

UW-Eau Claire: Developing Effective & Inclusive Credit for Prior Learning

SUMMARY

With an earlier round of funding from Enrollment & Student Success UW-Eau Claire developed the first Military Transcript Advising Guide in the UWs. The guide became a best practice touchstone for campuses navigating a difficult state law on military credit and sparked a wider interest in Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) at UW-Eau Claire. With a new round of funding, members of a CPL workgroup with representation from Continuing Education, Records & Registration, Academic Advising and Military & Adult Services completed a four-week professional development certificate program offered by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) (<https://www.cael.org/>) on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and CPL.

OUTCOMES

After the course, the workgroup began fostering culture change around CPL at UW-Eau Claire. The campus academic catalog now explicitly identifies CPL and details how it will be noted on a student's transcript. The workgroup started managing relationships with faculty, some of whom are resistant to PLA/CPL, to let them know the entire interdisciplinary workgroup is dedicated to assisting them and students through PLA assessment and potential CPL. The course and subsequent process highlighted the sheer number of departments and offices that come to bear on CPL and that leadership needs to be shared. Other key takeaways include the importance of a clear rubric, document checklist, and assessment process so students are aware of the workload required to produce a portfolio. Also important is training for academic advisors and admissions staff who will be the first points of contact and help students determine if PLA/CPL is a viable option. The workgroup also developed and documented an initial CPL process map (shown below) that highlights the department, functional office, and student perspective. Another tangible outcome was a survey delivered to faculty to assess current CPL practices and set the stage for future assessment.

NEXT STEPS

The course has started many next steps including researching CLEP exams for current military-connected students and automated reports of new joint service transcripts for the Military and Adult Services Manager. There are plans to create a website that houses CPL and all appropriate marketing materials and student-facing information about the process. A 1-credit asynchronous curriculum for a CPL portfolio class is being developed that will include clear communication strategies for students. Also planned is training for admissions, advisors, and faculty. The workgroup will continue to research best practices offered by other institutions, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

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