

Project Name Integrated Early Career & Transfer Engagement-OWL for Online Adult Learners

Principal Investigator Robert Knipe

Campus Genesee Community College

Year of Project 2012

Tier Tier One

Project Team

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- Judie Littlejohn, Genesee Community College
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Overview Summary

Development of a web-based orientation, training materials, and internal procedures to assist online degree-seeking students across a consortium of campuses. This maximizes course alignment with goals, shortens time-to-completion, and promotes regional workforce and economic development.

Outcomes Summary

A group of distance learning administrators piloted a consortium that has boosted retention and assisted with transfer among the consortium. Visit [project website](#) for details.

Project Abstract

Genesee Community College, in collaboration with the Online Western NY Learning Alliance (OWL) consisting of six community colleges in Western New York, seeks funds from the State University of New York to develop and integrate early engagement by adult students enrolled in a fully online degree program, with college Transfer and Career Advisement professionals, at OWL colleges. OWL community colleges work together to ensure student success in online learning. Together, OWL colleges provide an affordable opportunity for students, particularly working adults, to earn a SUNY associate degree or certificate in any of 35 fully online academic degree and certificate areas.

Through OWL, students are fully matriculated (enrolled) in one of the six member OWL colleges, but are able to take online classes from the other member schools which best fit their busy schedules. OWL enables working adults to effectively and affordably earn an online degree or certificate by seamlessly pooling courses taken from any combination of OWL member colleges.

The six OWL colleges are Corning, Erie, Finger Lakes, Genesee, Jamestown and Monroe Community Colleges. All are fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and fully authorized by the State of New York and SUNY to offer online degrees in the specified areas. See <http://www.owlny.org>.

Each OWL college has a designated “conciierge,” a trained online specialist who handles questions and concerns of OWL students, assists with business processes, facilitates student enrollment, advisement and assists with academic progress.

OWL’s target demographic is the working adult student returning to school, or starting college, needing the flexibility of a fully online degree or certificate program. Online “concierges” at each of the six OWL community colleges are uniquely positioned to provide holistic advisement to matriculating students from the outset of their college careers.

An additional needed service is early engagement with the exploration of post-degree options. Typically, Career and Transfer advisors in community colleges interface with students toward the end of their studies, whether through faculty, advisor, or other referral, or familiarization with career and transfer services through class work.

This project, Integrated Early Career & Transfer Engagement for Online Adult Learners, would develop (1) web-based orientation and training materials, and (2) internal procedures at OWL colleges, so that career and transfer exploration, discussion, and assistance for online degree seeking students occurs from Day One of their college studies. This will maximize course alignment with long-term goals, shorten time-to-degree-completion, increase the likelihood of keeping students in Western New York for career and/or baccalaureate degree opportunities, and in the process of doing so, contribute to regional workforce and economic development.

The Principal Investigator for the proposed project is Robert Knipe, Dean of Learning Technologies at Genesee Community College. The Co- Principal Investigators are the concierges of OWL at the Alliance colleges: Erin Wilburn, Corning; Colleen Gentry, Erie; Maureen Owens, Finger Lakes; Cori Dunagan, Jamestown,; Judith Littlejohn, Genesee; Peggy VanKirk, Monroe; and the Career and Transfer coordinators/advisors at all six OWL colleges.

This project is innovative in its flexibility and the ability for SUNY students to design their studies and career objectives from the moment they choose to pursue higher education by having access to pertinent information to assist them in making informed decisions. This project will provide much-needed college transfer and career advisement information from the moment students register for online courses at an OWL college. The

OWL website is up and running and has proven potential to assist online learners in choosing online credit courses at any participating OWL institution.

Reports and Resources

- [Project website](#)
- [Project outcome report](#)

Assessment, Understanding, Monitoring Student Progress

- Integrated Planning & Advising Services (IPAS)

Instructional Design

- Online Education
- Student Learning Support