



# Penn State

## Commission for Adult Learners

### General Meeting Agenda

**Date:** May 17, 2023

**Time:** 10:30AM – Noon

Attendees, Biddy Brooks, Renata Engel , Debra Flaig, Patricia Everhart, Ruth Ann Herstek, John Dennis Holst, JeanMarie Jacob, JoAnn Kelly, Melissa Kunes, Michele Rice, Renee Thorton-Roop , Jongwoo Ryoo, Stacy Sekely, Clayton Steen , Justin Schwartz, Jeff Warner, Gina Whalen, Whitney Zimmerman

You can view the recording [here](#)

#### Opening remarks (Jeff)

- Welcome from Jeff Warner
- Reminder that Provost Schwartz is joining today's meeting
- Jeff will not be able to attend the June meeting so Bill Fritz will be facilitating the meeting
- Jeff gave a quick summary of the past year
  - Hendrick Conference moved to Biannual event and marketed at a larger scale
  - Management of the Hendrick Award has been moved over to Claytons office
  - Jeff will review/adjust bylaws as past chair
  - We want to be sure to capture how we should be moving forward since this was a year of reflection/stabilization. We want to make the commission the place to come up with the strategy/ideas and then be able to identify the correct units at the university to actually implement the change. We want to build sustainable change for adult learners.
  - We have identified barriers for adult learners and created talking points for moving forward.
  - We strengthened our relationships with our sponsors.
  - Inviting Matt Melvin, VP for enrollment management to join the commission as executive sponsor
  - Areas for improvement/moving forward
    - ALEK committee- what can we do with AECs? How to best organize the roles and create a system that supports adult learners across the university
    - Make sure we continue to move in the direction that CAL is group identifying areas for growth and then finding out where to pass along the information for implementation. CAL is not the group to be doing the actual work.
    - Continue to work on barriers for adult learners. How can we continue to support adult learners and make recommendations that will help our adult students.

#### [April Minutes](#) Approval (Jeff)

- JeanMarie- motion to approve
- JoAnn second
- All Approved
- Reminder that editorial changes can still be made.

## Sponsors' Comments

- Renata Engel thanked Jeff for his leadership for the past year.
- With the new structure of having Matt Melvin position no longer under VP of Undergraduate education, it is a good time to invite him to become a sponsor. Renata has had an initial conversation with Matt.
- Membership- Each sponsor provides names to be considered for membership in CAL. Some sponsors have direct connection with units that work with adult learners.
- Recommended readings from Renata
  - [CAELs Effective institutions for adult learners](#)
  - [Blended Learning Article](#)
- Penn State 2025- wrapping up so we can move into new strategic planning for the university
- Efforts to look at Continuing Education and Workforce Development in the future.
- Sense of Belonging – how do adult learners fit into this idea? What opportunities does CAL have in this space?
- Opened up for Q&A.
  - JoAnn Kelly- Talked about the population of adult students at Great Valley campus. Majority are part-time adult learners, taking classes in blended format, sometimes condensed 7-week courses. She offered to provide information on how they work with financial aid for non-traditional students and maybe it will work for Undergraduate students also. Renata has already had conversations with Great Valley Chancellor, Colin Neill. She has also spoken to HHD. How do we do something similar for UG students? How do we take these concepts that are already happening across the university and make them part of the overall university in a helpful way? How do we market these opportunities efficiently across the university?
  - Jeff reminded members of CAL that they should continue to recommend members for CAL- it needs to be a broad representation across the university. When Chancellors and Deans are part of the CAL, it adds an added perspective to conversations. Having a diverse representation is vital. It is also important to have the individuals who work directly with operations of adult learners ( admissions -representation and connectivity) they are hearing pain points from the students.
  - Renata shared with the provost that the Sokolov- Miller Literacy Center has its roots in World Campus and CAL. The commission was instrumental in building the first modules. This is an institutional impact tied directly to the commission as well as the Hendrick Conference. Michele Rice's position with PLA came from the CAL commission. It is important to remember the successes.
  - Jeff wants to continue to reach out to adult students to see if they can be represented on the CAL. It is always difficult to get them on a regular basis. Perhaps we can identify a pool of individuals and invite them to a meeting and have the focus of the meeting on the students. You may find one or two who want to remain engaged.
  - Dr Jungwoo Ryoo asked about micro-credentials. Renata shared the [micro-credentials/badging t](#) document that Penn State 2025 worked on. Andrea Tessier and Fay Chadwell are chairing the CE/workforce development committee. It may be something CAL may want to look into this. This is on the horizon. Renata suggested the Dr Ryoo reach out to Larry Terry, VP for Outreach.
  - Michele Rice shared information with her past experience working with adult learners and non-credit, industry credentials that can be reviewed for credit PLA. Dr Ryoo shared that credit courses may be cost prohibitive. Renata shared that [prior learning polices](#) should always be reviewed and ensure the regulatory requirements are met. We need to use caution and do this in a thoughtful way and engage the SMEs at the university. Financial Aid is also a concern for adults taking non-credit courses which do not lead to a degree. All conversations should start with faculty. This is an area that requires more discussion. This may be an area that CAL continues to discuss.

## Committee Meetings Committee Updates

- Biddy Brooks – ALEC
  - Survey went out to AECs
  - Response rate not what she hoped. She will send out a nudge

- Hopefully the results of the survey can steer the committee on where to focus.
- Michele Rice, Barrier Identification
  - Her summary has been submitted to Jeff with identification of barriers for adult learners. This will be starting point for next year
- JoAnne Kelley (Bill Fritz not in attendance) Structure and Function
  - Marketing and lack of marketing for adult learners. How do we market programs to adult students.
  - Also thinking about who would be good contributors to CAL and bring those names forward.

Provost Schwartz (11:30AM – Noon) Presentation starts at 1:05:17 on recording.

- Acknowledged importance of work done by CAL
- Dr Bendapudi's number one goal is student success. Central to this conversation is where to meet students where they are and understand who they are. We anticipate that the adult student population will continue to grow at Penn State so it is important to continue our work with adult students.
- Open it up for Q&A
  - Q: Jeff Warner asked about the demographic shift that is coming and what PSU can do to make us a more attractive option for adults. A: Provost shared that we should continue to focus on what students want and what they need. Understanding and anticipating student needs. There is a reason an adult is coming back to higher education, and we should be prepared to meet needs. Working with marketing, Matt Melvin and Stat Com to develop the value proposal for adults. Find the right way to communicate with adult students.
  - Renata- Shared that intergenerational classrooms may be coming. Q: How do we approach this? Looking at the differences being a strength and not problematic. A: Is the distribution of majors of adult students different than the rest of the population of RI students? And what does that mean? JoAnne Kelly shared her experience with blend of G and UG students at the Great Valley campus and that it was a great success.
  - Q: Dr Ryoo asked if there are any new strategies that are being considered to attract and retain adult students. A: With the addition of Matt Melvin, we have been discussing marketing strategies. We are thinking about how to recruit students that are most recruitable. Asked back to the committee what should we doing? CAL is the experts so important to listen to what is already happening. Maybe we should be thinking about upskilling or identification of programs of interest and market in this way. Include adults in marketing materials and provide options for on-campus and on-line.
  - Guidelines for financial aid were written 50 years ago and say full-time students. Maybe we need to make some changes. This may also be issue for scholarships which say for on campus.
  - Maybe we should consider identification of the majors adults are pursuing and make them a longer time frame to fit into an adults life.

Adjournment