Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network
Adult Learners Work Group

April 6, 2015, 10 a.m. - noon
Northern Illinois University, Lowden Hall, Room 307
Call in Number – 815.753.0019

Attendees
Marilyn Bellert (NIU), Julio Capeles-Delgado (MCC – phone), John Cowan (NIU), Peggy Heinrich (ECC – phone), Joanne Kantner (Kish – co-chair), Angela Nackovic (COD), Jane Smith (COD – phone), Meryl Sussman (NIU – co-chair)

Suggested changes based on review of draft position paper on prior learning assessment (PLA)

- Overtly include methods of transcript credits from other institutions accepted
- Foreign credits – international assessments, credits, licensure
  - Tools for how to do this?
  - This may be of value to the field – consolidate this information into a single document may be a next step
- Organizational/industry certifications (e.g. Six Sigma, LEED, category data management, IFMA, SHRM, etc.)
- Do you offer 10 or more of the CAEL identified programs that make you an “Adult Learner Supportive Institution”? We could do a check list of these to get more numbers to find out which things are always done and which things aren’t done, particularly because there may be barriers
- Exemplary Programs Section
  - Separate into two groups – with PLA and without PLA
  - Assemble names of programs (AHEA (network for higher education, adult completion) – separate document
  - Add Thomas Edison University (NJ) and Empire State College (NY)
  - Georgia Adult Learning Coalition (CAEL webinar)
  - Look for peer institutions
- Overt position at the beginning of the document
  - Set context
  - Describe benefits of having a transparent process for PLA at each institution
- Need to consider
  - What will faculty need to do this?
  - What will support staff need to do this?
  - What kind of rubric can be shared among disciplines and offer feedback to candidates who apply for PLA?

ePortfolios
- John Cowan is looking into doing some work around eportfolios in order to link the efforts of NIU departments and other institutions to create a more seamless tool. He may be reaching out to get information on current activities so that we can start making connections. This is to ensure that we aren’t creating a parallel system.
- John will be working on a survey and asking work group members for the contacts at their institutions who would be best suited to answer questions about an ePortfolio system.

**Next Steps**
- Position paper
  - Revise position paper to include changes and succinct position that this work group
  - Work group members will review and send feedback.
  - An approved-by-the-work-group version will be distributed to work group members to share with their academic affairs colleagues.
  - Feedback from academic affairs personnel should be sent to John and Meryl prior to August 15.
  - Final version will be shared with executive leadership on May 18
- John will complete a summary on the adult learner and share with work group members via email prior to the next meeting
- John will work on a survey regarding ePortfolios and begin collecting information.
- Next meeting – Doodle poll for the week of May 18; COD & ECC have Fridays off in the summer

**Potential Future Actions**
- Visit institutions with exemplary prior learning assessment and adult learner programs
- Create a reference tool with information on correlating foreign learning credits to comparable American degrees, licenses, certificates, etc.

**Meeting materials**
Documents related to this topic are posted online at [www.niu.edu/p20network](http://www.niu.edu/p20network). Click on the Resources tab and then on the Adult Learners Work Group under Meetings and Materials. Feel free to send links to other documents that you recommend for this group to Debbie Pixton (dpixton@niu.edu).

**Work Group Participants**
Joanne Kantner, Dean of Adult Basic Education, Kishwaukee College – Co-Chair
Meryl Sussman, Assistant V-P for Outreach Adult and Non-Credit Programs, NIU – Co-chair
John Cowan, Senior Research Associate, NIU
Earl Dowling, Vice-President, Student Affairs, College of DuPage
Peggy Heinrich, Dean of Adult Basic Education, ECC
Mark Mrozinski, Dean, Continuing Education & Business Outreach, Harper College
Angela Nackovic, Adult Admissions Representative, College of DuPage
Tom Pierce, Executive Director of Adult Education, MCC
Jane Smith, Dean, Admission Services and Registrar, COD
Always in Mind

**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.

**White House Commitment:** Increase enrollment of adult learners in higher education across the region

**Next Steps to Meet September Objectives**

- Document best practices with prior learning assessments and career certifications for placement with recommendations for use at northern Illinois institutions.
  - Collaborate with the regional ePortfolio consortium to develop a consistent process for ePortfolios for adult learners that can be used across the region to communicate clearly with admissions counselors, academic advisors, departments, and institutions.
- Identify gaps in bachelor degree completion programs for adult learners with associate degrees, including AAS degrees, and/or professional certifications.
  - Complete catalogue of bachelor’s completion programs and identify programs needed to fill gaps related to workforce needs
  - Provide support for better understanding of the IAI articulation agreement.
- 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.
  - Provide recommendations on effective course scheduling options including block scheduling, evening or weekend offerings, accelerated models, cohort models, and an adult learner concierge or caseworker to provide one-on-one comprehensive advising in a one-stop-shop manner, rather than requiring visits to many different offices and departments.
  - Disseminate documentation of best practices and useable materials for adult learners to all P-20 network institutions.
- Develop a model for better serving adult learners across the region through collaboration among network institutions.
  - Consider regional communications strategies for conveying the importance of a bachelor’s degree early on in the process, while being respectful of each student’s individual goals and pursuits.

Ensure that processes to serve adult learners are transparent and consistent across departments and institutions.