COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Creating a Successful Program

NOTE:	Clarification of Terms
Must; Shall; Will:	These words or phrases indicate actions or activities that are *essential* or *mandatory*.
Should:	This word implies that it is highly desirable to perform certain actions or activities, but not essential or mandatory.
May or Could; Can:	These words imply freedom or liberty to follow an alternative to the action or activity being presented in a document.

Program Principles

In the late 1980s the American Council on Education created a task force responsible for the development of a set of principles that would be used to guide the development of all degree programs developed to service primarily non-traditional adult learners (mid 20s and older). In 1990 the task force presented a document "Principles of Good Practice" (1990). It was adopted by the Council and strengthened the position of a larger alliance of institutions, programs, and educators who had been working together. They were drawn to each other by their belief that adult learner needs were different than traditional 18 to 22 year olds. Members of this group created an organization, Adult Higher Education Alliance (AHEA).

The following 8 principles presented in "Principles of Good Practice" (1990) have been adopted, and in some cases modified, by Columbia College. Each professional program at the College follows these principles. The College's pre-career programs adopt the principles as much as reasonably possible.

Principle 1: Mission Statement

The program has a mission statement that reflects an educational philosophy, goals, purposes, and general intent that clearly complements the institutional mission.

Rationale

A well-defined program mission statement has a guiding, vitalizing, and unifying effect on all those who develop and operate the program. In addition to describing the fundamental goals and purposes of the program, the mission statement presents a commitment to the constituencies it endeavors to serve, and it provides key parameters for evaluating the program. While the mission statement reflects common goals and values, it allows for a diversity of viewpoints and directions within the program by which the goals may be reached and values expressed.

For a program that is a part of an institution, the mission statement establishes the internal relationship of the program to the institution's mission. Alternative and external higher education programs for adults are, by their very nature, dynamic and evolving; therefore a clear mission statement serves to insure continuity of purpose despite programmatic and personnel changes.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   **NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures**
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **1** of **9**

Sub Principles

1. The program mission statement is congruent with, extends from, or is a part of the institutional mission.

2. The program mission statement is reflected in program planning, goal setting, decision making, and in program policies.

3. The program mission statement is included in the institution's catalog and program materials.

4. The program mission statement is reviewed periodically and revised, as necessary, to reflect changes in the program, institution, and the larger community.

Principle 2: Personnel – Faculty and Academic Professionals

Faculty and academic professionals working in alternative, external, and non-traditional higher education programs such as those offered by Columbia College, share a commitment to serve adult learners and have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to teach, advise, counsel, and assist such students.

Rationale

Faculty and academic professionals who work in the above named programs for adult learners have common characteristics, although their titles and responsibilities may vary. Their tasks may be wide-ranging, encompassing the characteristics of facilitator, administrator, adviser, counselor, broker, and student personnel provider. While certain positions will emphasize certain tasks over others, most positions will involve a general mix of roles. In terms of the overall program, the combination of these various roles, whether within an individual or among the program staff, provides an integration of attitudes and abilities central to serving adult learners.

The academic competencies of the faculty must be complemented by their understanding of adult learners and the goals and nature of the adult education program. Likewise, part-time or adjunct faculty, who often provide special perspectives, resources, and expertise, need similar orientation and development. Meeting the needs of these part-time faculty members and integrating them into higher education programs for adults are issues for the future.

In addition to fulfilling their other leadership responsibilities, all academic professionals in alternative and external higher education programs serve as advocates for adult learners within their institutions. Their responsibilities include speaking for this population and increasing the institution's understanding of adult learners.

Sub Principles

1. In addition to academic or professional expertise, faculty and academic professionals have an understanding of adult learning and development, and other characteristics and needs of adult students.

2. Professional development is systematically planned and implemented for all personnel involved in the program in order to improve understanding of adult learners and to enhance academic and professional expertise.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   **NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures**
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **2** of **9**

3. Faculty and academic professionals actively participate in establishing, implementing, and evaluating the curricular and academic standards of their programs.

4. Criteria, rationale, and procedures for the selection and evaluation of faculty and academic professionals in the program are congruent with the standards of the institution.

5. Specific criteria, standards, and expectations for the role of part-time or adjunct faculty are clearly articulated.

6. **Faculty and academic professionals in the program participate in the institution's systems for evaluation, incentive, and reward, e.g., promotion.**

Principle 3: Learning Outcomes

Clearly articulated programmatic learning outcomes frame the comprehensive curriculum as well as specific learning experiences; in developing these outcomes the program incorporates general student goals and in implementing them it accommodates individual goals.

Rationale

Learning outcomes provide a focus for facilitating, for what is to be learned, and for assessment of that learning; they also serve as a foundation for program evaluation. A distinction is made between programmatic learning outcomes that are comprehensive or program-wide in scope and programmatic learning outcomes that are identified for a specific learning experience (course, tutorial, independent project, etc.). Faculty and academic professionals determine both types of outcomes, but seek the involvement of students in that determination. Some specific learning experiences may involve students in the identification of their own outcomes for those experiences.

Adult learners enroll in higher education programs for various reasons, often with specific personal or career goals in mind. It is both reassuring and motivating to them if programmatic outcomes clearly relate to their individual goals. The interrelationships among comprehensive outcomes, specific outcomes of learning experiences, and students' goals reinforce the learning process. The direct participation of the students in the identification of specific outcomes for a learning experience further supports their achievement and recognition of academic progress.

As part of the comprehensive outcomes, programs have a responsibility to assist students in the acquisition of the depth and breadth of knowledge requisite for their specific program. They are also responsible for aiding students in the development of skills and abilities in critical thinking, communication, problem solving, learning resource utilization, and analysis and integration of knowledge. The development of these skills and abilities encourages students to become more autonomous, self-directed lifelong learners.

Sub Principles

1. The faculty and other academic professionals determine the program's learning outcomes to form a coherent curriculum.

2. Learning outcomes reflect the core values and standards of the program and institution, and the general learning goals of their students.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page 3 of 9

3. The achievement of learning outcomes for the specific learning experiences can be demonstrated and assessed.

4. Programmatic learning outcomes are described so that students can relate the specific learning outcomes of each learning experience to the comprehensive outcomes of the program.

5. Learning outcomes for specific experiences are framed in consultation with students.

6. Learning outcomes provide a context for faculty/student discussions of academic progress and help guide student program implementation and modification.

7. Learning outcomes are clearly described so that external audiences (undergraduate schools, employers, etc.) understand both comprehensive and specific programmatic outcomes.

8. Programmatic learning outcomes are periodically revised to reflect changes in the program, institution, student population, and larger community.

Principle 4: Learning Experiences

The program is designed to provide diverse learning experiences that respond to the characteristics and contexts of adult learners while meeting established academic standards.

Rationale

Learning experiences in adult higher education programs recognize the social environments, experiences, backgrounds, motivations, and learning styles of adult students. Program designs might employ a variety of methods: didactic presentation, small group discussion, interactive sessions, internships, or independent study. The experiences take into account the increasing use of technology to achieve learning goals. In addition to the mastery of academic subject matter, learning experiences should be designed to facilitate and enhance the learning skills, capabilities, and strengths of the learner.

Canadian and American societies abound in resources for learning. Public and private colleges and universities and proprietary institutions exercise the central but not exclusive responsibility for providing postsecondary education. Associations, businesses, government, industry, military, labor, and other groups offer formal instruction, much of it at the postsecondary level. In addition, independent study and reading, career and voluntary work, the mass media, community involvement, and social interaction contribute to each individual's learning.

Given that college-level learning occurs in many places and at many times, college and university faculty have a responsibility to assess and accommodate extra-institutional as well as institutional learning as part of their credentialing function. Through reliable and valid assessment of extra-institutional learning, new learning is encouraged, past learning is renewed, and theory becomes integrated with practice. Faculty involved in degree programs for adults have the special responsibility of determining with the individual how this learning contributed to the goal of becoming an effective lifelong learner.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **4** of **9**

1. Specific learning experiences are determined by faculty and academic professionals in consultation with students in order to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes, to use and extend the strengths of the individual's learning style, and to develop the student's social and work environment as a learning resource.

2. Learning experiences equip learners to develop progressively those habits, skills, and values necessary for lifelong learning.

3. Learning experiences make use of current research and theory about how adults learn.

4. Learning experiences are offered in a variety of ways, settings, and time frames to accommodate individual learning styles and life situations.

5. Learning experiences are designed to provide feedback to learners regarding their progress in achieving the specific learning outcomes.

6. Program design and specific learning experiences recognize an individual's prior and current extra-institutional postsecondary learning.

7. Learners are assisted in examining the relationship of prior and current institutional and extra-institutional learning to their abilities, learning outcomes, and overall educational goals.

Principle 5: Assessment of Student Learning

The assessment of a student's learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes.

Rationale

The progress of students and their achievement of outcomes require assessment that has direct, personal links to the teaching-learning process. Because the assessment of learning is complex, programs use multiple methods of assessment including written and oral examinations, case study methods, interviews, portfolio and project review, and other means to determine that learning goals are achieved.

Forms of assessment selected are appropriate for the particular learning experience and assist students in their learning.

Just as the learner's involvement in identifying learning experiences and learning outcomes is essential, so too is the learner's involvement in the assessment process. Assessment grows from a partnership of faculty or academic professional and student that is committed to a process of helpful dialogue and feedback. Student participation in assessment contributes significantly to the goal of developing more self-managing, autonomous learners. Without the capacity for assessing one's own learning, the accomplishment of this goal is unlikely to be realized.

In addition to serving the individual student, assessment of students' progress provides essential information regarding the teaching and learning processes of the program. Individual student assessment is an integral part of the general program assessment and evaluation plan and contributes to the accountability of the program and the institution.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page 5 of 9

1. Assessment is designed to be an integral and active part of each learning experience.

2. Student learning is evidenced by what the student knows and can do through demonstrations of knowledge and skill.

3. The assessment criteria, methods, techniques, or strategies are developed by faculty and academic professionals on the basis of how effectively they might determine the extent to which the specific learning outcomes are achieved.

4. The assessment process for student learning provides ongoing feedback between teacher and learner regarding the acquisition of both knowledge and skills.

5. The development of student self-assessment skills is an integral part of the learning process and is critical to the growth of self-managing, autonomous learning.

6. The program has policies and procedures for assessing and recognizing extra-institutional learning, as well as learning that takes place at accredited postsecondary institutions.

7. Program policy for recognizing prior or current extra-institutional learning specifies standards or criteria, administrative and faculty responsibility, means of assessment, recording of results on transcripts, and the maximum number of credits or other forms of recognition allowable.

Principle 6: Student Services

The policies, procedures, and practices of the program take into account the conditions and circumstances of adult learners and promote the success of those students.

Rationale

Student success in alternative and external higher education programs for adults is enhanced not only by the academic quality of the program, but also by well-designed and appropriately delivered services that recognize the particular needs and circumstances of adult learners. Student services policies and practices support student academic and personal success in the form of student achievement and student development. Student achievement is identified as learning at the highest possible level consistent with program standards, one's interests and abilities, and the personal constraints experienced in making progress toward one's goals. Student achievement is demonstrated by such evidence as program completion, satisfaction with goal attainment, improved learning or self-management skills, and degree completion. Student development fosters personal characteristics such as self-esteem, self-directedness, autonomy, and the ability to formulate clear goals.

Adult and external programs are essentially student centered. Their student services enable learners to succeed from admission to graduation by recognizing, responding to, and honoring student diversity in preparedness, ethnicity, work and family commitments, goals, age, race, gender, and other characteristics.

Initial services focus on successful entry to the college, including useful program materials that inform students about educational options and procedures, and an admission process that is responsive to adult learners. Subsequently, transition into the education realm is eased and focused by providing meaningful orientation services and assessment of academic and learning

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **6** of **9**

skills. Support services to promote student success while pursuing program work include financial aid, counseling, advising, life/career planning, placement, child care, and academic tutoring. These services, which need to be accessible to adults, are directed at focusing student goals and options and overcoming obstacles to goal achievement. A diversity of services is provided to students with disabilities who may require accommodations in order to equalize access to education and support services to aid in the development of learning and skills.

Sub Principles

1. Promotional materials present a clear, comprehensive, and accurate description of the educational program and the services offered, including information concerning admission requirements, parchment awarded, curriculum, costs, learning formats, assessment methods, graduation requirements, policies regarding the recognition of extra-institutional learning, and accreditation.

2. Admission and retention policies take into account qualitative as well as quantitative data that reflect the student's current motivation and ability.

3. Financial arrangements and student financial assistance policies and procedures for adult students are equitable with those for other students at the institution.

4. Program entry services help students assess and understand their academic and learning skills as a basis for undertaking the program; students are assisted to strengthen these skills.

5. Orientation services are provided to help students understand themselves as learners and their new learning environment.

6. Academic progress of students is monitored and intervention strategies geared to adult learners are developed to improve student success.

7. A program plan is developed for student achievement and retention; follow-up research is conducted to ascertain reasons for problems and success of students and graduates.

8. Students in the program are included in the various institutional policies and practices with regard to awards, recognition, and honors.

9. Student support services of the institution are available, accessible, and appropriate for the adult learner; such services are designed to assist the student from admission through graduation.

Principle 7: Program Administration

The administrative structures and the human, fiscal, and learning resources are sufficient, appropriate, and stable for accomplishing the program mission.

Rationale

Central to the success of higher education programs serving adults is the institutional commitment to the program. This commitment is reflected in the fundamental administrative structure, the financial and budgetary arrangements, the academic systems, and other resource arrangements that support the program. The administrative structure of the program has equitable status with other academic units within its institution. At the same time, just as the

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **7** of **9**

program as a whole needs to be dynamic, open, innovative, and responsive, its administration also must possess these characteristics.

The administrative structure of adult higher education programs varies; it may involve a program within a college or university; a separate college, school, or division within a larger institution; or a free-standing institution. Regardless of structure, administrators provide leadership in designing and implementing policies and procedures to serve adult learners in the program, while remaining consistent with the general policies, procedures, and standards of the institution.

Financial and other resources need to be sufficient to achieve the goals of the program. Particular attention is given to ensuring that proper library, media, laboratory, and computer support is available to students and faculty. The program's academic systems must also provide recognized, acceptable, and equitable strategies for a broad range of issues, including hiring, training, and evaluating faculty; developing and evaluating curricula; admitting students and assessing their learning; and evaluating overall program success.

<u>Sub Principles</u>

1. Administrators provide leadership to assure that program operation grows out of an integration of administrative, academic, and student support commitments to the adult learner.

2. Criteria, standards, and expectations are clearly articulated for the roles of faculty and academic professionals in the program; specific requirements are delineated for part-time faculty.

3. Faculty and academic professionals participate in the development, review, and revision of program policies, procedures, and practices.

4. Funding and fiscal policies of a program are consistent with its own mission and with the general fiscal directions, purposes, and goals of the institution as a whole.

5. Adequate learning resources, including but not limited to computer support, laboratories, and library materials and services are available to students, faculty, and academic professionals.

6. Academic systems provide clearly stated standards and methods for managing and maintaining the quality of faculty, students, curricular, and program design.

7. Administrative arrangements are reviewed periodically to determine the extent to which they support program and institutional goals, purposes, and values.

8. The administrative structure and governance system provide ongoing planning and analysis of program directions and practices.

9. Criteria used to determine tuition and fees reflect the purposes, practices, services, and outcomes of the program.

Principle 8: Program Evaluation

Evaluation of the program involves faculty, academic professionals, administrators, and students on a continuing, systematic basis to assure standards and quality and to stimulate program improvement.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   **NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures**
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **8** of **9**

Rationale

Continuous evaluation of a program and its components is vital to the maintenance of quality, the assurance of accountability, and the development and improvement of the program. The program administrator provides leadership for evaluation with the involvement of faculty, academic professionals, students, employers, and others who contribute to the process.

The participation of faculty and academic professionals from other academic units provides valuable perspectives for the review of higher education programs for adults. Likewise, the viewpoints of professionals from the nonacademic community and from other educational programs for adults are beneficial to the evaluative process.

Program evaluation results, shared widely, inform all those involved in the program and guide them in determining future program direction. The results also become a part of an external review process by being linked directly or indirectly to the institutional accreditation procedure.

Sub Principles

1. In the context of the program and institutional missions, program evaluation focuses on both the attainment of goals and objectives and the processes designed to attain them.

2. Program evaluation provides for the inclusion of information from various constituencies, including faculty, academic professionals, administrators, students, graduates, employers, and other appropriate groups.

3. Program evaluation processes encourage the participation of professionals from outside the program or the institution.

4. Results of program evaluation are reported to the institution's chief administrator, and to administrators, faculty, students, and others involved in the program; the results are used to modify and improve the program as well as to provide the basis for planning.

5. Both the process and the results of program evaluation are incorporated in institutional accreditation review.

References

American Council on Education (1990). *Principles of Good Practice for Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults.* American Council on Education,   Washington, D.C.

Document Name: Creating a Successful Program
Document Number: Creating a Successful Program ADM-P199.docxP199
Revision #1   **NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures**
Revision Date: April 6, 2017
Approved by: Tom Snell
Page **9** of **9**