Penn State
Commission for Adult Learners

General Meeting Agenda

Date: June 18, 2025
Time: 10:30 – 11:30

Attendees: JoAnn Kelly, Biddy Brooks, Trisha Everhart, Chuck Greggs, Leslie Laing, Sheri Matter, Jessica O'Brien, Esther Prins, Michele Rice, Nadia Richardson, Michelle Wiley, Seria Chatters, Erin Hendrick, Melissa Kunes, Ruth Herstek, Ron Darbeau, Lori Brown, Andrea Tessier

Welcome

Minutes Approval (April)

- **Motion:** Sheri Matter
- **Second:** Biddy Brooks
- **Approval**

Minutes Approval (May)

- **Motion:** Michele Rice
- **Second:** Melissa Kunes

Discussion

- Jessica shared that the nomination form for Chair-Elect and Secretary is being finalized and will be sent out by Friday

- **Campus Closures Discussion**:
    - InsideTrack navigation (or transition) coaches are supporting students affected by campus closures, with a focus on helping them transition and addressing concerns like finances, transportation, and degree completion
    - Staff and Faculty Support - Interest in offering workforce development and reskilling opportunities for staff, including potential partnerships with external organizations and alumni career services.
    - Tuition Benefit Concerns - continuity of tuition benefits for staff who begin a degree program but may lose their job due to campus closures, and whether the university might offer stipends or discounts for alternative credentials.
    - Limited Student Aid Inquiries
    - Unclear Tuition Waiver Details
    - Advising and Navigation Support:

- Advising services have been made available to students from closing campuses through drop-ins and Starfish appointments
- Coordination with InsideTrack is still lacking, leading to some confusion and inefficiencies. Need for more structured collaboration with InsideTrack and clearer information dissemination to avoid students being bounced between departments and to better support adult learners.

- **Extended Conversation Related to Adult Learners:**
  - While specific student groups like nursing and student athletes have been discussed, adult learners have not been a major focus in Chancellor meetings, highlighting a need for advocacy.
  - Ron will mention this to Renata and try to get the Commission on the calendar for further discussion
  - Adult learners at closing campuses face unique challenges due to being location-bound and may need tailored guidance on options like World Campus or nearby institutions.
  - Concern that adult learners may transfer to competing universities, especially in areas like Pittsburgh where aggressive recruitment is happening.
  - There's interest in gathering consolidated data on adult learners—such as enrollment numbers and majors—to better understand their needs and support potential transitions.
  - While World Campus is eager to support displaced students, there's sensitivity around perceptions that it may be unintentionally drawing students away from other campuses, highlighting the importance of collaborative, student-centered communication.
  - Many campuses lack summer counseling due to 10-month contracts, leading to referrals to other campuses or limited remote support; some campuses like Altoona are extending services to help fill the gap.
  - Concerns were raised about the complexity of managing tuition differences and campus transfers in systems like LionPATH, especially as students move between campuses due to closures

- ## Strategic Planning and Goal Setting
  - The commission is aligning its goals with the university's strategic plan, focusing on student success, equity, and inclusion—especially for adult learners and transfer students affected by campus closures.
  - Erin shared that The university's institutional plan emphasizes building a strong infrastructure to support ambitious, innovative goals at the unit level, with a push for aspirational rather than purely quantitative targets.
  - Suggestions included expanding co-curricular opportunities for adult learners and improving systems for credit transfer and prior learning recognition, along with dedicated support structures on campuses.
  - here's interest in creating a comprehensive dashboard to visualize the adult learner experience using existing university data sources, including DEIB and strategic planning metrics.
  - A working group may form to align commission goals with the strategic plan, focusing on student success, equity, and benchmarking against best practices from other institutions.

- **Hendrick Conference**
  - The Hendrick Conference is tentatively scheduled for May 14 at Penn State Great Valley, with planning underway and interest from several new committee members.
  - Organizers are seeking someone with marketing and outreach skills to help promote the event, especially to attract more external participants beyond Penn State.
  - The conference, originally internal, has grown to include external attendees since the pandemic, and the new location at Great Valley offers a strong venue for broader engagement.
  - Andrea is connecting the planning team with continuing education contacts at Abington and Great Valley to support coordination and involvement.

- **Commission Membership**
  - There's a recurring issue with members attending only one or two meetings and then disengaging, prompting discussion on how to maintain active participation.
  - Members join through a mix of volunteer interest, sponsor recommendations, or direct outreach from leadership to campus administrators.
  - Each summer, the Executive Committee contacts current members to confirm continued participation or request recommendations for replacements if the terms have ended.
  - Discussion to continue in the fall semester

Thank you to JoAnn for your leadership over the past year!!!

Adjournment