The Center for Adult and Returning Students

Adult Student Recruitment and Retention 2020
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Question:

• What help is there for prospective adult students at your institution?
• What support is there available for adult students on your campus?
• How much help do they get finding that support?
• Share with a neighbor.
• Now share with the group—did you have similar responses?
Learning Outcomes

• Key Takeaway
  – The structure of the new Center for Adult and Returning Students (CARS) can serve as a model for structuring highly adaptable, low investment means of improving support for adult students (and other select student subsets).

• Road Map
  – History of Adult Student Support at UW-Parkside
  – Structure of The Center for Adult and Returning Students and services offered
  – Progress so far, four months in
In the Beginning…

• The Historical Situation at UW-Parkside
• 2016—CAEL ALFI Survey
  – Indicated need for improved academic planning, course structure and scheduling, performance coaching, adult friendly programs and modalities, and Prior Learning Assessment
  – Adult Student Enrollment Counselor (Stacy Tinholt) hired 2018
• 2019—CAEL Adult Learner 360 Survey
  – Specifically focused on data about Hispanic Students
  – But surveyed both Hispanic and non-Hispanic Students
  – Indicated insufficient wrap-around support structures
• Since 2016, UWP has developed more adult-facing programs
  – More online classes
  – Involved in collaborative UW-Extended Campus Online Degrees
  – But still clearly room for improvement, because between 2016 and 2019, there was not much change in surveyed data
• Indicated need for different and more intentional approach to supporting adult students: The Center for Adult and Returning Students
Steps to The Center for Adult and Returning Students (CARS)

- Recognize need—CAEL surveys were important for data clarifying needs
- Dynamic Continuing Education vision—improve adult education in all arenas
- Support of Campus Leadership—because funding is involved...
- Backing of campus community (or at least the part of it serving on relevant committees)
CARS Key Functions

- Intake assistance for adult students
- PLA administration and training
- Work with Departments to help develop adult-friendly versions of current programs
- Collect and monitor data about adult students
- Disseminate information about adult students and adult student programs, including developing and maintaining relevant webpages
CARS Structure + Audience

- Staffed by
  - Adult Student Enrollment Counselor
    - Outward facing
      - Admissions
      - Prospective students
      - Enrolling students
  - Adult Student Program Manager
    - Inward facing
      - Enrolled students
      - Faculty/Instructors
      - Staff in Advising and Career Services, Veteran's Services, Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, and the Provost's Office
Pre-Enrollment
Adult Student Support

• Major Responsibilities
  – Program Exploration
  – Unofficial Transfer Credit Review
  – Enrollment Assistance

• Super-Departmental Role
  – Rely heavily on both Continuing Education and Admissions.
  – Admissions for transfer credit evaluations and program exploration, as well as making contact with adult students as they come in the door.
  – Continuing Education for adult focus.
Pre-Enrollment Adult Student Support

- Found gaps in support for Adult Students as they considered enrolling
  - Open Communication loop—unanswered questions got passed on to faculty, and students were not referred back to the Adult Student Enrollment Counselor
  - Frequently need to address PLA questions, but PLA questions quickly get big and challenging to answer
- To deal with questions, needed someone dedicated to overseeing PLA and assisting enrolled adult students with PLA
The Center for Adult and Returning Students

• The Center for Adult and Returning Students is designed to serve as the central hub for adult students with questions throughout the enrollment process and once enrolled.
Enrolled Adult Student Support

- **Major Responsibilities**
  - Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Coordination
    - Retooled structure for PLA, including revising online class
    - Coordinate communication between students and professors
    - Offering training and support to Faculty and Instructors engaged in PLA
  - Provide training for support staff about PLA specifically and adult student needs generally
  - Advocate for adult-student friendly support office hours, class times, and delivery formats
Enrolled Adult Student Support

• Start with focus on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
  – Means for students to draw on learning done outside the classroom in order to petition for college credit
  – Doubles or triples a student's statistical likelihood of graduating from the PLA granting institution
  – Finding that it really makes a difference to validate a student's life and work experience

• But in practice, not the only thing proving to be important
Enrolled Adult Student Support

• Major ROI = Training
  – Eligible students are there, but staff and professors need to know about PLA as an opportunity and, therefore, need to know what PLA is.
  • Training session with Advisors
  • PLA and Syllabus Development Workshop (in collaboration with CAEL)
  • One-on-one sessions with professors, department chairs, deans
  • Working with Registrar's Office and Cashier's Office to improve PLA processing structure
  – Good for awareness of CARS across campus
Developing a web presence: uwp.edu/adult
Developing marketing materials
  – Print
  – Radio
In process of developing an outreach plan to get the word out to local employers and their employees
So Far....

• Funnel into CARS and into UWP functioning well
  – Uptick in contacts when web pages went live and as they have gained traction
  – Stacy interacted with 56 prospective students in January, up from 22 in October, an increase of 150%

• PLA growing
  – 8 PLA students, up from 0
  – 5 professors in the middle of PLA with a student(s)
  – 7 Departmental PLA Liaisons
  – 42 Staff and Faculty participated in 3 group training events

• House Adult-Focused Academic Programs—online AAS
Next Steps

- Online Orientation
- Outreach
- Adult-oriented programming review
  - Impact of online AAS on degree completion programs
  - Review certificate and delivery format
  - Survey online courses offered
In Conclusion

• Structure of CARS
  – One outward facing position + one inward facing
  – support adult student programming across campus
    • Minimal investment
    • Maximal flexibility

• So far, CARS has been able to make a real impact at Parkside to improve support for
  – Adult Student enrollment
  – Prior Learning Assessment
  – Adult-Friendly Programming
Contact Us

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