



NASPA | KNOWLEDGE
COMMUNITY

ADULT LEARNERS AND
STUDENTS WITH CHILDREN

**Adult Learner And
Students with
Children KC
Newsletter**

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Crossroads

Quarterly Update from the Adult Learner and Students with Children Knowledge Community



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**The Focus on Our Populations
*NASPA Book brings added
spotlight to our students
See review inside...***

Katy Kemp is the Director, Student Services-Center for Academic Performance at the University of North Texas Health Science Center



Letter from our Chairperson

Dear ALSC Members,

The fall semester is in full-swing, the foliage is beginning to change, and the temp finally dropped below scorching here in Texas. The ALSC KC is excited that our members are increasing their activity and joining us at our virtual monthly meetings. We have an exciting webinar planned for November entitled, "Advocating for the Pregnant and Parenting Student: A Proactive Approach". This webinar will touch on several key areas surrounding the pregnant and parenting student such as family-friendly policy, programming and support services for parenting students, and advocacy. We hope you will join us when we send out the registration link. The fall semester also brings NASPA program proposal season to a close. We hope you submitted proposals and plan on joining us in New Orleans in March. We will host an ALSC reception and sponsor several deserving sessions

at the conference.

The ALSC KC is also looking for nominations for an incoming Chair. If you are interested in running or know someone who would make a great candidate, please submit your nomination to Martha Harper at harperm@apsu.edu by October 15th. Please look for the announcement in this newsletter with all the details on the nomination requirements.

As always, we appreciate your support of student success and your desire to work with adult learners and students with children. Our KC aims to share knowledge on this ever growing population of students and facilitate positive change. If you are interested in becoming more involved with our KC, please don't hesitate to email me.

Sincerely,
Katy Kemp



We need you!

Greetings from our search team for Chair-Elect of our ALSC KC!
Martha Harper Austin Peay State University, TN
Tinuola Ekuase, University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Kristina Testa-Buzzee, Norwalk Community College, CT

You are invited to nominate yourself or someone else to serve as the next Chair, for NASPA's Adult Learner and Students with Children Knowledge Community. The KC Chair is elected for a three-year term: one year (March, 2015-March 2016) as Chair-Elect and two years (March 2016-March 2018) as KC Chair. We invite you to view the full Knowledge Community Chair position description <http://apps.naspa.org/files/KC-Chair-Position-Description.pdf>

Check out the Blog Post at <http://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/posts/inspire-grow-and-lead-with-courage> and Advance your favorite ALSC KC member to the search team!

Program Profile: Kicking off the Year at Southern Illinois Carbondale

By Deborah Barnett
Coordinator, Non-Traditional Student Services
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

The fall semester is off to a great start! At Southern Illinois University Carbondale, the semester started with Week of Welcome including programs to welcome all students back to campus with specific programs designed with student parents, commuters, veterans, adult learners, and transfer students in mind. Examples of programs included:

- Commuter to Campus Connection
- Non-Traditional/Veteran Students Cookout
- Milk and Cookies at Morris Library's Family-Friendly Study Room
- Get Involved: Transfer and Commuter Social
- SIU Family Carnival



Students socialize at the social event.

The purpose of these programs was to connect students to campus, connect students to each other, and connect students to campus and community resources to help them succeed in reaching their educational goals.

It's all about CONNECTIONS!

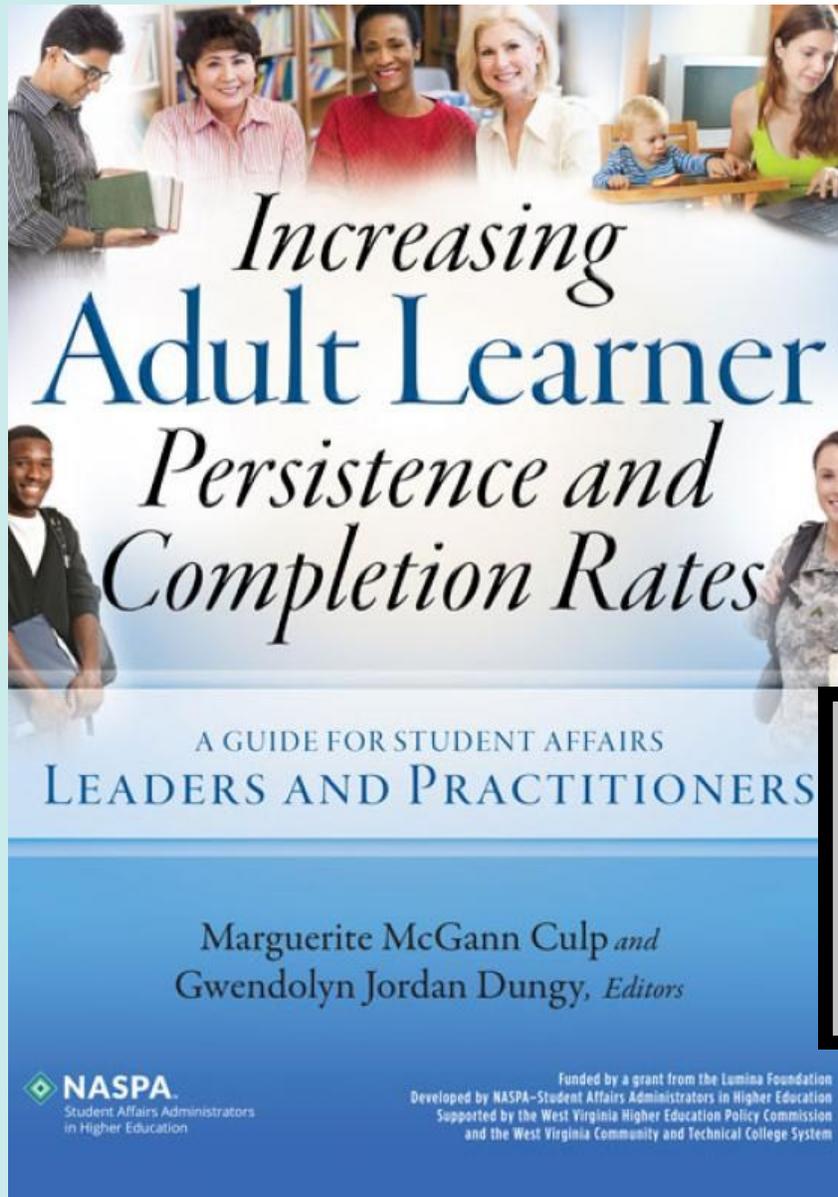


SIU Staff share information with a commuter student.



Students learn about the family-friendly study room at the Milk and Cookies Program

A review of the Book: *Increasing Adult Learner Persistence and Completion Rates: A Guide for Student Affairs Leaders and Practitioners*



Increasing Adult Learner Persistence and Completion Rates: A Guide for Student Affairs Leaders and Practitioners is available from the NASPA Website for \$29.95 (with a \$5 discount available for NASPA members) <http://www.naspa.org/publications/books/increasing-adult-learner->

By: Deborah R. Barnett, Adult Learner and Students with Children (ALSC) Knowledge Community Representative and Coordinator, Non-Traditional Student Services, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Culp, M. M, & Dungy, G. J. (2014). *Increasing Adult Learner Persistence and Completion Rates: A Guide for Student Affairs Leaders and Practitioners*.

The adult learner population continues to rise and institutions are, many times, short on research and best practices to guide services and support for this diverse population. *Increasing Adult Learner Persistence and Completion Rates: A Guide for Student Affairs Leaders and Practitioners* (2014) offers a comprehensive guidebook to understanding the adult learner population, developing effective programs and services as well as addressing issues important

to their success. Contributions from 18 established higher education professionals comprise the 10 chapters or modules related to topics including adult learner access and support, campus climate, assessment of initiatives, and the need for community and campus partnerships. Guided application, real-world examples, and advice from student affairs leaders not only provide sound, research-based strategies but seem to unite practitioners through shared experiences. The text also raises awareness of the diversity among this often marginalized population by addressing issues faced by re-entry students, parenting students, online/distance learners, student veterans, and the large population of current and prospective students with some college but no degree.

Funded by a Lumina Foundation grant, the text is a timely contribution to the field given the national agenda to increase educational attainment of adults age 25-64. Developed as a companion to NASPA's *Building a Culture of Evidence in Student Affairs: A Guide for Leaders and Practitioners* (2012), this interactive tutorial presents the *how to* and *lessons learned* from experts in the field. The guide empowers professionals to move forward and communicates urgency through the overarching theme, "The time for incremental change is over" (p. 11).

The text fills a gap by offering a wealth of practical knowledge and insightful analysis for institutions seeking to better serve, support, and successfully graduate adult students. For institutions not yet fully prioritizing the adult learner population, the tutorial also serves as a planning and preparatory resource for professionals to raise awareness within the institution. A strength of the text is the transparency with which contributors share their successes and challenges. The guide becomes a *one-stop shop* for what to do, what not to do, and what can be. The format allows for a team-based approach and institutional roadmap to examine existing adult learner programs and services while developing a strategic plan for success. Given that adult learner programs are historically underfunded and understaffed, particularly in traditional institutions, one could argue that more examples related to addressing barriers, overcoming challenges, and building capacity might have been helpful. However, the guide emphasizes building collaborative partnerships and working toward a common goal while recognizing strengths or limitations of the institution's culture.

The text concludes with "The West Virginia Story" which presents the background and implementation of *DegreeNow*, a collaborative effort among the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), West Virginia Community and Technical College System (CTCS), and NASPA and funded by the Lumina Foundation. The purpose of *DegreeNow* was to "increase the number of adult learners earning a postsecondary credential" (p. 204). It is important to point out that the success of the initiative was built on the foundational and existing commitment of "flexible, statewide degree programs aimed at adult learners" (p. 205). Although the *DegreeNow* program presents an exemplary view of what is possible, most institutions or adult learner programs lack the statewide support or institutional funding necessary for an initiative of this scale. However, the story leaves the reader filled with possibility to fuel continued dialogue. A helpful addition to the guide could have been to establish ways to extend the dialogue to those not privileged to participate in the *DegreeNow* initiative or the accompanying *Train the Trainer* program. Finding ways to continue to unite student affairs professionals by inviting them to join the conversation and learn from one another will be key to widespread change.

Overall, the text presents a compilation of strategies, best practices, valuable resources, and concludes with eight lessons shared from the *DegreeNow* program. These lessons offer student affairs professionals added insight as they move their own initiatives forward. The text challenges readers with a final lesson to contemplate, "It is relatively easy to implement a grant; it is more difficult to implement a grant in a way that matters." This lesson could also apply to each of the modules offered in the text. Selecting a strategy is only the beginning. As readers implement strategies in ways that matter and create a culture of evidence to demonstrate *how* they matter to adult learner persistence and completion, the purpose of this text is accomplished.

Program Profile: Govs Young Parent Program has first meeting at Austin Peay State University

By Candice Snow

Reprinted with Permission from the "ALL STATE," Student-run publication from Austin Peay State University

More information about this program can be found by contacting Martha Harper
harperm@apsu.edu

The stress of classes, extracurricular activities, and social life can feel overwhelming at times.

But for the silent population of young parents on campus, school can be a heavy burden added to an already full schedule.

In an effort to give support and resources to young college students with children, APSU has founded the Govs Young Parent Program. "It is a program for a population of students among us that we may not often see," said Coordinator of Adult and Nontraditional Student Center Martha Harper. "Students who are parents, but they look traditional age, so we don't think of them as having those extra pressures."

The Govs Young Parent Program is open to APSU parents under the age of 25. It meets three times per semester and offers a wide variety of resources to help develop those involved as both students and parents.

It is a safe zone where parents can connect with other young parents, learn about the importance of bonding with their children, focus on the positives of

parenting and receive valuable education and life advice from experienced APSU parents who have maintained at least a 3.0 GPA.

"The most important benefit is to recognize that you're not alone on campus," Harper said. "You may think you're the only one struggling with this sort of dual life, but there are others out there who are just not the majority of the population, so you don't see them as well. It takes away the feeling of isolation."

In an effort to stand out from the established Nontraditional Student Society—that already attends to some of the needs of student parents—the Govs Young Parent Program remains flexible and readily welcomes feedback from its members.

The first official meeting had a turnout of young parents, mentor parents and children. The meeting included informative guest speakers, group ice-breakers and playtime with the children.

"We are very much evolving until we figure out what the students need," Harper said.

Although the program is currently only open for APSU students, coordinators are flexible with regards to non-student spouses.



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