

## WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome from [Leslie Perkins](#), Chair



Hello Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners! I hope you are enjoying your summer and can't believe it's already August. Since my institution is on the quarter system, I'm in the midst of our summer quarter while those of you on the semester system are only a few mere weeks away from the fall semester. Either way, as we continue to work on behalf of commuter and adult learner students, we continuously espouse to them about striking a life balance. This is something that I hope you are being mindful of as well in your own lives.

### ACPA 2009 SUMMER LEADERSHIP MEETING UPDATES

It's been 2 weeks since I've been back from attending the ACPA Summer Leadership Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky (home of ACPA's President Tom Jackson and the home of ACPA's 2012 Convention). I spent several fun, action-packed days representing our constituent group and had a wonderful opportunity to connect with my fellow Commission Chairs, Standing Committee Chairs, State/International Divisions Chairs, and ACPA Governing Board members. As your representative, I wanted to share with the membership a few highlights of information obtained from the Summer Leadership Meeting. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to contact me at [lperkins@aie.edu](mailto:lperkins@aie.edu).

#### ACPA Placement Services and Career Services:

- Career Central is the new name of ACPA's Placement and Career Services system
- ACPA Career Central at Convention is the new name of ACPA's Placement and Career Services during annual conventions
- The new company chosen for our placement and career services is Job Target ([www.jobtarget.com](http://www.jobtarget.com))
- ACPA needed a new placement and career services system that modernizes our old system and allowed ACPA to maintain our tradition of excellence in career planning and placement services
- Job Target enhances both employer and candidate searches and will allow ACPA members to use a single system sign on via your ACPA username and password
- Career Central through Job Target will have a 24 hour/7 days a week customer service line and an online helpdesk from the website
- A Placement Implementation Committee worked on this project; it was a Professional Development Committee Project within the association's strategic priorities
- Career Central and Career Central at Convention expanded services will also include the availability of postings for internships, assistantships, and opportunities for mid-level and senior-level professionals
- New features for Career Central at the Convention include offering employers the opportunity to use an interview table for 1-2 days at a lower rate, and opportunities for candidates and employers for mid-level positions to conduct interviews in a more private environment
- For candidates and employers, there is no cost to maintain an account with Career Central
- The registration rates for Career Central at Convention have not been announced at this time
- Career Central sends personal alerts when jobs meeting a defined criteria are posted
- Career Central at Convention will be all electronic, but the mailboxes will still be available
- Career Central at Convention is scheduled to launch in October 2009 and will still offer candidates and employers the opportunity to conduct multiple interviews during the convention

#### ACPA Convention 2010:

- 2010 Convention registration costs will be the same as for last year's convention
- The scheduled dates are March 20-24
- The two main hotels will be the Boston Marriott Copley Place and the Sheraton Boston Hotel
- The Hynes Centre is where Corporate Partners (formerly called exhibits) will be located
- For the first time ever, Corporate Partners will be able to present conference programs; a total of 6 slots have been set aside
- The Saturday pre-conference workshops will now only be ½ day programs. The 2010 Convention Planning Team did research on the last several years and the numbers for full day programs on the Saturday have had low numbers

[Continued](#)

# Newsletter

Summer 2009

Commission for  
Commuter Students  
and Adult Learners

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New Feature! All [links](#) are active!

## ACPA 2009 SUMMER LEADERSHIP MEETING UPDATES CONTINUED

- ACPA Governing Board approved one day passes that will be an option for convention attendees with registration; the 2010 Convention Planning Team is being proactive about assisting members who may be unable to afford a 5-day conference
- Members will have the option of choosing either a Saturday ½ day and/or a Sunday full day pre-conference workshop with a day pass
- The ACPA Awards Reception will kick off the 2010 convention
- The 2010 Convention Planning Team is exploring the development of a professional development transcript for members that's very similar to a co-curricular transcript
- Career Central at Convention will offer candidates and employers the ability to recruit/interview for mid-level and senior-level positions in a more private space than the regular placement location
- Career Central at Convention will be an integration of the online job board and a modern onsite placement system
- Critical issues for the convention and opportunities for program proposals: serving veterans, global citizenship, and strategic partnerships
- Along with these critical issues, program proposals with consideration of the ways in which the economic situation has affected various aspects of campus life are welcomed
- Sample program proposals will be uploaded soon onto the convention website to assist members looking to submit proposals

### CONVENTION 2010 IMPORTANT DATES:

1. Call for program reviewers( August 3- September 4, 2009)
2. Call for programs deadline (September 11, 2009)
3. Registration, Housing, and Career Central Opens (October 5, 2009)
4. Ancillary Program Request Deadline (November 20, 2009)
5. Early Bird Registration Deadline ( January 29, 2010)

For continual updates on the convention, go to <http://convention.myacpa.org>.



*Directorate members Laura Knudson and Gerry Elizondo share Commission information during the 2009 Convention Showcase.*

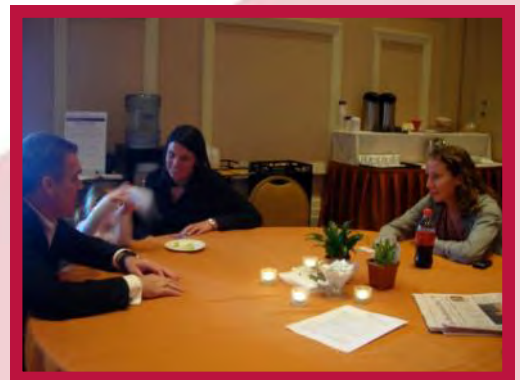
## WELCOME FROM GERRY ELIZONDO, CHAIR-ELECT



How wonderful it is to be involved with the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners ! After a 3-year hiatus from being involved in the Commission, I am very glad and honored to be back on the Commission as the Chair-Elect starting this March 2009. My convention experience in March at Metro DC allowed me to not only return to my old stomping grounds (Go Terps!) but also allowed me to (re)connect with colleagues both old and new. I was bowled over by how passionate and involved our Directorate is in moving the Commission forward and professionally re-charged from all that I've gained and learned through the Convention. I look to continue feeding off the energy I've gained from the Convention in inspiring my fellow colleagues in the Commission in doing new and different things in line with the Strategic Goals of ACPA. I've been lucky to find ways of being engaged in the Commission (it's so easy!) and I encourage each and everyone of our members to be involved in ACPA and the Commission. If you have any questions, you're welcome to contact me at [gerry.elizondo@sv.cmu.edu](mailto:gerry.elizondo@sv.cmu.edu).



*ACPA Members and guests enjoy some quiet time at the 2009 Convention Stress-Free Zone. Co-sponsored by the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners and the Commission for Wellness.*



# COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLANNING

By [Gerry Panelo Elizondo](#)

At the 2009 Convention at Metro DC in March, the Commission for Commuters and Adult Learners Directorate excitedly tackled the following task: how can our Commission be strategically aligned with ACPA's Strategic Goals of:

- Knowledge and Competencies
- Professional and Career Development
- Membership Recruitment and Retention

Why were we excited? Not only are these goals reflective of our own commission values of being a responsive and informed resource to our active and engaged membership, but also that these same goals are shared and recognized on all levels of ACPA. In being purposeful and mindful of how the Commission already meets these three goals, we acknowledged that while we effectively address these goals in what we currently do, there are so many ways we can think outside the box and be more effective!

- Here's a snapshot of each goal and the results of our brainstorming
- The goal of **Knowledge and Competencies** focuses on the creation and dissemination of new research theoretical understandings and competencies that will promote intentional practice in student affairs. In our brainstorming, we recognized how our Newsletter has been an effective means of providing information to our membership. An untapped area we look to move forward with is the use of technology - including webinars and podcasts -in providing valuable information and content to our membership as well as our students. We look to our membership to help provide our Commission with updates on current practices and the latest research in the areas of Commuter and Adult Learners and using venues such as regional conferences, blogs, submissions for publications and sponsored programs. We highly encourage the continual update of literature, including updated research on commuter and adult learners, and encourage the membership to contribute to these areas.
- Providing ongoing training, skill development and continuing education related to professional effectiveness is the goal of the **Professional and Career Development** theme. We recognize that Commuter and Adult Learner advocates tap into different professional resources – from trainings, various commissions, other professional organizations, literature sources, and technology – to inform their practice and be innovative in their approach to their work. The Commission finds value in promoting webinars, regional conferences and pre-conference programs to continually inform our membership of best practices.
- The process of establishing long term relationships with individuals and groups is the highlight of the third goal, **Membership and Recruitment**. In addition to our newsletter and our web presence on the ACPA website, we recognize that this goal also requires active and ongoing engagement between the Commission Directorate and the membership. We look to take advantage of technology and networking that can happen year-round, versus only at the yearly convention. Mentoring of Next Generation students at Convention, in addition to mentoring our own membership, is important. We also value the importance of recognizing best practices via our annual Awards process. Bottom line, our membership informs the Commission and the greater ACPA community of the advocacy we already provide to our Commuter and Adult Learner students – and the Commission challenges our membership to be involved!

As we say this to our own students, we also say to our membership - **key to our success is your involvement!** In order for the Commission to move forward with strategic planning and initiatives, we want (and need) honest feedback from our members via our Commission Self Study (coming to your e-mailbox soon!). In addition to feedback, we want involvement from the membership, from as simple as attending a Commission webinar or writing an article for the newsletter or attending a state or regional conference, to proposing a program for the National Convention or a commuter/adult learner program at your regional conference.

Our excitement and energy is contagious – we hope that you are equally excited as we approach a new academic year in being effective Commuter and Adult Learner advocates not only for our students, but also as being an effective resource in supporting and engaging your fellow colleagues via the Commission.

## Commission Question of The Month

By [Jeannette Passmore](#)

### ***A new feature of the newsletter!***

Each month a question will be posted in the newsletter 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.

**Does your institution participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)?**

**What data from these assessments do you find most useful?**

## COMMISSION FOR COMMUTER STUDENTS & ADULT LEARNERS MENTORING PROGRAM

By [Jeannette Passmore](#)

The Commission's Mentoring Program is a new service to the membership. This program brings together two of ACPA's strategic goals and our member's strengths and commitment to providing the best services for students and the profession. Participating as a mentor or mentee provides an opportunity for professional development at all levels of professional experience. Mentors and mentees will also be a part of the continued efforts to improve recruitment and retention by developing individual and group relationships. Please consider becoming a part of program and sharing your knowledge, passion, and experience with other professionals.

The Commission will provide initial pairing of mentors and mentees and will provide support for mentor/mentee pairs as needed. Mentors will accept the responsibility of working autonomously with mentees to ensure the mentor/mentee relationship is beneficial.

The Learning Outcomes of the mentor/mentee program for mentees are:

- Enhanced the professional growth and development
- Increased knowledge of the current issues facing professionals working with commuter students and adult learners
- Enhanced professional support from mentor and Commission colleagues
- Increased networking opportunities through knowledge of and participation in Commission related events and activities

The Learning Outcomes of the mentor/mentee program for mentors are:

- Professional growth and development through mentorship and providing service to their profession
- Increased knowledge of issues facing graduate students and new professionals in the field

Mentor/Mentee Roles and Expectations

- Mentors should be Commission members and mentees will be encouraged to become Commission members.
- A mentor is defined as anyone who is more senior in the field than the mentee (e.g., a graduate student may mentor an undergraduate; a new graduate may mentor a graduate student, etc.).
- Participants may apply to be both a mentor and mentee, if they wish (e.g., a mid-level professional might mentor a new professional, while being mentored by a senior professional).
- Mentors should try to connect with their mentee at least once month, either via e-mail, telephone, or in person.
- Mentees should put some thought into what they hope to achieve from the mentoring relationship, and be prepared with questions and ideas for how their mentor can assist with their career development.
- Mentor/mentee pairs should make an effort to meet in person at least once a year at a regional or national conference or meeting.
- Participants should commit to their mentoring relationship for a minimum of one year (though they are encouraged to maintain the connection for as long as it's helpful and productive).

[continued](#)

If you are interested in the program please send the following information to [Jeannette Passmore](#) or 567.429.3691



*Heather Shea-Gasser, ACPA Coordinator for Commissions-Elect (and immediate Past-Chair of the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners) and Alice Mitchell, ACPA Coordinator for Commissions pay a visit to the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners Directorate meeting during the 2009 ACPA Convention.*

# COMMISSION FOR COMMUTER STUDENTS & ADULT LEARNERS MENTORING PROGRAM

## INTEREST FORM

Fields marked with an \* are required. Please complete as many questions as you feel comfortable responding to so that we may match you with the best possible mentor/mentee

\* Name:

\* Email Address:

\* Office Phone:

Cell Phone:

Mailing Address:

Institution Name:

Institution Size:

\* Current Position:

\* Number of Years in Field:

\* Interested in: Mentoring \_\_\_ Being Mentored\_\_\_ Both\_\_\_

List Your Professional Interests

What areas of specialization do you have or are interested in developing?

What are some of your career aspirations?

What do you hope to gain out of the commission mentoring program?

What do you believe you can offer a mentee through this program?

With what type of mentor / mentee would you like to be matched?

What are your strengths as a professional?

What are three strengths you would like to develop or continue to develop during your mentoring relationship?

Are you currently working on a project with which you need assistance?

If yes, provide a brief description of the project. You may include any attachments that would help in understanding the project.

The goal of the program is to provide you with the mentor that best fits your needs. Please feel free to provide any additional information that would guide us in matching you with the most appropriate mentor.



*Right: Directorate members Stefanie Stefancic, Stephanie Zuniga, Katie Munsch, Gerry Elizondo, Laura Knudson, Chalen Jackson, Laura Yamin, Jessica Edonick, and Amy Downey prepare for the Directorate meeting at the 2009 Convention.*

*Left: The Convention was held and the Gaylord National Hotel.*



## BOSTON 2010 SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 20-24

**Innovative Ideas** - inspires and empowers us to imagine and to act as agents of change

**Revolutionary Results** - commits and challenges us to demonstrate effectiveness in support of teaching and learning

### What's Brewing in Boston?



The 2010 Convention theme, Innovative Ideas • Revolutionary Results, does more than connect us to the historic legacy of our meeting in Boston. Our convention offers us a framework to re-think how we approach our work with students. How do our services and programs engage students in and out-of-the classroom? How do we know if we provide outstanding service and programs? We have an opportunity to seek creative solutions and consider how we can best leverage resources in order to serve students holistically and globally. This includes moving beyond seeking collaboration to creating synergistic relationships with partners across the globe.

## MAKE YOUR MARK! CALL FOR SPONSORED PROGRAMS

by [Chalen Rice](#) and [Laura Yamin](#)

As most of you have probably already seen, ACPA has opened up the website to begin accepting 2010 program submissions. The Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners is seeking sponsored program submissions for the 2010 ACPA Convention. We would like to encourage you to submit a program proposal for the 2010 ACPA Convention in Boston - and to strongly consider targeting your program on the needs and issues of commuter students, adult learners and other non-traditional student populations. The Commission receives an opportunity to sponsor five (5) programs and one (1) round table. We are eager to claim all our spots for programs related to these functional areas.

The proposal submission process is open, and the deadline to submit a proposal is **Monday, September 11 by 11:59 EST.**

In addition, please visit the [this link](#) for the 2010 ACPA convention theme and detailed information about the professional competencies, critical issues as well as a new evaluation rubric that reviewers will use to evaluate all proposals. *As you consider a program proposal, the integration of the theme and core competencies will be factored in the review process.*

Below is a list of areas, including professional competencies, we are seeking submissions in. *This is not a comprehensive list or should limit anyone to seeking sponsored program within the commission.*

### Program Topic Areas:

#### **Veterans**

- Transitioning student services
- Best practices
- Collaborating with academic affairs (holistic service)
- Soldier to civilian efforts
- Mattering vs. marginality

#### **Global Citizenship**

- Organizing local community efforts
- Volunteer programs (on campus and in local community);  
Alternative Spring Break
- Celebrating diversity, family, etc
- Green initiatives
- Educational programming curriculums
- Co-curricular transcripts
- Learning/language communities



[continued](#)

## MAKE YOUR MARK! CALL FOR SPONSORED PROGRAMS

### Strategic Partnerships

- Meaningful partnerships with other associations and companies, aligning services, programs and innovative models of student success
- Developing revenue-seeking opportunities
- Collaborating with community partners for programming/learning opportunities for students
- Research/programming grants that may be available through associations, foundations, campus community, etc
- Collaborative opportunities with career services, local job fairs, etc.; utilizing student employees and providing unique job opportunities within our departments
- “Daycations” – working with local area to promote city/campus collaboration
- Innovative revenue opportunities

### 2yr. Colleges

- Student Life & Programming
- Connecting Students
- Connecting with distance learners

### Sustainability:

\*\* Note: For more information, please refer to ACPA Sustainability website (<http://www.myacpa.org/task%2Dforce/sustainability/>)

- Best Practices
- Healthy Environment
- Social Justice
- Sustainable society
- Non-residential based programs/outreach
- Reducing the carbon footprint



continued

## MAKE YOUR MARK! CALL FOR SPONSORED PROGRAMS

### Assessment

- Assessing Non-traditional students and adult learners
- What do we know
- What don't we know
- Best practices
- Reaching Commuter and adult learners
- What do we know
- Best practices
- Assessing Commuter students
- What do we know
- How are they changing
- What are their needs
- Best practices
- Applying Assessment and Theory
- What's out there
- How do we incorporate theory and/or assessment into daily practice
- Difference between national data and institutional data – how does this effect practice

### Technology

- Distance learners
- Meeting the iPod Generation
- How Millennials learn
- Reaching commuters through technology
- Bridging generations with technology



### Other Ideas

- Advocacy
- How campuses use student groups to advance advocacy efforts in their campus community
- Adult Learners
- Research
- Best practices
- Commuter needs in general
- Off Campus Students
- Transfer students
- Graduate students
- Distance learners

Please consider submitting a proposal. You can contact Chalen Rice ([chalen@uh.edu](mailto:chalen@uh.edu)) or Laura Yamin ([lyamin@pace.edu](mailto:lyamin@pace.edu)) if you have questions about commission sponsored programs, need help with your submission, or would like to let us know you are submitting on a topic. We look forward to an overwhelming response of submissions.



## SEEKING PRESENTERS FOR "MORE THAN A PLACE TO PARK" AT ACPA 2010!

By [Katie Munsch](#)

***Are you not quite ready to present an entire workshop at ACPA but have an exemplary practice to share?*** If so, I encourage you to submit a proposal to be a presenter at “More Than a Place to Park: Successful Programs for Commuter Students and Adult Learners” at the 2010 Annual ACPA Convention in Boston on March 20-24, 2010!

### **What is “More Than A Place to Park”?**

“More Than a Place to Park” is an interactive program that consists of three 15-20 minute presentations about innovative programs and practices for commuter students, adult learners, or other non-traditional students. The presentations are followed by 15-20 minutes of questions from the audience about the programs and ideas presented.

“More Than a Place to Park” is sponsored annually by the ACPA Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners (<http://www.myacpa.org/comm/commuter/>) at the ACPA National Convention. The program is organized and coordinated by the National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs ([www.nccp.umd.edu](http://www.nccp.umd.edu)), an organization that has had a close relationship with the commission for the past thirty years.

### **What are we looking for?**

We are currently seeking individuals to provide the three 15-20 minute presentations at “More Than a Place to Park”. These presentations should focus on exemplary practices that affect commuters, adult learners, transfers, veterans and other non-traditional students. We are seeking examples of exemplary practice related to:

- Programs, Activities, Organizations, etc.
- Assessment or Research/Data Collection
- Innovative and Cutting-Edge Practices

Ideally, we would like to have one presentation related to each area listed above.

In addition, please visit the following link to view the 2010 ACPA convention theme and the professional competencies and critical issues ACPA is focusing on this year: <http://convention.myacpa.org/program/index.php>. *Please Note:* “More Than a Place to Park” presentation proposals that include the integration of the convention theme and core competencies will be favored in the review process.

### **How do I submit a “More Than a Place to Park” presentation proposal?**

If you are interested in presenting at “More Than a Place to Park”, please send an e-mail containing a brief description of your exemplary practice to [kmunsch@umd.edu](mailto:kmunsch@umd.edu) by **Friday, August 28, 2009**. “More Than a Place to Park” presenters will be chosen and notified by Friday, September 4, 2009. If you have any questions, please contact me at [kmunsch@umd.edu](mailto:kmunsch@umd.edu) or 301-405-0986.



*2009 ACPA Convention attendees stop at the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learner's Chinese birthday celebration table at the Convention Showcase. The theme for this year's Showcase was Multicultural Birthday Party.*

## 2009 COMMISSION AWARD WINNERS!



By [Jeannette Passmore](#)

During the 2009 ACPA Convention the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners presented awards for many outstanding programs, services, and professionals. Each of the award winners has provided an outstanding service to commuter students and adult learners or contributed to the professional knowledge base. On behalf of the Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners the Directorate would like to congratulate our 2009 award recipients.

Outstanding Commuter Program Award: “Be a Good Neighbor” – Arizona State University

Outstanding Adult Learner Program Award: “Lessons Learned” – University of North Carolina Greensboro

Outstanding Collaboration Award: “The Pursuit of Happiness” – Pima Community College

Outstanding Perspective by a Student: “Serving Adult Learners: A Handbook for Effective Practice” – Bowling Green State University

### Outstanding Commuter Program Award

“Be a Good Neighbor” – Arizona State University

The ASU Center for Off-Campus & Commuter Student Services was officially opened in August of 2007 and was charged with becoming self-sustaining within 5 years. In an effort to meet that goal the Center developed the “Be a Good Neighbor Program” providing off-campus properties in the university district with the opportunity to partner with Off-Campus & Commuter Student Services. A key component of the program are the Community Liaisons who assist in building stronger communities in the partner properties by bringing students together through events and programs, providing university resources to our off-campus student population, and creating an atmosphere where students can work together with our partners and other community stakeholders to improve the quality of life in the university district.

The options within the ASU “Be a Good Neighbor” program were designed as a mechanism to connect the apartment communities to ASU resources. By allowing the properties to maximize their exposure to the ASU community (in ways exclusive to those properties who participate in the program), Off-Campus & Commuter Student Services provided service beyond what previously existed in addition to establishing mutually beneficial relationships.

The ASU “Be a Good Neighbor” program has been extremely successful, with revenue totaling \$67,000 in the first fiscal year. The program is continuing to evolve and become embedded in the community. There is a waiting list for properties that would like to participate as an ASU “Be a Good Neighbor.” While sales have yet to conclude for the 2009 fiscal year, Off-Campus & Commuter Student Services currently has an additional \$15,000 of revenue. Additionally, all the “Be A Good Neighbor” partners are presently sitting at a 90-95% full occupancy rate, which they attribute to their participation in this program. They are extremely pleased. The Center’s web page averaged over 2,000 hits a month and the Housing Locator service averaged over 1,000 hits a month for the 2008 fiscal year.

### Outstanding Adult Learner Program Award

Most adult students bring apprehension, anxiety and sometimes unrealistic expectations when they enroll as undergraduates. However, finding out what has worked well for their academic peers can provide a unique boost to their understanding of what a University education requires and how best to succeed in achieving it. The Office for Adult Students (OAS) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro addressed this need through the development of the Lessons Learned project.

The Lessons Learned project has incorporated the goals of the OAS. These goals include affirming lifelong learning, giving recognition to successful adult students at UNCG, connecting individuals with peers to share experiences and support, and to improving retention rates for this population’s enrollment.

Lessons Learned, available both in hard copy and online, offers advice from enrolled adult students who have succeeded academically at UNCG. Advice was compiled from OAS Adult Student Profiles and interviews with students from the Chancellor’s List or Deans List. The voices and faces of nearly 50 students appear in the hard copy version of Lessons Learned, organized into “key lessons.”

OAS recognized that visual identities as well as textual commentaries would be useful in imprinting the idea of academic success as an adult student, so photographs of the adult student participants were included, both in the Adult Student Profiles and in Lessons Learned. Attention was paid to presenting a cross section of ages, ethnicities, etc., so

[continued](#)

## 2009 COMMISSION AWARD WINNERS!



that any potential adult student might see him or herself fitting into this population.

While the retention effects will need a longer time frame for valid assessment, the anecdotal responses to Lessons Learned have been extremely favorable from those who have seen it.

The uniqueness of this program is in how it accomplishes goals for two very different groups of adult students. The adult students asked to share their stories receive recognition, not only in being chosen by the OAS, but also by being recognized as an adult student of excellence on campus. New and prospective students see successful adult students and get good advice from students who have "been there" already.

### Outstanding Collaboration

During the Spring 2007 semester, the Student Life Coordinator collaborated with three Pima Community College (PCC) Writing faculty, two PCC Student Success faculty, the University of Arizona (UA) Blue Chip Leadership Program, a local movie theater, and the UA's Centennial Hall to establish and implement a program around "The Pursuit of Happiness," a movie about Chris Gardner that speaks to our students who are overcoming struggles and building their lives. The Student Life Coordinator contributed the idea and funding and each participating teacher developed relevant writing projects that suited his or her classes. The program gave students an opportunity to participate in any or all of the following four components:

1. Reading and discussing Chris Gardner's book called "The Pursuit of Happiness."
2. Watching "The Pursuit of Happiness" movie at a local theater and writing papers to define personal success.
3. Attending a speaking event with Chris Gardner at the University of Arizona.
4. Participating in small-group discussions led by UA Blue Chip Leadership Program students about defining happiness, finding success, and transferring to a university.

As a result of the collaboration, over 300 students (~ 8% of the Desert Vista student population) participated in one or more components of the program. More specifically, 187 students and students' family members attended the speaking event; over 150 students read, discussed, and wrote papers about excerpts from Chris Gardner's book; 105 students participated in small-group discussions at the UA; and 93 students watched and wrote analytical papers about the movie.

Overall, the program was successful because the collaboration between the Student Life Office, numerous faculty members, the University of Arizona, and community businesses crossed academic, co-curricular, and community boundaries. By providing four different ways for PCC's commuter students to get involved in "The Pursuit of Happiness" program, allowing for students to attend certain events on their time, offering transportation, and supporting the students' family commitments, the Student Life Office established a strong method for creating and implementing programs for the campus community.

### Perspective By a Student

Prior to the 2006/2007 school year, Dr. Carolyn Palmer, Associate Professor in the department of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Bowling Green State University, was contacted by some of her colleagues regarding a handbook they wanted to produce focusing on adult learners. Since Dr. Palmer is the director of the Adult Learner Focus program at BGSU, she readily agreed. During the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school year, 13 graduate students in the department spent time researching programs and services that focused on the needs of adult learners and nontraditional students. As part of a class entitled "Student Services for Adult Learners" each student selected a student affairs functional area and spent the semester gathering information about different programs across the country that demonstrated good practices when serving the adult students at their institution. In addition to gathering the information, each student presented their findings during class and wrote a chapter that included three examples of good practice programs or services.

Throughout each semester, the students spent time critiquing each others' chapters and providing helpful suggestions. At the end of the Fall 2007 semester, Dr. Palmer submitted each chapter to the National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs for review. *Serving Adult Learners: A Handbook for Effective Practice* was published and available for sale in May 2008. "This 174-page handbook focuses on programs, services, policies, facilities, and other elements of higher education that address the needs and interests of growing populations of adult learners and other nontraditional students.

Each student who authored a chapter worked one-on-one with adult students in some capacity while completing their graduate studies at BGSU. Many continue to work with adult students at higher education institutions across the country.

## FEELING OVERWHELMED? CLEAN YOUR DESK

by [Alyssa Gregory](#)

You're winding down your week, and this weekend you won't be cramming in work during every free block of time that pops up. You're taking the weekend off. Good for you! But how do you put your work aside and forget about it...oh, and wouldn't it be nice to avoid the Sunday evening dread about what you will be facing in the morning?

As simple as it sounds, clearing off your desk before you shut down for the week can do wonders for your enjoyment of your work-free weekend. And it can generate feelings of preparedness for Monday. Take it one step further and adopt a more organized and consistent approach to your working environment, and you may find that you are happier, less stressed, and even more productive.

So, why does a clean and organized desk help deal with overwhelm? The answer is as simple as the concept:

- Clutter is distracting and can derail your attention.
- It's hard to decipher what is important when everything is a mess.
- You are making yourself work harder when you have to overcome a visual obstacle in order to get down to business.
- Seeing a messy desk when you are not working makes you think about everything you have to do.



It takes time to find what you need when nothing is organized.

You may be very organized with your work — successfully tracking tasks, managing client projects, staying on top of e-mail, and keeping your computer desktop clean. It's just an important, though, to let that organization trickle over into your physical environment. Here are some tips for getting started:

**Start with a clean slate** – If you have been neglecting your desk and office for a while, set aside a chunk of time across several weeks, if necessary, to get it to the level of clean and clear you need.

**Handle paper as it comes in** – Once your desk is clean, it's important to create a plan for maintaining it. Paper, including mail, is one of the biggest culprits of a messy desk. Take time every day to file, throw away or take action on every piece of paper on your desk.

**Separate work and personal things** – Don't let your workspace become overrun by non-work clutter. Assign another place in your house for items that you don't need to do your work (i.e. household bills, your children's school paperwork, personal letters and cards).

**Don't overdo it** – Avoid letting your quest for organization take over your life. If you find that you are spending too much time trying to stay neat, it's time to step back and reevaluate your plan.

**Decide what clean means to you** – A clean and uncluttered environment means something different for everyone. Find the level of organization that works for you and stick with it.

I, personally, accomplish more and feel better about what I'm doing when my desk is clean and my office organized. But, I also struggle to find the time to maintain organization as I go throughout my day. I started setting aside a few minutes at the end of the day (as I'm going through the last of my e-mails and preparing my tasks for the next day), when I straighten up and clean off my desk. And it works for my psyche.

Is clutter getting in your way? What do you do about it?

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Please feel Free to Contact your directorate members with any questions, suggestions, or concerns!

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Directorate Members Stefanie Stefancic, Laura Knudson, Leslie Perkins, and Brett Gagnon brainstorm together at the 2009 Directorate meeting.