



Commission for **Adult Learners**

October 9, 2019

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

324 Outreach Building

Minutes

Attendees: Patty Staskiel, Chair; Antone Aboud, Sherry Corman, Julie Cross, Ruth Ann Herstek, Avis Kunz, Leslie Laing, Eugene McFeely, Helen McGarry, Jessica O'Brien (recorder), Brian Redmond, Michele Rice, Debra Rodgers, Haley Sankey, Liz Seidle, Chris Stubbs, Annie Taylor, Renee Thornton-Roop, Jeff Warner, Kelly Wolgast

Sponsors in Attendance: Rob Pangborn, Marcus Whitehurst

Unable to attend: Andrea Adolph, Audrey Bonchack, Renata Engel, William Fritz, Charles Greggs, Madlyn Hanes, Doug Hochstetler, Charles Patrick, Erin Shumac, Damon Sims, Tammy Spevak, Judy Wills, Elizabeth Wright

Guests: Assistant VP, Undergraduate Education and Executive Director of Student Aid, Melissa Kunes

Presentation on Student Aid – (posted in BOX, October meeting)

- Student Aid presents annually on statistics related to adult learners
- (Slides will be shared) - DATA SHOULD NOT BE SHARED EXTERNALLY
- Source and type of undergraduate financial aid 2017-18
 - \$1B to 60,962 undergraduate students
 - 61% is federal and state aid
 - 55% federal
 - 23% private
 - 17% institutional
 - 5% state
 - 64% is education loans
 - 64% loans
 - 19% grants
 - 17% scholarships
 - <1% work study (must show need - students indicate interest on their FAFSA; positions are posted in EJMS; There are WAY more work study jobs than eligible students, yet not all awarded students seek positions - might we need to market these better so students know...even as early as the FAFSA...what opportunities might be available?)
 - Military benefits - no longer tracked due to difficulties tracking on LionPath, etc. - this is making our overall student aid numbers look lower than in the past
- Essential Costs 2019-20 - First Year Students

- Total tuition/fees and room/housing
 - \$32,700 at UP for in state
 - \$49,764 for out of state
 - \$28,726 average in state at CC
 - \$37,716 average out of state at CC
 - \$28,238 for World Campus (for a full-time student - \$13,988 for tuition/fees only)
- Estimate \$920 for books per semester for a full-time student (way too high for most programs)
- Pell grants are NOT restricted to students who take a certain amount of credits...can take as little as .5 credits, but not a state grant or other federal grants
- Adult Aid Recipients: Profile/Characteristics
 - (see slides showing comparisons between 2017-18, 2016-17, and all students)
 - First gen students typically do not get preferences on grants and loans...but some donors may specify that they want their funding to go to first gen students as a part of their criteria
- Legislative Action
 - Federal Higher Education Reauthorization (in progress!) - the issues that both sides of the aisle agree on (House/Senate):
 - FAFSA simplification
 - Federal Pell Grant increases and accountability measures for students
 - Support and expand the Federal Work Study Program
 - Support more opportunities for loan repayments (right now there are 7 different plans - they also want to simplify those to 2-3)
 - Eliminate loan fees (government currently takes 1.68% of a student's aid off the top as a loan fee for Direct Loans) - this would mean \$1.2M more in aid for our undergrad and grad students in a given year!
 - Additional counseling for aid recipients
 - State Legislation
 - Schools must annually send students a loan debt letter/summary
 - includes average interest rates
 - includes average monthly payments
 - This information will be available via LionPATH in July 2020 (versus a physical letter) - CAL suggested making that access available to Penn State alumni, too!
 - Fostering Independence Bill
 - State mandates that institutions must institute a tuition and fee waiver for foster youth who have aged out
 - Waiver of tuition and fees applied after Federal Pell Grant, PA State Grant, and Chaffee Grant (they must apply and receive this - does PHEA have the funding available to cover all those in need?)

- Does not cover room/meals
 - Will be effective Fall 2020
 - Also have to have support services available for these students
- NOTE: Students who are incarcerated are not currently eligible for federal or state aid (but can get county aid if available); this is being looked at to see if it might be changed (wasn't always prohibited)
- Other updates
 - Early aid award notification began this year (February 3, 2020 is next one) - still studying whether this made a difference
 - FY 2016 cohort defaults rate: 4.9% (lower than the national rate and lower than the PA rate and public rate, but not lower than Big Ten colleagues)

1. Announcements and updates

- a. Review minutes from September 18, 2019; Patty noted attendees not included. Will review updated minutes in November
- b. Announcements

Michele Rice: Advisors can now look in the transfer credit tool to see how military training is being handled for undergraduate courses/students (they are working on grad level)

Eugene McFeely: Be looking for announcements on this year's Military Appreciation Week.

Patty Staskiel: Please share scholarship info broadly. National First- Generation Student Day on November 8th - events being held on several Penn State campuses

Also reminded the group that President Barron will join us in December - we should be thinking of what we want to share and what we'd like to hear from him

Helen McGarry: Teen Entrepreneur camps have been held at Mon Alto - in her work she discovered that the average age of those using Launch Box resources is actually 40. Wanted to get that fact on our radar

2. Liaison and Committee Reports

ALEC

- Proposing changing the acronym AEC to *Adult Experience* Coordinator
- Also looking at making sure the role of these individuals more clear and making sure those fulfilling those roles are identified as AECs.
- Want to communicate better with AECs and looking at methods for doing so
- How can we help make their roles more visible?
- Want to identify an adult learner at each campus whose stories we can tell across the University (working through the AECs); These individuals could also

serve as a sounding board for the CAL (ALEC has identified some students already and these include 2 veterans)

- Patty added that a plan for this year's CAL meetings was to have students participate in our meeting, so they reached out, found interested students, but there were too many conflicts for them to regularly participate
- Plan B: Going to bring in a panel of adult learners once each semester for our Q&A - will begin at our November 2019 meeting; we should prepare ideas of the kinds of things we'd like to hear about or questions we have for them
 - What is Penn state doing well to support adult learners?
 - What do you wish we'd do better to support adult learners?
 - What is their favorite communicator at Penn State? What are they doing that makes it so helpful?
- Want to identify and better share best practices across the University
- Might collaborate with the SPEC committee on their survey

Hendrick

- No one present to provide an update
- Patty shared that they are revising the methods and processes related to the nominations for the annual award
- Brian asked us to be thinking about nominees
- Patty suggested that ALEC might help share resources/information from the event to AECs who cannot attend

One Penn State Going Forward

- Have been identifying those they want to talk with to find out what is already going on so they don't reinvent the wheel
- Going to start with meeting with the Penn State Go (mobile app) team
- Will also connect with the Faculty Senate, who they know are working on many aspects of One Penn State 2025 this year

SPEC (student persistence experience completion)

- They have reviewed the Complete Penn State project and its statistics - want to know more about how many of the students were adult learners, so they are investigating more (Student Support Success office will be working on this); also want to know what grant opportunities were available for those students
- Looking into whether StarFish can give us more info on adult learners
- Also looking at World Campus persistence data sources
- Will then determine what is missing

Military Students - Eugene McFeely

- Working with Faculty Senate on partial withdrawal verbiage
- Just attended the BTAA military sub-group meeting last week

4. Adjourn meeting