In the News

Plus 50 In the News

- “Brookdale to Offer Free College Training to Adult Learners,” Atlantic Highlands Herald, June 29, 2015
- “Resources Available for Kane County Residents Looking for Work,” Kane County Chronicle, June 26, 2015

Plus 50 Initiative Praised as a “Notable Success”
AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative was recently lauded in a report as “a notable success among the various Lumina-funded adult college completion efforts.” The authors from Higher Ed Insight found that while interest in adult college completion is at an all-time high, colleges and universities must change their policies and practices to better serve students who return to college as adults. Noting the dramatic growth and results of the Plus 50 Initiative over the years, the authors also singled out for praise AACC’s expansion efforts that replicated and scaled the program. The report, Adult College Completion in the 21st Century: What We Know and What We Don’t, is available online (see pages 49, 60–61 for information on AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative).

Webinar Series Available on Credit for Prior Learning
Are you considering adding credit for prior learning to your campus to aid college completion efforts? Or are you thinking about changing your existing program that offers credit for prior learning? This free webinar series examines how to integrate credit for prior learning into institutional
culture and the role of registrars in providing these important programs. The webinar series is sponsored by the Adult College Completion Network, the American Council on Education, and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

**Heavily Used College Placement Test Being Phased Out**
Compass, a popular but controversial college placement test that colleges use to determine whether students need to take remedial courses, is being phased out by ACT, reports *Inside Higher Ed*. The change spells good news for students, and illustrates how community colleges are improving their assessment processes. A 2012 study by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University’s Teachers College found that up to a third of students who placed into remedial classes due to their Compass or Accuplacer scores could have passed college-level classes with a grade of B or better.

**Good News for Job Hunters: Employers Are Seeking Applicants**
For the second month in a row, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that the number of job openings was higher than at any point since the data series began in December 2000. In July, BLS reported there were 5.4 million job openings in May 2015. Industries with the most job openings are professional and business services, healthcare, accommodation and food services, and retail trade. During the Great Recession, there were almost seven unemployed workers for every job opening, but the latest data shows that there are now well under two.

**Over 55 and Overqualified: Advice for Older Job Hunters**
Next Avenue from PBS profiles Patricia, a plus 50 worker who is among the long-term unemployed, and her struggles to find a position. The former paralegal and insurance claims representative has been told that she is “overqualified.” This can be a code word for “too old.” Author Chris Farrell offers advice that can help. He says that if a hiring manager says you are overqualified, recognize that what you may be hearing is worry that you'll be bored, dissatisfied, and jump to a better job as soon as one comes along. You should reassure the potential employer by emphasizing that at this stage of your life you’re striving for a better work-life balance, not necessarily the next rung on a career ladder. He also recommends that you cherry pick your experiences and build your resume around the skills you have that fit the particular job you are interviewing for. During your interview, show enthusiasm for the position and say you want to work hard.

**Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program**

**COMPLETION**

**Why Credentials Should Connect**
A new initiative in 2015 by the Lumina Foundation and nearly 40 co-sponsoring organizations is calling for ways to transform our nation’s highly diverse and fragmented credentialing system into one that is student-centered and learning-based. Change is needed for several reasons: to ensure educational quality; increase access; better align the work of industry, education, and certification/licensure agencies; multiply the benefits of increased attainment; reduce social inequity; and foster
individual progress that results in market-valued credentials. Postsecondary credentials (degrees, certificates, industry certifications, and more) are the currency through which skills and knowledge are recognized—connecting people to jobs, education programs, and career pathways. But there’s little clarity about what these credentials mean—their value, their quality, and how they connect. That makes their use difficult both by employers and learners. Join the dialogue and learn more.

LEARNING

**Americans View Quality of Two-Year, Four-Year Colleges Similarly**

According to a new study by Gallup, Americans are about as likely to rate the quality of education that community colleges offer as "excellent" or "good" (66%) as they are to rate 4-year colleges this positively (70%). But Americans are only about half as likely to rate the quality of Internet-based college programs—those offering online-only courses—as excellent or good (36%). Gallup found that many Americans believe online education programs lack in key areas, including reliable testing and grading, high-quality instruction, and value to potential employers. Online education is not an either/or proposition, as brick-and-mortar colleges routinely incorporate online coursework. But in terms of college programs that are solely Internet-based, it seems unlikely that online programs are going to overtake traditional colleges anytime soon in public perceptions of quality.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

**Occupational Outlook Handbook**

This online guidebook from the U.S. Department of Labor offers information on hundreds of occupations and is an invaluable resource for job seekers and those supporting them. Education requirements, training, work environments, job duties, and salary levels are offered. Users can also look up the number of projected jobs and predicted industry growth rates. You can also learn about entry-level education and pay of select health care and education occupations, or look at the concentration of jobs in states by education level.

PLUS 50 TRENDS

**“Marketing Your Brand to the Boomer Consumer”**

This article offers tips on how to market your brand to baby boomers. The author notes that advertisers need to understand just how youthful, vigorous, and energetic this group perceives itself to be. Marketers are advised to focus on areas such as health and well-being, productive living, the importance of autonomy and empowerment, and the value of relationships. They are also encouraged to dump their stereotypes about aging and to embrace “ageless marketing.”