

**April 20, 2016**241 Outreach Building, Innovation Park
10:30 a.m.
Minutes

Attended: Christian Brady, Jamie Campbell, Jared Hammond, Martha Jordan, Leslie Laing, Sonya Leitzell, Albert Lozano, Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Brooke Repine, Michele Rice, Beth Seymour, Renee Thornton-Roop, and Judy Wills, recorder

Joined by Polycom: Francis Achampong, chair; Terry Speicher, Sandy Feather

Sponsors attending: Madlyn Hanes

Guest: Dr. Carol Reardon

Unable to attend: Kelly Austin, JoAnne Carrick, Renata Engel, Pete Forster, Daad Rizk, and Ken Thigpen

1. Dr. Achampong called the meeting to order and announced that Dr. Daad Rizk received the 2016 Shirley Hendrick Award for her work creating and advancing financial literacy efforts University-wide.

- a. University-wide updates on Adult Learner initiatives

For the first time, the University will recognize graduating students for their military service with honor cords at spring 2016 commencement ceremonies. Additional details are available at the link

<http://news.psu.edu/story/400167/2016/03/28/academics/penn-state-celebrate-graduates-academic-military-success-honor>

The search opened for the Senior Director of Veterans Affairs and Services which President Barron announced at our February meeting. This position was created to coordinate the various units throughout the University that provide services and administer services to veterans.

Renee Thornton-Roop distributed the final draft of the Military and Veteran Services committee's proposed short-term military absence policy. The recommendation will be forwarded to Faculty Senate

- b. Members approved minutes of March 16, 2016 as submitted.

2. Perspectives from meetings with veteran students across the Commonwealth—Dr. Carol Reardon, George Winfree Professor of American History and Penn State University Laureate, 2015-2016.

Dr. Achampong hosted a campus visit in October and invited Dr. Reardon to speak with us today. Since then, she has visited eighteen campuses across the commonwealth. Reardon also met with University Park and provided update on the campuses during that meeting.

Reardon discussed perspectives gleaned from her campus visits

- 1) Recruiting veterans by stressing both unique programs at Commonwealth campuses and UP, and adding information about local/regional Reserve units for those who do not have plans to transition completely to civilian life.
- 2) Transition issues relating to information flow, information accuracy, and other preliminaries between acceptance and first day of class.
- 3) The need for refresher courses in math and writing to refresh/improve basic skills as part of the transition back to academic life
- 4) The need for consistent information from well-informed advisors at every stage of the veteran student's academic program
- 5) A continuing concern about the way in which (and the number of) transfer credits from various military schools and professional experience may be applied to the degree audit. Special concern seems to center on the requirement to take CAS 100, especially among former military personnel with 7+ years of experience who have been through various leadership schools.
- 6) Concerns about summer classes as they relate to their housing allotments, especially at Commonwealth campuses, full payment requires them to take at least one on-campus course during the summer, at a time when most upper-division courses in their majors are not offered in the summer

Question was raised wondering what if we have hubs? Would they be willing to come to where courses were offered?

- 7) A desire on most campuses for a dedicated space just for veterans to meet, get information, and the like, where it does not already exist.
- 8) A desire for a non-veteran advocate on campus who can serve as a bridge between veterans and faculty/admin when special concerns seem to require the need of a mediator.

Mont Alto has a Student Advocacy Specialist in this role. Madlyn Hanes noted the value in connecting Dr. Reardon to chancellors and DAAs at a monthly meeting and will follow-up after the meeting.

Some veterans need extra support beyond what we typically think of. As example, she met one student who was blind. Available resources which are outside the veteran system and students may not be aware services

exist. Thornton-Roop mentioned mobile vet centers she learned about at a recent conference which could go out to remote areas. Thornton-Roop will send details to Reardon and Hanes.

9) An interest in veterans awareness programs (or a week dedicated to the subject), not just veterans appreciation week. There is opportunity to build visibility and understanding of issues.

10) An interest in paid summer internships to provide real-world work experience and perhaps alleviate the problem mentioned in point 6. As example, the chancellor at Penn State York worked locally to create veteran-specific internship opportunities.

11) Placement programs for veterans (and adult learners in general) that focus on offering positions that require both their practical work experience along with a relevant degree.

Leslie Laing noted that a PA Regional Career Fair for adult and veteran students is held annually each spring by Student Affairs and it has an online component.

In scheduling adult learner job fairs, the challenge would be that some companies only visit campus once. Suggestion was made to instead emphasize to company representatives that they will also be meeting with veterans and adults bringing experience along with degrees and looking for higher than entry level positions. Another suggestion was to target employers for fairs based on majors and geographic location to the job openings.

3. Business items and Committee reports

- a. Nominating Committee/Candidate slate for 2017-18 Chair - Martha Jordan relayed that Jamie Campbell had accepted nomination. Per bylaws, Wills will prepare and send to appointed members an electronic ballot with space for write-in. After allowing a ten-day voting window, votes will be tallied. Dr. Achampong will share results at the May 18 meeting.
- b. Faculty Senate Liaison update-Beth Seymour; No report
- c. Hendrick Committee- Ken Thigpen, Judy Wills

As mentioned during announcements, Daad Rizk will receive the 2016 Shirley Hendrick Award at the University Faculty/Staff Awards reception April 21. Ken Thigpen and Martha Jordan will represent the Commission. Rizk's nominators and guests will also attend. Wills will arrange for the announcement to appear on the Commission's web site. Albert Lozano recommended inviting Rizk back to speak at the 2017 Hendrick conference in addition to the 2017 recipient.

Sandy Feather coordinated with campus Adult Enrollment Coordinators to compile a gallery of adult student photos and quotes for a slideshow originally planned to run at the Hendrick conference. Eleven campuses participated to spotlight twenty-eight adult learners from across Penn State. In light of the event's cancellation, the slideshow will instead run on the Commission's web site, with target date to be live by our final meeting May 18.

d. Military and Veteran Support Services-Renee Thornton-Roop

In addition to the short-term absence policy recommendations discussed during the announcements, the committee is working on way to compile a list of veterans faculty and staff for the purpose of serving as volunteer mentors or other resource capacities. The committee seeks Commission input on tentative plan for sending a mass email to faculty/staff on campus inviting them to opt-in. Suggestion was raised of having a decal or other means of identifying them, once the list is compiled. Paula Milone-Nuzzo recommended that the committee be very clear on what the volunteer expectations would be and then offer guidelines. Suggestion was raised to submit an article to Penn State Today with a link to register/opt-in. Members suggested waiting until an article which announces when the new senior director is hired and coordinating with that story. Martha Jordan will check with Outreach communications about whether there is a planned story about the military honor cords, then future stories could build on it.

e. Prior Learning Assessment -Michele Rice

The committee worked on its year-end report and believes that the committee's work is complete and has fulfilled its charge. Michele Rice has formed a University-wide Council on PLA which can carry forward recommendations from the PLA Task Force. The Commission can refer future PLA discussion to the Council on PLA.

Recommendation was raised to maintain a way to liaise with the Council on PLA so that CAL can remain apprised of the work of the CPLA. This may become an update item similar to the yearly update provided by the Office of Student Aid.

f. Strategic Task Force-Albert Lozano

The task force continued to work on reining in costs. They gathered and analyzed very detailed data from Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment. The task force proposes continuing this work next year. JoAnne Carrick agreed for Penn State Shenango to serve as a potential site to gather additional information. Their campus has high levels of part-time and military enrollments. The task force also recommended adding Mont Alto as a potential site to study.

The task force also discussed news of how other institutions are approaching tuition differential (for example IUP and some other PASSHE schools are moving toward straight per-credit tuition). If the Commission can recommend an alternative part-time model, work out alternate, it can move Penn State into position to lead initiatives nationally.

4. Achampong adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

Submitted by Judy Wills

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