AGELESS LEARNING

In the News

Plus 50 In the News

- “CSM’s Plus 50 Encore College Completion Program Gives Seasoned Adults Career Alternatives,” *The Bay Net*, April 8, 2014
- “McAsey to Host Resume, Job Search Workshop,” *Plainfield Patch*, April 7, 2014
- “AACC Plus 50 Initiative—Adult College Completion Network,”* Survive 55*, April 7, 2014
- “AACC Plus 50 Initiative,” *Survive 55*, April 1, 2014
- “Plus 50 Initiative Leads to Good Jobs for Older Workers,” *Community College Daily*, March 31, 2014

AACC’s Plus 50 Webinar Offers a Look at Learning After 50

Last month’s webinar provided tips for Plus 50 colleges on nurturing programs that effectively assist plus 50 learners. Handouts are already posted on AACC’s Plus 50 website. College staff discussed how they have engaged faculty and campus partners in supporting their plus 50 programs. The webinar recording will be posted online at a later date.

Where We’ve Come From: A College Leader Looks Back at the Evolution of the Plus 50 Initiative

When AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative began in 2008, there were no helpful toolkits online to assist colleges in reaching out to the business community or to help them assess their programs for plus 50 learners. The Plus 50 Initiative launched with 15 colleges who were willing to share what they learned and benchmark best practices. We recently talked with Mabel Edmonds, associate vice president for instruction at Clover Park...
Technical College (CPTC). Her college was one of the first engaged in the Plus 50 Initiative, and we asked her to talk about how far the Plus 50 Initiative has come. “When we first started, our college was organized differently,” said Edmonds. It was common then to find plus 50 students on campuses engaged mainly in life enrichment or continuing education types of courses. “Most of what the colleges did was under continuing education, lifelong learning, and courses that didn’t necessarily involve workforce development,” said Edmonds. But then the Great Recession hit. CPTC and the other colleges involved in the Plus 50 Initiative re-oriented themselves to focus on supporting plus 50 adults who needed to train for new jobs and update their skills. Edmonds says the perspective of the college was to view “this as a way of really positioning our college to pay more attention to plus 50 learners.” She said it was helpful to talk with Mary Sue Vickers at AACC in those early days, because she was “able to connect with us on a regular basis, and find out what we needed, and asked how AACC could assist them.” As a group, the colleges “really grappled with how to do things in a comprehensive way.” As a result of these conversations, meetings, and feedback from the participating colleges, many of the resources available today that assist colleges were developed. Evaluation data helped bolster and develop best practices so a structure and implementation model could be developed. Those sequential steps—readiness, needs assessment, program development, implementation planning, and continuous improvement—are now the backbone of C-PAD. These five steps organize the process colleges go through today as they develop a plus 50 program. Edmonds is proud of the initiative and how far it has come. “We were so involved because we were building the ship as we were sailing it. There was ownership, pride in having nothing and in trying to help each other,” she said. College staff today who are building plus 50 programs are facing similar challenges, noted Edmonds, but now they have a roadmap and a library of resources available to help. “As I listen to some of the colleges now, I think they may be trying to do everything at one time and that can be overwhelming,” said Edmonds, who assists and mentors new colleges chosen for the program. She advises colleges to not think about C-PAD as only a reporting tool, but to view C-PAD as a process and guidance tool for developing their program. She also says it is important to identify allies in your college who you can link to and work with. “Start with what you are already doing. People are not going to help you if they think you are going to give them more work,” said Edmonds. She says that part of why the plus 50 program is sustainable at her college is because it connected with other initiatives that were happening on campus, and they were able to work together and leverage resources.

Lake Region State College Newsletter Offers Study Tips, Advice for Plus 50 Students
A newsletter from Lake Region State College is providing practical advice to help plus 50 students be successful in the classroom. The newsletter is
The February 2014 edition offered tips on researching and writing papers and links to additional resources. The November 2013 edition delivered tips on breaking tasks into meaningful chunks, and October 2013’s newsletter discussed note-taking strategies and skills.

Grant: Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Program
The U.S. Department of Labor announced the availability of approximately $1.8 million in grants through the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations program. The program is an initiative designed to recruit, train, and retain women in high-skill occupations, such as advanced manufacturing, transportation, energy, construction, and information technology. Approximately four grants will be awarded to community development organizations to create Regional Multi-State Technical Assistance Resource Centers. The centers will support women entering into nontraditional occupations. The solicitation for grant applications will be available online.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

COMPLETION

“An Examination of the Impact of Accelerating Community College Students’ Progression Through Developmental Education”
In an effort to improve developmental education students’ outcomes, community colleges have been experimenting with acceleration strategies. This article from The Journal of Higher Education examines the impact of a basic form of acceleration—enrollment in shorter versus longer developmental education sequences—on access to introductory college coursework, performance in that coursework, overall college credit accumulation, and degree attainment at City University of New York community colleges. Researchers found that accelerating students through developmental education in shorter sequences results in greater access to college-level coursework and long-term success but may have consequences for student performance in college-level coursework.

LEARNING

“Choosing Between Online and Face-to-Face Courses”
This article from The American Journal of Distance Education discusses community college students’ experiences with online and face-to-face learning, as well as their reasons for selecting online versus face-to-face sections of specific courses. Students reported that online courses had lower levels of instructor presence and that they thus needed to “teach themselves” in these courses. Accordingly, most students preferred to take only “easy” academic subjects online; they preferred to take “difficult” or “important” subjects face-to-face. The results of this research suggest that colleges need to take care to avoid curtailing the availability of face-to-face course sections, particularly in academically challenging or advanced areas of study.
TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

Are Your Employees Asking for Career Development?
This white paper from the Council on Adult & Experiential Learning examines effective career development strategies that target entry and mid-level workers. It discusses using career maps to help employees understand how they can advance in a company and what skills and education might be needed to advance. Career maps can also be built in reverse, offering insights to employers and educational partners about training and hiring needs.

PLUS 50 TRENDS

“Responsive Web Design Best Practices for Baby Boomers”
This blog post discusses why baby boomers are a significant audience for online mobile media. The authors discuss what to consider when applying responsive Web design to communicate effectively with plus 50 adults.