AGELESS LEARNING
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In the News

Plus 50 In the News

- “Edgecombe Community College Joins Project to Train Older Workers for New Jobs,” PR Web, February 25, 2014
- “Oakton Joins National Initiative to Train 10,000 Older Workers for New Jobs,” Morton Grove Champion, February 24, 2014
- “Data Points,” Community College Daily, February 20, 2014
- “Many Baby Boomers Returning to College,” Tulsa World, February 19, 2014
- “TCC NR: Tallahassee Community College Receives Grant to Support Workforce Training for Mature Students,” Capital Soup, February 19, 2014
- “Tallahassee Community College Receives Grant,” WTXL, February 17, 2014

Grant Funding: Ready to Work Partnership Offers $150 Million
The U.S. Department of Labor is now accepting proposals for new grants to help those who have been out of work for 6 months or longer return to work in middle- and high-skill jobs. The $150 million Ready to Work Partnership grant competition will support and scale innovative partnerships between employers, nonprofit organizations (including community colleges) and public workforce systems to build a pipeline of skilled workers. It will award 20 to 30 grants, ranging from $3 million to $10 million, to programs focused on employer engagement, individual counseling, job placement assistance and work-based training, focusing on jobs where employers currently use foreign workers on H-1B visas.
The programs selected for funding will use on-the-job training, paid work experience, paid internships, and registered apprenticeships as the means to train workers in the specific skill sets employers say they need. A key requirement for each successful grant application is the participation of at least three employers or a regional industry association actively engaged in the project. Read more in Community College Daily and get application information. Potential applicants may also find it helpful to review Grant Applications 101—A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants.

Webinar: Explore Competency-Based Education and the University of Wisconsin’s Flexible Option
While competency-based education programs are not new, they are emerging as a promising strategy for adult college completion. This free webinar, hosted by the Adult College Completion Network, offers insights from university staff engaged in implementing this strategy. The webinar will be held March 4, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. (ET).

Reminder: Plus 50 Webinar March 31
Plus 50 Completion Program grantees check your inbox for the registration material for the March 31, 2014, webinar, A New Look at Learning After 50. When experienced Plus 50 Completion community colleges are asked about the most important lessons they have learned, they respond, “Have an understanding of the plus 50 population—their needs, concerns, as well as strengths.” Through professional development you can provide that same level of understanding to faculty and staff, enhancing the community college experience for plus 50 students. This webinar provides information on how to develop a professional development program to build the andrological skills of those teaching adult learners. Practical tips for faculty and staff will be explored on building a learning environment that promotes reinvention, dynamic and continued learning. A recording of the webinar and resource materials will be available on the Plus 50 website after the session. Community colleges not in the Plus 50 Completion Program may contact Mary Sue Vickers, Plus 50 Initiative director, for webinar registration material.

It’s Tax Time—Don’t Forget the American Opportunity Tax Credit
Plus 50 students may need information about the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) as they are preparing their 2013 tax forms. The AOTC is a tax credit of up to $2,500 of the cost of tuition, fees, and course materials paid during the taxable year. Also, 40% of the credit (up to $1,000) is refundable. This means you can get it even if you owe no tax. The credit can be claimed in tax-years 2009 through 2017 for expenses paid for tuition, certain fees, and course materials for higher education. A taxpayer whose modified adjusted gross income is $80,000 or less ($160,000 or less for joint filers) can claim the credit for the qualified
expenses of an eligible student. The credit is reduced if a taxpayer’s modified adjusted gross income exceeds those amounts. A taxpayer whose modified adjusted gross income is greater than $90,000 ($180,000 for joint filers) cannot claim the credit.

**Innovative Idea: Pell Grants for Returning Students**

Returning students who have previous degrees may soon be eligible for Pell grants to help pay for career retraining or certificate programs at Lewis and Clark Community College in Illinois, reports [this article](#) in *Community College Daily*. While students who already have degrees are not eligible for Pell grants and must rely on loans, scholarships, or paying for additional college out of pocket, the U.S. Department of Education is examining whether a new type of eligibility can increase their employability and/or decrease federal student loan debt. The college will serve as a pilot site for the initiative, which will help students who already have associate degrees but who are unemployed or underemployed pay for school to pursue a new degree or certificate.

**Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program**

**COMPLETION**

“**Career Pathways Are Essential Workforce Solutions**”

This [article](#) in *Community College Daily* highlights the Wisconsin Career Pathway program, which offers smaller, short-term credentials within new or existing degree and diploma programs. Each credential fits seamlessly within a larger educational goal, is linked to immediate employment opportunities, and represents a step on a clear path toward a future career. The employment link and career focus is assured because employers are partners in the development process. The article highlights the story of Enisael Aguilera, an adult student who wanted to provide a better life for his family, who discovered the metal fabrication technical diploma program while working toward his GED at Waukesha County Technical College. Because his introductory welding class was part of a career pathway and had a bridge component, he received team-taught instruction in basic education and welding. Aguilera soon became a registered welder through the state and now earns nearly $16 per hour as a finish welder. More importantly, Aguilera developed the confidence to take more classes and advance into a more specialized type of welding with even greater earning potential.

**LEARNING**

“**Scaling Up Learning Communities**”

This [article](#) offers insights from six community colleges participating in the Learning Communities Demonstration. This report describes the strategies the colleges used to scale up their programs while working to
improve their quality, and the many complex challenges that are likely to be faced by any community college intent on scaling up effective learning communities—including scheduling, faculty engagement, and balancing developmental courses with traditional college-level courses. Many of the findings will resonate with college staff building Plus 50 programs. The participating colleges found that having a coordinator and committed leaders were essential to managing and scaling up learning communities. As coordinators clarified expectations and offered support, faculty responded by changing their teaching practices. Student cohorts led to strong relationships among students, creating both personal and academic support networks.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

“The First Line of Offense: Community Health Workers”
Community health workers can play a key role in helping communities receive quality health care and reach underserved populations, but training these workers may not be easy. The challenges in offering training and certification for community health workers are discussed in this article by Hospitals and Health Networks Magazine.

PLUS 50 TRENDS

Economic Security for Seniors
This fact sheet from the National Council on Aging provides an overview of economic security among older Americans and includes updated statistics. According to information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by January 2012, older workers displaced in the years following the recession were half as likely to have regained employment as the nationwide average.