

## **Executive Summary: Adult Learners Council Meeting**

BSC – NECE Building Conference Room

January 28, 2010

Chancellor Goetz welcomed the Adult Learners Council.

Robert Larson introduced the keynote speaker, Judith Wertheim, Vice President, Higher Education Services and Administration, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). [www.cael.org](http://www.cael.org).

- Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a project that CAEL began in the mid 1970s through which institutions award college credit for what people learn outside the classroom via corporate training, work experience, civic activity and/or independent study.
- CAEL and ACT created EdLink, the nation's largest provider of tuition assistance management services.
- Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs) provide a way to pay for education and training via a partnership with government, employers and individual workers.
- In 2008, CAEL and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) published an important study, *Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data*.
- Adult learners seek affordability, accessibility and aspiration.
- When asked what factors encouraged them to return to school, adult learners indicated financial assistance, flexible academic programming and credit for prior learning.
- Wertheim said that one of the ways that CAEL has worked to address the issues of accessibility, affordability and aspiration is with the Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) initiative.
- ALFI adheres to the nine principles of effectively serving adult learners. The nine principles are:
  1. Outreach,
  2. Life and Career Planning,
  3. Financing,
  4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes,
  5. Teaching-Learning Process,
  6. Student Support Systems,
  7. Technology,
  8. Strategic Partnerships, and
  9. Transitions.
- It is important to raise awareness concerning the adult learner, address affordability and accessibility, and to make connections in addressing the issues of the adult learner.

Chancellor Goetz discussed the vision and mission of the council.

- What are the necessary learning opportunities in the state of North Dakota?
- What additional opportunities need to be expanded for the adult population?

Wertheim said that barriers for adult learners include affordability, accessibility and aspiration. Others barriers also include concierge, covering cost, coordination, collaboration and context.

- Concierge - Students need a navigator or concierge to help them navigate through their career as a student.
- Covering Cost - Covering costs or affordability is a barrier to the adult learner.
- Coordination - Coordination relates to various career paths and getting from one level of education to the next.
- Collaboration - A model for sharing resources and for connecting the various sectors.
- Context – What are the individual learners' needs?

Goetz gave his thoughts on the next steps for the ALC.

- It is an initiative with high priority projected to be part of the upcoming budget.
- It is an issue of public policy and awareness.
- The involvement of the business community and the private sector is critical.
- A review of the recommendations from the ALC will determine next steps.
- Additional input from the council will be valued.

Dr. Hillman worked with the council in identifying five key issues for adult learners. These will be developed into action steps for the council's further consideration.

1. Financial Aid
2. Flexible Delivery
3. Prior Learning Assessment
4. Advising and Career Planning
5. Employer Needs Assessment

The meeting adjourned at 3:10.