that is used to process course substitutions electronically using pre-set approval paths. Currently the e-Petition process is used exclusively in HHD although College of Information Sciences and Technology (IST) is working on their own version of the e-Petition system.
- **Brandywine Process** – They have a process that is a very simplified work flow. Students can't begin the process. Program coordinators must initiate the process. The approval process is not automated. Once the course substitution has been approved by the faculty, a Web form is filled out and submitted. The Web form generates an email to the college representative. Then the course substitution is manually entered into ISIS.

Requirements for a New System

The group identified several requirements for a new system although this isn't a complete listing of all of the requirements. The requirements are not listed in any particular order

- Student should be able to initiate a course substitution request although they should be consulting with their adviser before they do this
- Adviser can initiate a course substitution request on behalf of the student
- Use standard access account and password for system access (Web Access) along with second factor authentication (i.e. SecureID token)
- Approval paths should be able to be customized by the college, campus
- Tracking of the course substitution requests
- Pre-populate data fields from ISIS i.e. major, campus
- Automatically update ISIS when the course substitution request is approved. This results in an exception being made to the student record in the degree audit system.
- Web Based System
- Notify student when the course substitution request is approved.
- Ability to submit supporting documentation along with the request i.e. attach a word document
- Allow different levels of access rights. Some personnel would be able to view everything within a college or campus while others would have restrictions on what they could view and/or approve.
- Allow multiple course substitutions requests on a form
- Allow comments to be entered at any stage of the process

- Allow certain course substitutions requests to be approved immediately i.e. General Education credits while others like major requirements would need to go to another approval level i.e., adviser or faculty. This should be controlled by the college, campus
- Restricted viewing of data on forms so that personnel can view only the data/forms they have been approved to see
- Audit tracking – should include who viewed, accessed, changed and approved forms
- Flexibility to allow each college, campus to customize the approval paths and access – would need to have a system administrator in each area

Education and Communication

There is concern that students don't understand General Education credits and how they map to the academic requirements of their specific major so education and communication about this process to the students is essential. There is also concern that the Degree Audits aren't user friendly. Improving the look of the Degree Audit could help students understand how their choice of courses fulfills their major requirements and allow for better academic planning.

Recommendation

The conclusion of the group was that Penn State should build upon the existing e-Petition system to make it available University wide. e-Petition has some features and functionality that A University-wide course substitution system would help to standardize and expedite the process. It would also provide a consistent interface for students, adviser and faculty. Allowing ISIS to be updated real-time once the course substitution request is approved will eliminate staff having to do manual data entry.

Having a University wide system will also allow reports and statistics to be generated to ask such questions as

- How many course substitutions are done University wide, by campus and by college?
- How many course substitutions are done for General Education credits?
- Do certain courses have more course substitutions then others?

Since the data about all course substitutions will be kept in one place, the reporting capabilities and data analysis is really endless. A copy of the data should be housed in the Universities Data Warehouse so that it will be available for individual units to do their own specialized reporting.

In order to move forward with this initiative, Senior Executive support and sponsorship is critical. College and Campuses like to have the flexibility to do a process their own way but in order for this new system to be successful, there would need to be a strong commitment throughout the University to embrace and support a University-wide solution. Having individual units build their own systems is not an effective or efficient use of our resources. A University-wide system also fits nicely into helping to achieve Goal 6 of the Penn State's Strategic Plan for 2009-10 through 2013-14 which is to "Use Technology to Expand Access and Opportunities". This goal has several strategies but strategy 3 - Re-Balance Centralized/Dispersed Facilities/Services for Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness fits nicely with this recommendation.

Resources, such as subject matter experts as well as IT personnel, College Records Office personnel, and college-level program coordinators throughout the University will need to participate in further discussions about scope and detailed requirements for such a system. A system steward will need to be defined to provide overall guidance about this new system and also to make critical decisions about what features and functionality are needed. This system could be built in phases with the first release providing the most critical functionality. Subsequent releases could be phased in to provide the “should have” or “nice to have” features.

3-Year Report AY 2007-2010

CAL Faculty Engagement Committee

This committee began in Fall 2007, when the charge, which follows, was delivered to the co-chairs of the committee.

Faculty Engagement to Recruit and Retain Adult Learners (a new committee formed in Fall 2007)

- Define the key dimensions of faculty engagement with adult learners
- Develop the liaison relationship with the University Faculty Senate
- Determine which of these dimensions should be targeted by the Commission on Adult Learners
- Investigate contributions that can be made by other administrative units (e.g., the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence which can provide programs on best practices teaching adult learners, etc.)
- Identify best practices to encourage and support faculty engagement and appropriate methods for disseminating this information

Membership

Committee membership over the past three years has included faculty, administrators, and adult students whose work location has been at University Park as well as at the campuses. (Please see alphabetical list of committee members below.)

Dr. Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Chancellor, Penn State Altoona

Dr. Sharon E. Christ, Director, Student and Enrollment Services, York

Dr. Roger Egolf, University Faculty Senate, Associate Professor of Chemistry,
Penn State Lehigh Valley

*Dr. Robert Farrell Associate Professor of Biology, York

Ms. Karen Foley, Faculty Senate Liaison, Associate Dean, Eberly College of Science;
Administrative Fellow in Student Affairs 2009-10

Dr. Sandra Gleason, Associate dean for Faculty and Research, University College
Galen Grimes, Associate Professor of IST, Greater Allegheny

* Dr. Theodora A. Jankowski, Director, Academic Affairs, Wilkes-Barre

Dr. Michael Mahalik, Director, Academic Affairs, Worthington-Scranton

Mr. Jacob Moore, Undergraduate Student, Penn State York

Mr. Kevin R. Musick, Associate Director of Development, Eberly College of Science

Dr. Joel Rodney, Chancellor, York

Ms. Laura Swinyer, Undergrad student, University Park

Mr. Theodore R. Timmerman, Counselor, Veteran's Outreach, University Park

Dr. Ann Williams, Chancellor, Lehigh Valley

* Co-Chairs

General Observations

This committee was formed to try to understand the relationship(s) between faculty and adult learners at University Park as well as at the campuses. While there was no hard data, there was a sense that “faculty” did not enjoy teaching adult learners, for whatever reason(s). The committee was charged with trying to determine whether these perceptions were true. What to do about these perceptions if they proved true was not overtly the charge of this committee. However, there was perhaps a tacit belief that the knowledge of whether or not the “faculty” did have problems with adult learners might suggest a means for dealing with the issue.

The committee decided early that we could not complete all the charges in one academic year. The following were decided upon as immediate questions to be addressed:

- Questioning faculty across the university as to their opinions regarding adult learners generally and as members of their class(es). This would be accomplished through the administration of an on-line questionnaire.
- Preparation of an Appendix about Adult Learners explaining the characteristics and specific needs of adult learners to be added to the on-line Handbooks for both full-time and adjunct faculty.
- Preparation of an Appendix for Adult Learners outlining the variety of services available to them for inclusion in the on-line Student Handbook.

It soon became apparent that we could not complete all of these tasks in one year. We decided to proceed as expeditiously as we could and see what we could accomplish during the three years we would serve as Co-Chairs of the committee.

At an early meeting the committee brainstormed about the kinds of information it might be helpful to have from faculty as well as the kinds of information faculty might like to have about adult students. We decided on a two-pronged plan for these related blocks of information: a questionnaire and a two handbook appendices.

Questionnaire

The committee decided that we could not use our personal experiences with adult students to generalize about faculty members overall. We considered the kinds of situations in which faculty interacted with adult students as well as what the faculty might need to know if they had never worked with adult students. We then put these very general questions into a pilot on-line questionnaire that was tested at four campuses. Since faculty were requested to answer in sentences or paragraphs, we were delighted with the detailed information presented to us. We discovered that, on the whole, faculty at the four University College campuses we targeted very much enjoyed teaching adult learners and had creative and solid suggestions on how to improve things for these students.

Realizing, however, that we could not expect the entire Penn State faculty to answer in such detail, we revised the questionnaire to make it more detailed as well as easier to answer. This was done by asking primarily “yes/no” questions and then allowing choices in sub-questions under each major response. The co-chairs have been approved by Human Subjects to administer this questionnaire on-line. Although it was initially scheduled to be administered in the Fall 2008 term, various contingencies conspired to

prevent its administration. It is scheduled to be administered by Digital Measures in Fall 2010.

*Please see **Appendix 1** for the questionnaire*

Handbook Appendix for Faculty

The committee determined that the faculty, as a whole, might wish to be furnished with information on *all* areas pertaining to adult learning.

Once we decided upon the areas to cover, committee members were asked to choose one or more areas on which to write an appendix section. Once the assignments were turned in and collated into a tentative form, the draft was distributed to the committee for suggestions, critiques, and any other input. Following the “input” period, the co-chairs edited the appendix draft for repetition, prolixity, style, format, organization, etc. and then sent a final draft copy out to all. The copy has been ready for insertion into the online Faculty Handbook since Summer 2008.

*Please see **Appendix 2** for the Faculty Handbook Appendix*

Handbook Appendix for Students

The second year saw the beginning of the production of the adult on-line Student Handbook Appendix for adult students. Development proceeded in the same manner as detailed above for the Faculty Handbook Appendix. After final approval by the committee, this appendix was also delivered to the Commission chair. The copy has been ready for insertion into the online Student Handbook since Fall 2009.

*Please see **Appendix 3** for the Faculty Handbook Appendix*

Findings so Far

1. The Faculty Engagement Committee sponsored a panel discussion at the 2009 Hendricks Conference. Panelists were PSU faculty members who themselves had been adult learners. We covered a number of disciplines and several campuses in addition to University Park. The overall response of the panelists was that there is positive, full engagement between faculty at the campuses and adult learners. Campuses often have dedicated advisors and specific lounges for adult learners. Such students are regular and welcome visitors to the various Learning Centers. Since the campuses are generally small enough to allow close interaction between adult learners and faculty--both in classes or within an advisory relationship—students are more apt to go to faculty for help with coursework, as well as to form meaningful mentoring relationships. No information surfaced at this panel that indicated any prevalent, negative reaction to adult learners at the campuses or among campus faculty.

2. A major problem at a number of campuses is recruiting adult students. This occurs because of the “transfer issue.” Many adult student come to Penn State with credits they have accumulated over a lifetime from various colleges and universities. Often these are perfectly “respectable” credits that will be accepted as transfer credits. Unfortunately, students wishing to transfer in cannot know which credits will be accepted and which not until some time—often terms or years—after they are admitted. Add to this the fact that

many adult students are pressured by employers to get that degree “*now*” and you have a problematical situation. Students may wish to attend Penn State, but if they are not told up-front, before they apply, what credits will transfer where and how long *exactly* it will take them to get their degree, the conditions of their employment might make attending a college that gives them this information immediately more attractive. For many adults, this is the major impediment to becoming a Penn State student.

3. Another aspect of the “transfer” problem has to do with veterans, a cohort that will surely grow in the next few years given the post-9/11 GI Bill. Some of these issues surfaced during the adult student panel—which included two veterans—at this year’s (2010) Hendricks Conference. The students were concerned that courses they took in the military were not counted for credit when they transferred to Penn State. This may have to do with the fact that the students themselves seemed unaware of either DANTES or CLEP exams. More publicity by the Veteran’s Affairs office should help.

The students also pointed out that they and colleagues of theirs had received training in highly-technical, engineering-related areas in the military. When they arrived at Penn State, they suddenly found they had to take lots of “theory” courses to supplement their technical knowledge in order to get their, primarily Engineering, degrees. They suggested the creation of condensed theory courses as a way to speed them on their academic way. It may be, though, that the veterans are unaware of the existence of Technology degrees at Penn State. Some basic education explaining the differences between types of degrees—Electrical Engineering vs. Electrical Engineering Technology, for example—at the time of first registration might be helpful. Students who wish a “Hand’s On” degree could then choose a less theoretical Technology degree.

4. Speaking with various student members of the committee over the past three years has suggested that, while adult students at the campuses are rather satisfied with the way they are treated, students at University Park are less so. Some “complaints” we have heard include: courses offered at “bad” times; adjuncts not being easily available due to lack of offices or just because they are only on campus one night; RI students monopolizing faculty members in evening courses; the presence of RIs in CE sections, which results in the class overall becoming “too hard,” etc. These perceptions—and we do not know at this point how accurate they are—are held more often by University Park students than by campus students. Perhaps such perceptions have to do with the fact that the ratio of adult to RI students is so much smaller at University Park than at the campuses.

Next Year

Since the co-chairs of the committee and the charter members are leaving the committee as of 30 June 2010, we expect that the new committee will review the overall charge and discuss how they wish to proceed. Robert Farrell will remain connected to the committee at least until the questionnaire is administered. He is planning to review the outcome of the questionnaire and report formally on what is revealed.

Hendrick Best Practices for Adult Learners 2009-10 Conference Planning Committee

Commission update for June 9, 2010

The Hendrick Conference was held May 10, 2010 and the planning committee held their wrap up meeting on June 2.

The theme for the conference was “**Innovation 2010: Opportunities for the New Decade.**” This is the second year that we used the condensed conference schedule beginning at 8:30 AM with an adult learner panel and concluding at 3:00 PM with the keynote and awards luncheon. It continues to be successful as evidenced by the 225 registrants, representation from 15 campuses and one rogue attendee, Director of Advising, Student Retention from St. Ambrose University in IOWA.

The Commission sponsors gathered for a pre-conference breakfast with Keith Hillkirk and the speakers of note which included: Eric Hoover, Senior Writer for the Chronicle of Higher Education who moderated the opening panel; Judy Wertheim from The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and keynote speaker Brenda Harms from Stamats who presented national statistics.

We offered 18 breakout sessions and for the first time hosted a Commonwealth Chancellor’s Panel and an Academic Dean Session both of which were well received and had standing room only. Hoover blogged about the session online via the Chronicle of Higher Ed in an article entitled *Many facets of Adult Students*.

<https://chronicle.com/blogPost/The-Many-Facets-of-Adult/23879/>

The conference planning committee implemented a few green initiatives by posting some conference materials online and selecting a recyclable spiral-bound notebook was this year’s give-away. Small welcome packs were given to our three guest speakers comprised of donated items from Outreach, Student Affairs and World Campus. The University Bookstore also supplied four Barnes & Nobles gift cards for our four adult student panelists.

Six campuses were awarded Travel Grants to offset transportation costs: York, Harrisburg, Lancaster Center, Schuylkill, Abington and Hazelton.

Four recipients of the Commission’s 2009 Incentive Grants participated in a breakout session. Eight of Shirley Hendrick’s family members attended the luncheon and keynote address. Our annual award for Superior Service to Adult Learners was presented to April Kadyish from Penn State Fayette and Penn State Altoona was the recipient of this year’s Outstanding Adult Learner Recruitment and Retention Award. All other nominees were sent a certificate via interoffice mail.

We are awaiting additional conference photos from Chuck Fong Studios and they will be posted on the Hendrick web pages when available.

Please keep in mind our next conference date will be **Monday, May 16, 2011**.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie A. Laing, Chair

Commission for Adult Learners
Prior Learning Committee
2009-2010 Year End Overview

CHARGE: Prior Learning Assessment Committee

A new committee designed to identify institutional issues of PLA, including common definitions, usage, benefits, and efficiencies; and student, faculty, and staff training. Recommendations may be made regarding the format and delivery of PLA awareness information.

- In order to increase internal PLA awareness, request time at professional development conferences of important internal constituents:

Enrollment Management –confirmed for Fall 2010

Academic Advising – confirmed for Fall 2010

Chancellors – pending

ACUE – pending

Others – pending

Note: PSU's participation in CAEL PLA study and report is well timed for continuing internal awareness campaign

- Worked extensively on PLA web page content, location and links; more to be done 2010-2011
- At the request of the V.P. Outreach, and in support of recent faculty senate adult learner report recommendations, our committee will specifically address recommendation 3: Conduct a system-wide audit of the academic colleges and departments to identify those courses eligible for credit by examination (Senate Policy 42-50) and Credit by Portfolio (Senate Policy 42-97) and provide the information to all units that advise/counsel adult learners
- Will also conduct a 2011 pilot of PLA advising process at Abington and University Park

Commission for Adult Learners
2009-10 Annual Report

Introduction: As stated in its Bylaws, “the purpose of the Commission for Adult Learners (CAL) is to provide advice and consultation to the University on issues affecting adult learners.” Specifically, the CAL is charged to

- *Help create a supportive climate for adult learners at Penn State;
- *Monitor recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of adult learners;
- *Recommend changes in areas that negatively impact adult learners;
- *Improve coordination and exchange of information regarding programs and services for adult learners;
- *Advocate for adult learners’ concerns.

Monthly Meetings: To work toward the above purpose and goals during the past year, Commission members hosted monthly meetings framed around the following topics:

October 14: *Developing Support for Adult Learners:* Mary Ann Amato and Spencer Lewis.

November 11:*Adult Learner Student Panel :* Sharon Nelson, UP; Nicole Stocks, World Campus; Justene Cieslak, Abington; Angela Wenttang, York.

December 9: *Campus Veterans’ Representatives Panel:* Tammie Durham, Schuylkill; Yolanda Beattie, York; Ted Timmerman, UP; Carolyn Julian, Harrisburg; and John Mills, World Campus.

February 10: *College Prep for Adults Pilot Program:* Shannon Wabby, Schuylkill; Ina Lubin, Northeast Region, Continuing Education.

March 17: *Adult Strategic Implementation Team Final Report:* Martha Jordan.

April 14: *Adult Enrollment Coordinator (AEC) Panel:* Biddy Brooks, Erie; Sharon Christ, York; Ellen Gregorio, Wilkes Barre; Steve Mostert, Abington; Shannon Wabby, Schuylkill.

Standing Committees: The three standing committees for the past year included the Faculty Engagement Committee, the Hendrick Best Practices for Adult Learners Conference Planning Committee, and the Prior Learning Assessment Committee. Following are brief overviews of Committee accomplishments for 2009-10.

Faculty Engagement Committee: Committee Co-chairs Theodora Jankowski and Robert Farrell. Members: Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Karin Foley, Galen Grimes, Jacob Moore, Joel Rodney, and Laura Swinyer.

As its full name implies, the Faculty Engagement to Recruit and Retain Adult Learners Committee, since its initial charge and creation in 2007, has focused on encouraging and supporting faculty awareness, interest, and engagement with adult learner needs. The Committee has developed an Adult Learner Questionnaire for Penn State Faculty which will be administered across the University early in Fall 2010. The purpose of the questionnaire is “to collect information about faculty perspectives on undergraduate adult learners and the needs of this student group.”

The Committee has also prepared a Handbook Appendix for Faculty which addresses adult learner needs and issues. The Appendix is awaiting final approval for insertion into the online Faculty Handbook. A Handbook Appendix for Students has also been developed and is ready as well for insertion into the online Student Handbook.

Hendrick Best Practices Conference Planning Committee: Committee Co-Chairs Leslie Laing and Sharon Christ. Members: Spencer Lewis, Martha Jordan, and Joann Olson.

The annual Hendrick Conference was held on May 10 at the Penn State with the theme, “Innovation 2010: Opportunities for the New Decade.” Keynote speaker, Brenda Harms, from Stamats, Judy Wertheim from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and Eric Hoover from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* joined 225 registrants from 15 Penn State campuses for a day of inquiring, sharing, and learning about best practices for adult learners through 18 breakout sessions.

Additional conference highlights included Eric Hoover’s post-conference blog on the “Many Facets of Adult Students,” the presentation of the annual award for Superior Service to Adult Learners to April Kadyish, Penn State Fayette, and the Outstanding Adult Learner Recruitment and Retention Award to Penn State Altoona. We were also honored to have eight members of Shirley Hendrick’s family attend the luncheon and keynote address.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Committee: Committee Chair Jane Owens. Members: Anna Griswold, Linda Higginson, Spencer Lewis, Michael Mahalik, Amy Pancoast, and Karen Schultz.

Newly formed in 2009, the PLA Committee is charged to monitor and assess the status of prior learning review at Penn State, identify issues related to the assessment of prior learning, and make recommendations for improvement. The committee has recommended information sessions on PLA for the following internal Penn State audiences: Enrollment Management, Fall 2010; Academic Advising, Fall 2010; Chancellors and ACUE dates are pending. The committee also worked extensively on PLA web page content with more improvements planned for 2010-11.

During the upcoming year, the committee will also conduct an audit of the academic units to identify courses eligible for credit by examination (Senate Policy 42-50) and credit by portfolio (Senate Policy 42-97). The outcomes of this audit will then be shared with advising units across the university that advise and work with adult learners. The committee will also oversee a 2011 pilot of PLA advising processes at Penn State Abington and UP.

Additional Commission Highlights: Commission members Martha Jordan, Leslie Laing, Linda Higginson, Laura Swinyer, and Keith Hillkirk represented the CAL at the annual Trustee Breakfast on January 23. We also welcomed the Faculty Senate Report on Enhancing the Educational Experience of Adult Learners. The Commission will be working during the coming year to support and further these recommendations, an example being the PLA Committee's ongoing work on the Senate Report Recommendation 3: Conduct a system-wide audit of the academic colleges and departments.

Appreciation: The work of the Commission would be impossible without the financial support of our four sponsors: Rob Pangborn, Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education; John Romano, Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses; Damon Sims, Vice President for Student Affairs; Craig Weidemann, Vice President for Outreach. Our sponsors ensure the quality of support that the Commission can bring to adult learner advocacy at Penn State through the annual Hendrick Conference, the Inventive Grants and Annual Awards, and other Commission initiatives.

Beyond our sponsors, the work of the committee chairs and members has helped to make 2009-10 a successful year for the CAL. In addition, Martha Jordan who serves as Outreach Liaison to the Commission and Judy Wills who provides staff support continue to do a truly exceptional job of keeping us all on track. Thanks to each of them and to each of the members of the Commission for their dedication to Penn State and their many contributions.

Keith Hillkirk, Chair, CAL, 2009-10