



Penn State

Commission for Adult Learners

General Meeting Minutes

Date: March 20, 2024,

Time: 10:30AM - Noon

CAL Members: Bidy Brooks, Brian Cameron, Shannon Corkery, Trisha Everhart, Debra Flaig, Bill Fritz, Chuck Greggs, Ruth Ann Herstek, John Holst, JeanMarie Jacob, JoAnn Kelly, Melissa Kunes, Leslie Laing, Sheri Matter, Col. Eugene McFeely, Denise Poole, Esther Prins, Robin Redmond Wright, Michele Rice, Amy Rustic, Jungwoo Ryoo, Stacy Sekely, Renee Thornton-Roop, Michael Vicaro, Jeff Warner, Gina Whalen, Tracie White, Whitney Zimmerman

Attendees: Bidy Brooks, Shannon Corkery, Renata Engel, Trisha Everhart, Debra Flaig, Bill Fritz, Chuck Greggs, Ruth Ann Herstek, John Holst, JoAnn Kelly, Melissa Kunes, Leslie Laing, Sheri Matter, Matt Melvin, Jessica O'Brian, Denise Poole, Esther Prins, Michele Rice, Amy Rustic, Clayton Steen, Stacy Sekely, Tracie White, Whitney Zimmerman

Welcome

February Minutes Approval

- Motion to Approve – John Holst
- Second – JoAnn
- Minutes Approved

Hendrick Conference Update

- Current registrations: 90, goal: 150.
- Schedule adjusted: Start at 8:30 AM, finish at 2:30 PM.
- Seeking volunteers to moderate sessions.
- Student Panel removed from agenda, exploring alternatives.
- Several members of the Hendrick Family confirmed to attend.

Sponsor Comments

- Renata: Highlighting benefits of focusing on specific aspects of adult learners. Mentioned 1+3 or Base to Campus program for military/veteran learners.
- Matt: Emphasizing the importance of federal financial aid for retention and completion. Urging students to file aid applications promptly.
 - Melissa: Noting a decrease in FAFSA Applications. Encouraging timely submissions despite processing challenges.
 - Enrollment management is sending notifications to ALL students asking to file the FASFA, not giving timeframes. Families understand the delay – websites are updated, and emails being sent out to undergraduate and graduate students. Encourage families to file and not be intimidated by the new process.

President Bendapudi Discussion (11:00 AM)

- President Bendapudi initiated the discussion with introductions and expressed gratitude for the Commission's longstanding presence since 1998.

- She emphasized her commitment to supporting the military learning initiative and advocated for a stronger focus on credit for prior learning.
- Acknowledging administrative challenges, she underscored the importance of removing barriers to retention and success, particularly for adult learners.
- Stressing the need for lifelong learning opportunities, she highlighted successful credit for prior learning programs at Fort Knox and proposed expanding such initiatives to support individuals with caregiving responsibilities.
- Denise emphasized the need for smoother re-enrollment pathways for adult learners and suggested collaboration with the Prior Learning Assessment process to facilitate degree attainment.
- Stacy suggested reaching out to the healthcare systems for support.
 - President Bendapudi highlighted ongoing efforts with Highmark and the Allegheny Network to address healthcare needs, leveraging Penn State's land grant status.
- John inquired about the Commission's role in decision-making and implementation.
 - President Bendapudi emphasized alignment between classroom and extracurricular activities. Permission for CAL to try new ideas.
- Esther sought clarity on the process for proposing and implementing ideas.
 - President Bendapudi explains the Provost's role in enrollment-related matters and the importance of impactful investments.
- Melissa raised concerns about enrollment challenges stemming from financial constraints and advocated for increased philanthropic support and scholarship opportunities for adult learners.
- Bill address bureaucratic hurdles in transfer credit process and emphasized the need for transparency in evaluating transfer credits prior to admission.
- Shannon highlighted financial accessibility issues, particularly discrepancies in state-managed funding, with Renata tasked to follow up on potential solutions.
- Ruth Ann noted the potential positive impact of transfer credit reforms on both traditional and non-traditional learners.

Announcements

- Information shared on Pennsylvania Parent Pathway Initiative, a grant offering tuition funding. Penn State has applied for this grant. (More details available at: [Pennsylvania Parent Pathway Initiative](#))
- Renata was extended an invitation from the VP of Outreach to participate in a discussion regarding joining an Age-Friendly University Designation Task Force. CAL is a unique group with valuable insights. Also highlighted available space for the Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) Symposium.
- Removal of transcript holds for students with delinquent account balances. This change benefits students seeking to return to the university or explore opportunities elsewhere.
- Registration is open for the third annual First-Gen Student Support Summit on April 3. This free one-day hybrid conference offers an opportunity for sharing best practices and networking. (More information at: [First-Gen Student Support Summit](#))
- Reminder regarding upcoming elections for next year's CAL Leadership in April. Nominations are welcome; individuals interested can reach out to Jeff.
- Identified Senate Committees and suggested presenting issues related to Transfer Credit and Prior Learning to Senate Leadership. (More information available at: [Senate Subcommittee on Retention and Transfer](#))
- Various suggestions for moving forward, including faculty review and course division. Further action will be taken once a degree audit is conducted.
- Reporting on progress of the Removing Barriers committee, which is working on enhancing the transfer credit process. Emphasized the importance of evaluating credits for students admissible to the major.

Adjournment