AGELESS LEARNING

In the News

Plus 50 in the News

- “TCC Selected for Plus 50 Program,” Tallahassee Democrat, January 20, 2013

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.

Free Webinar: Lumina Foundation’s Degree Qualifications Profile

The Adult College Completion Network will host a webinar on February 7 at 1:00 p.m. (ET) on Lumina Foundation’s Degree Qualifications Profile. This framework specifies learning outcomes for degrees, attempting to concretely describe what is meant by each degree level regardless of the specific field in which it is earned. As such, it holds significant promise for those working in the area of adult college completion. Marcus Kolb, strategy officer at Lumina, will present the profile and discuss its implications for future degree completion work. The webinar is free of charge and open to all. Advanced registration is required. A webinar
recording will be available after the event for those unable to attend. View the agenda for the webinar and register for the webinar.

**Video Student Story: John Hanson, St. Louis Community College**

“I really appreciated the Plus 50 program; it was the catalyst for me to get out of the state of confusion I was in,” said John Hanson in a video from St. Louis Community College on the AACC Plus 50 YouTube channel. After he retired from a successful career, Hanson was trying to figure out what to do in the next chapter of his life. The college mailing with information about re-inventing himself through the plus 50 program resonated with him. He describes looking at a skill assessment and wanting to try something different in his life. He took a drawing course and was a little frustrated with the subject matter initially because it was a stretch for him, but he got help from the instructor and was proud of himself for completing it. Hanson found that he was in the course with a group of people who were like himself and in the same age group, who were going through many of the same things he was facing. “I just didn’t give up, I just kept going,” said Hanson.

**New Analyses of Census Bureau Data Examine Nation’s 65 and Over Labor Force**

A new American Community Survey brief from the U.S. Census Bureau focuses on individuals 65 and older in the labor force. The percentage of people 65 and older in the labor force increased from 12.1% in 1990 to 16.1% in 2010. The increase was greater for women. “As with all age groups, the increase in labor force participation of women has been a driving factor for this overall trend,” said Braedyn Kromer, an analyst in the Census Bureau’s Labor Force Statistics Branch. Between 1990 and 2010, women 65 and older experienced a 4.1% increase in labor force participation, while women 16 to 64 experienced a 1.9% increase. This compares with a 3.2% increase in the labor force participation rate for men 65 and older and a 5.2% decline in the participation rate for men 16 to 64. State specific information is listed in the report.

**Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program**

**COMPLETION**

*Post-Traditional Learners and the Transformation of Postsecondary Education: A Manifesto for College Leaders*

Higher education leaders should transform the academy to better serve post-traditional learners, according to a new paper commissioned by the American Council on Education. The paper says the needs of adult learners, a national innovation economy, and an information-driven democracy can combine to produce a “new era of innovation in higher education.” While much attention is paid to the disruptive potential of massive open online courses and other technology-driven developments, those are simply tools that will abet the real force driving higher education change: the rise of the post-traditional learners. Not only have such post-
traditional learners been a growing presence in higher education institutions since the late 1970s, but by many measures, they now have become the norm. The author says it is crucial to increase the attainment levels of working age Americans.

LEARNING

Library Services in the Digital Age
In a new survey of Americans’ attitudes and expectations for public libraries, the Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project finds that many library patrons are eager to see libraries’ digital services expand, yet also feel that print books remain important in the digital age. The availability of free computers and Internet access now rivals book lending and reference expertise as a vital service of libraries. A notable share of Americans say they would embrace even wider uses of technology at libraries such as: online research services allowing patrons to pose questions and get answers from librarians, apps-based access to library materials and programs, access to technology “petting zoos” to try out new devices, GPS-navigation apps to help patrons locate material inside library buildings, Redbox-style lending machines or kiosks located throughout the community where people can check out books, movies, or music without having to go to the library itself, and Amazon-style customized book, audio, or video recommendations that are based on a patron’s prior lending behavior.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

A Guide for Using Labor Market Data to Improve Student Success
This guide from the Aspen Institute offers concrete examples of how five community colleges have used labor market data to assess educational programs, better align them with employment opportunities, and inform students. In addition, the guide describes six specific data sources that colleges can access today to understand relevant labor market demands as well as the employment/earning outcomes of their graduates. In the months and years ahead, ever increasing amounts of employment and earnings data will add to what we know about the value of a college education. The authors hope that this guide will help colleges understand this data, not just to answer inquiries from the press or legislators, but to assess and improve the quality of education they are providing students.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

Encouraging more older Americans to work in government jobs, says this Civic Ventures report, can help ease talent needs facing government employers, say the authors. They argue that governments often rely on in-house talent pools to fill vacant positions, resulting in little recruitment among outsiders for senior-level positions. As baby boomers retire from
government jobs, other older workers could step into their roles and, in the process, bring new ideas and energy into the government work environment.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges. The association represents nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACC promotes community colleges through five strategic action areas: recognition and advocacy for community colleges; student access, learning, and success; community college leadership development; economic and workforce development; and global and intercultural education. Information about AACC and community colleges may be found at www.aacc.nche.edu.