AGELESS LEARNING

In the News

Plus 50 In the News

- “Older American’s Attitudes Toward Work and Retirement Changing,” Dothan Eagle, November 2, 2013
- “Grundy Workforce Announces November Events for Job Seekers,” Morris Daily Herald, November 2, 2013
- “Arizona AARP Director Meets Boomers at PCC Event October 29,” Tucson Citizen, October 26, 2013
- “Arizona AARP Director Meets Baby Boomers at PCC Event October 29,” Pima Community College (press release), October 25, 2013
- “Boomers Going Back to School,” Better Living, October 23, 2013

Kick-Off Events Inspire Plus 50 Students: Colleges Demonstrate Lessons Learned

A plus 50 kick-off event or information session can help market your college’s certificate or degree programs for prospective baby boomer students. Several colleges have modeled how to conduct a program like this. At Halifax Community College, a kick-off program for plus 50 adults drew more than 40 people. College staff from multiple departments described available programs and discussed how the college is helping baby boomers be successful on campus. A current plus 50 student also shared with the crowd. The college advertised the event on Facebook.
and on its website. A press release summarizing the event was issued by the college with a photo, and it was re-printed in the *Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald*. This additional media placement gave the college the opportunity to showcase its Plus 50 Encore Completion Program in front of more people.

Pima Community College (PCC) used the attendance of the AARP state director to generate news coverage for a successful kick-off event for its plus 50 program. David Mitchell, Arizona director for AARP, delivered a keynote address at the event, and his speech was in the middle of a 3-hour block of time when prospective students could learn about available programs. PCC Chancellor Lee Lambert and PCC East Campus Vice President of Student Development Nancee Sorenson also talked about the college’s commitment to serving plus 50 students and highlighted the 1,800 students age 50 and up who attend the college. In addition to conducting an outreach event, PCC also created its plus 50 website using the branded marketing materials provided by AACC, so prospective students could look over information online or follow-up. The website includes a 30-second advertisement for the kick-off event.

Both of these events helped prospective plus 50 students understand how colleges in their communities are assisting baby boomers and helping them complete certificates or degrees in education, social services, or health care. They also demonstrate how colleges have used a combination of marketing skills, media relations efforts, online outreach and social media to engage prospective plus 50 students. They also show how engaging multiple programs across the college and inviting the participation of college leadership in plus 50 events can help support a plus 50 program.

**Marketing Tip: Use Video to Attract Baby Boomers & Promote Your Programs**

People are becoming more comfortable sharing and watching videos online, according to new research from the *Pew Internet and American Life Project*. In August 2013, researchers found that the percent of online adults who view or download videos has grown over the past 4 years, from 69% in 2009 to 78% today. The percentage of adult Internet users who upload or post videos online has also doubled in the past 4 years, from 14% in 2009 to 31% today. Since 2006, the number of adults who use video sharing sites has grown from 33% to 72%. Student stories can help baby boomers overcome barriers to starting college and video is an intimate and touching way to share these stories. Hearing a peer who is their age discuss what going to college is like for them can dispel myths and anxiety among potential students. Video can be a powerful marketing tool for your plus 50 program because it can help you market your program and inspire current plus 50 students to achieve their educational goals. Video student stories can also help better educate college faculty and staff about the plus 50 student experience and build understanding. AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative has a *YouTube channel* which features student
stories and staff members working with the plus 50 program from several colleges. If your college would like to participate, please contact Mary Sue Vickers. We can mail to you our easy-to-use video camera and a handy guide to the interview process. You can link to the finished videos online from your program website. We can send your polished and produced video files to you for your college or program YouTube channel as needed.

Student Story: Even Rock Stars Change Careers
Steve Scales is best known as the former percussionist of Talking Heads, a new wave band from the 1970s and ‘80s. He’s also recorded with Tom Tom Club, the Psychadelic Furs, and Yoko Ono, to name a few. Now, Scales has a new role: student. The percussionist is in his second semester at Housatonic Community College in Connecticut. “Going from a full-time rock star to a student is kind of humbling,” Scales said. Scales is working toward an associate degree in human services with a goal of being a counselor. He plans to eventually transfer to get a bachelor’s degree, and then a master’s degree. Scales, a Vietnam-era veteran, hopes to use his education to help other veterans. “I watch the news and see that there are a lot of veterans coming home with a lot of problems,” Scales said. “If I could get a degree in counseling, they would talk to me because I could relate to them.” Read more of his story in Community College Times.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

COMPLETION

A Matter of Degrees: Engaging Practices, Engaging Students
Most community colleges have begun using strategies to get more students to complete degrees or certificates. But those programs are often just window dressing, as few students participate in them, says a new report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement. Researchers say that colleges must now focus on bringing high impact and engagement practices to scale if they hope to increase college completion rates. In an era of growing demand, shrinking budgets, and greater accountability, meeting this challenge requires singular focus from college faculty and staff. This report looks at which practices appear to engage students effectively. These findings give colleges information they can use to focus resources on practices that are most likely to help more students complete college successfully.

LEARNING

“The Decision-Making Behavior of Post-Traditional Students”
This blog post with a PowerPoint presentation overviews data about 140,000 prospective and enrolled post-traditional students. Researchers examined their reasons for pursuing a degree, institution selection criteria, concerns with online learning, non-start reasons, and drop reasons. A little more than half of post-traditional students are pursuing a degree to advance in their current career, while another 18% are starting a career
and 12% are changing careers. The less selective an institution is about admission requirements, the more convenience and program quality matter to students. Convenience matters the most to male and female post-traditional students, and older students tend to care the most about convenience.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

“The Emerging World of Alternative Credentials”
Digital badges and verified certificates are among the latest developments in non-degree credentialing, where increasingly people are using alternative credentials to show employers they have the skills and knowledge needed, says this Higher Education Today writer. The author believes that non-degree certificate programs may play an increasing role in providing postsecondary education opportunities for more Americans, especially those who are beyond the age of the traditional college student and seeking to expand their skills. Digital badges can validate discrete skills and competencies acquired in any number of learning environments without having to complete a full class or program. A number of education providers—schools, museums, other nonprofits, and companies—have established digital badges that people can earn to document learning. Each person’s badges are maintained online and can be shown to employers much like a traditional transcript, although they are unlikely to be accepted as formal transfer credit at degree-granting institutions.

PLUS 50 TRENDS

Working Longer: Older Americans’ Attitudes on Work and Retirement
A study by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 9 in 10 workers who are age 50 or older say they are very or somewhat satisfied with their job. Older workers reported satisfaction regardless of gender, race, educational level, political ideology, and income level. The AP-NORC survey found significant minorities of people reporting unwelcome comments at work about their age, being passed over for raises and promotions, and other negative incidents related to being older. But it was far more common to note the positive impact of their age. Six in 10 said colleagues turned to them for advice more often and nearly half said they felt they were receiving more respect at work.