

PLA COUNCIL

AGENDA-FEBRUARY 4, 2016 – 10 AM-3PM

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education; Room 102A

Introductions and Welcome-Lodmell

- In person: Garth Sleight, Michael Schulz, Ricki Jones, Katherine Williams, Katie Spalinger, Sue Jones, Steve Lodmell, Joel Sims, Lexy Fisher, Daryl Lee, Cliff Coppersmith, Ann Ellsworth, Ron Larsen
- On phone: Shawn Grove, Dena Wagner-Fossen

Why is PLA important for MUS Students and Campuses – Lodmell and Nook

- Mark Nook shared his background regarding PLA and the importance of PLA for students in the MUS
 - Important to recognize that students acquire knowledge and skills in a variety of settings
 - Credit is not given for experience, but for demonstrated knowledge of learning outcomes
 - The variety of experts serving on the PLA Council is key, as PLA involves a variety of students
 - Veteran credit overload is a problem, so crucial that financial aid directors are involved
 - Encourage excitement and keep students at the forefront of our decisions
- Steve Lodmell stated that faculty members are capable of evaluating learning based on their skill sets
- Ricki Jones mentioned that students are often encouraged to take specific elective courses which may discourage utilization of PLA credits, if available
 - Mark stated that we should be paying attention to what the advisors and faculty members are saying in regard to electives. Open conversations may be necessary on campus, as faculty members may not understand the level of PLA coming in and how it could fit into the curricula.
- Steve led general conversation regarding objectives of the PLA Council
 - Workforce shortages are projected
 - Pipeline to post-secondary education is limited, adult learners and veterans are key
 - Maintaining quality of education is crucial

- Promotion and visibility of PLA is needed to inform target demographics
- Transcribing
 - Daryl Lee mentioned that veteran learning can be assessed, but does not always need be applied if not in the best interest of the student
 - Group agrees that further conversations are needed regarding evaluation of previous learning and application of credit
- Michael Schulz and Ricki Jones stated that sample PLA work and a best practice document to ensure quality would be helpful resources
- Transferability between institutions is important

Grant-Funded PLA Activities-Jones

- Sue provided an update on PLA
- grant-funded activities
 - \$350,000 granted from USA Funds
 - Build PLA Infrastructure
 - Support PLA Implementation
 - Share PLA Information with Montana's Veterans
 - Communications and Marketing

PLA Work in Progress – City College Policy/Work on PLA Pathway-Coppersmith

- Working closely with Kirk Lacy regarding workforce development
 - Montana Unions
 - Apprenticeship equivalency to Associate's Degree
- Seamless process regarding PLA between MSU Billings and City College

Focus of the Council's Work:

Working with Liaisons

Liaison's Role (see Roles & Responsibilities-discuss)

- Suggestions posed regarding PLA Liaison Roles/Responsibilities
 - "Liaison coordinates with faculty, administrators..."
 - "Ensure faculty senate has appointed..."
 - Add wording that CAO will be informed

- Construct a template with bullet points/objectives to aid PLA Liaison when informing PLA Council of progress
- Consistency must be apparent, possibly construct a content based webpage template for campuses to use
- “Establishes, convenes, and facilitates a short-term PLA workgroup to meet at least twice per year...”
- Outside community resources/outreach could possibly be included
- Once changes/suggestions are made, the document will be e-mailed to the group

Draft Questionnaire

- Suggestions posed regarding PLA Liaison Guide and Questionnaire
 - Specifically include individual who transcripts, financial aid office, business office/services, anyone else who has a vested interest in PLA
 - Traditional and non-traditional age students
 - Possibly get a copy of each institution’s PLA policy for PLA Council to review/compare
 - Question 1: Are you aware that there is a PLA policy?
 - Question 2: List the kinds of PLA are used at your institution
 - Ask audience to comment/react to questionnaire completed by PLA Liaison

Timeline for Stakeholder Input

Working with CAO’s

CAO’s Role (see Roles and Responsibilities-discuss)

- Possibly share with CAO’s for input

The Evolving Role of Council Members

Annual Report to Board of Regents

Data

Timeline – Ability to track PLA data to be in place by Fall, 2016.

MACRAO Recommendation to the Council on PLA Data Tracking (action at March PLA Council meeting?)-Dena Wagner-Fossen

- Dena Wagner-Fossen stated this is a huge conversation that needs to take place

- Discussion/decision on utilizing one system or use individual system and reporting
 - If a student attempts a challenge exam and fails, should it go on transcript? Failures need to be tracked somehow for data purposes.
- Fee structure impacts what is placed on transcript
- Upcoming MACRAO meeting at the end of February, must have a decision by May BOR Meeting

Tracking PLA Transfer Credit Designation

Institutional Policies & Guides (MCC; Helena College)–create template?

- *MSU Bozeman and FVCC PLA policies and MCC's PLA Portfolio Assessment Handbook were given to the group to read and review*

Training on PLA Standards (including 25% rule)

Research on Fees Charged for PLA

Testing and challenge exam fees, portfolio assessment fees-what is the typical cost in Montana?

Are there other state models?

Can we correlate assessment and time required to fees?

Faculty load and fees?

Promoting PLA on and off of our Campuses

Draft Manuals-for Students, Faculty, Staff– Sue

- Draft manuals were given to the group to read and review
 - Add information about ACE opportunities for faculty members to Faculty Fact Sheet

Communication (website, print materials, social media, outreach, etc.)

Faculty and Staff Role in Promotion

PLA Newsletter

Working Groups "to do" list

Examples: Tracking

PLA as it applies to Veterans
OCHE's Website Project
Communication & Newsletter

Next Meeting: March 10, 2016, Fairmont Hot Springs, Anaconda, 9 am-2pm

