AGELESS LEARNING

In the News

Plus 50 In the News

- “Virginia Western to Retrain Older Generation,” WSLS, August 8, 2013
- “Vance-Granville Community College: College Receives Plus 50 Grant,” The Daily Dispatch, August 5, 2013
- “CCBC Receives Grant from Plus 50 Initiative: $15K Grant Awarded to Grow the Competitiveness of Workers 50+ Years of Age,” The Community College of Baltimore County (press release), August 5, 2013
- “Helping Ageless Learners,” The Roanoke Times, August 4, 2013
- “Virginia Western Courts Ageless Learners,” The Roanoke Times, July 28, 2013

Marketing Your Plus 50 Program on Your College Website: Working With Your Admissions, Registration, or Advising Offices

Don’t think about using only your college’s plus 50 Web page, which might be found within your college’s continuing education or workforce programming Web pages. Think about how students are entering your college online, and get information there, too. One way to distribute information about your plus 50 program to prospective students is by distributing information on Web pages typically managed by your college’s admissions, registration, or advising offices.
This Web page by St. Louis Community College is provided through the college’s registration and admissions area. The page offers information for plus 50 adults who are thinking about completing a degree or certificate at the college. The page has a welcoming tone. Prospective students are invited to engage with plus 50 concierges at each campus to get more information. Links to career tracks, financial aid, and other information about the college are also provided. Program branding images are used in a sidebar to show the linkage to the overall plus 50 program.

Another great example comes from Cape Cod Community College, which has a link for “returning adult students” within the college’s main academic advising page. This location sends a message to plus 50 students seeking advice, that the college can meet their needs as non-traditional students. The link goes to a Web page about plus 50 programs and resources at the college, with direct contact information for plus 50 student advisors, office hours, and photos showing plus 50 students.

**Now Seeking: College Applicants for the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program**

AACC is offering grants to additional member community colleges to start a Plus 50 Encore Completion program on their campus. The goal of the program is to help 10,000 students over age 50 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. The request for proposals is available now. Applications will be accepted through September 13, 2013. If you know of a college that would like to grow its programs for plus 50 adults, encourage it to apply.

**Labor Day: A Great Opportunity to Spotlight Plus 50 Workers, Jobs for Plus 50 Adults**

Created in 1894 by Congress, Labor Day (September 2, 2013) pays tribute to the social and economic achievements of American workers. Labor Day offers a great opportunity for plus 50 colleges to talk about the advantages plus 50 workers bring to employers (see the Plus 50 Business Community Outreach Toolkit) and highlight the jobs for which colleges are preparing older workers. You might want to work with your college public information officer to issue a press release in advance of Labor Day highlighting key points and certificate or degree programs for plus 50 adults. You can get background information and read more about Labor Day in this information release by the Census Bureau. Not surprisingly, some of the fastest growing occupations are in the health-care industry, which is a key focus area for many plus 50 colleges. See the note on the news release from the Census Bureau about America’s fastest growing
jobs. The release notes that personal care aides are predicted to see a 70% industry growth from 2010 to 2020. The occupation expected to add more positions over this period than any other is registered nurses (711,900 jobs).

Where the Jobs Are Today
National Public Radio’s Planet Money recently examined which industries are hiring today (and which they are not) and created some helpful graphics. Not surprisingly, health care is the big bright spot in the jobs picture. The sector has added 1.5 million jobs since the start of the recession, and average earnings of more than $26 an hour are solid. This blog post offers links to U.S. Department of Labor data on earnings and jobs.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

COMPLETION

"Presentation Matters: Using Your Data to Make Your Case"
Have you ever wanted to use the data you’ve collected about your plus 50 program to educate others? In this recent blog post for the Adult College Completion Network, Patricia Steele from HigherEd Insight discusses how presenting data graphically can illustrate program growth and how your college is meeting the needs of adult learners in your community. She offers several suggestions on ways to present your college’s data and offers examples and links for more information.

LEARNING

Academic Advising for Adult Students
This research paper reviews literature about the best practices used in adult student advising. The authors identify institutions that have implemented some of these practices. Plus 50 community colleges Cape Cod Community College and Mohawk Valley Community College are praised in the opening of the paper for their efforts to provide advising services tailored to the needs of adult learners. While many of the examples cited by the researchers are from 4-year colleges, the practices illustrated are applicable to community college environments.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

Perspectives on No Worker Left Behind
From 2007 to 2010, Michigan’s innovative No Worker Left Behind program provided free tuition to low-income and unemployed workers willing to pursue a market-relevant degree or credential. Newly-released survey results, based on 4,231 participants, indicate that most workers
who participated in the program found their training valuable in finding and performing new jobs. Nearly two out of three respondents who completed training had found employment. Nearly 60% were earning the same or more than they had before entering the program. Based on survey results about advising and support services for participants, researchers observed that older workers likely require more and/or different supports in finding employment. Age-appropriate support can help workers overcome unique barriers to employment. These supports could include helping workers repackage their experiences after long hiatuses as they enter training and later when they are seeking employment. Survey results offer helpful information for anyone managing a program to retrain workers for new employment.

PLUS 50 TRENDS

The United States of Aging Survey 2013

What do aging adults think about the world they live in and realities they face today? For the second year, the National Council on Aging, UnitedHealthcare, and USA Today have surveyed 4,000 U.S. adults age 60 and over on their perspectives and published the results. The results show older adults are optimistic about the future. Eighty-six percent of seniors say they are confident about their ability to maintain a high quality of life, and 60% expect their health to stay the same during the next 5 to 10 years (compared with 53% of adults ages 18–59). The survey also found that women and Blacks are among the most optimistic about growing older. Of the most optimistic seniors—those surveyed who expect their quality of life in the next five to 10 years to be “much better” or “somewhat better”—65% are women and 18% are Blacks. Additionally, the survey found that seniors are driven by a desire for connectedness. More than half of seniors (53%) nationally indicate that being close to friends and family is important and only 15% report occasional feelings of isolation. Eighty-four percent of seniors nationally cite technology as important to their ability to connect with the world around them. A fact sheet, national sample data, and information on older and low-income seniors are available. Community-specific results are available for Birmingham, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Orlando, and San Antonio.