

CVHEC CRC Strong Workforce Regional Project Brief

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Summary of PLA

With birth rates and high school rates flattening, growing demand has become a priority and a challenge for colleges. In response, postsecondary institutions are beginning to take an expanded view of degree-seekers, focusing on attracting post-traditional students (25 and over). Serving post-traditional adult learners, however, presents the challenge of modifying existing institutional processes designed for traditional students. The QuickPath Program provides a solution by leveraging one of the best kept secrets in postsecondary education, prior learning assessment.

The QuickPath PLA Program is a faculty led and designed program that allows colleges to offer course credit to students who can demonstrate prior learning. PLA expands the traditional offerings beyond Challenge Exams and CLEP tests to include credit by portfolio assessment. The QuickPath Program is designed to simplify the navigation of prior learning assessment options and expand the offerings to include credit by portfolio assessment. In revealing all the ways students are able to earn credit for their prior learning in an easy-to-navigate platform, colleges will be able to highlight the systems which help students decrease the cost of attendance and time to degree. The development of a faculty driven portfolio assessment process will enable colleges to grow enrollment of post-traditional students who have industry skills and competencies that align with certificate and degree programs, but who do not possess formal credentials or degrees. Portfolio assessment offers adult learners a way to demonstrate the prior learning they gained from years of industry experience and earn credit for what they already know.

West Hills and San Joaquin Delta College received a \$2 million Award for Innovation to spearhead the development of the QuickPath Program in the Central Region. The funding is being used for the following:

- A full time coordinator for the program (Dr. Justin Garcia)
- Contracting with AcademyOne to design a multi-institutional regional web platform to facilitate and simplify the navigation of prior learning assessment options for students
- Hosting each college in the region on the QuickPath online platform during Year 1 (ends April 2018)
- Stipends for faculty to develop the policies, procedures, guidelines, regional marketing for all of the colleges
- Assessments for the web platform
- Consulting fees for The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) who is providing consulting services to faculty as they develop the Portfolio Assessment processes and practices.

Next Steps for the Region

West Hills and Delta need **input and full** participation from regional colleges as we collaborate with CAEL and AcademyOne to develop the pilot program. The expected outcome of the pilot is to bring the PLA Program to scale at the colleges within the region and ultimately to the rest of the colleges statewide.

- ***Each college will need to identify faculty and administrative champions to serve as the contact points for the initiative and to work with CAEL and AcademyOne to ensure the success and scalability of the pilot project.***
- Host additional Regional Colleges on the QuickPath online platform
- AcademyOne to train administrators, faculty, and staff to use the platform to serve the students at their respective institution
- CAEL led PLA-training for administrators, faculty, and staff
- Professional development for faculty to serve as portfolio assessors and evaluate portfolios for credit
- Develop Prior Learning Assessment marketing materials to drive interest to the regional web-enabled portal