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## Prior Learning Assessment: A Growing Trend in Higher Education

Tyechia Paul

Fayetteville State University, tpaul5@uncfsu.edu

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# Prior Learning Assessment: A Growing Trend in Higher Education

Dr. Tyechia Paul

Senior Director of the Online Business Program

Assistant Professor of Management

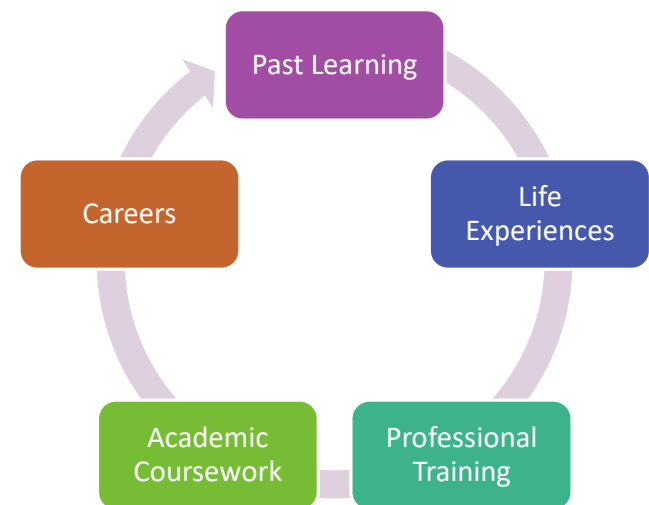
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# Objectives

- Define Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Discuss PLA benefits and drawbacks
- Detail principles of PLA
- Discuss climate for PLA

# What is PLA?

- **Prior Learning Assessment** – the process by which educational, training, and professional experiences are evaluated by qualified faculty to discern whether those experiences are creditworthy, based upon evidence- and competency-based demonstration of satisfactory attainment of student learning outcomes of the corresponding college-level courses
- Examples:
  - Portfolio evaluation
  - CLEP
  - Challenge exams
  - Military credits
  - Language fluency exemptions



# Why PLA?

- Increase enrollment
  - by increasing the number of transfer/PLA credits accepted
  - to necessitate increased faculty headcount
- Generate additional revenue associated with portfolio review
- Growing trend among traditional and for-profit colleges/universities
- Precedent set
  - CLEP & challenge exams
  - Co-curricular degree requirements
  - Co-Op Experience (BUS 380) worth 3 – 15 credits

The purpose of the co-op experience is to provide students with an individualized educational opportunity through a full-time employment situation. This work-related experience is designed to complement the students' coursework through the practical application of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities.



## Why not PLA?

- Instructor credential as an indicator of instructional quality
  - Assessment and verification of learning outcomes achieved by AQ/PQ faculty in the discipline
- SACS compliance
  - Permissible as a substantive change by SACSCOC
- Lack of faculty-reviewed deliverables
  - Portfolio development course option

# PLA Quality Standards

- I. Credit awarded only for evidence of learning, not for experience or time spent
- II. Assessment, including feedback, is integral learning because it leads to and enables future learning
- III. Assessment based on criteria for shared, clearly articulated SLOs
- IV. Determination of credit awards made by appropriate subject matter and credentialing experts
- V. Assessment advances the broader purpose of access and equity for diverse individuals and groups to support their success
- VI. Institutions proactively provide guidance and support for learners' full engagement in the assessment process
- VII. Assessment policies and procedures are the result of inclusive deliberation and are shared with all stakeholders
- VIII. Fees charged for assessment are based on services performed in the process of assessment instead of credit awarded
- IX. Stakeholders involved in the assessment process receive training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform
- X. Assessment programs are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised to respond to institutional and learner needs

# Factors for PLA Consideration

## PLA students:

- take approx. 10 more credits than peers without access to PLA
  - Lower rates of persistence for non-traditional students than traditional
  - PLA credits, plus increased persistence generates more credits toward degree
- are 2.5x more likely to earn a postsecondary degree than students with no PLA credit
- earn an average of 18 credits
- net 8 fewer undergraduate credits, about ½ of 1 semester



## Quantifying the Impact of PLA

- Measured by revenue gained/retained by reducing attrition through PLA implementation

$$\text{Annual Projected Attrition Loss}^* = (\textit{Population} * \textit{Attrition} * \textit{Tuition})/2 \text{ or } (\textit{SL} * \textit{T})/2$$

P = Fall Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Undergraduate and Graduate Population, combined

A = 6-year Annual Attrition Rate = 1 – Graduation Rate

SL = Students Lost

T = Tuition

\* Raisman, N. (2013). *The Cost of College Attrition at Four-Year Colleges & Universities: An Analysis of 1669 US Institutions*. Virginia Beach: Educational Policy Institute.

# Source Data

Gleaned from Student & Faculty Profile Data, IPEDS Data Feedback Reports 2014-2018, and 2018 Common Data Set

<u>ENROLLMENT</u>	<u>Fall 2018</u>	<u>Fall 2017</u>	<u>Fall 2016</u>	<u>Fall 2015</u>	<u>Fall 2014</u>	<u>2019 Adj. Projection</u>	<u>2019 Readj. Projection*</u>
Total Headcount	1059	960	1051	1047	1035	1059	1059
Total FTE Enrollment	1022	923	1005	1000	978	1022	1022
Undergraduate Headcount	976	887	988	985	1010	976	976
Undergraduate FTE	955	861	955	952	956	955	955
Full-time Undergraduates	932	830	903	911	892	932	932
Part-time Undergraduates	44	57	85	74	118	44	44
Graduate Headcount	83	73	63	62	25	83	83
Graduate FTE	67	62	50	49	23	67	67
Non-traditional (GPS) Headcount	78	81	94	101	--	78	78
Non-traditional (GPS) FTE	62	64	70	77	--	62	62
Tuition ( $V_c$ or current value)	\$31,730.00	\$29,998.00	\$29,052.00	\$27,941.00	\$26,664.00	\$31,730.00	\$31,730.00
Average years to complete undergrad	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Lifetime Value ( $V_L$ )	\$190,380.00	\$179,988.00	\$174,312.00	\$167,646.00	\$159,984.00	\$190,380.00	\$182,447.50
6-Year Graduation Rate	53%	52%	40%	48%	47%	71%	71%
6-Year Attrition Rate	47%	48%	60%	52%	53%	29%	29%
5- Year Mean of the 6-Year Attrition Rate	52%						
Undergraduate Students Lost	459	426	593	512	535	283	283
Annual Projected Attrition Loss	\$7,277,592.80	\$6,385,974.24	\$8,611,012.80	\$7,155,690.10	\$7,136,619.60	\$4,490,429.60	\$4,301,831.56

\* Adjusted to reflect 50% of undergraduate students earning PLA credits and those PLA students having a 6-year graduation rate of 88% and to reflect PLA students taking approximately 8 fewer classes on average.

## Projected Fiscal Impact

**\$2,975,761.24** revenue gain

- \$495,960.21 annually over 6 years
- Based on tuition revenue at the 2018-19 rate only
- Excludes:
  - revenue received for housing, food, etc.
  - Revenue from new future enrollees
- Based on annual projected attrition loss of approximately \$7.3MM decreasing to \$4.3MM
- Reflects
  - PLA earners completing 8 fewer undergraduate courses, resulting in lower lifetime value
  - PLA earners average graduation rate of 88% which, assuming half of students get PLA credit, increases the graduation rate to 71%