



Commission for **Adult Learners**

December 13, 2017

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

324 Outreach Building/Zoom videoconference

Minutes

Attended: J. Campbell, A. Adams, R. Brown, J. Campbell, G. Chinn, J. Cross, S. Feather, D. Gruendler, C. Horner, L. Laing, A. Lozano, A. Maxson, E. McFeely, H. McGarry, B. Redmond, M. Rice, D. Rodgers, H. Sankey, B. Seymour, E. Shumac, D. Smith, P. Staskiel, R. Thornton-Roop, J. Wills, recorder; L. Wright

Sponsors attending: R. Engel, R. Pangborn, M. Whitehurst

Guests. Dr. Eric Barron ,M. Smith, C. Taylor

Unable to attend: M Corby, N. James, P. Johnson

1. Conversation with President Barron

Dr. Barron spoke about how Penn State is a model of a truly public institution, having multiple entry points providing access to the same world-class education. He noted there is an obligation when we open our doors to help students succeed and what we do to help students succeed can have a bigger impact than reining in tuition increases or providing scholarships: Examples are the veteran's center, mentoring and advising, and creating the financial literacy center.

Including transformative experiences along with a degree program presents a challenge for many adult learners who manage multiple life responsibilities. Recognizing that our adult population has a different experience, the more deliberate and cost effective we can be the better.

M. Rice gave overview of PLA program goals and provided figures for portfolio assessments requested per year. Her office is also working to expand available PLA opportunities around transfer and military credits.

B. Seymour noted that our Access and Affordability committee is considering ways for adult learners to clarify their path to degree: building in support systems, working more closely with career services to tie together with academic path, and exploring how to expand capacity around engagement.

The ALEC committee plans to expand collaboration with AECs at campuses in providing our adults opportunities to engage with the University and leadership opportunities. This includes ways to transition leadership roles they already have to translate to career opportunities.

At the essence, adult learners have experienced an interruption in their educational journey, and due to a rapidly changing world job market, more individuals seek ways to add to marketable expertise throughout their lifetime. Discussed ways to signal to prospective students that “Penn State is your University for life” as means to acknowledge that interruptions are part of the learning process. This message could be incorporated at new student orientation, through unified efforts of AECs at campuses, through the veterans’ center, and in the classroom. Students of the future would have access to whatever is needed to complete lifelong goals. Firmly embedding such messages and conversations around the University and building that story out to reach deep into the institution can help adult learners to articulate the value of their education. This ties back to PLA efforts noting there could be increased participation if more students know time to degree from the outset. If we can be a leader in that space, this could further differentiate the message “We are developing lifelong learners and we are your University for life.”

Campbell invited Dr. Barron to join our 20th Anniversary celebration dinner on May 8.

2. Announcements and updates

a. Beth Seymour made a motion to approve the minutes from November 15, 2017, and David Smith seconded. Minutes were approved as submitted.

b. Announcements

The proposed updates to the Military Short-Term policy passed through Faculty Senate.

A. Adams is chairing the planning for the Summer Leadership Conference. The event will offer an adult learner tract for the first time. Tentative date is early August. Adams will provide updates as they become available.

FOBA hosts two scholarships presented at the MLK banquet. Applications are open through December 22. Undergraduate students from all campuses can apply. Information is available at FOBA.org. FOBA also has a humanitarian award with open nominations window.

Michele Rice and Col. Eugene McFeely are working on transferring in defense language institute military credits with language prefix.

Campbell shared a SMART Diversity contest scholarship opportunity available through the START conference. Information is available on the START Conference web site. Any undergraduate student can apply.

c. Sharing adult learner initiatives at campuses-None

3. Liaison and Committee reports

a. Access and Affordability Task Force-D. Smith

The committee recently heard research findings from World Campus about persistence and will seek more insight to frame their work for the remainder of the CAL term.

b. Adult Learner Engagement Committee (ALEC)-P. Staskiel

The committee is working on topics to discuss with AECs during the January 18 videoconference to enhance engagement on campuses. The committee are also gathering information for adult learner marketing materials and working to identify prospective students to include on the planned panel at the Hendrick conference.

c. Hendrick Award and Conference Planning

The committee received seven nominations for the 2018 Shirley Hendrick Award. A. Lozano is leading selection efforts and the selection subcommittee will work to identify a recipient by the end of January. The award will be presented at the Faculty/Staff Awards Reception April 3 and the Commission will recognize the recipient during a general session at the Hendrick conference.

Keynote and general sessions have been identified for the Hendrick conference and target date to finalize program details is February 1.

Target timeframe to open registration is the week following spring break.

d. Military and Veteran Support Services-No additional report

e. Faculty Senate Liaison

The Senate is considering many policy changes and expect to see many come through next semester, likely both legislative and process recommendations reports.

There was discussion around how to frame policies to promote student success instead of only as barriers. As example, utilizing financial literacy early on to change perspective of academic warning to opportunity to success rather than a barrier.

f. Twentieth Anniversary ad hoc committee—E. Wright is working with the Hendrick planning committee for both events. The date savers for the anniversary dinner will go out soon. There has been a good response to requests made to various groups University-wide to submit suggested students or alums to feature in the planned news article about the twentieth anniversary.

Campbell adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Next meeting February 21, 2018. If members have questions or topics for the January 18, AEC meeting, please send to Campbell or Wills.

Submitted by Judy Wills