



September 16, 2015

204 The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel

10:30 a.m.

Minutes-Draft

Attended: Francis Achampong, Chair; Christian Brady, Jamie Campbell, Jo Anne Carrick, Renata Engel, Sandy Feather, Pete Forster, Jared Hammond, Martha Jordan, Leslie Laing, Sonya Leitzell, Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Albert Lozano, Brooke Repine, Michele Rice, Daad Rizk, Beth Seymour, Terry Speicher, Ken Thigpen, Renee Thornton-Roop, and Judy Wills, Recorder.

Sponsors attending: Madlyn Hanes, Craig Weidemann, Marcus Whitehurst

Guest: Anna Griswold

Unable to attend: Kelly Austin

1. Welcome and call to order, Dr. Francis Achampong, Chair
 - a. Achampong called the meeting to order and invited attendees to introduce themselves and share brief background of their interest in adult learner advocacy
 - b. Announcements and updates
 - i. University-wide updates on Adult Learner initiatives

Martha Jordan shared a draft of the September 2015 Adult Learner Fact Sheet. This successful initiative was started in 2014-15 as means of informing the Penn State community about our adult learner population and the work of the Commission. The focus of the current edition is on academic achievement information and the Commission's objectives for the coming year. All Fact Sheets produced to date are housed on the Commission's web as downloadable PDFs.

Sandy Feather shared a student story of a World Campus student who resides in the Worthington-Scranton area. The student received a Work Study opportunity in their admissions office and became a Lion Ambassador. He has since recruited 3-4 more adult learners to support admissions efforts and leads the adult student club on campus.

Jo Anne Carrick, relayed discussion with a donor who provided funding to support students' successful start through Penn State Shenango's 'Fall start, Fresh start' program. The program will use ALEKS as resource tool for math and will later bring in a writing component. Carrick also noted that

Shenango campus renamed its learning center SHARC (Shenango Academic Resource Center). The grand opening will be during their library open house at the end of September.

Achampong noted efforts at Penn State Mont Alto to partner with the county veterans office. Mont Alto Reads is using the book Redeployment for discussion. The first two discussions will be set in the veterans' center. Carol Reardon, the 2015-16 Penn State Laureate, who has military interest and background, will lead the October 12 discussion.

Renee Thornton-Roop shared the number of certifications at the start of Post 9/11 GI Bill in 2009 compared with fall 2015. Fall 2009 numbers were 574 certified for University Park, 571 for World Campus. As of fall 2015, there were 1,018 certified for University Park, and 2,218 for World Campus. Thornton-Roop also noted that Penn State Air Force ROTC will sponsor a prisoners of war-missing in action (POW-MIA) vigil on Old Main lawn at Penn State's University Park campus on Friday, September 18.

Jordan encouraged members to gather similar stories for sharing on the Commission's web site, reminding members that part of our charge is to be a repository for adult learner initiatives University-wide.

ii. Age limit on dependent education benefit

Dr. Esther Prins emailed Achampong in late May 2015 about the age limit for dependent children of faculty, staff, and retirees to receive educational benefits. Dr Prins' request referenced discussion at the April 2015 Faculty Senate meeting. (<http://senate.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13525/2014/06/042815record4pdf1.pdf#page=8>)

The group discussed the background and history of the issue. Attendees concurred that our advocacy should focus on adult learners as whole and that this was more of an employee benefits issue on which the administration has already made a decision.

Achampong will relay the outcome of the discussion to Prins.

iii. Approve minutes of May 11, 2015

Beth Seymour moved and Jo Anne Carrick seconded motion to approve the minutes of May 11, 2015 as submitted. The membership voted to approve the minutes.

2. Adult Learners' Student Aid Profile, Anna Griswold, Assistant Vice President Undergraduate Education and Executive Director for Student Aid, University Park.

Griswold shared an overview of undergraduate financial aid. Data included:

- sources and forms of aid
- breakout of 2015-16 essential costs for PA residents and non-residents.
- “For the Future” campaign tracking and growth in institutional awards during the campaign.
- Breakdown of spendable awards for each million dollars in endowment funds.
- Average scholarship amounts and percentage of direct costs it covers. The spendable part of quasi-endowments is included institutional part of the data. These are reported in general funds.
- Undergraduate Admissions ‘Offer Declined Survey’ results for how cost to attend and lack of scholarship influenced the decision to not attend Penn State.

Griswold noted that the Board of Trustees is looking at capital planning, focusing on largest external funding sources. They will examine state appropriation, Hershey, research, and student aid. Griswold will participate to cover the student aid piece.

The data include GI benefits and includes all students who qualify (Minimum of 6 credits is required to receive aid.)

Griswold also covered profile of adult aid recipients for 2013-14 and compared to 2012-13. This profile included

- Demographics broken out by residency, gender, and average age.
- Number of students with student debt at graduation including average debt load.
- Number of adults with University scholarships and Pell Grant eligibility.
- Data on median income.
- First generation status.
- Average unmet need.
- Weighted averages by income, location, and residency and decision to attend.

Commission discussion

Carrick noted that the adult learners that earn just above Pell-eligible amounts borrow more to cover living expenses causing a distinct cliff effect on debt amounts. Daad Rizk’s work on the financial literacy initiative can help minimize borrowing more than necessary. Rizk noted the problem created when adult learners combine part-time attendance, with full-time borrowing levels. Also, the amount borrowed is also a reflection of our costs.

Achampong mentioned that trends historically are related to recessions and economic aftermath. During these dips there is trend to use community colleges. Pell eligibility is indicator of economic impact on regions. There is a need to connect Access and Affordability with workforce development for communities.

Renata Engel shared that the Enhanced Educational Pathways committee has requested data on students who have earned 111 credits, but walk away. That group is trying to understand the size of this population and what proportion are adult learners. This could be an area of impact. Engel will share the findings at a

future meeting.

Craig Weidemann encouraged thinking about how the Commission can gather and provide leveraged information or case statements to make it appealing for donors to support our adult population with the Capital campaign coming.

Griswold's slides will go out to members with draft meeting notes.

3. Commission objectives for 2015-16. Francis Achampong and Martha Jordan reviewed the 2015-16 Commission objectives which will address areas identified in the May 2015 report Making Penn State More Accessible and Affordable to Adult Learners.
 - a. Reining in cost for adult learners
 - b. Implementing adult-friendly PLA practices
 - c. Implementing adult-friendly transfer policies
 - d. Enhancing financial literacy
 - e. Mitigating challenges with adult learners' academic preparedness
 - f. Revisiting lack of adult degree completion option
 - g. Other activities including hosting the Hendrick Adult Learners Conference, producing the Adult Learner fact sheet for communicating with the overall University community, proposing improvements based on the Military and Veterans Support Services committee's survey, and providing information to the President and Provost's communications staff about Penn State's adult population.

The Executive Committee will identify topics and presenters to help advance the objectives.

4. Achampong introduced the 2014-15 committee structure and chairs.
 - a. Awards and Recognition-Ken Thigpen, Chair.
 - b. Hendrick Conference Planning-Judy Wills, Chair. The Awards and Recognition and Hendrick Conference planning committees will join efforts for 2015-16.
 - c. Prior Learning Assessment-Michele Rice and Terry Speicher, Co-Chairs.
 - d. Veteran and Military Support Services-Renee Thornton-Roop
 - e. 2015-16 Strategic Task Force-Albert Lozano. The task force will have two areas of focus: reining in costs and conduct a national scan, looking at degree completion.
5. During lunch the committees briefly discussed their objectives for the year. Committee objectives will support the overall Commission objectives.

6. Achampong adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Submitted by Judy Wills.