Plus 50:

Comprehensive Implementation Results

November 2010

Prepared For
The Plus 50 Initiative
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LFA maximizes the impact of social-profit organizations through rigorous evaluation, research, and strategy development.

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I.   Introduction: What is the Plus 50 Initiative?

The Plus 50 Initiative is a three-year initiative of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), launched in June 2008 and funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies. It was created to support a pilot group of two-year institutions to develop or expand campus programs that engage plus 50 learners.

The overarching goal of the Plus 50 Initiative is to support community colleges' ability to substantively and continuously engage in helping plus 50 learners lead purposeful lives through education, work, and service. To reach this goal, the initiative focuses on developing and expanding the program offerings of the pilot colleges, striving to reach more plus 50 students by expanding plus 50 offerings to additional community colleges, and putting the interests of plus 50 students at community colleges on the public agenda. Another aspect of the initiative's goal to support the expansion of plus 50 programs is growing the number of community colleges offering this programming beyond the initial grantee cohort. A long-term goal of the initiative is that 300 community colleges will implement and sustain plus 50 programs.

Initiative Design

The Initiative supported a pilot group of 13 two-year institutions to develop or expand college offerings in three areas: workforce training and career development; learning and enrichment; and volunteering. It was later expanded to include affiliate colleges that were paired in learning partnerships with experienced Plus 50 colleges. (Results in this report focus primarily on the 13 pilot grantees; however, the impact on affiliate colleges is discussed as well.)

Plus 50 Grantees

Pilot Grantee Colleges

Exhibit 1
Plus 50 Pilot Grantee Programs

College	Plus 50 Program Tracks		
	Workforce Training and/or Career Development Services	Learning and Enrichment	Volunteering
Cape Cod Community College	✓		✓
Century College	✓	✓	✓
Clark College	✓	✓	✓
College of Central Florida	✓	✓	✓
Community Colleges of Spokane	✓	✓	
Clover Park Technical College	✓	✓	
Joliet Junior College	✓		✓
Luzerne County Community College	✓	✓	
Richland College	✓	✓	✓
Santa Fe College	✓	✓	
St. Louis Community College	✓	✓	
Wake Technical Community College	✓	✓	
Western Dakota Technical Institute	✓		✓

Thirteen colleges were the pilot grantees of the Plus 50 Initiative, and each implemented at least two of the three Initiative tracks. Exhibit 1 below provides an overview of the Plus 50 program tracks that each grantee implemented during the Initiative. All of the grantees implemented workforce training courses and/or

career development services for plus 50 students, most are offering learning and enrichment courses, and about half of the grantees are offering volunteering programs.

Expansion Colleges

In 2009 and again in 2010, the AACC made a strategic decision to expand the impact of the Initiative and increase the number of community colleges under the "Plus 50 umbrella" that had access to ongoing support from AACC. This expansion demonstrates AACC's commitment to thoughtful and proactive Plus 50 program model dissemination.

Learning Partners and Affiliate Colleges

Changing economic circumstances generated additional need for Plus 50 programs focusing specifically on the Initiative's training, retraining, and career development: due to massive declines in retirement savings throughout the U.S., many workers who thought they were poised for retirement now must remain on the job. The Plus 50 expansion reflected this additional need, and paired existing and more experienced Plus 50 pilot colleges with new community colleges that now become "affiliates" of the Plus 50 Initiative. Learning Partners served as guides and worked to expand the network of Plus 50 colleges by reaching out to additional community colleges. Through one-to-one relationships, they shared information about how to start and sustain a quality educational program for plus 50 students.

- St. Louis Community College was a learning partner for affiliate Metropolitan Community College.
- Joliet Junior College was a learning partner for affiliate Moraine Valley Community College.
- College of Central Florida was a learning partner for affiliate Rose State College and Pasco-Hernando Community College.
- Century College was a learning partner for affiliate Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.
- Western Dakota Technical College was a learning partner for affiliate Dawson Community College.
- Clover Park Technical College was a learning partner for affiliates Bates Technical College, Tacoma Community College, Pierce College-Fort Steilacoom and Pierce College-Puyallup.
- Community College of Spokane was a learning partner for affiliate Shoreline Community College.

Plus 50 Pilot College Conferences

Select pilot colleges hosted Plus 50 conferences to bring the Plus 50 message and resources to additional community colleges.

- Century College hosted a conference for the nine other Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn. community colleges.
- Three Plus 50 Initiative community colleges in Washington - Clark College, Clover Park Technical College and Community Colleges of Spokane - hosted a regional conference for 22 community colleges from Washington and Oregon.
- Richland College in Dallas, Texas, hosted a Plus 50 Initiative Conference for 11 other community colleges in the Dallas area.

Peer-to-Peer Ambassadors

Peer-to-Peer Ambassadors invited new colleges to participate in information sharing on resources and tools available to assist them with effective programming for plus 50 students.

- Joliet Junior College is a peer-to-peer ambassador for three other Illinois community colleges.
- Clark College is an ambassador for seven other community colleges in Washington and Oregon.
- St. Louis Community College is an ambassador for 12 other community colleges in Missouri, one community college in Illinois, and an additional community college in Oregon.

Programmatic Focus Areas

AACC supports the pilot colleges in their efforts to increase offerings to the plus 50 population in three programmatic tracks: (1) workforce training and career development; (2) learning and enrichment; and (3) volunteering. The initiative not only focuses on expanding the *quantity* of offerings, but also fosters innovation in *how* the colleges meet the particular needs and interests of this age cohort. This means developing new courses and redesigning existing ones, as well as developing and expanding support services that enable access to community college programming. Plus 50 programming also includes support services that increase access of the plus 50 learner to community colleges.

Workforce Training and Career Development

Workforce training and career development are courses and services that help people upgrade their skills for the purposes of re-entering the workforce or advancing their careers. Colleges offer a wide range of training programs and career services, including workshops in resume writing and job interviewing, computer refresher courses, and certificate programs that help students train for new careers, as well as job placement services and community partnerships with employers. Student-level outcomes for the workforce training and career development track include:

- Improving, increasing, and/or learning new skills;
- Increasing excitement about re-careering;
- Learning about new job possibilities;
- Preparing for a job search;
- Securing a job; and
- Receiving job promotions, raises, and new responsibilities.

Learning and Enrichment

Learning and enrichment courses are general studies (such as math and foreign language) or personal interests (such as cooking and yoga) that students enroll in for academic development, to relieve stress from their busy lives, and for personal enrichment. Student-level outcomes for the learning and enrichment track include:

- Identifying as a lifelong learner;
- Generating new excitement about learning;
- Increasing knowledge; and
- Feeling part of a community of learners.

Volunteering

This focus area includes programs and services that support plus 50 learners in finding opportunities to volunteer their skills and talents in their communities. Services can include issuing a directory of volunteer opportunities and matching skilled volunteers with nonprofits. Student-level outcomes for the volunteering track include:

- Increased interest in, and enthusiasm for, volunteering;
- Getting placed in a volunteer job;
- Feeling useful as a volunteer;
- Feeling a sense of community through volunteering; and
- Knowing how to go about finding a volunteer job that is a good fit.

Support Services

As part of their Plus 50 programs, grantees are implementing services and supports to increase access of plus 50 students to the community colleges. Some of these barriers include lack of awareness of the courses and activities geared to the plus 50 population, difficulties integrating into campus life, physical challenges (e.g. needing large print on handouts), and financial barriers. To address these barriers and to help attract and retain plus 50 students, Plus 50 colleges are investing in support services, including:

- Services that facilitate the integration of plus 50 students into the college;
- Supports that facilitate physical access; and
- Supports to increase the financial feasibility of college courses.

II. Overview of Course Offerings for Plus 50 Students

Counting Courses Offered to the Plus 50 Student

This evaluation seeks to quantify the extent to which pilot colleges have expanded their offerings for the plus 50 student. The quantity of course offerings can be counted in two ways: the *unique number* of courses; and the *total number* of courses. The unique number is the number of individual courses that are offered at least once during the year to this population, and represents the size of the *"course portfolio"* for this population. The total number represents the aggregate number of courses offered, taking into account when a course was offered multiple times. (For example, there might be two unique courses, each offered three times during the year; the total courses would therefore be six.) The total number of courses represents the *"course capacity"* for this population: it is the extent of opportunities that plus 50 students have to take courses tailored to their needs and interests.
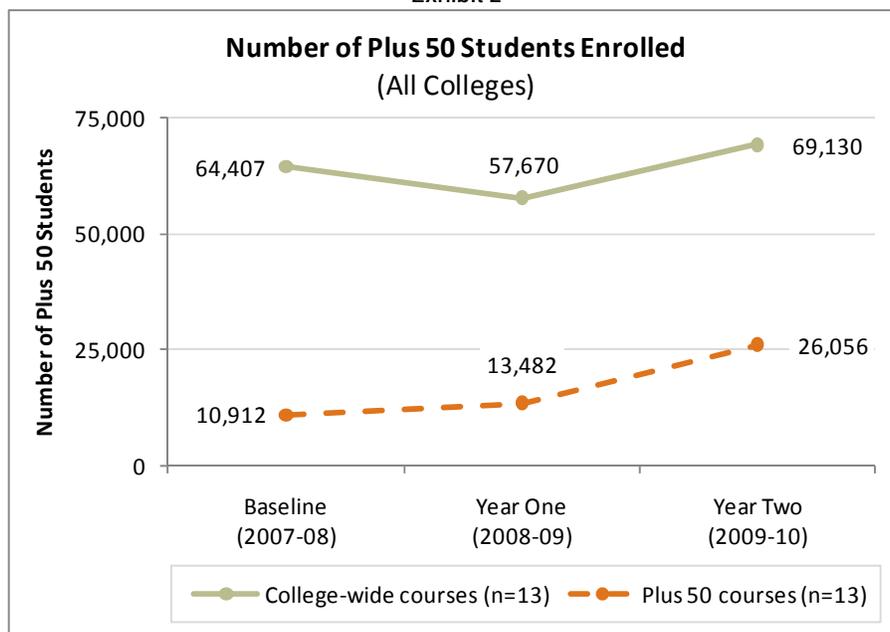
> **Counting Courses: Unique v. Total**
>
> The *unique number* of courses represents a college's *"course portfolio:"* the number of unique courses that are offered at least once during the year to this population.
>
> The *total number* represents a college's *"course capacity"* to serve the plus 50 population: the aggregate number of courses offered, taking into account when a course is offered multiple times.

Course Offerings and Enrollments at Plus 50 Colleges

Aggregate enrollment data for the pilot colleges show that there was a strong increase in the number of students enrolled in Plus 50 courses and programs, as well as an overall increase in the total number of plus 50 students enrolled at the colleges (in *any* course, *including* courses that pilot colleges included as part of their Plus 50 programming).

Plus 50 Student Enrollment College-wide, and in Courses that are Part of Plus 50 Programs
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)
Exhibit 2

Number of Plus 50 Students Enrolled
(All Colleges)

- College-wide courses (n=13): Baseline 64,407; Year One 57,670; Year Two 69,130
- Plus 50 courses (n=13): Baseline 10,912; Year One 13,482; Year Two 26,056

- Over the course of the initiative, there was a strong increase in the number of students enrolled in courses included as part of pilot colleges' Plus 50 programming: annual enrollment in courses associated with the Plus 50 program more than doubled, increasing by over 15,000 students from baseline to the end of year two.
- During the period from baseline to the end of the second year of the Initiative, there was only a slight net rise in annual college-wide enrollment of plus 50 students (and there was a dip at the end of year one).

A Shift in Emphasis from Enrichment Courses to Workforce Training Courses

The colleges that have a learning and enrichment track also have a workforce training and career development track. And over the course of the initiative, these colleges have seen a shift in demand away from courses taken for personal interest, in favor of workforce training courses. The downturn in the economy has prompted this shift, with plus 50 learners needing to enroll in classes that will help them find a job.[1] Some of these students are displaced workers, and some are coming out of retirement after seeing their savings dwindle.

Courses Offered for Plus 50 Students
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)
Exhibit 3

Number of Unique Courses Offered for Plus 50 Students
(All Colleges)
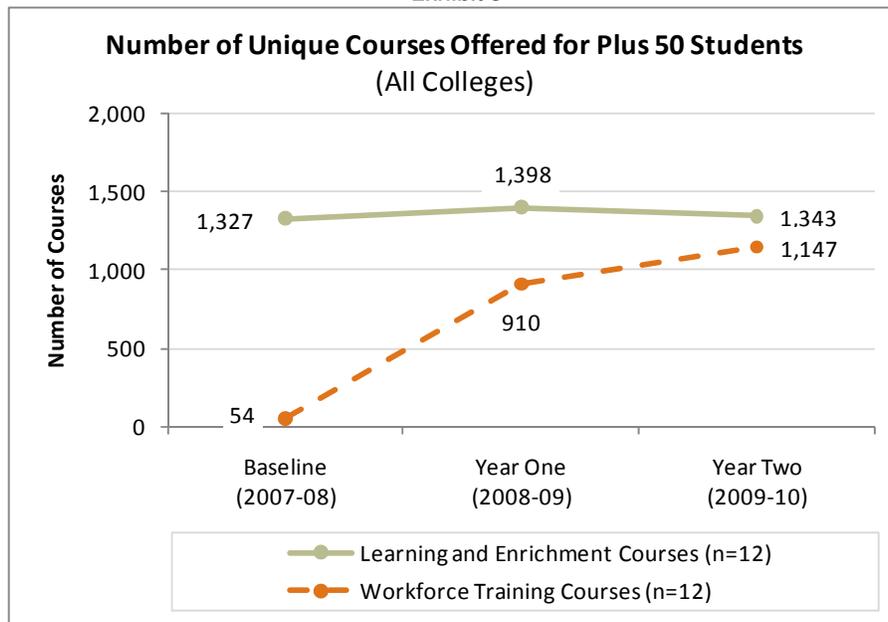
- There was a slight rise in the number of enrichment courses from baseline to year one, and a dramatic rise in the number of workforce training courses.
- In year two, there was a slight decline in the number of learning and enrichment courses and a continued increase in the number of workforce training classes.

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[1] Dembicki, M. (February 2009). *Economy Prompts Shift in Plus 50.* Community College Times, Vol. XXI No. 4.

III. Workforce Training and Career Development Programs

Community colleges play a critical role in the nation's workforce development, supplying vocational and technical education, which millions of students access every year as they seek to build skills they can use in the workplace. This is true for plus 50 learners as well as younger adult learners, and workforce training is an increasing need for this age cohort. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of workforce training courses offered specifically for plus 50 learners. The increase in workforce training courses reflects an emphasis of the Plus 50 Initiative. From the beginning, the Initiative had a focus on workforce development, seeking to encourage community colleges to create programming that would help meet the career and employment needs of the plus 50 population. At the same time, the Initiative coincided with a severe downturn in the US economy, which decimated baby boomers' retirement savings and led to a broad demographic shift in which many in this age group pushed off retirement or found themselves needing to return to work. [2]

Growth in Credit Workforce Training Courses

Credit Workforce Training Courses
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)

Unique Courses — Exhibit 4
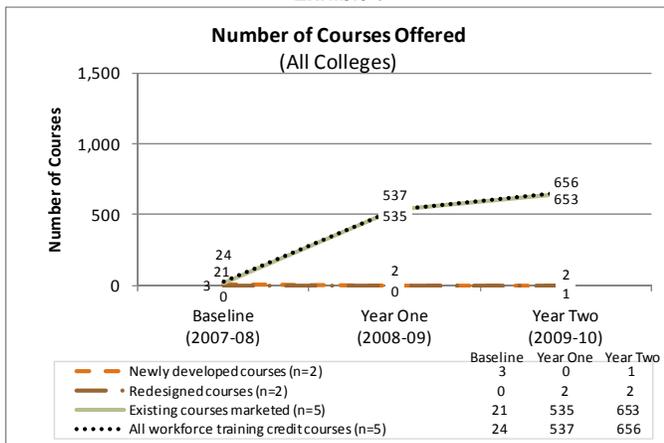
Total Courses — Exhibit 5

- From baseline to year two of the Initiative, pilot colleges dramatically increased their workforce training offerings by more than 600 unique credit courses (with most of the increase taking place in between baseline and year one).
- Plus 50 grantees collectively offered 1,093 more workforce training courses for plus 50 students in year two than at baseline – an approximate 20-fold increase.

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[2] Dembicki, M. (February 2009). *Economy Prompts Shift in Plus 50.* Community College Times, Vol. XXI No. 4.
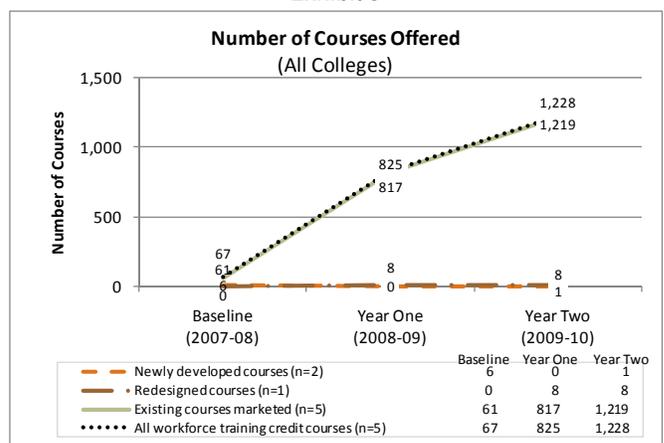
Growth in Non-Credit Workforce Training Courses

Non-Credit Workforce Training Courses
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)

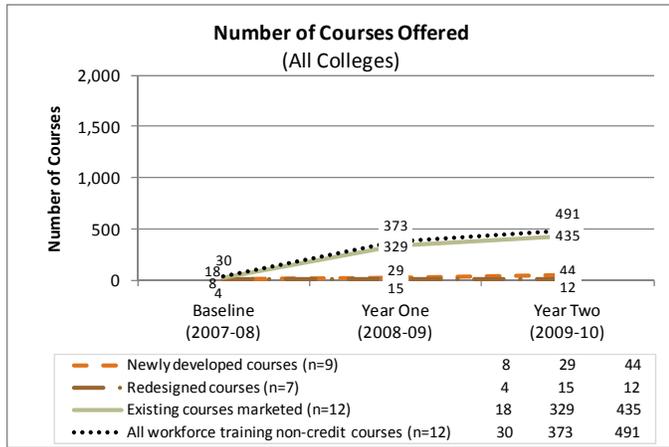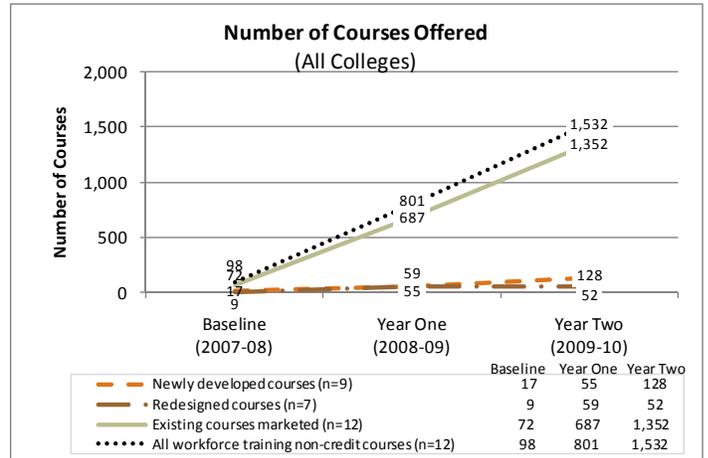| Unique Courses	Total Courses
Exhibit 6	Exhibit 7

Number of Courses Offered (All Colleges)

	Baseline (2007-08)	Year One (2008-09)	Year Two (2009-10)
Newly developed courses (n=9)	8	29	44
Redesigned courses (n=7)	4	15	12
Existing courses marketed (n=12)	18	329	435
All workforce training non-credit courses (n=12)	30	373	491

Number of Courses Offered (All Colleges)

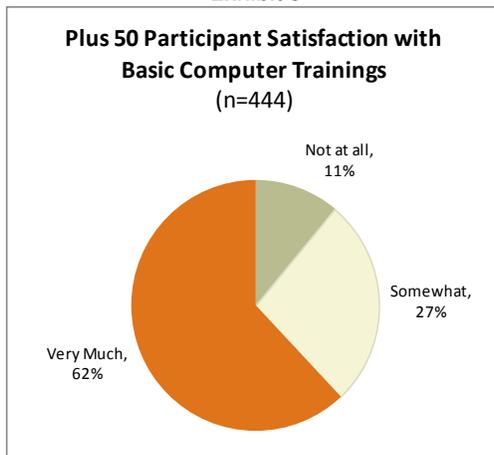|	Baseline	Year One	Year Two
Newly developed courses (n=9)	17	55	128
Redesigned courses (n=7)	9	59	52
Existing courses marketed (n=12)	72	687	1,352
All workforce training non-credit courses (n=12)	98	801	1,532

- There has been significant growth in the portfolio of non-credit courses: from 30 to 491. Most of this growth is accounted for by the marketing of existing courses rather than designing or developing new courses (at year two, 435 of the 491 courses offered to this demographic were courses that were in course catalogs before the Plus 50 initiative).
- Over the course of the Initiative, the colleges' capacity to serve the plus 50 population with non-credit courses increased by more than fifteen times, from 98 to 1,532.

Computer Courses for the Plus 50 Student

One type of workforce training course deserves special mention: computer courses tailored to plus 50 students to provide them with a newfound level of comfort with technology. Some experts see lack of comfort with computers as "the biggest educational barrier to postsecondary education" for plus 50 adults,[3] and it is often a barrier to advancing one's career as well. Offering a computer course specifically for plus 50 students is a popular approach among the pilot colleges.

Exhibit 8

Plus 50 Participant Satisfaction with Basic Computer Trainings
(n=444)

Not at all, 11%
Somewhat, 27%
Very Much, 62%

- Most (89%) survey respondents agree that basic computer trainings geared toward plus 50 learners successfully met their needs, interests, and objectives.

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[3] American Council on Education. (2007). *Reinvesting in the Third Age: Older Adults and Higher Education.*

Exhibit 9

Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that **will maintain** component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Computer courses (n=11)	1	9	1	10
Career preparation courses (n=9)	4	5	0	8

- Nine colleges refined their computer courses to better tailor them to the needs and learning styles of plus 50 students; ten colleges will continue to offer computer courses after the initiative ends.
- In addition to computer courses and "refresher" courses, four colleges created and five colleges refined career preparation courses tailored to the needs and learning styles of plus 50 students; eight colleges will continue to offer these courses upon completion of the Plus 50 Initiative.

Enrollment of Plus 50 Students in Workforce Training Courses

Enrollment of Plus 50 Students in Workforce
Training Courses
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)
Exhibit 10
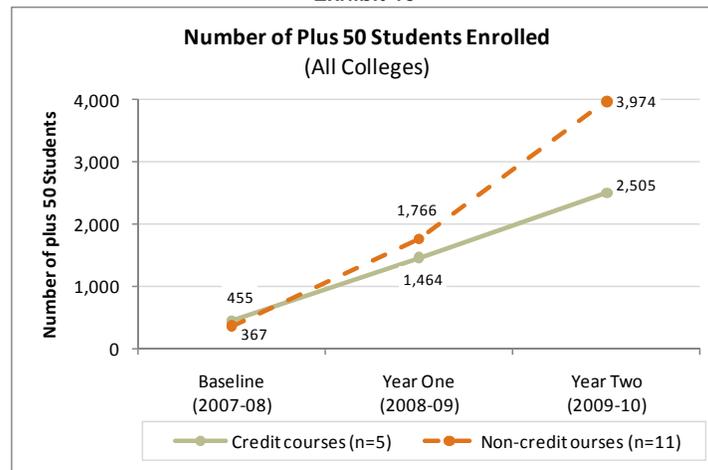
- From baseline to the end of year two, the number of students enrolled annually in program-related credit courses rose from 455 to 2,505 across all colleges, and the number enrolled in non-credit courses rose from 367 to 3,974.

Career Counseling and Career Workshops

Research into plus 50 students at community colleges shows when plus 50 students use career services for the "standard student," these services fall short.[4] Looking for a job, updating job search skills, or changing careers is a very different thing for those 50 and over than it is for those in their 20s and 30s, or even those in their 40s. For career services to truly meet the needs of plus 50 workers, they need to be tailored to this age group. As part of their career services program implementation, the Plus 50 colleges have been working

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[4] Portland Community College Taskforce on Aging. (2007). *Boomers go to College: A Report on the Survey of Students 40 and Older.*

to make sure that their services are tailored specifically to the needs, interests, and objectives of the plus 50 client with new career goals.

Exhibit 11

	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Career Counseling and Workshops				
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Career Counseling (n=9)	2	6	1	8
Career Workshops (n=8)	4	4	0	5

- Two colleges created career counseling for Plus 50 students from scratch, six revised their programs, one continued to offer tailored career counseling and almost all (eight colleges) will continue to offer this service after the Plus 50 Initiative ends.

Career Counseling and Career Workshops
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two in Number of Clients Served)
Exhibit 12
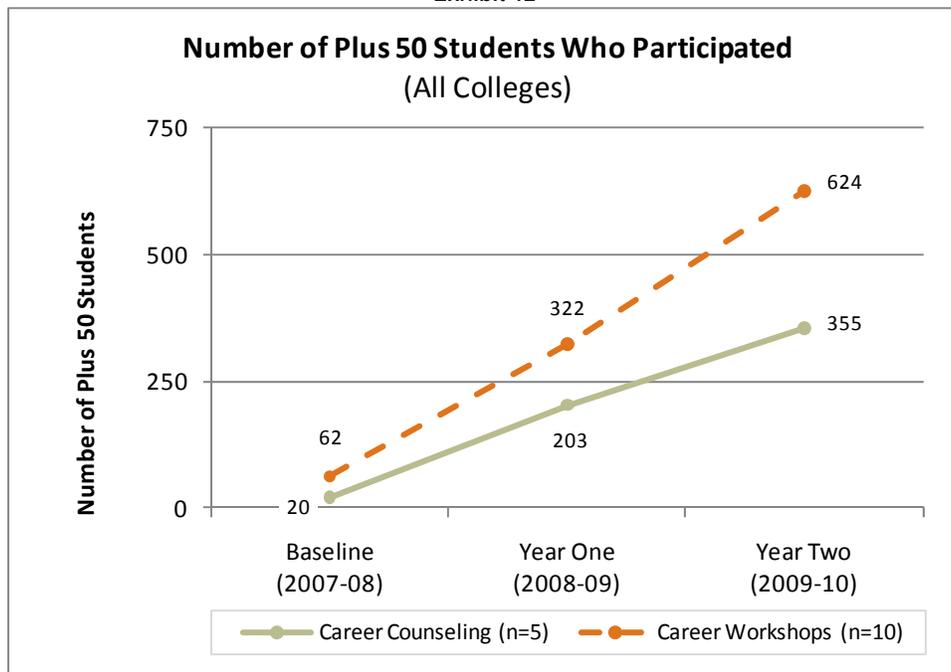
- The total number of students age 50 or older who participated annually in career counseling services increased by 562 between baseline and year two.
- The total number of students age 50 or older who participated annually in career workshops increased by 335 between baseline and year two.

Support in Finding Job Openings: Job Listings, Job Matching, and Job Fairs

The exhibit below shows the growth in the number of colleges offering specific services that support plus 50 clients in locating job openings they can apply for. Services offered include job listings, job matching, and job

fairs. Offering job listings is a less popular approach than job matching: job matching is a service in which staff work to link prospective employees to employers.

Exhibit 13

Job Fairs				
	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Job Fairs (n=6)	3	3	0	4

- Three colleges created a job fair tailored to Plus 50 students and an additional three colleges refined this offering; four colleges will continue to offer tailored job fairs after the Plus 50 Initiative.

Job Listing and Job Matching
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two in Number of Clients Served)
Exhibit 14
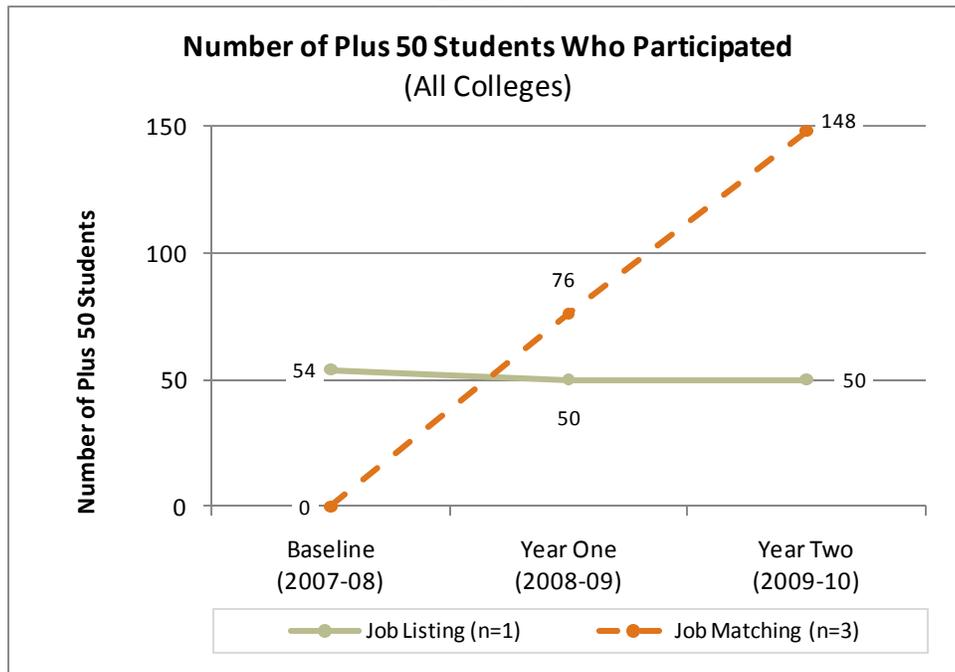
- The total number of students age 50 or older who participated annually in job listing services decreased by four between baseline and year two.
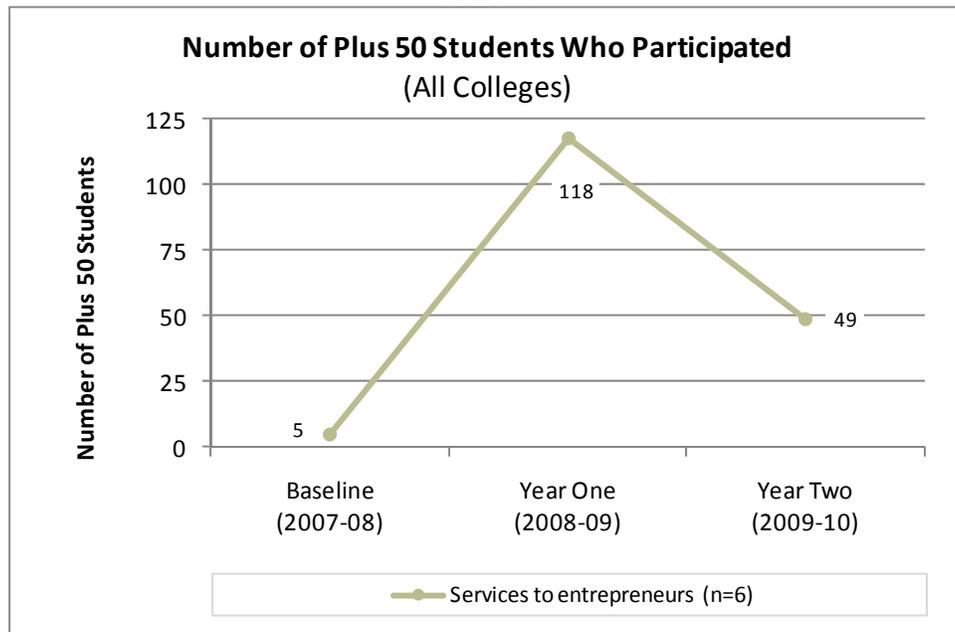- The total number of students age 50 or older who participated annually in job matching services increased by 148 between baseline and year two.

Providing Services to Entrepreneurs

When some consider their careers in the third stage of life, they are interested not in landing another job, but in working for themselves. Several colleges have created offerings tailored to plus 50 entrepreneurs.

Services to Entrepreneurs
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two in Number of Clients Served)
Exhibit 15

Number of Plus 50 Students Who Participated
(All Colleges)

- The total number of students age 50 or older who participated annually in entrepreneurial services increased from baseline to year one but decreased in year two, resulting in a net rise of 44. The economic downturn caused some colleges to scale back or eliminate services to entrepreneurs during year two. For example, at one college, the center that housed support services for entrepreneurs in year one was closed in year two due to budget cuts.

Student Satisfaction with Workforce Training Courses and Programs

Plus 50 students participating in Plus 50 programming filled out surveys that asked them to rate the extent to which taking workforce training courses and using the career services had helped them meet their career goals. The results are extremely positive, with students reporting that both the courses and career services are of high quality, and they are largely receiving the support they need to work toward their career objectives.[5]

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[5] Note that respondents were offered a "does not apply: this was not my goal" option, so that they would not provide "disagreement" answers when courses or services did not meet a goal due to the fact that the course or service was not *designed* to meet that particular goal.

Plus 50 Workforce Training Programs Helped Me To…

Exhibit 16

Exhibit 16 — horizontal stacked bar chart "Percentage of Respondents"

- Acquire new job skills (n=259): Completely Disagree 4%, Mostly Disagree 5%, Mostly Agree 27%, Completely Agree 64%
- Improve my job skills (n=272): Completely Disagree 3%, Mostly Disagree 4%, Mostly Agree 31%, Completely Agree 62%
- Improve my technology skills (n=254): Completely Disagree 3%, Mostly Disagree 4%, Mostly Agree 33%, Completely Agree 61%
- Prepare for my job search (n=256): Completely Disagree 3%, Mostly Disagree 7%, Mostly Agree 31%, Completely Agree 59%
- Work toward obtaining a license or certificate (n=176): Completely Disagree 8%, Mostly Disagree 7%, Mostly Agree 28%, Completely Agree 57%

Legend: Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Mostly Agree, Completely Agree

Exhibit 17

Exhibit 17 — horizontal stacked bar chart "Percentage of Respondents"

- Land a job (n=217): Completely Disagree 12%, Mostly Disagree 15%, Mostly Agree 30%, Completely Agree 43%
- Advance in my job (n=137): Completely Disagree 13%, Mostly Disagree 15%, Mostly Agree 31%, Completely Agree 42%
- Get a raise (n=119): Completely Disagree 19%, Mostly Disagree 24%, Mostly Agree 24%, Completely Agree 34%
- Get a promotion (n=118): Completely Disagree 17%, Mostly Disagree 25%, Mostly Agree 27%, Completely Agree 31%

Legend: Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Mostly Agree, Completely Agree

▪ Plus 50 learners indicated high levels of satisfaction with workforce training courses and programming, with more than nine out of ten indicating that workforce training programs helped them to improve their technology skills (94%), improve their job skills (93%), acquire new job skills (91%), and prepare for a job search (90%).
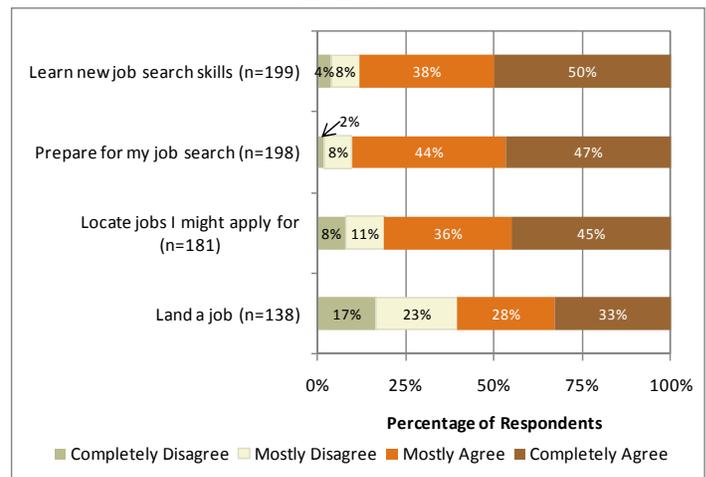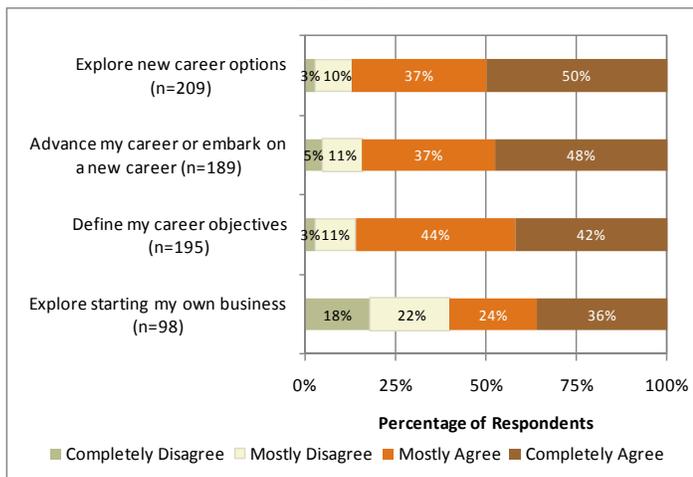
Student Satisfaction with Career Development Services

The results of the student surveys show that students have high levels of satisfaction with how career development services are helping them to adequately prepare for a job search. Colleges' career services are supporting students in learning job search skills, preparing for a job search, locating job openings, and finding a job.

Plus 50 Career Development Services Helped Me To…

Exhibit 18

Exhibit 18 — horizontal stacked bar chart "Percentage of Respondents"

- Explore new career options (n=209): Completely Disagree 3%, Mostly Disagree 10%, Mostly Agree 37%, Completely Agree 50%
- Advance my career or embark on a new career (n=189): Completely Disagree 5%, Mostly Disagree 11%, Mostly Agree 37%, Completely Agree 48%
- Define my career objectives (n=195): Completely Disagree 3%, Mostly Disagree 11%, Mostly Agree 44%, Completely Agree 42%
- Explore starting my own business (n=98): Completely Disagree 18%, Mostly Disagree 22%, Mostly Agree 24%, Completely Agree 36%

Legend: Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Mostly Agree, Completely Agree

Exhibit 19

Exhibit 19 — horizontal stacked bar chart "Percentage of Respondents"

- Learn new job search skills (n=199): Completely Disagree 4%, Mostly Disagree 8%, Mostly Agree 38%, Completely Agree 50%
- Prepare for my job search (n=198): Completely Disagree 2%, Mostly Disagree 8%, Mostly Agree 44%, Completely Agree 47%
- Locate jobs I might apply for (n=181): Completely Disagree 8%, Mostly Disagree 11%, Mostly Agree 36%, Completely Agree 45%
- Land a job (n=138): Completely Disagree 17%, Mostly Disagree 23%, Mostly Agree 28%, Completely Agree 33%

Legend: Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Mostly Agree, Completely Agree

▪ More than three-fourths of survey respondents agree that Plus 50 career development services have helped them in several areas related to job preparation including: preparing for a job search (91%), learning new job search skills (88%), exploring new career options (87%), advancing a career or embarking on a new career (85%), defining career objectives (86%), and locating jobs to apply for (81%).

▪ More than half (61%) of survey respondents indicated that Plus 50 career development services helped them to obtain a job.

IV. Learning and Enrichment

Learning and enrichment courses include general studies (such as math and foreign language) or personal interests (such as cooking and yoga) that students enroll in for academic development, to relieve stress from their busy lives, and for personal enrichment. Plus 50 learning and enrichment courses serve a wide variety of student interests. Students may take credit courses in the pursuit of an associate's degree; they may take courses that dovetail with career advancement goals; and they may take these courses purely for personal interest. Colleges have put a great deal of effort into offering a diversity of course content and formats tailored to the needs of plus 50 learners.

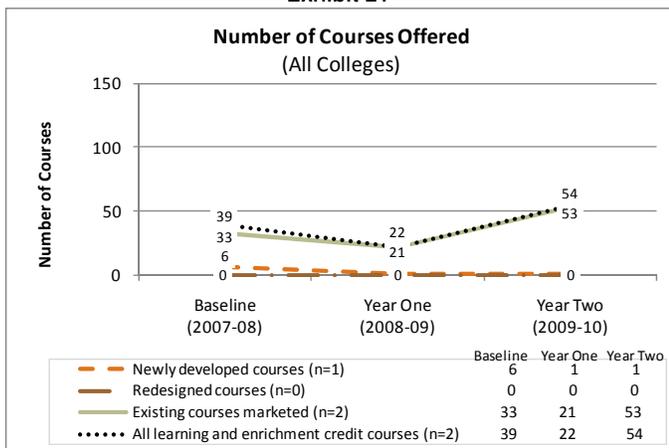## Change Over Time in Learning and Enrichment Courses Offered[6]

Exhibit 20

Learning and Enrichment				
	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
"Refresher" courses (n=7)	4	3	0	5
Enrichment courses (n=12)	4	4	4	11

- Four colleges created and three colleges refined "refresher" courses tailored to the needs of plus 50 students who have been away from school for many years.
- All colleges created, refined, or continued to offer enrichment courses tailored to the needs and learning styles of plus 50 students (aside from "refresher" courses and computer courses); eleven colleges will continue to offer enrichment courses.
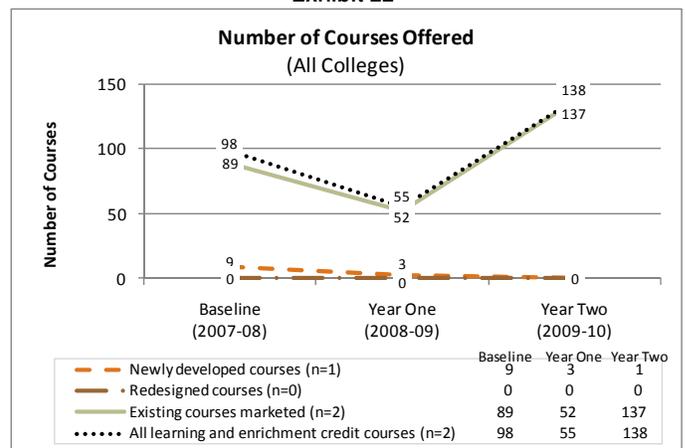
Learning and Enrichment Credit Courses

Credit Learning and Enrichment Courses
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)

Unique Courses
Exhibit 21

	Baseline	Year One	Year Two
Newly developed courses (n=1)	6	1	1
Redesigned courses (n=0)	0	0	0
Existing courses marketed (n=2)	33	21	53
All learning and enrichment credit courses (n=2)	39	22	54

Total Courses
Exhibit 22

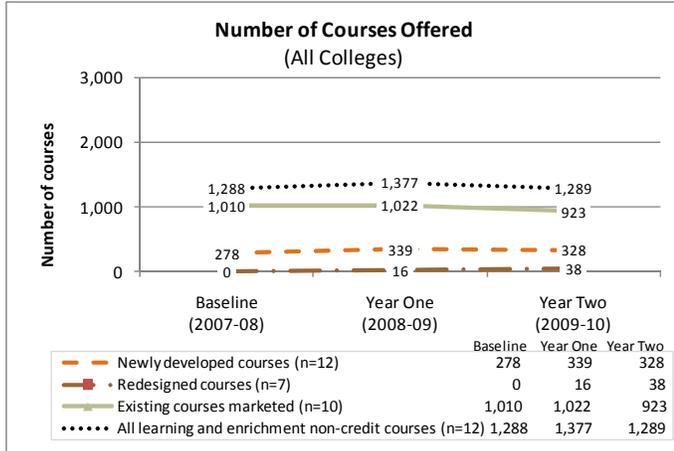|	Baseline	Year One	Year Two
Newly developed courses (n=1)	9	3	1
Redesigned courses (n=0)	0	0	0
Existing courses marketed (n=2)	89	52	137
All learning and enrichment credit courses (n=2)	98	55	138

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[6] Though only ten pilot colleges offered learning and enrichment tracks as part of their Plus 50 grant, two additional colleges reported data on enrichment courses that supplemented workforce training. Data on all twelve colleges counting enrichment courses as part of their programming is included as part of this report.

- Colleges' learning and enrichment course offerings decreased from baseline to year one and increased again in year two.
- During year two of the Initiative, colleges offered 54 unique Plus 50 learning and enrichment courses 138 times.
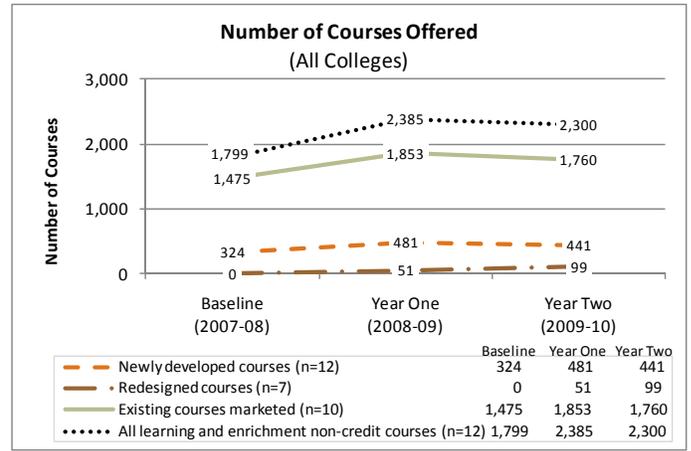
Learning and Enrichment Non-Credit Courses

Non-credit Learning and Enrichment Courses
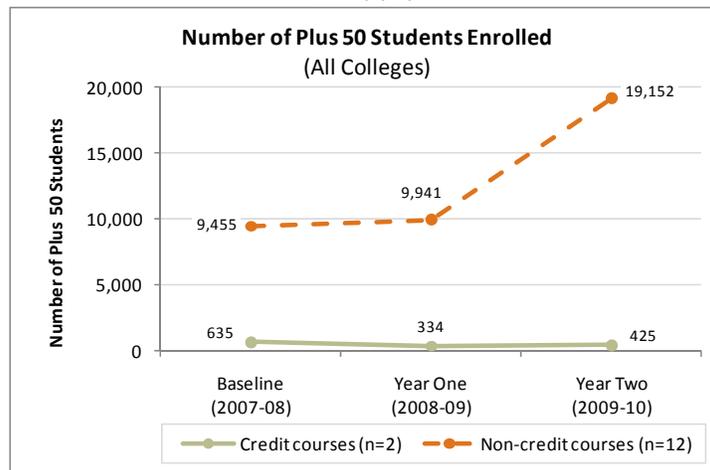### (Changes from Baseline to Year Two)

Unique Courses	Total Courses
Exhibit 23	Exhibit 24

- During the Initiative, the number of unique non-credit learning and enrichment courses offered by pilot colleges remained relatively stable, with existing courses marketed to plus 50 learners accounting for the majority of the 1,289 unique courses offered.
- Colleges focused on increasing the total number of times courses were offered, with the total number of course increasing from 1,799 to 2,300 from baseline to the end of year two.

Enrollment of plus 50 Students in Learning and Enrichment Courses

Enrollment of Plus 50 Students in Learning and Enrichment Courses
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)
Exhibit 25

- The total number of students age 50 or older enrolled annually in credit learning and enrichment courses *decreased* by 210 students from baseline to year two.
- The total number of students age 50 or older enrolled annually in non-credit learning and enrichment courses doubled, increasing by 9,697 students from baseline to year two.

Student Satisfaction with Learning and Enrichment Offerings

Surveys of program participants were designed to measure learning and enrichment outcomes such as identifying as a lifelong learner, generating new excitement about learning, and increasing knowledge.

Plus 50 Learning and Enrichment Courses Helped Me To…
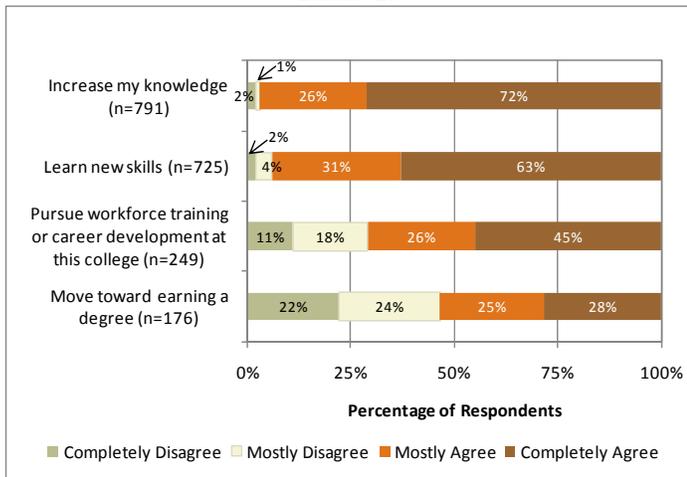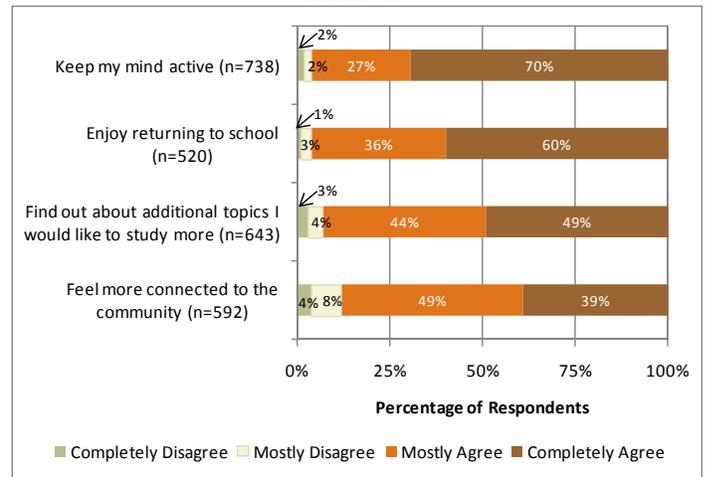

Exhibit 26

Exhibit 27

- More than 95% of survey respondents indicated that learning and enrichment courses have helped them to increase their knowledge (98%), keep their minds active (97%), and enjoy returning to school (96%).

V. Volunteering Programs

Altruism, a desire to stay engaged, and connecting to community members of all ages inspired plus 50 volunteers. The plus 50 population is highly educated and skilled, and those leaving the workplace have the potential to apply their wisdom, experience, and talents to "doing good."[7] Pilot colleges developed volunteering programs to link plus 50 volunteers with volunteering positions. Through these programs, students have found opportunities to use their skills and talents to benefit their communities.

## Developing and Expanding Volunteering Programs for Plus 50 Students

Exhibit 28

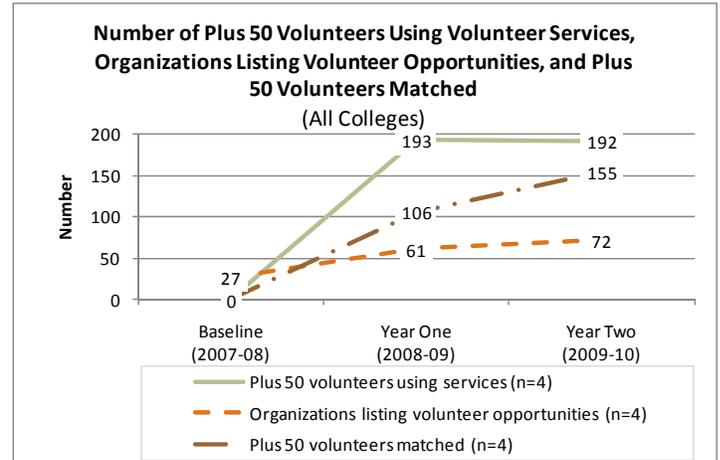| Pilot college: Volunteering Offerings				
Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Volunteer job matching or volunteer job listings (n=9)	7	1	1	6

- Seven colleges created volunteer job matching or volunteer job listings tailored to Plus 50 students during the Plus 50 Initiative, one college refined this program, and one continued to offer this service.
- Six colleges will continue to provide volunteer job matching or volunteer job listings for Plus 50 volunteers after the Plus 50 Initiative ends.

Volunteer Listing and Matching Services

Volunteer Listing Services
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)
Exhibit 29
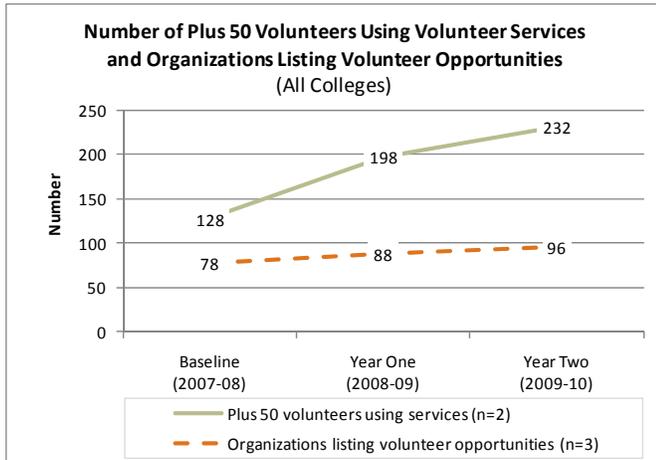
Number of Plus 50 Volunteers Using Volunteer Services and Organizations Listing Volunteer Opportunities (All Colleges)

Volunteer Matching Services
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)
Exhibit 30

Number of Plus 50 Volunteers Using Volunteer Services, Organizations Listing Volunteer Opportunities, and Plus 50 Volunteers Matched (All Colleges)

Volunteer Listing
- The total number of students age 50 or older who used volunteer job listing services annually increased by 104 students from baseline to year two.
- The total number of organizations listing volunteer opportunities increased by 18 from baseline to year two.

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[7]Points of Light Foundation (2004). *50+ Volunteering: Working for Stronger Communities.* Retrieved on February 3, 2009 from: http://www.pointsoflight.org/downloads/pdf/programs/50plus/POLF_2004_Boomer_Pub.pdf

Volunteer Matching

- The total number of students age 50 or older who used volunteer matching services annually increased by 165 from baseline to year two.
- The total number of organizations listing volunteer opportunities increased by 45 from baseline to year two.
- The total number of students age 50 or older who were placed in volunteer positions annually increased by 155 from baseline to year two.

Student Satisfaction with Volunteering Programs

Through Plus 50 volunteering programs, students have found avenues to use their skills and knowledge to benefit their communities. Results from student surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction with volunteer programs.

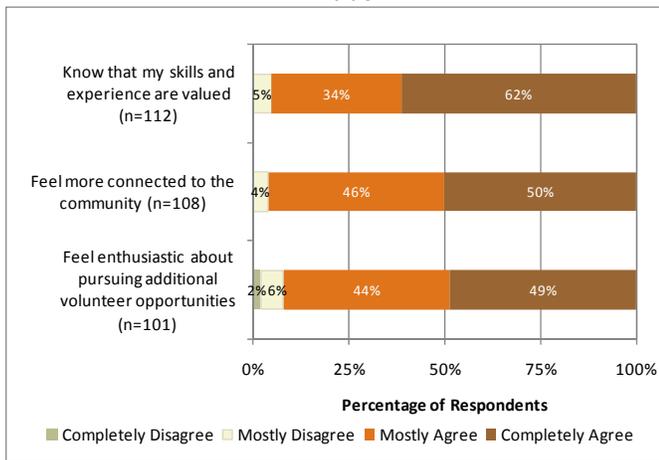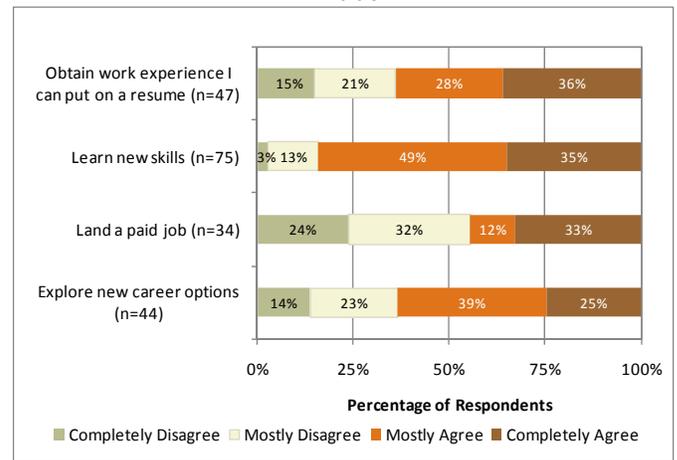### Plus 50 Volunteer Services Helped Me To…

Exhibit 31

Exhibit 32

- Over 90% of respondents agree that volunteering helps them to feel more connected to the community (96%), to know that their skills and experiences are valued (96%), and to feel enthusiastic about pursuing volunteer opportunities in the future (93%).

Exhibit 33

Participant Agreement that Their Skills Were Put to Good Use at Their Volunteer Position
(n=116)
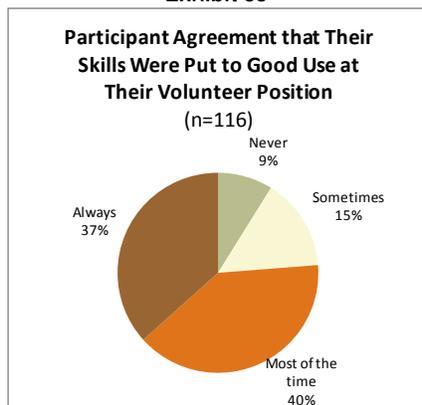
- More than three-fourths (77%) of survey respondents agree that their skills were put to good use at their volunteer positions.

- Results from student surveys also highlight the career benefits to volunteering: nearly two-thirds (64%) of plus 50 learners surveyed agree that the volunteer services helped them to explore new career options, and obtain work experience they could put on their resumes, and nearly half (45%) of plus 50 learners were able to leverage their volunteer experience to obtain a paid job.

VI. Professional Development, Marketing, and Support Services

Professional Development for Faculty

Some teachers are better able than others to tailor their teaching styles so that plus 50 students feel comfortable in the learning environment. Recognizing the importance of this teaching skill, several Plus 50 colleges are offering professional development workshops or other opportunities designed to provide faculty with the information they need about appropriate pedagogical strategies. A few Plus 50 colleges provided professional development to instructors in an effort to ensure that pedagogy meets the needs of this age cohort. Some colleges' provided workshops on their plus 50 programs and the specific needs of the plus 50 population during the colleges' annual professional development days for faculty and staff. These workshops focused on various topics, such as tips for teaching older adults and generational learning differences.

Exhibit 34

Professional Development				
Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Professional development for faculty (n=5)	5	0	0	5

- Before the Plus 50 Initiative, no college provided professional development for faculty; during the initiative five colleges created this training for faculty and all will continue to offer professional development upon the completion of the initiative.

Marketing and Outreach to Bring Plus 50 Students to the Program

Exhibit 35

Course Catalog and Web pages				
Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Course catalog (n=7)	3	3	1	5
Web pages (n=12)	11	1	0	11

- Web pages were the most commonly created program component of the entire initiative; 11 colleges created web pages on college website designed specifically for plus 50 students.
- Three colleges created and three colleges refined their course catalogs specifically for Plus 50 students.
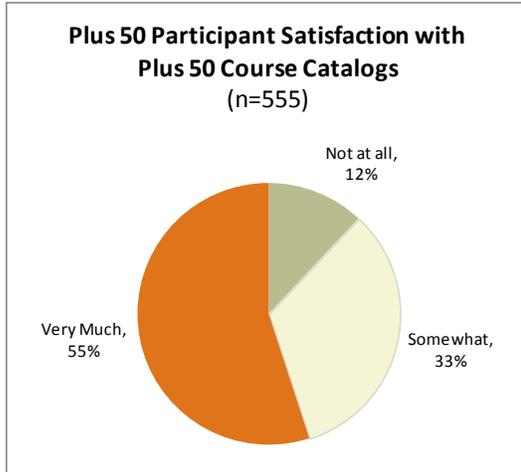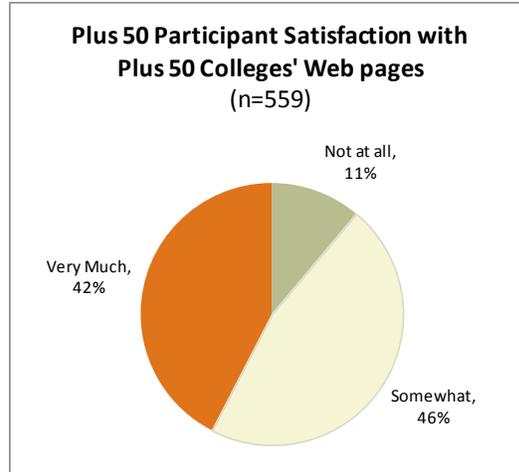
Exhibit 36

Plus 50 Participant Satisfaction with Plus 50 Course Catalogs
(n=555)

Not at all, 12%

Very Much, 55%

Somewhat, 33%

Exhibit 37

Plus 50 Participant Satisfaction with Plus 50 Colleges' Web pages
(n=559)

Not at all, 11%

Very Much, 42%

Somewhat, 46%

- Most (88%) survey respondents agree that course catalogs focused on Plus 50 offerings and college Web pages tailored to plus 50 learners successfully met their needs.
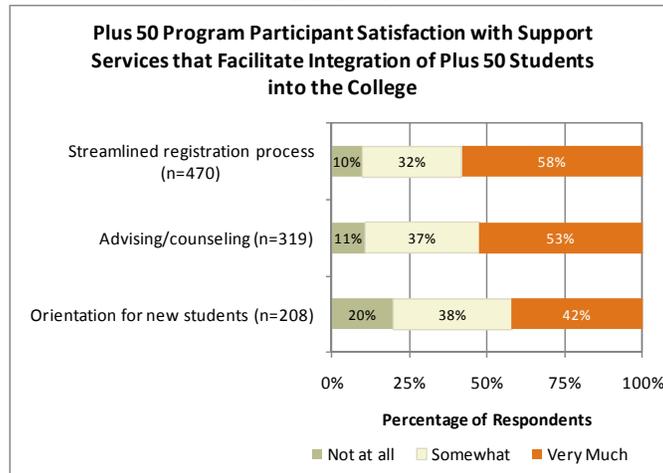
Support Services

As part of their Plus 50 programming, community colleges offered learner-centered support services to aid plus 50 learners to provide support and guidance throughout a college career. In addition to tailored advising and counseling services, colleges provided other services to facilitate the integration and success of plus 50 learners at the college. These included: concierge services, new student orientations for plus 50 students, and support with registration.

Exhibit 38

Learner-centered Supports				
	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Advising and counseling services (n=6)	2	4	0	6
New student orientation (n=4)	1	3	0	4
System for easy registration (n=6)	1	5	0	4

- Many Plus 50 colleges had learner-centered supports in place before the Plus 50 grant and refined these services to better meet the needs of Plus 50 learners.
- All colleges that offered advising and counseling services will continue to provide this valuable learner-centered support.

Exhibit 39

Plus 50 Program Participant Satisfaction with Support Services that Facilitate Integration of Plus 50 Students into the College

- Support services offered by Plus 50 colleges met the needs of plus 50 learners: nearly all survey respondents indicated that streamlined registration processes (91%), and advising/counseling tailored to plus 50 learners' needs, assets, and interests (90%) met their needs.
- Orientation for new students geared toward plus 50 learners also met the needs, objectives, and interests of most plus 50 students.

Facilitating Physical Access

Grantee colleges provided plus 50 students supports to ensure physical comfort and accessibility. These types of support includes strategies such as ensuring that there is comfortable seating, providing handouts with larger type, or making sure that classes are offered in a location that does not require walking up and down a lot of stairs. This might also include assistive technology for hearing and vision considerations. Transportation services are part of colleges' efforts to facilitate access to programming.

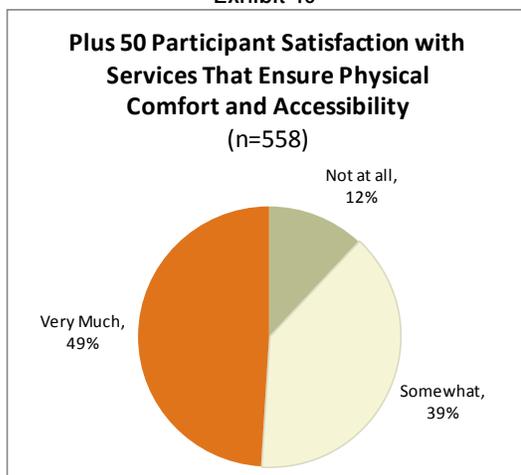### Ensuring Physical Comfort and Accessibility

Exhibit 40

Plus 50 Participant Satisfaction with Services That Ensure Physical Comfort and Accessibility
(n=558)

Exhibit 41

Plus 50 Participant Satisfaction with Transportation Services
(n=92)
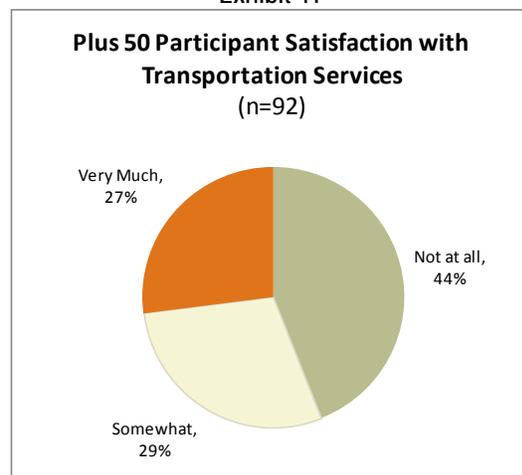

- Nearly all (88%) survey respondents indicated that college services ensuring physical comfort and accessibility (e.g., large print for handouts, adult-friendly seating, and classes located close to campus parking) successfully met their needs.

▪ Student feedback on surveys shows that transportation services is an area where colleges have been less successful in meeting the needs of plus 50 students: about half (56%) of survey respondents agree that transportation services for older learners provided or facilitated by the colleges met their needs.

Making Community College More Affordable

For some plus 50 adults, the cost of college courses can be a significant challenge. To address this challenge, several Plus 50 colleges are offering direct financial aid, referrals to sources of financial aid, and financial assistance workshops. Financial aid is, of course, something that is available to all students, but the sources of financial aid often tend to be more limited for plus 50 students. In addition, sources of financial aid that can be particularly helpful to this age group tend to be less well known. The work that pilot colleges have done to provide financial aid and to connect students with financial aid has made it possible for many more plus 50 students to access community colleges courses. This is a very clear benefit to students in this age group – many of whom are taking workforce training courses as a way to enter or re-enter the workforce.

Exhibit 42

Financial Accessibility				
	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Financial aid (n=5)	2	1	2	3
Referrals to sources of financial aid (n=7)	3	4	0	5

▪ After the Plus 50 Initiative, three colleges will offer financial aid for Plus 50 students and an additional five colleges will provide referrals to sources of financial aid.

Financial Support Services
(Changes from Baseline to Year Two)

Exhibit 43

Number of Plus 50 Students Who Participated
(All Colleges)

Exhibit 44

Plus 50 Participant Satisfaction with Financial Assistance Services
(n=224)
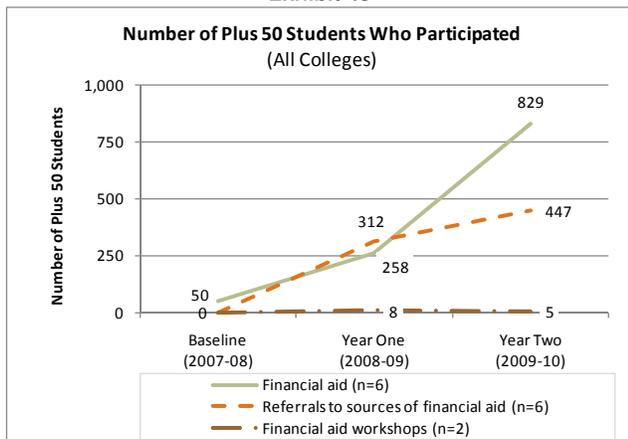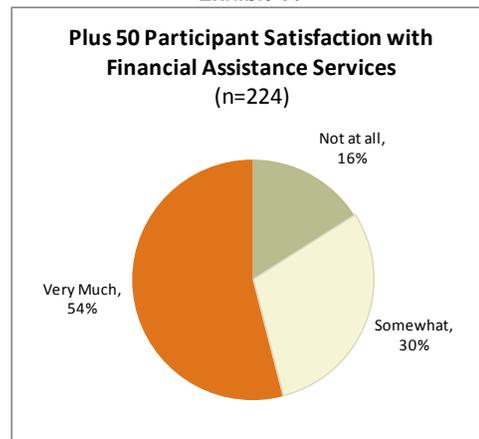
▪ The average number of students age 50 or older who received financial assistance annually increased by 127 from baseline to year two.

▪ The average number of students age 50 or older who were referred annually to various sources of financial assistance increased by 75 from baseline to year two.

▪ The average number of students age 50 or older who participated annually in financial aid workshops increased by three from baseline to year two.

▪ Nearly nine out of ten (84%) survey respondents agree that services that provide supports in finding sources of financial aid, especially those specifically for older learners, successfully met their needs.

VII.Sustainability of Plus 50 Programming at Pilot Colleges

The impressive sustainability of program offerings has grown out of efforts that AACC encouraged from the beginning of the Initiative: (1) cultivating broad-based organizational and institutional support; (2) embedding Plus 50 program goals into course offerings by tailoring courses to the needs, interests, and learning objectives of plus 50 learners; (3) leveraging community partnerships; and (4) planning for financial sustainability.

Cultivating Broad-Based Organizational and Institutional Support

Exhibit 45

Extent of Support for Plus 50 Programming from College Departments
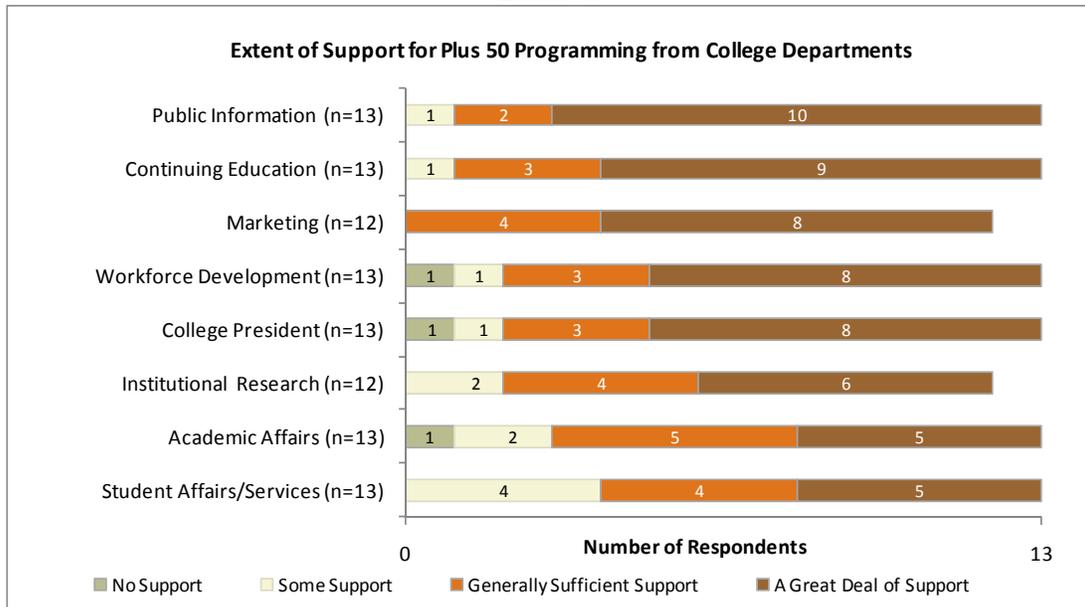
- Pilot colleges reported very high levels of support from stakeholders throughout the institution.
- Public Information departments at ten colleges offered "a great deal of support"
- College presidents were also very supportive of the Plus 50 Initiative.

Exhibit 46

In Support of the Plus 50 Program, Advisory Committee Members Have...
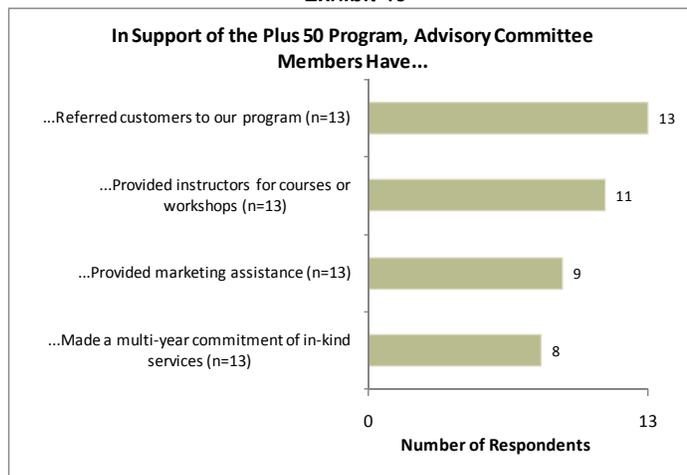
- At all colleges, committee members have referred customers to the program, while at nine colleges members have provided additional marketing assistance to boost customer outreach. In addition, at 11 colleges, members have provided instructors; and at eight, members have committed other types of in-kind services.

## Institutionalizing Program Components within Structures and Processes

Cultivating institutional support happens not only by gaining the support of individuals inhabiting specific organizational roles, but also through institutionalization: the integration of Plus 50 program components into the college's structures and processes.

Exhibit 47

Integrating Plus 50 Programming into Structures and Processes, These Colleges Have...
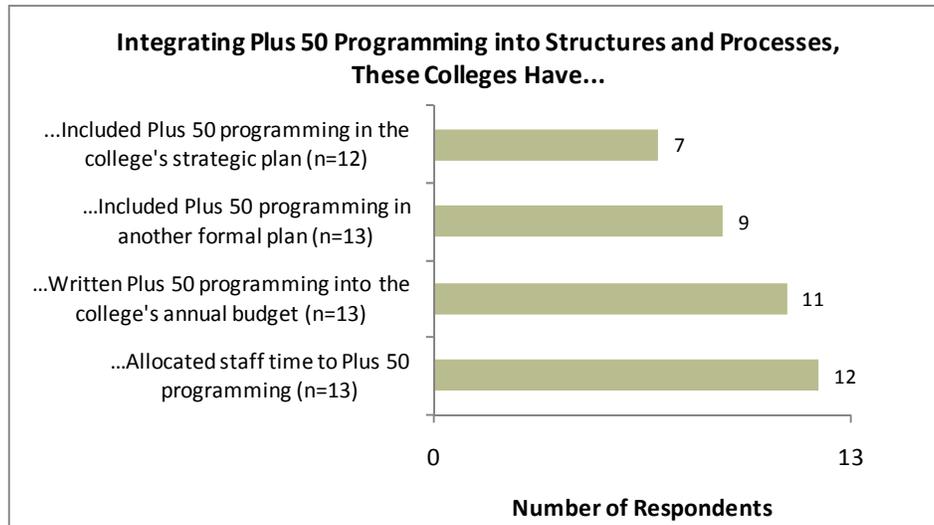
- Twelve colleges have staff time dedicated to Plus 50 programming (and have committed to continuing this staff time allocation after the grant)
- Eleven colleges have at least some aspect of Plus 50 programming written into the college's annual budget.
- Seven colleges have succeeded in having Plus 50 programming written into the college's strategic plan, which is a stunning accomplishment, especially considering the fact that the Initiative began only a few years ago.
- For nine colleges, Plus 50 programming is written into another formal plan (aside from – and sometimes in addition to – the strategic plan).

Embedding Plus 50 Program Goals into Course Offerings

Plus 50 learners come to community colleges largely to enroll in courses. These learners are, however, very different "consumers" of education than younger adult learners. They tend to be more goal-directed, more motivated by hands-on and practical learning, more constrained by life circumstances, and have more to offer to their classmates in terms of work and life experience. All of this means that if colleges are to effectively serve plus 50 learners, they must tailor courses to the needs, interest, and learning objectives of this student population.
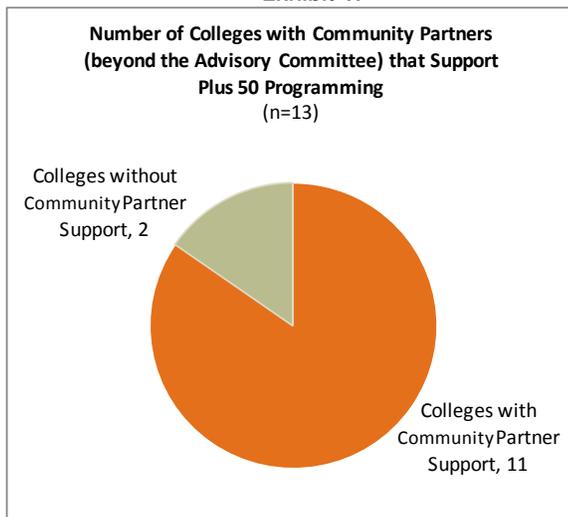
<div align="center">Exhibit 48</div>

Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that **will maintain** component
	created component	**refined** existing component	**continued** to offer component	
Accelerated courses designed to allow plus 50 students to move through **career preparation programs** quickly (n=6)	2	3	1	5
Flexible course scheduling designed **for career preparation courses** to accommodate the schedules of plus 50 students (n=5)	4	1	0	5
Flexible course scheduling designed **for enrichment courses** to accommodate the schedules of plus 50 students (n=10)	4	2	4	9

- Of the five colleges that had flexible scheduling in place for workforce training courses during the grant, all of them will maintain this when the grant is over
- Of the ten colleges that had flexible scheduling in place for enrichment programs, nine will maintain this when the grant is over.

Leveraging Community Partnerships

<div align="center">Exhibit 49</div>

Number of Colleges with Community Partners (beyond the Advisory Committee) that Support Plus 50 Programming
(n=13)

Colleges without Community Partner Support, 2

Colleges with Community Partner Support, 11

- Plus 50 colleges were asked to form seven to ten member Advisory Committees to meet quarterly and provide guidance for their Plus 50 program work. Colleges were advised to include committee members from the college, at least two community partners, and at least one student. Eleven out of thirteen grantees have community partners outside of the Advisory Committee who support their Plus 50 programs.

Exhibit 50

In Support of the Plus 50 Program, Community Partners Have...
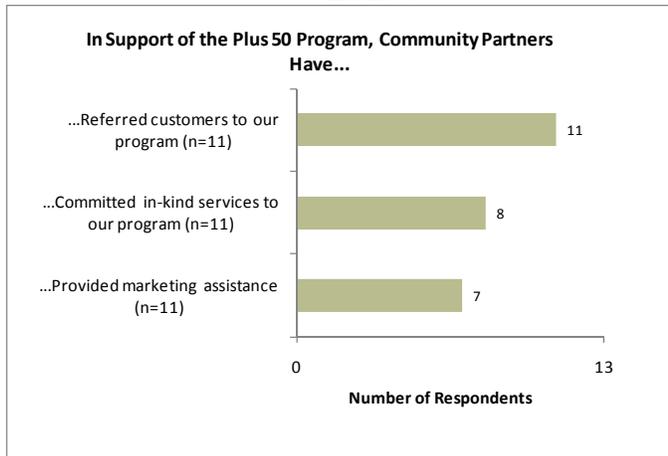

- Eleven of the colleges have community partners that referred customers to their program.
- Eight colleges have partners that committed in-kind services to their program.
- Seven colleges have partners that provided marketing assistance.

Planning for Financial Sustainability

Plus 50 programs can be sustained partly through organizational and institutional support, the embedding of program goals in course design, and through leveraging the support of external partners.

Exhibit 51

Colleges Have Used the Following Strategies to Fund Plus 50 Offerings ...
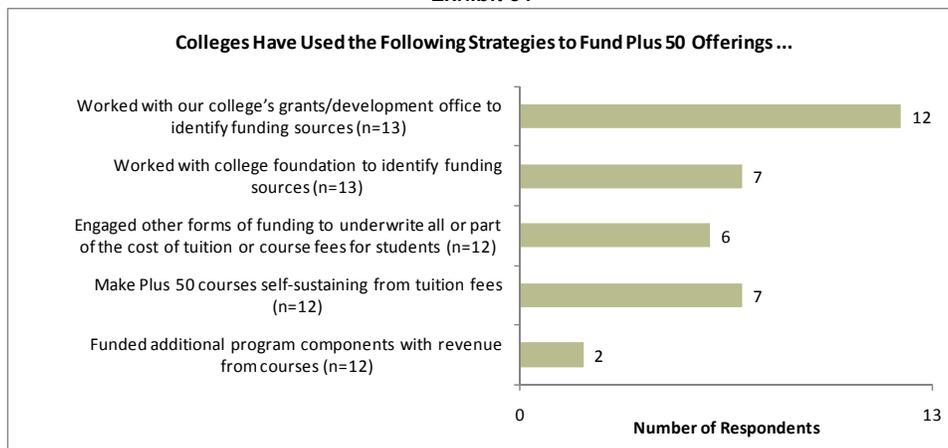
- Seven colleges have made Plus 50 courses self-sustaining through tuition or course fees
- Eleven colleges have obtained outside funding that will continue after the conclusion of the AACC grant.

Exhibit 52

Sources of Funding Continuing After the Conclusion of the AACC Grant: (n=13)
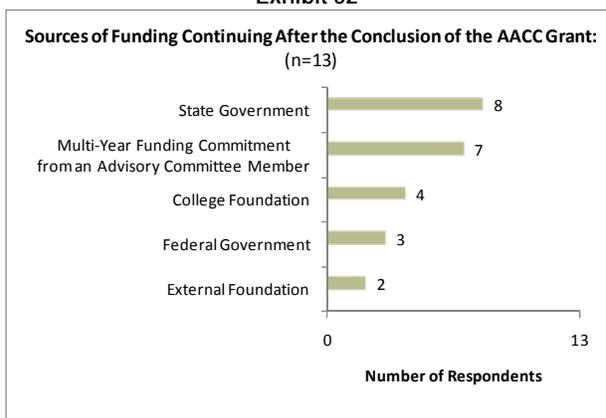
- Eight colleges report that they will receive state funding; three report that they will receive federal funding.
- More colleges will receive government funding than foundation funding: four colleges will receive support from their own foundations; only two will receive outside foundation funding.
- Advisory Committee member organizations have made funding commitments at seven colleges.

VIII. Implementation and Sustainability of Plus 50 Programming at Affiliate Colleges

Affiliate colleges have been involved in the Initiative for less time (one year), received lower grant amounts ($10,000), and received lighter touch support from AACC. And yet survey results indicate that even with the lower level of Initiative involvement, the affiliates have gone a surprisingly long way toward sustaining their programs.

Exhibit 53

Affiliate Colleges: Types of Courses Offered				
	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
"Refresher" courses (n=4)	1	3	0	4
Computer courses (n=6)	1	3	2	6
Career preparation courses (n=3)	3	0	0	3

- Of the four colleges who plan to continue to offer "refresher" courses tailored to the needs of plus 50 students who have been away from school for many years, one created this offering from scratch and three refined the existing offering to better meet the needs of plus 50 students.
- All six colleges that offered computer courses tailored to the needs and learning styles of plus 50 students during the grant will continue to offer these courses.
- Three colleges created career preparation courses tailored to the needs and learning styles of plus 50 students (aside from "refresher" courses and computer courses) and all three will continue to offer these courses after the Plus 50 Initiative.

Exhibit 54

Affiliate Colleges: Career Development Offerings				
	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
Program Component	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Career counseling (n=4)	3	1	0	4
Career workshops (n=5)	3	1	0	4
Job fairs (n=3)	3	0	0	3
Job matching service or job listings (n=2)	0	2	0	2

- Four colleges will continue to offer career counseling and career workshops tailored to the needs of plus 50 job-seekers after the Initiative ends.
- Three colleges created new tailored job fairs for plus 50 students; all three colleges will continue to offer job fairs at the end of the grant.
- Two colleges refined job matching service or job listings and will continue to offer these.

<div align="center">Exhibit 55</div>

Affiliate Colleges: Learner-centered Supports

Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Advising and counseling (n=4)	4	0	0	4
New student orientation (n=2)	2	0	0	2
Registration process (n=2)	1	0	1	2
A "one-stop-shop" (n=3)	3	0	0	3
Course catalog (n=2)	2	0	0	2
Web pages (n=4)	3	0	1	4

- Many learner-centered supports were new for affiliate grantees; almost all grantees offering these support services created this offering as a result of the Plus 50 Initiative.
- Four colleges created advising and counseling and all four will maintain this offering after the grant period.
- Three colleges created a "one-stop-shop:" a location plus 50 students can come to for plus 50 services, resources, and referrals and all will continue to offer this support service.
- Three colleges created and one college refined Web pages on college website designed specifically for plus 50 students.
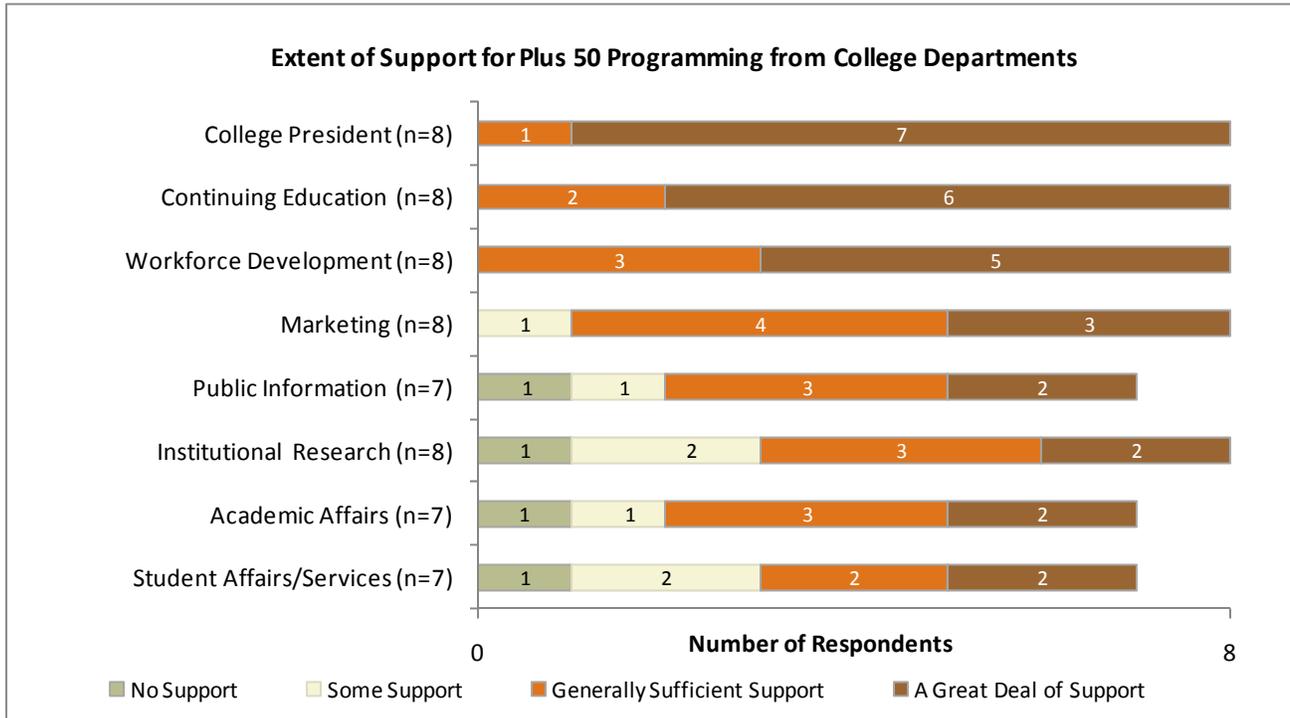
<div align="center">Exhibit 56</div>

Affiliate Colleges: Financial Accessibility

Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That…			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Financial aid (n=4)	2	1	1	4
Referrals to sources of financial aid (n=2)	1	0	1	2

- Of the four colleges that will maintain financial aid for college (e.g., courses/workshops offered at discounted rates to plus 50 students, vouchers or subsidies for courses/workshops), two colleges created this opportunity as a result of Plus 50, one college refined this component, and one college previously offered financial aid and continues to do so.
- Two colleges will maintain their referrals to sources of financial aid designed to inform plus 50 students about financial aid sources after the Initiative ends.

Internal Constituencies

Exhibit 57

Extent of Support for Plus 50 Programming from College Departments

Number of Respondents

- No Support
- Some Support
- Generally Sufficient Support
- A Great Deal of Support

- Almost all College Presidents (seven out of eight) offered "a great deal of support" for the Plus 50 program at affiliate colleges.
- Continuing education and workforce development departments were also very supportive of the Plus 50 program at affiliate colleges.

Exhibit 58

In Support of the Plus 50 Program, Advisory Committee Members Have…

Number of Respondents
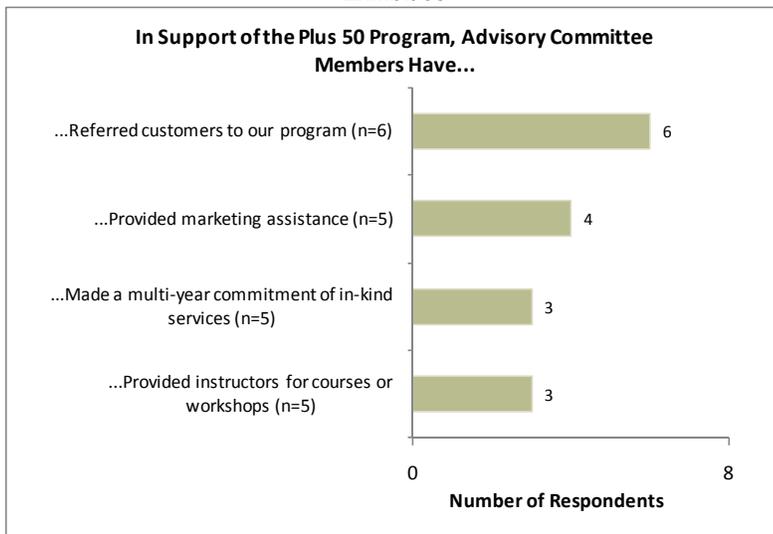
- At six affiliate colleges, advisory committee members have referred customers to the Plus 50 program.
- Advisory committee members have also provided marketing assistance, committed in-kind services, and provided course or workshop instructors.

Institutionalizing Program Components within Structures and Processes

Exhibit 59

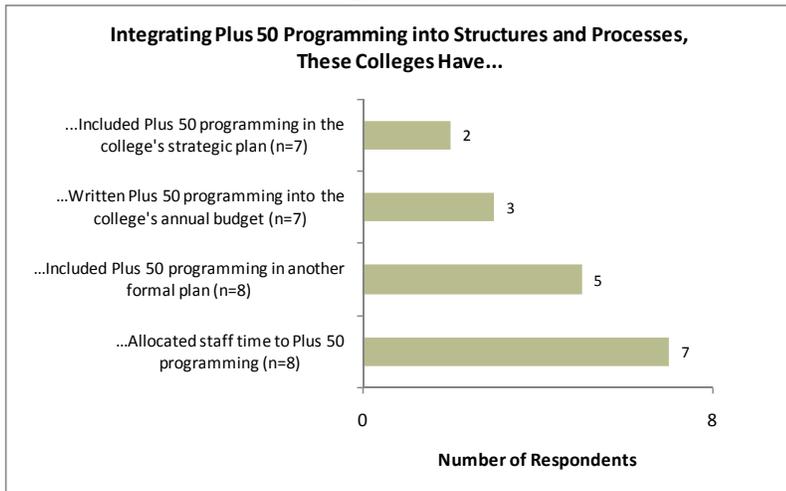**Integrating Plus 50 Programming into Structures and Processes, These Colleges Have...**

...Included Plus 50 programming in the college's strategic plan (n=7)	2
...Written Plus 50 programming into the college's annual budget (n=7)	3
...Included Plus 50 programming in another formal plan (n=8)	5
...Allocated staff time to Plus 50 programming (n=8)	7

Number of Respondents (0 to 8)

- Seven colleges have staff time dedicated to Plus 50 programming (and have committed to continuing this staff time allocation after the grant)
- Three colleges have at least some aspect of Plus 50 programming written into the college's annual budget.
- Two colleges have succeeded in having Plus 50 programming written into the college's strategic plan.
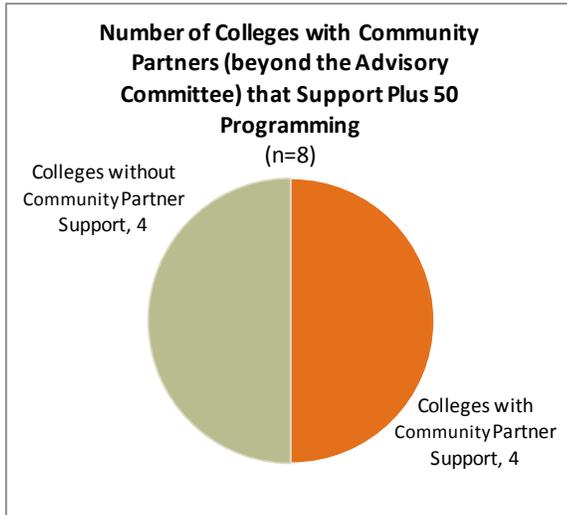
Embedded Plus 50 programming

Exhibit 60

Affiliate Colleges: Course Delivery and Pedagogy

Program Component	During the Plus 50 Grant, Number of Colleges That...			After the Plus 50 grant number of colleges that will maintain component
	created component	refined existing component	continued to offer component	
Accelerated courses designed to allow plus 50 students to move through **career preparation programs** quickly (n=3)	1	0	2	3
Flexible course scheduling designed **for career preparation courses** to accommodate the schedules of plus 50 students (n=5)	2	0	3	5
Professional development opportunities (n=3)	2	0	1	3

- One college created accelerated courses designed to allow plus 50 students to move through career preparation programs quickly and two continued these offerings; all three colleges will maintain this component after the grant.
- Five colleges will continue to offer flexible course scheduling designed for career preparation courses to accommodate the schedules of plus 50 students.
- Three colleges will continue to offer professional development opportunities for faculty that focus on the learning styles and preferences of plus 50 students.
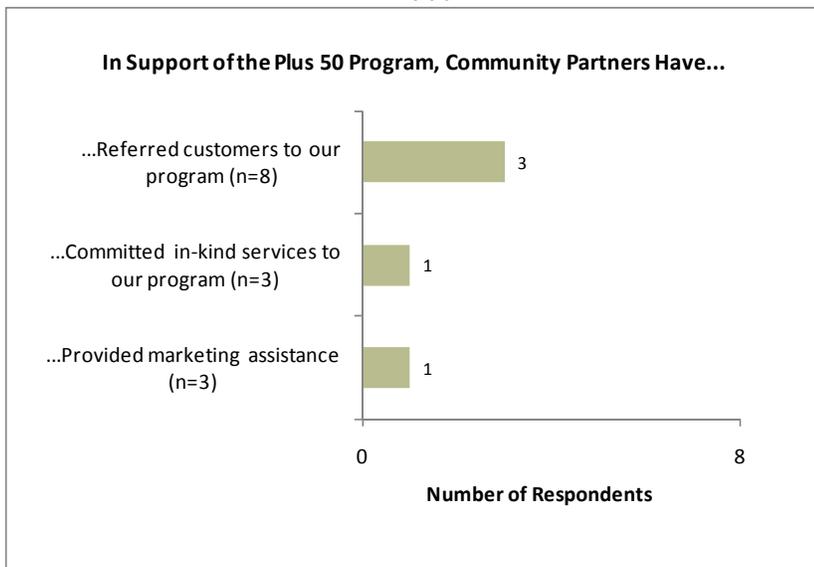
Leveraging Community Partnerships

Exhibit 61

Number of Colleges with Community Partners (beyond the Advisory Committee) that Support Plus 50 Programming
(n=8)

Colleges without Community Partner Support, 4

Colleges with Community Partner Support, 4

- Half of affiliate colleges have community partners outside of the Advisory Committee who support their Plus 50 programs.

Exhibit 62

In Support of the Plus 50 Program, Community Partners Have...

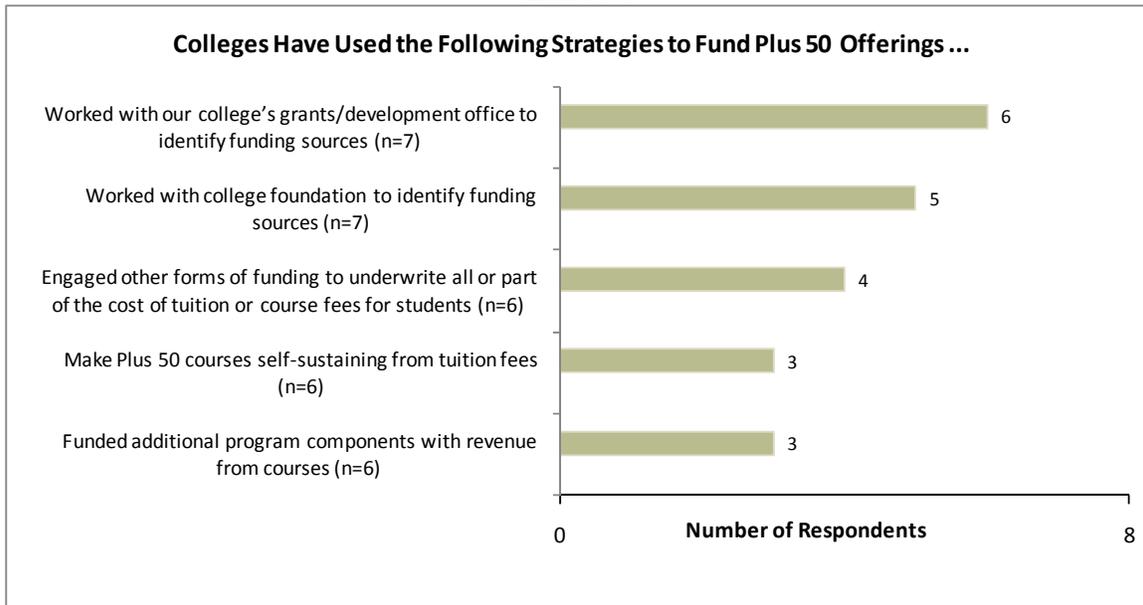|	Number of Respondents
...Referred customers to our program (n=8)	3
...Committed in-kind services to our program (n=3)	1
...Provided marketing assistance (n=3)	1

- Three of the colleges have community partners that referred customers to their program.
- One college has a partner that committed in-kind services to their program.
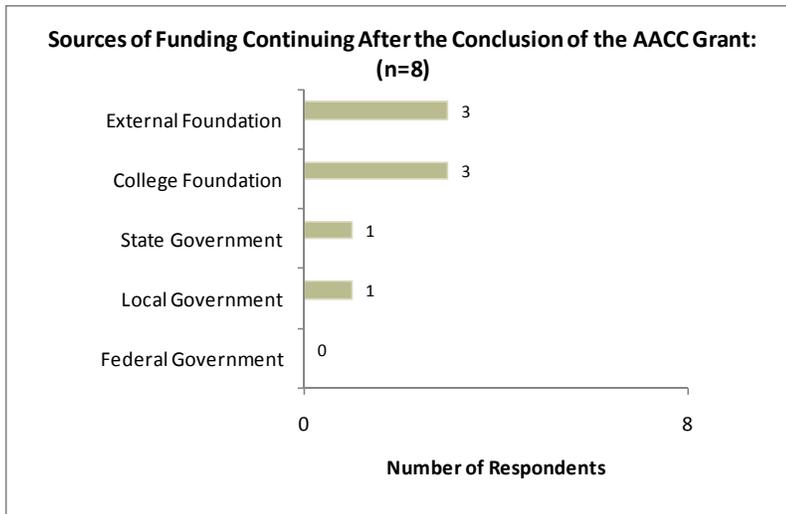- One college has a partner that provided marketing assistance.

Planning for Financial Sustainability

Exhibit 63

Colleges Have Used the Following Strategies to Fund Plus 50 Offerings ...

Strategy	Number of Respondents
Worked with our college's grants/development office to identify funding sources (n=7)	6
Worked with college foundation to identify funding sources (n=7)	5
Engaged other forms of funding to underwrite all or part of the cost of tuition or course fees for students (n=6)	4
Make Plus 50 courses self-sustaining from tuition fees (n=6)	3
Funded additional program components with revenue from courses (n=6)	3

- Six affiliate colleges have worked with their development departments to seek future plus 50 funding.
- Three colleges have made Plus 50 courses self-sustaining through tuition or course fees.

Exhibit 64

Sources of Funding Continuing After the Conclusion of the AACC Grant: (n=8)

Source	Number of Respondents
External Foundation	3
College Foundation	3
State Government	1
Local Government	1
Federal Government	0

- Three colleges will use outside foundation support to continue Plus 50 programming.
- Three colleges will receive support from the college foundation to continue Plus 50 efforts.

IX. Appendix A: Description of Evaluation Methods

LFA Group is responsible for the Plus 50 Initiative's national evaluation. LFA developed a mixed-method evaluation designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the initiative and support continuous improvements over the course of the three-year initiative. The evaluation is focused at three levels: the initiative as a whole; the pilot colleges; and students participating in colleges' Plus 50 programs. LFA also included affiliate colleges when assessing the overall impact of the Plus 50 Initiative.

To facilitate data collection from pilot colleges, the evaluators set up a system in which each college was assigned an Evaluation Liaison: a specific member of the evaluation team to be a primary contact. Evaluation Liaisons also shared back the college's individual data for them to use; each college received a report that aggregated the student survey results for that individual college's programs.

Data Collection Methods

To measure the many components of the initiative data collection worksheets and surveys were developed for stakeholders of the initiative. Here, we describe the evaluation instruments and data collection procedures implemented from 2008 to 2010 that inform this report.

Plus 50 Community Pilot Colleges

- **Data Collection Worksheets**: Data collection forms were designed to track the progress of grantees' implementation to understand how course offerings and plus 50 student participation changed over time. The evaluation team made a strong effort to develop implementation measures that could be aggregated across the grantee cohort. Evaluation liaisons also worked with colleges to tailor the worksheets to college programming. Early in year one, LFA collected information on what was in place before the initiative began (the 2007-2008 academic year), in order to have a baseline comparison. In July 2009 and July 2010, LFA collected data from all 13 pilot colleges.
- **Surveys**: On-line surveys were administered to key personnel at each pilot college to understand the impact of the Plus 50 initiative on pilot colleges. Surveys were administered in August 2010. All pilot colleges responded to the survey.

Plus 50 Participants

- **Participant Surveys:** Surveys were designed to assess the initiative from the users' perspective. A sample of plus 50 participants at all pilot colleges received anonymous surveys in the spring of 2009. The focus of the survey was students' satisfaction with their Plus 50 experiences including coursework and services. The surveys were administered electronically and by hard copy depending on the Plus 50 colleges' preference and capacity. Across the 13 Plus 50 colleges, 849 plus 50 participants responded to the survey.

Plus 50 Community Affiliate Colleges

- **Surveys**: On-line surveys were administered to key personnel at each affiliate college to understand the impact of the Plus 50 initiative on affiliate colleges. Surveys were administered in August 2010. All affiliate colleges responded to the survey.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

There are many important strengths of this evaluation. The mixed methods approach offers in-depth information, and represents a large number of stakeholders. Assessing program implementation and

satisfaction at multiple levels and across diverse stakeholders (e.g., plus 50 participants, grantees, and affiliates) captures the perspectives of a variety of constituents and allows for a thorough investigation of the Plus 50 Initiative.

LFA's evaluation liaisons work with mentor/demonstration college teams. This means that the liaisons have an intimate and in-depth understanding of the team's functioning as well as each college's programmatic focus and implementation. Plus 50 colleges use their liaisons as a resource during all phases of data collection and these liaisons conduct the key informant interviews with their colleges to ensure data quality and accuracy.

Limitations

Plus 50 grantees have been very supportive of data collection needs. LFA relies on grantees' self-reported data to assess program implementation such as course counts, enrollment numbers, and specific services offered. However, not all colleges have the same level of access to course and enrollment data. For those grantees whose colleges have databases that do not track course and enrollment data in the same format in which the data worksheet asks for it, some data points include estimations. While in some cases it is potentially possible to obtain exact information rather than estimates, LFA is working to balance the needs of the evaluation, with the goal of minimizing the burden of data collection on grantees. Estimations are made for some colleges where unduplicated enrollment counts are not possible, and a "duplication factor" is applied to "deflate" the duplicated number and estimate an unduplicated count.