AGELESS LEARNING

In the News

Plus 50 In the News

- “Plus 50 Student Resource Event,” Phoenix College (event listing), May 6, 2015

Upcoming Webinars: Mapping Military Training and Occupations to Postsecondary Credentials

Institutions are being challenged on multiple levels to recognize military training to meet requirements in degree programs. All too often colleges and universities are engaged in time-consuming processes that do not build on effective practices and emerging models for adaption. This can result in little to no credit awarded due to a lack of straightforward equivalencies, or at the other extreme, excessive elective credits, causing more harm than good to a student veteran’s SAP. This two-part webinar series convenes a group of representatives from 2-and 4-year institutions that have put effective processes into place and begun to build “maps to credentials” for a range of degree programs. The webinars are free and will be held June 16 and June 18. Learn more and sign up.

Resource: Financial Aid Toolkit

Do students in your plus 50 program have questions about federal financial aid? This helpful toolkit from the U.S. Department of Education can answer their concerns and let them know what aid is available. It also offers tips and resources you can use to educate others about their financial aid options in your e-newsletter or social media outreach. A search engine helps your locate relevant resources.
SPECIAL FEATURE: Resources from the Society for Human Resource Management

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the SHRM Foundation have launched a 3-year national research initiative to highlight the value of older workers and to identify—through original research—best practices for employing an aging workforce.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the current demographics of organizations and their views on how the demographic breakdown of their workforces is likely to change in the future in both their organizations and industries. Researchers will also determine what, if any, actions organizations are taking to prepare for an aging workforce, including recruiting and retention strategies to specifically target older workers. They will also identify the skills and experience HR professionals most value in older workers.

As a result, SHRM is publishing a number of resources and these materials are a gold mine of information to advise and assist plus 50 workers.

Executive Summary: Preparing for an Aging Workforce provides an overview of research efforts. Of interest are the charts at the bottom of page 1 showing percentage of older workers by industry, and how organizations are preparing for the changes older workers will bring to the workforce. Sadly, less than 40% of organizations are taking steps to address this challenge.

When asked about the type of older workers (i.e., job classification) they found difficult to recruit, about one quarter of organizations reported it was difficult/extremely difficult to recruit older workers qualified for skilled labor (25%), executive (25%), salaried individual contributor/professional (22%), and management (22%) positions compared to other workers; less than one fifth indicated the same for labor, low-skilled positions (17%), and few for administrative/secretarial positions (7%). Additional charts discuss steps taken to recruit and retain older workers, as well as obstacles organizations face in recruiting and retaining older workers.

Of particular note is the section about advantages of older workers as compared with younger workers, found on page 6. Research respondents said older workers have more work experience, such as more knowledge and/or skills (77%), they are more mature/professional (71%), they have a stronger work ethic (70%), they are able to serve as mentors to younger workers (63%), and they are more reliable (59%).

Changing Our Perceptions of Older Workers offers great insights for anyone who is preparing older adults for the workplace and job hunting. Common stereotypes of mature workers are that they lack the drive to innovate, resist change, and are less productive than younger workers. Studies find little evidence to support these negative assumptions.
Yet one of the more interesting nuggets of information is that some people internalize negative stereotypes about older workers and self-sabotage themselves. This is often the case for those who view their aging as a hindrance. It is important for anyone involved in career placement or education with plus 50 students to help those with negative perceptions to embrace a more positive self-image. The way to prevent or minimize mature workers’ own negative age stereotypes is to replace them with positive or neutral perceptions.

*Engaging Older Workers Strategically* offers advice to employers about how to improve retention and utilization of older workers on the job. For plus 50 program managers who are working with corporate partners to secure job placements for plus 50 students, this publication could be a valuable jumping board for discussion. The publication examines flexible work arrangements, training and development opportunities, and knowledge management and transfer. It also offers questions to guide human resource leaders in defining how their company will engage older workers strategically.

**Student Stories: Visit the Plus 50 YouTube Channel!**
Get words of inspiration from others managing plus 50 programs and hear how plus 50 programs at community colleges are opening doors to brighter futures. One of the most effective recruiting tools is to share the stories of plus 50 students, because you can help others envision the possibilities that education could bring to their lives. Visit the [Plus 50 YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/plus50) for a quick pick me up!

**Gallup-Lumina Foundation Poll Finds Overwhelming Majority of Americans Support Increasing Attainment**
An overwhelming majority of Americans continue to believe that having a certificate or degree beyond high school is important to our success as a nation and as individuals. But, according to new results from the annual Gallup-Lumina Foundation Poll on Higher Education, Hispanics and African Americans believe most strongly in the power of postsecondary education to help deliver good jobs and a better quality of life. Ninety-six percent of Americans say it is somewhat or very important to have a degree or professional certificate beyond a high school diploma. Forty-one percent of Americans agree or strongly agree that only a professional certificate beyond high school can lead to a good job.

**For Your Plus 50 Newsletter: An Article You Can Share with Plus 50 Adults**

**Resume Tips for Older Workers**
Advice from the career website, monster.com, on how older workers can improve their resumes.

**Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program**
COMPLETION

**Collaboration and Coordination to Improve Adult College Completion Efforts**

This April 2015 publication by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the Lumina Foundation explores research on the common characteristics of effective multi-stakeholder collaborations, with a particular focus on initiatives working to tackle complex social challenges. The brief includes examples of collaborative efforts that are uniting diverse stakeholders to support adult degree completion at the state and local level. The author examines the Cincinnati Health Careers Collaborative, the Georgia Adult Learning Consortium, and the 55,000 Degrees project in Louisville, Kentucky. Research indicates that factors contributing to successful collective impact have a common agenda, shared metrics, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

LEARNING

**Study: Tablet Computer Use May Help Keep Older Adults' Minds Sharp**

Researchers found that challenging older adults with certain never-before-tried activities, such as tablet computing, might enhance cognitive vitality and ultimately help ward off or delay age-related dementia. Researchers gave iPads to a group of older adults, and had two control groups. One third of the participants were placed in an iPad group and given extensive training in using the tablet computer to perform various tasks and projects, spending an average of more than 15 hours a week on an iPad for 10 weeks. The iPad group’s results were compared to a placebo group that completed activities of low-cognitive demand and no skill acquisition, such as watching movies and completing knowledge-based word puzzles; and a social group, which socialized for 15 or more hours a week, primarily around prescribed conversational topics such as travel, art, and history. All three groups were given the same cognitive tests before and after the 10 weeks of activities. The tests included standardized measures designed to gauge mental agility, such as assessments that examined participants’ speed in comparing lists of numbers and their immediate recall. A comparison of scores found significant improvements in episodic memory and processing speed in the iPad group. Learn more about the study from the Center for Vital Longevity at The University of Texas at Dallas.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

**Selected Public Workforce Development Programs in the United States: Lessons Learned for Older Workers**

This AARP report reviews public workforce development programs in the United States over the past 80 years. The report places special emphasis on the importance these programs have to older Americans. It discusses how the public workforce system developed, how it operates today,
significant programs and target groups, common employment services and job training strategies, and what is known about program effectiveness. In some instances, the report speculates on how the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 might influence such programs. Particular attention is given to services benefitting dislocated workers (i.e., experienced adults permanently separated from their prior employers). The report includes evidence on the services found to work best and suggests policies and additional research to improve the public workforce system—especially for older workers.

**PLUS 50 TRENDS**

*“These Charts Show the Baby Boomers’ Coming Health Crisis”*

These charts from *TIME* show the pending health crisis that will be faced by baby boomers. This information illustrates why programs to stimulate the mind and improve health for this population are so important. Baby boomers are more stressed, less healthy, and have slightly less health care coverage than people in the same age group a decade ago. The charts are based on data from a [new report](#) released by the U.S. Centers for Diseases Control on baby boomer health.

[The American Association of Community Colleges](http://www.aacc.nche.edu) (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](http://www.aacc.nche.edu).