



# Leveraging *DegreeNow* to Support Adult Learners

You're invited to attend a "Leveraging *DegreeNow* to Support Adult Learners" workshop.

The workshop, sponsored by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Community & Technical College System, is part of the state's effort (*DegreeNow*) to re-enroll more adult learners in our colleges and universities.

The free workshop is for any interested higher education professional who works with adult students.

## About the Workshop

### Workshop Details

Location: Room 104B

Date: Friday, April 6, 2012

Time: 8:30am - 4:30pm (lunch will be provided)

Workshop Facilitators: Randy

Friend and Sarah Sweeney

The workshop will be led by your colleagues from across the state.

Workshop topics include:

- Best practices and processes for serving adult students.
- Partnerships between academic and student affairs.
- Cultures of evidence in student affairs.

For more information about the workshop, including how to register, please contact one of the workshop facilitators or Sarah Beasley at [sbeasley@hepc.wvnet.edu](mailto:sbeasley@hepc.wvnet.edu), 304-558-1112.

## What you'll find in the Newsletter

This is the inaugural issue of *DegreeNow*: West Virginia Adult Learner Quarterly Newsletter. This newsletter will provide updates about the *DegreeNow* initiative, resources for adult learners and faculty and staff who serve adult students, research on adult learners, and other adult learner information. It will also provide a forum for campuses to share best practices for serving adults and to share adult student success stories.



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## What is *DegreeNow*?

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, in partnership with NASPA-Student Affairs in Higher Education, are facilitating a collaborative effort to create *DegreeNow*, an integrated statewide adult degree completion program, with support from the Lumina Foundation for Education.

The initiative also incorporates three components: the West Virginia Board of Governors Associate in Applied Science (AAS), the Regents Transfer Agreement, and the Regents Bachelors of Arts. Together, these components will provide a continuum in which adults can earn associate's degrees or bachelor's degrees previously started and facilitate progress for those who complete an associate's and choose to work toward earning a bachelor's degree.

According to state data there are 126,997 potential degree completers who meet the criteria. Of these, most have earned fewer than 30 credits (45%), followed by 30-59 credits (25%), 60-89 credits (22%), and 90-119 credits (12%).

By 2013 our goal is to have helped 3,000 adults complete an associate's degree and 4,600 adults complete a bachelor's degree. Each year thereafter, our goal is to help an additional 2,500 adults complete a credential.

### ***The Importance of Adult Students***

West Virginia cannot meet its workforce and civic needs for a more educated populace or aspire to achieve the Big Goal of a 60 percent attainment level by 2025 without helping more adult students complete their postsecondary credentials. West Virginia must produce an average of about 2,000 more degrees per year to reach this goal. The data indicate adult degree-completers play a crucial role: West Virginia is an aging state with low degree completion and projected increase in the number of students who start college but do not finish.



## Resources for Adult Students

Here are some on-line resources for adult students.

AdultStudent.com:  
[www.adultstudent.com](http://www.adultstudent.com)

The Adult Student Center:  
[www.adultstudentcenter.com](http://www.adultstudentcenter.com)

National College Transition Workshop:  
[www.collegeforadults.org](http://www.collegeforadults.org)

Association for Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education (ANTSHE):  
<https://sites.google.com/site/antsheontheweb/home>

CFWV.com:  
[www.cfwv.com](http://www.cfwv.com)

If you know of other resources for adult learners or have suggestions for this newsletter, please email [sbeasley@hepc.wvnet.edu](mailto:sbeasley@hepc.wvnet.edu)  
Thank you!



## DegreeNow Activities to Date

Here are some of the things we've been up to since receiving the \$800,000 grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education.

### Adult Learner Statewide Presentations

As the inaugural event for *DegreeNow*, staff from the Commission and Council traveled to nearly every West Virginia public institution to facilitate discussions about best practices for serving adult learners as well as the importance of adult students to the state of West Virginia. We shared with each institution information about their adult starters (adults who started college but did not finish), including the median number of credits adult starters had completed prior to leaving. Handouts from these presentations can be found on the WVHEPC website.

### Train-the-Trainer Workshop

In early June the Executive Director of NASPA, Dr. Gwen Dungy, and national higher education expert, Dr. Maggie Culp, led a Train-the-Trainers workshop in Flatwoods, WV for nearly forty student affairs/services and higher education professionals. These trainers will train others in the state on ways to best serve adult students.

### Marketing Campaign

This summer, along with [cfwv.com](http://cfwv.com), we began a statewide marketing campaign targeting adult learners. The campaign includes radio and newspaper ads, billboards, direct mailings to adults who started college but never finished, and on-line

efforts including revamping the college portal website adult learner section ([cfwv.com](http://cfwv.com)).

### Advisory Board

We have established an advisory board consisting of national and local educational experts, and representatives from key constituency groups, such as adult degree completers. Plans are underway for an inaugural board meeting for late summer 2011.

### Evaluation Efforts

The Center for Post-secondary Research at Indiana University is serving as the external evaluation partner on this project. Baseline data are being collected to assess how state agencies and institutions work together on existing adult degree completion programs.

## Professional Development: Webinars

EducationDynamics has a webinar (free), The New Traditionals, and How to Use the Web to Retain Them: Focus on Commuter, Adult, Online and Continuing Education Students. <http://educationdynamics.com/Retain-Students/webinars.aspx>

Innovative Educators has a webinar series (\$) entitled *Effectively Recruiting & Retaining Adult Students*. [http://www.innovativeeducators.org/product\\_p/454.htm](http://www.innovativeeducators.org/product_p/454.htm)

The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL) webinars (some free for CAEL members and others \$). <http://www.cael.org/webinar.htm>

## Adult Learner Resources

### Adult College Completion Network

A key Lumina Foundation commitment is to increase adult college completion. Lumina has partnered with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) to create the Adult College Completion Network. Check out their website, [www.adultcollegecompletion.org](http://www.adultcollegecompletion.org), to learn more

about adult learner focused projects such as *DegreeNow* and other adult learner news. You can also join their listserv to connect with higher education professionals across the nation committed to serving adult learners.

### The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

CAEL is a national non-profit organization which

creates and manages effective learning strategies for working adults. Their website includes information on principles of effectiveness for serving adults; marketing, recruiting, and retaining adult students; prior learning assessment; and other adult-focused research. CAEL also provides toolkits for institutions to assess their campuses. See [www.cael.org](http://www.cael.org).

## What is your campus doing to serve adult students?

**Does your institution have programs, events, and/or services that are geared toward adult students?**

For example, on August 2 Potomac State College of West Virginia University will hold an informational session for adult students who are thinking about starting or returning to college.

Admissions, financial aid, and academic advising staff will be there to meet with



prospective students.

If you would like to share in an upcoming *DegreeNow* newsletter what your institution is doing to serve adults or an adult student success story, please contact Dr. Sarah Beasley at [sbeasley@hepc.wvnet.edu](mailto:sbeasley@hepc.wvnet.edu) or 304-558-1112.

We look forward to hearing from you!



*DegreeNow is supported by the Lumina Foundation for Education and is a partnership between the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Community and Technical College System and NASPA—Student Affairs in Higher Education.*

## Upcoming *DegreeNow* Events

- **“Leveraging *DegreeNow* to Support Adult Students”**

This fall we will hold a series of regional 8-hour workshops entitled “Leveraging *DegreeNow* to Support Adult Students” for student affairs and other higher education professionals. These workshops will be led by your WV colleagues who completed the NASPA-led train-the-trainers workshop. Workshops will include resources on adult learners, best practices and processes for serving adults, partnerships between academic and student affairs, and the creation of a culture of evidence in student affairs.

Dates and locations will be announced soon. We hope you will join us!

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