

By [Leslie Perkins](#)



Welcome to the Commission for Commuter Students & Adult Learners September Issue!! Autumn has begun and just as the leaves will begin to transition and change soon, so are our commuters and adult learners at our various campuses. So many exciting, new, and innovative initiatives are happening within our Commission and we hope that you are motivated to participate and be a part of it. From our Commission survey to move forward our strategic planning, an October webinar focused on transfer students, research award opportunities for graduate students, award opportunities to showcase your outreach to commuters and adult learners, feedback on the potential ACPA and NASPA unification, to upcoming leadership opportunities within the Commission directorate--the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners is working hard to serve you, our members. Please feel free to offer suggestions, feedback, and ideas to me at lperkins@aie.edu or by giving me a call at (703) 247-6842.



Commission Sponsored Webinar

The Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners will be sponsoring **Beyond Orientation: Building, Transitioning, and Engagement**

Opportunities for Transfer Students on Tuesday, October 27 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. EST.

Research and practice has shown that transfer needs go beyond orientation. As the transfer student population continues to grow in our campus, student affairs professionals are charged to find innovative ways to engage transfers and assist them with their transitioning into the institution in a cost-effective manner. This webinar will look to grounding our research and theory relating transfer student population into practice.

Costs: \$99 for ACPA student members, \$199 for ACPA members, and \$299 for non members

To register, go to: <http://www.myacpa.org/pd/webinars/>

Congratulations to Commission Members Jessica Edonick, Laura Yamin, and Kara Sharkey!

Newsletter

September 2009

Commission for
Commuter Students and
Adult Learners



Updates!

Listed below are a few updates sent from the 2010 Convention Chair, Robin Diana.

- Go **LIVE**- the Convention Planning Team anticipates October 5 to go live with the convention Registration, Hotel, Career Central, and Next Generation.
- As mentioned in our summer E-Newsletter, there are one day pass options with registration.
- Keynote and featured speakers will be announced soon, so stay tuned for an announcement in the next few weeks.
- Special Events—from Opening to Showcase to the Cultural Festival—get ready for the “WOW” factor.
- Corporate Partners/Exhibits will have a new feel to it at the 2010 convention. Cyber Café will be in there, along with some other surprises we are working on.
- The convention schedule at a glance will be on the convention website in October. A complete schedule for the convention with locations will be available next year.

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Nomination and Elections!



ACPA members, it is time to get more involved with the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners! Nominate yourself or a colleague to be a member of the commission directorate. *Nomination forms* are due by **Tuesday, November 3, 2009** and *Candidate Information Forms* are due by **Monday, December 21, 2009**.

Check out the information below on what the Commission and you as a Directorate member would do throughout the year, and find out how to nominate and/or apply to be a Directorate member.

What is the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners?

The Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners provides a network of contacts and support for those serving commuter students and adult learners. Opportunities for learning about effective programs and services, encouraging original research, sharing data, and discussing the needs/concerns of these populations are a large part of the Commission experience.

What does it mean to be a directorate member of the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners?

The directorate is a 15-member board who oversees the agenda for all Commission activities relevant to commuter and adult student advocacy, programs, services and research. Representatives are elected annually by the Commission constituency to a three-year term of service that includes committee involvement (see below), networking with colleagues, program presentation, and leadership opportunities.

What are the directorate member responsibilities?

Prior to formally submitting their names for balloting, all nominees must agree to fulfill the following expectations and responsibilities:

- Attend the ACPA National Conference
- Attend and participate in all Directorate business sessions for each ACPA National Convention held during the member's term of office, even if institutional funds are not available. (**Note: For the 2010 convention, new members will be required to attend the formal Directorate Business Meeting scheduled for *Sunday, March 21, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.***) Information regarding location, as well as the mandatory orientation program and meeting time changes, if any, will be communicated to nominees and others prior to the upcoming Commission elections.)
- Assume a leadership role by chairing a Commission committee, task force or special project during the term of office.
- Respond to all requests for information and feedback from the Chair, Chair-Elect and other Directorate members in a timely fashion.
- Resign if these duties cannot be fulfilled.

What is the nomination process?

1) Fill out the *Nomination Form* for yourself or another person on the by **Tuesday, November 3, 2009**. The nomination forms can be accessed via the [Commission's website](#). All completed *Nomination Forms* are due **Tuesday, November 3, 2009**. Forms may be emailed to Laura Knudson at nyrex001@umn.edu or Stephanie Zuniga at szuniga@studentlife.tamu.edu.

2) Fill out the *Candidate Information Form* by **Monday, December 21, 2009**. The candidate forms can be accessed via the [Commission's website](#). Forms may be emailed to Laura Knudson at nyrex001@umn.edu or Stephanie Zuniga at szuniga@studentlife.tamu.edu.

For questions or concerns, please contact:

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Featured Directorate Member

Melissa Mahan, PhD is our featured Directorate Member of the month. Melissa is the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Northeastern State University's branch Campus in Broken Arrow, OK. Her job responsibilities include overseeing the student affairs functions which consist of Disability Services, Leadership Development, Health/ Wellness, Student Government & Student Activities.

Melissa was kind enough to answer several questions about her position and other topics.

What two or three things about your position really keep you up at night? "Paperwork. I spend most of my time helping students or teaching leadership classes and have little time to do necessary paperwork, which has to be done at home. Like most other student affairs professionals, my motto is people work before paperwork. Secondly, emails. I usually receive anywhere from 75-125 emails per day. I try and answer my emails quickly and respond the same day (when possible)."

What's the best/worst career advice you've ever been given? "I cannot ever remember getting any advice at all. The advice I would give to anyone going into Higher Education would be, build relationships with people in every department of the University. Partner with faculty and collaborate with other departments to accomplish great things. The worst thing you can do is isolate yourself and think that you can do it all yourself."

What are your strengths? "I'm a huge fan of Strengths Quest and Discover Your Strengths. My top five strengths are 1. Woo 2. Positivity 3. Futuristic 4. Connectedness 5. Competition."

What are your favorite activities? "I love spending time with my family. I've been married for almost 22 years and have two children ages 19 & 20 and a Jack Russell Terrier named Freddie who loves to play fetch."



Commission Sponsored Programs Update

An announcement will be made by November of the Commission's sponsored programs during the 2010 Boston Convention.

What books are you reading? "Actually, I just published my first book and it is hot off the press as of September 2009. "The DELTA Model of Personal Leadership: Leadership for Adult Learners" You can find it on Amazon.com."

Are you Right-handed or Left-handed? Right-handed.

Where were you born? "I was born in Fort Smith, AR and raised Poteau, a small town in Oklahoma about 20 miles from the Arkansas boarder."

What's the most memorable class you've ever taken? "Ballroom Dancing with my husband. It was one of my 20th wedding anniversary presents."

What is the one thing people should know about what you do, but don't? "I traveled to Russia to teach English. It was a blast!"

Two of my favorite quotes:

"Do small things with great love" Mother Theresa

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail" Ralph Waldo Emerson

Is there anything else important that you can think of that we didn't cover? "I was a non-traditional student who also was a commuter student. I commuted 160 miles each day I had classes for my bachelors degree. I can remember how difficult it was not feeling "connected" to the college or my peers. I returned to school as a married adult with children to complete my masters in business and then my Ph.D. in adult education. I understand the demands and struggles of our adult learners and commuter students. I have a strong passion to meet the needs of these students and to see them reach their goals."



Dr. Melissa Mahan and Amy Greenland prepare for the 2009 Directorate meeting at ACPA in Washington DC.

Pay It Forward

by Nels P. Highberg, reprinted with permission from [Prof Hacker](#)

Each year, my university gives two research fellowships to junior faculty. They come with course releases and research funds, which makes the quest for them rather competitive. When I decided to apply for one in my third year, a colleague down the hall who had won one offered her application to me. She said that she'd used the application someone in her department had written a couple of years earlier, and she thought she'd won because that earlier application pushed her to think about format, design, and content in new ways. I felt that same after reviewing hers. I saw different ways of presenting certain aspects like the schedule for project completion and list of references. When I won, I knew it had a lot to do with what I learned from being given my colleague's application. If I hadn't been able to review it, I know my presentation of what I planned to do and how I planned to do it would have been much less effective. I fully believe I would have lost.



(The [photo for this entry](#) is from Flickr user Menage a Moi and is licensed through Creative Commons.)

There's a lot of writing that faculty have to do as part of our jobs, and I don't mean the scholarship we produce or the syllabi we create. I'm talking about the annual reports, grant applications, tenure dossiers, and fellowship applications. You know, the kind of writing we have to do so that we can do the writing we want to do. So why do many of us reinvent the wheel, starting many of these documents from scratch and often worrying that we're approaching them in the wrong ways?

That's why I started asking faculty more senior than I am if they'd be willing to share their documents with me and why I started offering my own to those on my junior side. After that experience with the fellowship application, I asked a few people for copies of their tenure dossiers, and they all sent them eagerly, sometimes following up with an email or phone call offering clarifications or a chance to talk about the process face-to-face. The sample documents helped a lot, too. Of course, I'm not saying I followed their exact formatting and style, but if I got stuck at how to present a certain piece of information—whether to use a chart or bulleted list or standard paragraph form—I took a look at how my colleagues handled it while adding my own spin.

And this does not only apply to faculty. A lot of graduate programs already keep files of successful job application materials, and we should be doing more of that. Graduate students can share statements of purpose they used to get into their programs. When they sign a contract for a tenure-track job, they can get the word out that their application letters, dissertation summaries, and teaching philosophies are available. Adjunct faculty might share their own job application letters or any documents or annual reviews they might have to write to keep their jobs year after year.

Some might say that the solution would be for us to post these documents online, that we should make our grant applications and tenure dossiers available on our homepages or blogs. I'm not ready to go there, however. My tenure dossier contains several quotations from external reviewers and others about my work, and they offered the letters that I quoted without consenting to their being made public to the world at large. Sure, I could ask if they're okay with it now or leave that particular information out. But if I were to post these documents online, I would want them to be complete. Plus, even as I argue that we should make such documents available to those within our immediate institutions, I would have to think more deeply and talk with others more fully about the implications of greater availability. I hope we can do that in the comments.

For now, I'm letting junior faculty at my place know they can have a copy of my fellowship application if they want it, and I attended a couple of workshops last year for faculty going up for tenure to offer some advice and let them know they could see my dossier if they thought it would help. And as I started thinking of the sabbatical application I hope to complete in the next year or two, I asked a few faculty members if I could have a copy of theirs. They all sent it along, and I intend to do the same if I'm successful with mine.

Overall, I look at this as another way we can meet one of the larger goals I have as a professional: we need to make academic processes as transparent as possible. This is my first post for Prof. Hacker and my first thinking on this issue, and I welcome questions and further reflections. It just might make our work easier.

Graduate Student Research Award 2009

By [Katie Munsch](#)

What is the Research Award?

This year, the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners is offering one \$250 research award to recognize a graduate student who is focusing a research effort on issues/trends that affect one (or more) of the following student populations: Commuter, adult learner, transfer, veteran or other non-traditional students. Individuals who have exemplified a particular passion for and commitment to studying the needs of these student populations should apply for this award.

Award Expectations:

- 1.) Publication of research/outcomes in our newsletter.
- 2.) Submission of research to a scholarly journal for possible publication.
- 3.) To be one of our sponsored program presentations at the 2011 ACPA Convention

Who is eligible for this award?

All ACPA members enrolled in a graduate program are eligible. Commission membership is not required. Award recipients are strongly encouraged to attend the 2010 Annual Convention to speak on their research and receive their award.



How do I apply?

Submit an abstract and cover letter to Katie Munsch, the Committee Chair, at kmunsch@umd.edu by November 20, 2009. Please limit abstracts to no more than eight (8) pages.

Abstracts must include:

- o Description of issue being investigated
- o Research design
- o Description of sample population
- o Research timeline that must include a completion date no later than January 1, 2011
- o Description of significance of research to the field of student affairs and the Commission
- o Hypothesis of possible conclusions

Cover letter must include:

- o Name of researcher and graduate institution
- o Contact information of researcher including e-mail and phone number
- o Contact information of researcher's supervisor (academic or professional)
- o Description of graduate field of study, including graduate level (i.e., master's or PhD)
- o Title of Abstract
- o ACPA affiliation and ACPA Membership Number

Please Note: The abstract should NOT provide the name of the researcher, as all entries are judged blindly. The cover letter will not be given to the selection committee.



Commission Awards Update

Information on the Commission Awards for 2010 will be coming soon. Please watch the listserv and website for more information on the nomination and selection process. Be sure to nominate your programs, colleagues, and students for our Commission Awards!

September Questions of the Month - Make your voices heard!

By [Jeannette Passmore](#)

A new feature of the newsletter!

Each month a question will be posted in the newsletter and/or via the Commission [Listserv](#).

Please post responses to the Commission [Listserv](#). Sharing knowledge with other professionals is an important professional development and networking tool. Asking a simple question can be a great way to get a new conversation started with long-standing and new members!

This month our questions come from the Summer Leadership Meeting and concern the Unification discussion that is ongoing between ACPA and NASPA. It is important that our voices as individuals, and as commission members, are heard by the Leadership of both associations. Our responses will be gathered and relayed to the Leadership by our Commission Chair Leslie Perkins.

Please take a few moments to respond to the following questions via the listserv. If you are uncomfortable providing your responses via a public forum you are always welcome to email our Commission Chair Leslie Perkins at lperkins@aii.edu!

- 1) What do we need to know?
- 2) What are anticipated hurdles?
- 3) How can we build a better relationship with NASPA?



Become Active on the Commission Listserv!

Listsers instructions: Login to your member profile at <http://www.myacpa.org>. Select “Manage Your Subscriptions” from the myRECORD section of the membership page. Scroll down Email Discussion list settings to verify that you are subscribed to the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners list as a single or digest subscriber. Please note the email address you have associated with your account. You will need to send all listserv messages from that address.

Once you have verified and / or updated the list information you may send a message to the listserv using commuter_and_adults@lyris.acpa.nche.edu as the To: address.

Closing Comments from the Chair-Elect!

By Gerry Elizondo

We hope that you found this month's newsletter to be both informative and enlightening! As you can see, there are many ways to be engaged with the Commission - from webinars, Commission survey, your thoughts on the unification, and more. Be sure to read our monthly newsletter, where you'll find additional information plus a new Question of the Month (we want your thoughts)! If you have any questions about the Commission, curious about what professional resources you can tap into, or wonder how you can get more active in ACPA, don't hesitate to contact any of our Directorate members or myself at gerry.elizondo@sv.cmu.edu or at 650-335-2846.



DIRECTORATE

Please contact your directorate members with any questions, suggestions, or concerns!

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