

Texas Association Of Community Colleges Offers New Way To Help Students Earn College Credit

New Focus on Prior Learning Assessment Helps Students Save Time and Money While Earning Their Degree

AUSTIN, TX, USA, January 13, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Texas Association of Community Colleges ([TACC](#)) has partnered with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning ([CAEL](#)) to offer the opportunity for adult students to earn college credit. Students can save time and money in earning their degree by demonstrating the learning they obtained through life and work experience, Dr. Martha Ellis, TACC Interim President and CEO, announced today.



"Adult students here in Texas have significant skills and knowledge gained through work, volunteering or service in the military. Through this new Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program, students can build a portfolio of their expertise and have it assessed for college credit, reducing the time and cost to earn their degree. This method for earning credit will guarantee better opportunities for community college students, old and new," said Dr. Cynthia Ferrell, Executive Director of the Texas Success Center, a subsidiary of TACC.

In order to earn credit, students develop an online learning portfolio that is evaluated for college level learning acquired outside of traditional college courses. Once the portfolio is submitted for assessment, faculty with appropriate subject matter expertise evaluate the student's portfolio to determine a credit award. To start the process, students register for a self-paced online course at their college, offered through the Virtual College of Texas. The course will teach students how to match their learning to college courses in their degree plan, and what to include in their portfolios. Students can register for this course at any time and complete it in up to six months, which gives students flexibility to accommodate their active schedules.

The Texas colleges participating are College of the Mainland, Texarkana College, Ranger College, San Jacinto College, The Alamo Colleges, Lone Star College System and Tarrant County College District.

The portfolio assessment is provided by LearningCounts, an initiative of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, (CAEL) a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization based in Chicago, Illinois that assists adults with their educational endeavors, finding practical ways to transfer learning from prior professional and life experiences that occur outside the classroom to college course credit and the completion of a postsecondary degree.

Added Dr. Ferrell, "PLA can be especially powerful for adult students who in many cases must also balance their classes with work and family demands which may make it difficult for them to earn their degree. Thanks to PLA programs like this one, students can earn college credit for what they already

know, saving them both time and money to help them earn their degree."

Pamela Tate, CEO and President of CAEL said, "We are proud to be working here in Texas with the Texas Association of Community Colleges to develop innovative tools like this one that can help push students ahead in their quest for a college degree."

To learn more, students should ask their advisers or [visit http://www.learningcounts.com/tacc/](http://www.learningcounts.com/tacc/)

Concluded Dr. Ellis, "This is a powerful new program and we look forward to working with adult students everywhere to help them achieve their dream of a college degree."

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization based in Chicago, Illinois that assists adults with their educational endeavors, finding practical ways to earn college credit for learning acquired through training and work experiences. CAEL works with the public sector, private sector industries and higher education institutions to ensure that adult students receive the most efficient training and education to occupy a meaningful professional place in a 21st century economy. Since 1974, CAEL has assisted colleges and universities in providing college credit for prior learning. CAEL is the recognized national expert on a method known as portfolio assessment, and their Ten Standards for Assessing Learning are used by colleges and universities, as well as accrediting organizations, across the country.

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