Northern Illinois P-20 Network
Adult Learners Work Group

NOTES
October 13, 2014, 1:00 p.m.
Lowden Hall 304

Participants
Meryl Sussman (NIU), John Cowan (NIU), Peggy Heinrich (ECC), Joanne Kantner (KC), Tom Pierce (MCC – phone), Jane Smith (COD), Debbie Pixton (NIU)

Opening
Meryl Sussman reviewed the objectives and focus of the group. Clear lines were established to indicate that this group is working on degree completion programs, rather than developmental programs for adult learners. A need for establishing a common language was established. Definitions should be agreed upon for “adult learner” and “prior learning assessment.” Meryl will be providing sample definitions for the group to respond to via email in the coming weeks.

Review of Work Group Goal – Increase higher education enrollment of adult learners, who are essential to meeting the goal of increasing the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and professional credentials to 60% by 2025.

Objectives, Tasks, and Next Steps
1. Identify gaps in bachelor degree completion programs for adult learners with associate degrees, including AAS degrees, and/or professional certifications
   a. Tasks will start with a survey to collect data from all P-20 Network participating colleges. The introduction to this survey will describe the regional nature of this work, the fact that participating institutions will receive copies of the report and will otherwise benefit from the work of this group.
   b. John will work on a draft of the survey based on questions drafted at this meeting and will circulate it to the group for feedback. Target date for survey distribution is November 1 with a due date of November 15.
   c. Results will be shared at the December meeting of this group.
   d. A long term activity may be to conduct focus groups at participating institutions with adult learners based on the results
2. Document best practices at leading institutions across the country with prior learning assessments for possible implementation at northern Illinois institutions
   a. The above mentioned survey will also have questions about prior learning assessment opportunities the participating colleges offer.
   b. A greater focus on this may drive some long term activities of this group.
3. Share successful approaches for adult learners across network institutions, including flexible scheduling, alternative delivery modes, reduced time to degree completion, and solutions to out-of-district fee issues
a. A first step for this objective will be sharing the results of the survey with participating organizations.
4. Develop a model for better serving adult learners across the region through collaboration among network institutions

Future Meetings
- December at Elgin Community College
- January 14