



## Chair's Welcome

**Heather Shea Gasser**  
**The University of Arizona**  
**Chair, Commission for Commuter Students &  
Adult Learners**



As we commemorate the beautiful fall season, it is also time to celebrate the diverse body of students we serve. Many of you are gearing up for your annual celebration of National Non-Traditional Student Appreciation Week, November 4 - 10. As you plan and implement this year's events and programs, please consider sharing your success stories with fellow student affairs practitioners by submitting to this publication.

It will also soon be time to register for the ACPA annual convention in Atlanta. Registration opens in less than a month! Mark your calendars for November 15 and visit <http://convention.myacpa.org/> for more info.

Please enjoy the enclosed tips, reminders and features from our field. In the spirit of National Non-Trad Week, we have included many articles in this edition about working with adult learners. Our hope is that you can use this information to provide services and programs on your own campus, as you continue to advocate on behalf of your students.

P.S. Don't forget to nominate your programs, students or colleagues for our commission awards; see the nomination information on page 5.

## Celebrating Non-Traditional Student Week

**Dana McKoy, Coordinator, Commuter & Non-Traditional Services**  
**University of North Carolina Wilmington**

The Association for Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education (ANTSHE), designates the first full week in November as "National Non-Traditional Student Appreciation Week." Even if your time and budget are stretched thin, here are some low-cost, low-effort ways to celebrate:

- Reserve a glass display case or bulletin board in a prominent area on campus and create a display about the many "roles" non-trads have: students, parents, employees, care-givers, athletes, soldiers, etc.
- Create customized thank you cards that non-trad students can pick up in your office, fill out, and give to those who support them, such as family members, friends, and professors. Then offer to mail the cards for them.
- Ask students, faculty and staff to finish the sentence, "Non-trads are..." Post the responses on a display or on your Web site. You'd be surprised how the poignant answers will demonstrate a full spectrum of opinions relating to adult learners and your campus' services for them.

For more ideas, visit <http://www.antshe.org/>.

## Graduate Preparation for Serving Adult Students

**Carolyn Palmer, Associate  
Professor**  
**Bowling Green State University**

With the numbers of nontraditional students continuing to grow in American higher education, many master's programs in college student personnel (CSP) now offer courses focusing on adult learners. At Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Ohio, the Adult Learner Focus (ALF) is akin to a minor within the major of CSP.

Like all CSP students, ALF students learn about today's diverse student populations, the types of institutions they attend (e.g., community colleges, large public universities, small private colleges), the program selections they make (e.g., traditional on-campus courses, off-campus cohorts, online learning, evening/weekend programs), the out-of-class activities they pursue, the academic and personal support they need, and the student services that foster their success and satisfaction with their college experiences.

In addition, ALF students complete coursework focusing specifically on adult learning, adult development, and student services for adult learners. Further, every attempt is made to place ALF students in required CSP internships (half-time graduate assistantships) at community colleges or in graduate,

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## Commuter Students and Adult Learners: What's New

Dr. Barbara Jacoby

Senior Scholar, National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs

The following "hot topics" were debuted by **Dr. Barbara Jacoby** at the March 2007 ACPA/NASPA Joint meeting in Orlando. This article is reprinted with the permission of *Commuter Perspectives*, a publication of the National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs:

### Commission on the Future of Higher Education

The release of the report by the federal panel appointed by U.S. Secretary of Education **Margaret Spellings** has far-reaching implications for higher education. In its preamble, the report debunks the myth that the typical undergraduate is of traditional age with a recent high school diploma attending classes at a four-year institution. One of the issue papers accompanying the report focuses on adult learners and is titled, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Adult Learners Forge a New Tradition in Higher Education." It provides current and useful statistics, as well as a clear picture of where change is needed most. [www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/stokes.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/stokes.pdf).

### Federal Financial Aid

Advocates for commuter students and adult learners should, as always, keep a watchful eye on federal legislation regarding financial aid. Although the White House has made a big deal about increasing Pell Grants (the "good news"), the "bad news is that its budget pays for this increase by cutting subsidies for student loans and eliminating the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program. Eliminating the SEOG program, which augments Pell Grants for low-income students, could be harmful to the students who most need federal aid. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i24/24aOO1.01.htm>

Outside the federal government, there are a couple of interesting things to watch. One is the work being done to reduce the complexity of the financial aid application process, particularly for low-income applicants, by transferring data from tax forms directly to the FAFSA form. <http://insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2007/02/20/afsa>

### Community Colleges

Community colleges continue to embrace innovations and strategies that are relevant to

commuter students and adult learners in all types of institutions. Over the last year, *The Student Affairs Leader* (a one-year subscription costs \$169 and is available at [www.magnapubs.com](http://www.magnapubs.com)) has featured numerous articles on such trends at community colleges. For example, emphasizing academic advising is among the steps for increasing student success that are useful for all students. Recent studies show that two-year college students who most need academic advising are least likely to seek it out. Strategies for increasing success include early identification of students experiencing academic or personal problems, providing them with enthusiastic and well-trained advisors, and strongly encouraging them to use their advisors rather than relying on friends or family for academic guidance.



### Urban Institutions

Like community colleges, urban institutions have much to share with those of us at other types of institutions in the way of best practices. In an excellent article, "Succeeding in the City: Challenges and Best Practices on Urban Commuter Campuses" (About Campus, July-August 2006), **Marcia Roe Clark** identifies three challenges that may be shared by other commuter students and adult learners: urban commuter college students may be isolated; they may be silent; and they must start over each semester. Clark states: "Because commuter students and their friends lacked a common ongoing experience, such as might be found in a residential experience, they found it difficult to sustain classroom-based friendships from one semester to the next, when class schedules changed" (p. 5). She identifies best practices, including facilitating student interactions with peers and faculty, cultivating connections with students through intrusive mentoring programs, guiding students in effectively strategizing to meet their individual academic challenges, building connections with students' families, and building continuity across semesters.

## Providing Commuters Local Alternative Break Opportunities

Jennifer Bonnet, Coordinator of the National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs  
University of Maryland

During the 2006-7 academic year, The University of Maryland (UM) offered a new *Local Alternative Spring Break* program, developed by **Jennifer Bonnet** of Off-Campus Student Involvement, and **Genevieve Villamora** of The Engaged University. The program was created to provide a unique, experiential service opportunity geared toward off-campus students who were unable to leave town for the week due to family, work, and other responsibilities, as well as financial constraints.

In addition to team meetings and teambuilding workshops throughout the fall and spring semesters, participants engaged in reflection activities regarding issues of hunger, food security, and environmental health. The week's labor consisted of laying the groundwork for a new community garden in the Riverdale neighborhood of Prince George's County, the home county of UM. Collaborating with community members to develop and implement the plans for the garden, students worked at the site for five days (Monday through Friday), approximately six hours per day. Scheduling of work times during the week was intentional to accommodate the multiple life roles of off-campus students who were juggling work, family, and other responsibilities. In the same vein, drop-in participants were welcomed, and contributed greatly to the week's work.

Thanks to gang prevention grant funding awarded to the service site, no housing needed for participants, and low transportation expenses due to carpooling, the cost of the week was minimal; thus, the trip was funded by the two aforementioned offices and through donations from supporters of the program. Students were able to participate free of charge!

Students were both literally and metaphorically sowing the seeds for a program that Off-Campus Student Involvement and The Engaged University hope will grow and flourish, and build stronger connections between the University of Maryland and its neighbors.

**Editor's Note: Are you providing innovative co-curricular experiences for commuters at your university? Let us know! Email [mckoyd@uncw.edu](mailto:mckoyd@uncw.edu).**



**Top: Students spread compost and till the ground as they prepare a community garden for the Riverdale neighborhood.**  
**Bottom: Participants pause for a moment and celebrate the beautiful results of their teamwork and service.**

## Top Ten Ways for Making Your Campus More Student-Parent Friendly

(beyond building a child care center)

**Heather Gasser, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Initiatives  
The University of Arizona**

10. Install diaper changing tables (in both mens' and womens') restrooms in major public buildings on campus.
9. Make sure your dining center or campus eateries have highchairs and booster seats available.
8. Provide safe, sanitary (NOT in a bathroom), and private places for women to breastfeed and/or pump.
7. Set up and maintain a child-friendly play area in public areas, where students study or use computers, or are likely to be found with children.
6. Promote a culture on campus that appreciates the presence of children.
5. Develop a resource website for student parents on activities to do on campus with kids.
4. Support the creation of a student organization or club for student parents to find each other and utilize each other for support.
3. Advocate for "maternity leave" for undergraduate and graduate student parents.
2. Apply for a CCAMPIS Grant (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/campisp/index.html>) and use the funds to develop child care subsidy programs, sick-child emergency back-up programs, or on-campus child care facilities.
1. What was most helpful to student parents\*? Understanding Faculty.

\* According to a recent study of Student Parents at the University of Arizona (2006).

## Stressing the Importance of Renter's Insurance

**Stefanie Stefancic, Coordinator of Adult, Graduate and Off Campus Student Services, Texas A & M University**

Perhaps your students don't have the latest plasma technology in their apartment or rental property, but they probably do have the new computer they received as a graduation gift, a closet overflowing with clothes, textbooks, Ipods and that extensive DVD collection. Students' belongings may be worth a lot more than they think, so it makes sense that they should protect them. Renter's insurance is a good place to start.

Simply put, insurance provides a safety net for students during unfortunate events such as theft, fire, burglary and vandalism. Obtaining renter's insurance is as easy as: 1) Meeting with an insurance agent to discuss what they have and how much coverage they need. 2) Considering the policy options presented by the agent and make a final decision. 3) Making their payments; for as little as \$10.00 a month most students can get \$25,000 of coverage.

It's not just an apartment; it's the place they call home and the keeper of everything that makes them happy. It's easy to see why they should safeguard it – with affordable renter's insurance. For less than the cost of a DVD each month, they can have something even more valuable: peace of mind.

## Awards Spotlight: Laura Stierman

**Brian Dusbiber, Ed.D.  
University of St. Thomas, MN**

Laura Stierman was selected as the recipient of the Commission's 2007 *Outstanding Perspective by a Student* Award. She has consistently, cheerfully, and professionally taken leadership in representing and advocating for student mothers and student parents on our campus. Working from a positive, "can do" attitude, Laura has sought out opportunities for women as adult learners, and particularly those who also have a parenting role at home.

She has moved this interest and this enthusiasm towards action. Laura has been at every orientation program for adult learners in the past three years. She has taken on leadership roles on the university's Student Parent Services Committee and has contributed to events such as the *Students who are Parents Appreciation Reception and Dinner*.

She has also organized some informal gatherings of adult women and began a Coffee & Conversation group. Laura has provided much needed leadership to this series of informal, conversations between female adult learners at the university. She has also inspired other women to take on leadership roles within this group.

By displaying the importance of continuing her own education while raising six children, she also sets a positive example and support for other women and adult learners.

## PaperClip Communications Debuts Sustainability White Paper

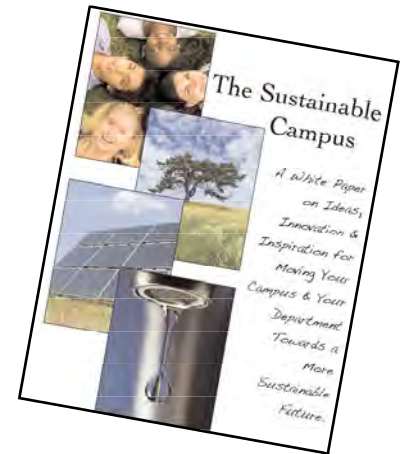
Leslie L. Perkins, Director of Student Development  
The Art Institute of Washington

PaperClip Communications will soon offer a new resource for those of you who are interested in sustainability issues. The Commission for Commuter Students & Adult Learners Taskforce on Sustainability recommends that you check out the following information, courtesy of [www.paper-clip.com](http://www.paper-clip.com):

### *A White Paper on Ideas, Innovation & Inspiration for Moving Your Campus & Your Department Towards a More Sustainable Future!*

Colleges are now actively searching for useful, impactful and economically sound ways to join the movement towards a more sustainable future. Now comes a solution to help campus administrators become sustainability leaders on their campus. The Sustainable Campus: A White Paper on Ideas, Innovation & Inspiration for Moving Your Campus & Your Department Towards a More Sustainable Future - is an innovative 50 + page white paper that highlights projects and ideas that are not only innovative but also working. From innovative programs at U.C. Berkeley to broad initiatives that can be considered by any campus, this important white paper offers real-world, practical solutions and ideas for moving your department and your campus into the future of sustainable campuses.

[For more details, check the publication Web site.](#)



## Commission Awards Committee Requests Your Nominations

Antonio Delgado, Director, Student Life  
Miami Dade College

The ACPA Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners cordially invites you to nominate outstanding individuals and programs for our annual awards. Nominations are now being accepted for the following categories:

### **Individuals:**

- Commuter/Adult Learner Perspective by a Student Development Professional
- Commuter/Adult Learner Perspective by a Student
- Graduate Student Research and Innovation

### **Programs:**

- Outstanding Adult Learner Program
- Outstanding Commuter Program
- Outstanding Collaboration Award

For detailed descriptions of each award and to submit online nominations, please visit: [http://www.myacpa.org/comm/commuter/award\\_descriptions.cfm](http://www.myacpa.org/comm/commuter/award_descriptions.cfm). The nomination deadline is November 26, 2007. Contact Erik Dussault at [Dussa001@umn.edu](mailto:Dussa001@umn.edu) or Tony Delgado at [adelgad1@mdc.edu](mailto:adelgad1@mdc.edu) for more information.

## Commission for Social Justice Education Seeks Newsletter Articles

Jen Frost, Coordinator for Student Support, Rutgers Residence Life  
Rutgers University

The ACPA Commission for Social Justice Education (CSJE)'s newsletter is published four times a year to an audience of more than 500. We are interested in publishing articles that address issues of diversity and social justice both in and outside of higher education. Ideas for articles include quantitative, qualitative, or emancipatory research briefs, editorial articles, historical articles, opinion/position pieces, and book reviews related to social justice and diversity education. The current CSJE newsletter is available at: <http://www.myacpa.org/comm/social/pages/newsletter-current.cfm>. Submissions should not exceed 1,500 words and comply with the APA 5th edition. Submissions for the November '07 edition are due by October 29th. All submissions should be sent as a word document via email to Jen Frost, Newsletter Coordinator, at [jenfrost@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:jenfrost@rci.rutgers.edu).

## Graduate Preparation for Serving Adult Students,

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academic advising, academic enhancement, career development, or other programs that serve many adult learners, as well as traditional students. What is it like to be returning adult learners in a master's program that prepares students for careers in which they will work with adult learners? Here is how two of our current ALF students answered that question:

**Amy Jo:** I believe that promoting education for any person regardless of age is important throughout our global society. I have a passion for serving and teaching adult learners, and I am an adult learner myself. I have been married for ten years, have two children, aged four and six, have been an adult education instructor for the Sandusky Career Center for several years, and am now a CSP intern in academic advising at Firelands College, a small two-year branch campus of BGSU. Given the many responsibilities I already had, some people wondered what I was doing when I entered the CSP:ALF program at BGSU in June of 2006.

It's been a challenge at times, but I have managed to balance my roles as a wife, mother, student, intern, etc. The program has enriched my life and exposed me to opportunities I would not have been able to pursue on my own. I feel particularly gratified that, as an academic adviser, I have been able to tell my story to many adults and reassure them that it is possible to return to college, succeed in college, and graduate from college at any age or stage of life. I have found the CSP:ALF program to be an excellent one for me and well worth the adjustments inherent in returning to school after ten years.

**Erin:** Before I joined the CSP:ALF program I was working in a field that was draining emotionally and physically. I decided it was time to go back to school and begin to work in an educational environment with a population that was energetic and upbeat. I have found that population in my cohort of classmates at BGSU and among the students I serve as a CSP intern in The Learning Center at Owens Community College. I really enjoy working with such positive, creative, and collaborative people. Currently, I am working with some of my colleagues in our cohort on an e-community designed to bring adult students together and hopefully create a greater sense of real community on campus.

I enjoy my coursework that emphasizes the learning and development of both traditional and nontraditional students, and I appreciate being able to take elective and practicum courses that contribute to my sense of academic independence. Outside of the classroom, in the larger campus community, I hold executive positions in BGSU's Graduate Student Senate and the Bowling Green Student Development Association. These positions allow me to connect with undergraduates as well as senior administrators, faculty members, and other graduate students. I even managed to plan and execute a wedding during my time in the program. Of course my various commitments can be stressful and at times seem overwhelming, but ultimately, I love what I do and I know that I will be serving a population that I love in an environment that is right for me!

*If you would like additional information concerning the CSP:ALF program at BGSU, please visit our web site at <http://edhd.bgsu.edu/csp> or contact Carolyn Palmer by e-mail at [cpalmer@bgsu.edu](mailto:cpalmer@bgsu.edu) or by telephone at 419-372-7383.*

## Hot Topics,

*continued from page 1*

### Technology

Trends in technology continue to affect commuter students and adult learners in both positive and potentially negative ways. On the positive side, on-line student clubs are a new tool for engagement and community building. The School of Undergraduate Studies at University of Maryland University College has created on-line major-related student clubs as a way for students to build academic communities. On the negative side, commuter advocates need to continue to watch what's going on so that commuter students do not end up as technology "have nots." For example, The Chronicle of Higher Education reported on March 3, 2006 that many institutions, such as Stanford, Yale, and Bowling Green Universities, have live-in computing consultants in dormitories. As commuter advocates, we need to ensure that these consultants are also available to commuter students in on-campus computer laboratories and via telephone for students working at home. With wireless hot spots all over campus, commuter students at Rutgers have asked for wireless hot spots at the campus bus stops as well!

### Contact Us!

Although this newsletter is a quarterly publication, we accept articles and suggestions for upcoming issues at any time. Please contact **Dana McKoy** at [mckoyd@uncw.edu](mailto:mckoyd@uncw.edu) with your ideas and submissions.

**Need more info about the Commission? Visit**

[www.myacpa.org/comm/commuter/](http://www.myacpa.org/comm/commuter/)