

# IPCN

*Indiana Pathways to College Network*

**Pathnotes, Vol. 29, No. 1**

## ***Indiana Efforts in Recruiting and Retaining Adult College Students***

**Moderator: Henry Merrill, Indiana University School of Continuing Studies**

**Panelists: Kimberly Stephan, Ivy Tech College for Working Adults, Amanda Helman, IUPUI-Ivy Tech Coordinated Programs, Patricia Jefferson, University of Indianapolis School of Adult Learning, and Daniel Callison, Indiana University School of Continuing Studies**

The **College for Working Adults (CWA)** at Ivy Tech is designed to reduce barriers related to postsecondary education for working adults. The online, cohort format enables adults to earn an Associate's Degree in two years at relatively low cost and with less time and transportation requirements than in a traditional program.

- Ivy Tech launched nine CWA programs at 10 Ivy Tech campuses, though program director Kimberly Stephan suggested that in hindsight, launching one or two programs at a time might have been a better idea.
- CWA participants need to be “program ready” (not in need of remediation) at the start of the program. Remediation modules are available to help students “brush up” on necessary skills.
- Students are expected to have access to a computer with a high speed internet connection, though many campuses assist students with accessing computers.
- Currently, the program consists of about 60% women and 40% men. CWA students report liking the sequencing, flexibility, and pace of earning credits.
- Marketing for the CWA program includes distribution of program brochures, online and television commercials, and a dedicated email campaign that automatically contacts students who have expressed an interest in the program.
- There is a need to better engage employers and to encourage them to support adult workers in participating in the program.

**IUPUI-Ivy Tech Coordinated Programs (Passport)** strives to increase course and degree articulations between IUPUI and Ivy Tech, maintains advising offices at both campuses, offers cooperative student services, facilitates shared access to student records, offers IUPUI Passport

scholarships and promotes student life programs. The goal of the Passport office is to make the transfer of credit and/or degrees between the two institutions as seamless as possible.

- Articulations between IUPUI and Ivy Tech are well underway, with a 2 + 2 format leading to a Bachelor's Degree from IUPUI from all Associate's Degrees at Ivy Tech.
- Passport advisors tell prospective transfer students up-front that IUPUI is more expensive than Ivy Tech, to reduce sticker-shock and increase the chances that students will be prepared for the higher cost when they get to IUPUI.
- Moving from a smaller school like Ivy Tech to a larger, more impersonal school setting can be intimidating for adult students who may be hesitant to ask for help.
- Adult transfer students need lots of support and early encouragement on campus to help them to feel comfortable enough to succeed.

The **University of Indianapolis School for Adult Learning (SAL)** was developed via a Lilly Endowment grant to stem "brain drain" in Indiana by tapping Indiana's large pool of undereducated adults and enabling them to earn Bachelor's Degrees, bolstering Indiana's workforce.

- Adults tend to have strong ties to Indiana making them less likely than traditional age college students to leave the state after earning a degree.
- Students in SAL range in age from 24 to 76, presenting a marketing challenge to appeal to students across generations.
- SAL offers an accelerated program with five-week courses and an extended learning program with two traditional 15-week semesters, plus two 7-week summer sessions.
- Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) enable students to earn credit for previous life and work experience, accelerating their progress toward degree completion.
- An advising office provides a one-stop shop for student support services, offering extended hours (including financial aid and career advising) that meet the scheduling needs of busy working adults.
- All students are required to take an introductory course designed to familiarize them with the "nuts and bolts" of being on campus, including identifying their personal learning styles and identifying strategies to adjust learning styles to different instructional styles.
- Program participants are encouraged to access all amenities on campus (math lab, career center, etc.) to make the most of their educational experience at the University of Indianapolis.

- SAL faculty (including adjunct faculty) are provided with strategies to support the needs of adult learners.

The **Indiana University School of Continuing Studies** is an interdisciplinary degree program offering an Associate's Degree (which will be phased out and will become the sole domain of Ivy Tech over the next few years) and a Bachelor's degree in General Studies, as well as a Master's Degree in Adult Education.

- The School of Continuing Studies is located at all nine Indiana University campuses, and distance education is also available (degrees can be completed entirely through online courses).
- Target populations to recruit to the General Studies program include students who delayed college entry after high school by joining the military, starting families, or directly entering the workforce, and workers with some college experience who lack a degree and want to change careers, necessitating further education and training.
- Indiana is struggling in national comparisons to educate its adult population and increase the number of Associate's Degree holders in the state. [Increases in need-based financial aid are needed](#) at IU and other colleges and universities to increase college participation among low-income adults and build Indiana's workforce.