



Commission for Adult Learners
December 8, 2010
324 Outreach Building, University Park
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Minutes

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

Guests: Dr. Craig Weidemann, Trish Evanitsky-Diagnostics Plus, Barbara Sherry, Commission Back-up Administrative Support Assistant

Unable to attend: Paul deGategno, Beth Ann Delaney

- 1) Ann Williams called the meeting to order.
- 2) Members approved minutes from November 10, 2010 by voice vote.
- 3) Pilot Faculty Survey results—Trish Evanitsky, Diagnostics Plus, presented results from the survey of faculty at Altoona, Lehigh Valley, and Schuylkill campuses. Results and copy of the survey were distributed.
 - a) Trish Evanitsky will provide breakdown for each/all themed responses to open-ended questions.
 - b) Language from existing policy will be added to PLA questions as a step to educating faculty.
 - c) Suggestion was made to include question about willingness to attend workshops regarding adult learners and, if so, in what areas.
 - d) Results can be shared with campus leadership as a basis to handle concerns specific to their campus.
 - e) Timeline for taking the survey University-wide is under discussion pending funding.
 - f) Commission members will send suggested revisions and additions to Martha Jordan by January 30, 2011. Jordan will meet with Trish Evanitsky to review. The three pilot campuses will be surveyed again

when the survey goes University wide. Dr. Weidemann asked if report of final results could be sent to Faculty Senate Committee on Outreach.

4) Ann Williams distributed summary of committee reports of work to date on Faculty Senate Recommendations and committee chairs presented to Dr. Weidemann as a summary first draft.

a) PLA, Recommendation #3, Jane Owens

- Ideas were gleaned from CAEL sessions and discussions with staff from University of Wisconsin at the CAEL conference. The PLA Task force will meet Friday.
- Biggest concern is clarifying and educating faculty that policy exists.
- Suggested key person to manage PLA effort University-wide, including the duty of finding opportunities to engage faculty in the job description to the point person. Martha Jordan replied that budget approval has been received for a PLA Coordinator position in her Adult Learner Advocacy unit.
- Owens noted that the Lumina Foundation advocates PLA and members discussed adding tactical national examples to the recommendation.

b) Faculty Engagement, Recommendation #4, Keith Hillkirk and Lori Bechtel-Wherry

- Delineated from PLA committee's work to focus on Credit by Exam.
- Current use of Credit by Exam is situational and there is a need to explore processes to identify best practices. Example of process at Berks was shared.
- The group discussed how to get funds to establish a pilot program to gain visibility, possibly adding the task of identifying funding sources to the PLA Coordinator job description.
- Need to shift culture and incentivize faculty, and find ways to facilitate adult learner return.
- Need to communicate what Credit by Exam IS as well as what it IS NOT as well as explore how to gain visibility.
- Of 182 students utilizing Credit by Exam (CrX), 142 were clustered at 4 campuses (Berks, University Park, York and World Campus.) Need to look at best practices.

- c) Financial Aid Task Force, Recommendation #7, Anna Griswold
- The committee reviewed scholarships available to adult students.
 - Programs are confusing for students.
 - Adults want a designated person and there is a need to coach them on available self-serve resources.
 - Concern was expressed about online commercial sites being outside of Penn State. Competitors' advertisements on these commercial sites may encourage students to attend other universities.
 - Adult students need to be prepped to manage loan debt.
 - Would like to do some benchmarking via web site exploration and discussion.
 - There is a need to find out what primary issues are creating adverse outcomes.
 - Suggestion was made to explore how to get adult learners on the radar for scholarship sources.
 - Question was posed about whether the number of employers offering reimbursement to employees for courses has been reduced. Griswold has not yet had opportunity to determine. She will send snapshot of adult learners' aid profile.

Dr. Weidemann asked the committees to revise the formatting of the recommendations to break out into concrete actions, partnering with Faculty Senate acting as a resource for support and advocacy of the Commission's recommendations. He recommended that the scope be narrowed and strengthened to be more direct and actionable. He will ask for the discussion of Recommendations be moved to a later Faculty Senate meeting to allow committees time to make the revisions.

- 5) Additional committee report-Hendrick Conference Planning—Leslie Laing reported that conference planning is in a holding pattern around registration fee. The committee will meet again on December 16.
- 6) Updates—Martha Jordan will share summary of October regional AEC meetings at the February meetings.
- 7) Ann Williams adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m