In the News

Plus 50 in the News

- “TCC Joins Program to Train 10,000 Older Workers for Jobs Nationwide,” WTXL, January 14, 2013
- “Lake Region State College Joins Program Aimed at Those Over 50,” WDAZ, January 14, 2013
- “Clover Park Technical College President Dr. John Walstrum Announces Retirement,” Lakewood-JBLM Patch, January 10, 2013
- “Norwalk Community College Joins National Program to Train Baby Boomers for New Jobs,” Stamford Plus, January 9, 2013
- “ECC Receives Grant Money to Train Adults 50 and Over,” Daily Herald, January 2, 2013

Grant Available for Colleges: Plus 50 Applications Being Accepted Through Feb. 15

Improving support for older students can help community colleges raise their completion rates – and there’s a grant available to help colleges. AACC’s Plus 50 Encore Completion Program aims to help 10,000 students age 50 and over earn certificates or degrees in the high-demand fields of health care, education, and social services, enabling them to increase their employment competitiveness while improving their communities. Grant applications from community colleges are being accepted through February 15, 2013. You can get more information and submit your application online.

Building a Plus 50 Program: Owens Community College

Forging partnerships can help community colleges rapidly expand and improve their plus 50 programs. Just ask Gary Corrigan at Owens Community College. He connected with Experience Works locally and found out that they have a grant from the Walmart Foundation to help underemployed and unemployed older workers get job training. The grant
is now helping unemployed adults come back to college to tune up their skills and re-invent their careers. “We set up a collaborative venture with them to communicate with those people over 50 and unemployed that we have training for them and financial support,” said Corrigan. Working in a community that has been battered by the recession and area plant closures, Corrigan says many people age 50 and up who are out-of-work are struggling with self-image and aren’t sure how to start looking for a new job or what they might do. “It’s communicating to people a message of hope that allows them to not be afraid to come in the door and start learning,” said Corrigan. He’s also keenly aware of the demographics and labor trends affecting the community served by the college. “Almost a third of people in our county are 50 and older and we know that number will continue to grow,” said Corrigan. “Our total available workforce in our market area is declining, so if you want growth, you need to bring in more people who can work or make people more productive.” Corrigan’s work reaching out to partners and to the press is paying off with media attention. A local television station ran a short op-ed about the program and he received dozens of calls about a short-term course the college is offering called “50+ and Job Ready.” The course will help older students who are unemployed get up to speed quickly for job hunting in today’s environment. It also lays the groundwork to support students who want to transition to certificate or degree programs at the college.

SPECIAL FEATURE: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Free Credit Predictor Helps Students Identify Outside-of-Classroom Learning for Credit
The Credit Predictor is a free tool developed by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning that allows students to identify career skills, job responsibilities, and subject areas that match the college-level learning they obtained outside of the classroom. Based on their selections, students are presented with an action plan that lists the prior learning assessment (PLA) options available to them for receiving college credit. Students can opt to have their personalized action plan e-mailed to themselves.

Prior Learning Assessment Resources
This information page from Valdosta State University offers prior learning assessment tools that are linked to specific courses offered. Tools require documentation and description of experiences as a basis for PLA. They also provide guidance on how the student’s submission for credit will be evaluated. A link on the page goes to presentations about PLA at the college and other institutions, which should be helpful for colleges considering implementing or expanding their prior learning assessment program.

Prior Learning Assessment Program: Marylhurst University
This website is designed to assist prospective or current students with prior learning assessment. The college uses a 3-step process: (1) a learning assessment workshop where students clarify their goals, develop a personal plan, and discover how many credits may be earned; (2) a PLA seminar where students walk through a step-by-step method for making
credit requests; and (3) portfolio development studies where students get one-on-one instruction and guidance. Information about scholarships, frequently asked questions about PLA, and more are available on the website.

Prior Learning Assessment Services
The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning offers a wealth of resources to help colleges implement prior learning assessment. Multiple approaches to implementing PLA are described. Ten standards for assessing learning are listed to help guide colleges while building and implementing a program. Links to workshops, webinars, and certification information are available.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

Completion

Cornerstones of Completion: State Policy Support for Accelerated, Structured Pathways to College Credentials and Transfer
In spring 2012, after a year of intensive data analysis and planning, the colleges participating in Completion by Design announced strategies for creating clear, structured routes through college for more students. These strategies contain elements unique to each college, but all of them drive toward helping students enroll early in program streams that lead to a major, and keeping students engaged and progressing until they complete credentials with labor market value. To that end, the strategies include interventions such as strategic dual enrollment, mandatory orientation, improved advising, acceleration of developmental education, early enrollment in programs of study, and close monitoring of student progress.

Learning

“Understanding the Particular Needs of the Adult Learner”
This webinar recording from AACC offers an overview in understanding the needs that plus 50 students bring to the college classroom and how to tailor instructional strategies. Staff members from Cape Cod Community College offer tips in the webinar on how to connect with baby boomers and facilitate their success on campus. Colleges with plus 50 programs will find the downloadable PowerPoint presentation slides particularly helpful, as they can be easily adapted for sharing at a faculty or staff meeting.

Training & Re-Training
**Portable, Stackable Credentials: A New Education Model for Industry-Specific Career Pathways**

As the world’s labor markets evolve, so do the demands on its educational systems. This paper by Jobs for the Future describes the nature of the challenges we are facing and highlights current innovations and models from around the world and in the U.S. that suggest how a new system of well-designed career pathways could address more effectively the demand-side needs of employers and the supply-side needs of individual workers. At the core of such a system are portable and stackable credentials that enable students of all ages to build careers with family-sustaining, middle-class incomes. In such a system, students have the opportunity to both learn and earn by acquiring shorter term credentials with clear labor market value even as they continue to build on these to access more advanced jobs and higher wages. And employers, educational institutions, and students can have confidence that the credentials they are working towards are recognized across the country and perhaps even around the world.

**VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE**

**The Civic Enterprise: Advancing Civic Engagement Opportunities in Later Life**

This is the introductory chapter to the 2010 book Civic Engagement in an Older America. The confluence of increasingly complex social problems and the burgeoning numbers of people who can expect to live 20 or 30 years past retirement calls us to consider the possibilities of a civically engaged older population. The authors say that engaging older adults in activities aimed at the social good is a win-win scenario that has captured the imagination of government and nonprofit leaders, policymakers, and gerontologists.