



Commission for **Adult Learners**

Annual Report 2017- 2018

The Commission for Adult Learners celebrated twenty years of services to adult learners throughout the commonwealth this academic year. We have been honored to serve to this vibrant and growing community. I cannot say thank you enough to the dedicated work of the members of this commission, and to our sponsors for their active and engaged support.

This year we have been fortunate to have many valued administrators to address the commission. This group included but was not limited to, Mr. Dan Murphy, Mr. Clark Briggers, Dr. Anna Griswold, Dr. Sonia DeLuca-Fernandez, Dr. Nicolas Jones, Dr. Renata Engel, and Dr. Eric Barron. These speakers have covered everything from *One Penn State 2025* to *Transforming Education*.

Each of our individual committees have been actively working on solutions to issues that all adult learners are facing on their campuses. The below paragraphs highlight some of their valiant work this year.

Access and Affordability Task Force

The committee pursued two separate avenues to help part-time adult learners graduate in a timely fashion: The first **was to explore the development of scholarship assistance to help students finish their final few semesters**. Several initiatives are being developed in this space at the University, including Complete Penn State. The second avenue was that the Task Force recognized that **students often need comprehensive advising support for them to identify an appropriate academic pathway as well as to better understand the relevance of what they are learning**. We envision academic advising working together with Career Services to help students better align academic and career planning. We recommend that the Commission explore this avenue next year and align this work with Penn State 2025. Another suggestion is to submit an RFP to the Transforming Education Council as part of the Provost's Strategic Plan.

Adult Learner Engagement Committee (ALEC) Outcomes

One of the success stories of the 2017- 2018 was the **reinvigoration of AEC group**. This occurred with January meeting, which allowed for a renewal of communication among the group. A key component was the discussion of the execution of focus groups at all campuses. ALEC shared our focus group template and suggestions for that activity. This ability to gather information, and use the results to foster open communication between the adult learners and the campus will allow for greater engagement. **Development of a Canvas Pride**. AECs and others who work with adult learners. ALEC has also started a network for all interested parties to share

best practices, concerns, and words of encouragement. **Promoted Leadership Opportunities for Adult Learners.** As a result of the work of ALEC there will be an Adult Learner Track at the Summer Student Leadership Conference; this is a great opportunity for adult learners to be included in the Student Leadership training experiences. In addition to these accomplishments, the closing session of the Hendrick Conference is a student panel presentation featuring current adult learners sharing their experiences.

2018 Shirley Hendrick Award

The committee received seven nominations for the 2018 Shirley Hendrick Award, which recognizes a University administrator whose visionary accomplishments have contributed significantly to foster and increase Penn State's efforts to serve our adult learners. Dr. Brian Clark is the recipient of the 2018 Shirley Hendrick Award. Dr. Clark is currently the Director of Veteran Programs at Penn State, having served in different capacities in this office for over 39 years. A veteran himself, Dr. Clark is recognized for his commitment to veteran students for example by serving as the advisor to the Penn State Student Veteran Organization for many years. Dr. Clark also developed the counselor/certifying official model of service for veteran and military students currently used at Penn State, which results in a multi-prong approach to supporting them. He played an integral role in securing the availability of federal financial aid for veterans by removing GI Bill benefits as a disqualifier for this aid and testified on Capitol Hill in this regard.

2018 Hendrick Conference

The annual Hendrick Best Practices for Adult Learners Conference is planned for Wednesday, May 9 at the Nittany Lion Inn. **This CAL signature event showcases best practices from the Penn State community involved with supporting adult learners. We expect over 180 attendees, including representation from University Park, World Campus, and most Commonwealth campuses.**

2017-18 Ad Hoc 20th Anniversary Planning Committee

This year CAL celebrates our twenty years of advocacy for adult learners. We have invited past administrative leaders, chairpersons and Shirley Hendrick Award recipients to join our current membership and sponsors for a reception and dinner to commemorate this milestone. **We expect 41 guests for this event. Our planned program includes remarks from Provost Nicholas Jones and a retrospective on CAL's accomplishments during our first and second decades presented by Dr. Charlene Harrison, retired Director of Center for Adult Learners, and Martha Jordan, and retired Senior Director for Adult Learner Advocacy respectively.** In conjunction with our celebration, we worked with Mike Dawson, OOE Marketing and communications on a Penn State News article that will feature student success stories collected from across Penn State. In addition, we worked on compiling a ten-year update to accompany Eric White's history of the first decade, which is currently available on the CAL website.

Military and Veterans Services Subcommittee (MVSS)

The Military Short-Term Absence policy was approved by the Faculty Senate as an addendum to the current attendance policy and has received final approval through all necessary chains. The policy is currently effective and allows students deployed for two or fewer weeks the option to drop a class for a return if not approved by his/her professor after appealing to the Dean. The committee addressed concerns surrounding tutoring and other learning for veterans. The chairs also met with *tutor.com* representatives to determine the practicality of providing this resource to all veteran students. Discussion also occurred in regards to a Veterans Upward Bound programs and placement testing.

Upon completion of this academic year, it was decided that the MVSS committee will dissolve and future military/veteran affiliated committees will fall under the leadership of Senior Director of Veterans Programs and Services, Eugene McFeely, who will sever as military/veteran liaison to the CAL

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Albert Lozano-Nieto received nominations for the position of Chair-elect for 2019-20. Electronic ballots for this election were sent to the Commission's membership which resulted in Patricia Staskiel being the Chair-elect for 2019 – 2020.

On behalf of the 2017-2018 Commission for Adult Learners, we thank you for your continued support and look forward to working with you in the future.

Jamie Campbell.
2017-2018 Chair
Commission for Adult Learners

Assistant Dean
Diversity Enhancement Programs
Smeal College of Business