

**Institute for Senior Professionals  
Okaloosa-Walton College**

**ISP Review of the  
OWC Prime Time Program**

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**Eileen Arpke, Chair  
Dale Blanchard  
Tom Reynolds  
Barbara Wall**

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## OWC Prime Time Program Review

A review of the Prime Time program by the ISP was initiated by a letter from the Prime Time staff requesting the ISP to evaluate and improve areas of concern. The request was accepted by the ISP and the following committee was established: Eileen Arpke, chair, with members Dale Blanchard, Tom Reynolds, and Barbara Wall.

Walt Turner functioned as a consultant, being the creator of Prime Time, and continues to help direct the program. Amanda Barker and Laura Schultze also acted as resources representing the college.

The committee was asked to focus on a number of areas of concern. These were:

- Public relations
- Support structure
- Involvement with the College
- Age requirements for enrollment
- Class offerings
- Any other areas of concern we might discover

The committee met as a whole and in addition, it met with Dr. Jill White and Melinda Stein concerning the financial structure and registration requirements of the program.

Prime Time was created to be, and continues to be, a program primarily for senior citizens of our large retirement community, both permanent and transient (snow birds!). However, there are no age restrictions and all classes are also open to all students regardless of age. Courses offered are non-credit and can also be classified as continuing education or creative learning processes. Classes are offered in both fall and spring semesters and normally accommodate from 400-600 students or 600 to 800 class seats.. Class offerings change as interests and requests of the students change. Sixty offerings (this number varies) per semester range from arts and crafts classes, computers, health, travel, food and politics to seminars and workshops covering genealogy to the holocaust. There are no grades or tests in the Prime Time offerings.

A very detailed, easy-to-read brochure is published each semester to guide prospective students through all aspects of registration either in person or on the web. The brochure is mailed to former students in Okaloosa and Walton counties, and is also available in community centers and through snowbird organizations. This same information is available on the OWC web site at [www.owc.edu](http://www.owc.edu), as well as all college locations, area chambers of commerce and public libraries.

The brochure contains a complete description of each class, its location, the number of times it meets, meeting times, cost, cancellation or dropping a class, and the campus parking regulations.

Prime Time is a "break even", non-profit program for personal enrichment. A basic class charge is set by the Florida legislature, and class cost has ranged from \$15 to \$50 depending on number of meetings, distance (trips taken), and support needed. A flat rate of 30 percent is charged for overhead for each class; this includes lights, heating and cooling of facilities, printing of class materials for the class size involved, janitorial services, partial salaries of instructors and partial salary for the director. All student participants receive the benefits of regular OWC students, including use of the library, access to special events, and free parking.

One of the goals and missions of OWC is to accurately assess and provide needed educational services to the senior community. The Prime Time program fulfills these goals.

The Prime Time program, although part of the regular curriculum (and handled as such through two OWC staffers) actually depends on volunteers. These volunteers come from the ISP, from class members and from the college faculty and administration. A curriculum committee of volunteers has been formed, and this committee determines new classes, deletion of classes too small to be effective, and considers plans for future activities.

Prime Time continues to function well and classes remain varied and well attended in spite of rising costs. Costs remain less than half of a regular "for credit" class.

### **Recommendations for Improvement and Growth of Prime Time**

Increased publicity this past semester by OWC personnel has resulted in increased interest in Prime Time as well as in better class attendance. But there is no better validation than the inclusion of seniors in the Prime Time publicity drive and the committee feels that a senior Prime Time member should accompany OWC personnel on each publicity contact.

- An expansion of publicity into areas of senior attendance such as churches, condominium association meetings, use of bulletin boards, senior centers, welcome centers, snowbird meetings, libraries, chambers of commerce, and service clubs, such as Kiwanis, Rotary, etc. Brochures left at these places plus beauty parlors, gyms, grocery stores, and real estate offices could be effective. Other sources of "public relations" would be the OWC Outlook interviews with Prime Time instructors, students and radio interviews as public service announcements.
- A power point presentation could augment each personal presentation
- A Prime Time newsletter once or twice a semester on what is happening in various classes. Although no journalism classes are taught at OWC, perhaps an English class might take on a special project for extra credit. Or, as an alternative, enlist the OWC Collegiate High School in this effort.
- A Prime Time ad in the NWF Daily News just before registration.
- Include Prime Time registration information in registration flyers sent out in newspapers prior to fall and spring registrations.
- Use of additional sites for classes. For example, public school sites, churches, and community centers might be productive sites for expansion. Also, we are looking forward to expansion to the new Walton County campus in the near future.
- Add an additional permanent representative of the ISP to the Prime Time Curriculum Committee.
- Create a mission statement for Prime Time with clearly defined goals.
- Create a well-defined governing structure for the Prime Time program, with rotating officers to create continuity in governance and operation.