



ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY



CECE

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE
STUDY
2020

IEP CATEGORY – CONNECTION

Purdue University: Purdue Global

ABOUT PURDUE GLOBAL

The Purdue Global (PG) mission is to serve adult, working students by enrolling them in certificate and associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree programs. It also customizes offerings for employers, not necessarily seeking a degree solution. Adult learners have different needs than traditional students (ages 18-25) due to careers and/or family demands. Purdue Global has designed and developed the curriculum, instruction, and operational infrastructure to ensure there is a Path to Degree for every adult learner.

Tammy Misland graduated from Purdue Global in 2019 with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology-addictions. Formerly employed in the restaurant industry, she now works full-time as a case manager – more than doubling her income. “It was not easy to manage two courses per term for 4 long years, as well as work, kids, a household, and all of the other daily responsibilities of a single mom,” said Tammy. “The professors were personable and were there to help when circumstances arose. There were a couple of amazing professors, who really stood out. They made learning real and compassionate. They went out of their way to ensure we as students succeeded, and it worked.

Purdue Global serves approximately 29,000 students who primarily attend classes online in more than 175 programs. It also operates 14 locations in Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Maryland, Maine, Missouri, and Wisconsin. It is a nonprofit, public university accredited by the Higher Learning Commission that is affiliated with Purdue's main campus in West Lafayette, Indiana.

For the past ten years, Purdue Global has focused on building the infrastructure to create a personalized and outcomes-focused university with a Path to Degree for every adult student. This is core to our value proposition, and we believe it is a true differentiator in a crowded market for adult learners.

“Completing a four-year degree entirely online while working and raising a family was not easy. It was certainly a long and challenging road, but that has only given me even



Students enrolled in Purdue Global's Module Courses

more confidence in my career ambitions,” said Nathan Pearson, a military veteran who earned his associate degree from Purdue Global in information technology in 2015 and his bachelor’s degree in information technology in 2019. “My first degree allowed me to completely transition into an IT professional and ultimately a software developer. I was able to move from working jobs that I hated into a career that I really enjoy. I was also able to more than triple my earning from the start of my journey until now.”

ADJUSTING THE COURSES TO FIT THE STUDENT

Adult learners come to the University with diverse educational and employment backgrounds. Purdue Global believes this means we must leverage their existing skills and knowledge against alternative ways they can learn and progress to their degree. The University provides options for learning and different paths to a degree not offered by any other educational institution. At the highest level, these are:

- **“Traditional” Courses** - The content in traditional courses is modularized and organized around each outcome, while it is presented and taught as a traditional course. In this format, there are required learning activities that include readings, discussion boards, seminars, and assignments. Grading is A-F with strong faculty engagement.
- **Module Courses** - 1-credit module courses have the same content and outcomes they would have if organized in a corresponding traditional course. The module design supports student-led independent learning. With modules, faculty guidance and feedback are available, as needed. The final competency assessment, which is typically a paper or project, is the only graded item. Students must attain an A or a B to pass the module. The grading scale is A, B, or F.
- **Open Courses** - Self-paced courses provide content and resources to help students prepare for a course or project assessment. If passed, students earn all the credits in the corresponding full course or module.

Purdue Global has invested in the modularization of course content by developing separate, but aligned, course modules. The traditional course content has been developed and organized around outcomes: one outcome for each credit. In parallel, Purdue Global has created one-credit course modules aligned to each traditional course. This enables maximum flexibility of course delivery.

In addition, student outcomes are thoroughly evaluated. Assessment occurs in every section of every course. In addition, Purdue Global has embedded general education literacies and professional competencies into our curriculum. Both of

these are assessed at the course level and are tied to program level outcomes. All assessments for a particular outcome are identical, regardless of instructor or course type.

COMMUNICATION DRIVING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Communication with students is also vital to Purdue Global. This is achieved in two key ways:

- A smooth IT and operational infrastructure: The Registrar’s office has developed, and continues to enhance, our IT infrastructure to register, articulate, manage, and report on progress at both the module and course level; and
- A competency report: The interpretation and communication of knowledge and skills in our curriculum is tied to career goals and organized in a personalized Purdue Global Competency Report.

Both of these initiatives promote highly valued personal, flexible student engagement.

Sarah Sneed, who earned her associate degree in legal support and services in January 2020, said these attributes were key to her decision. “After looking at several options, Purdue offered a lot of flexibility, which was very important.”

“My intention/goal was to pursue my future as a paralegal. Around December, before graduation I began utilizing LinkedIn, Indeed, and Glassdoor. My first interview was with a bankruptcy firm and I have received a job offer! I will begin in June.”

ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

ABOUT THE IEP UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM

APLU and its **Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)** established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP designation program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP awards program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- **Talent** and workforce development
- **Innovation**, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- **Place** development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: www.APLU.org/IEP