What’s New

Innovative Ideas: Insights From Plus 50 Colleges Reports

Cape Cod Community College

- Opened a new adult learner services center that centralizes programs and resources to help plus 50 students.

Century College

- Is starting a job club for over-50 unemployed, dislocated and transitioning workers, providing them a network of support. Century will began this service to assist the local Workforce Center counselors overwhelmed by the number and prolonged length of unemployment being experienced by out-of-work job seekers.
- Formed a partnership between the plus 50 program and community education in a nearby community to offer classes locally.
- Will be writing a volunteer section in the college’s alumni newsletter encouraging alumni and retired staff to consider volunteer opportunities at the college. Century is using plus 50 volunteers in innovative ways, including mentoring younger students, curating the college’s art collection and creating costumes for the theater program.

Clark College

- Adopted new enrollment system practices to assist plus 50 students to register online for courses.
- Held two workshops to orient and assist plus 50 students enrolling in credit-bearing courses.
- Published *Elderberry Wine 2011*, a book containing writings by plus 50 student writers.
- A donor to the Clark College Foundation funded a new sound system providing dual
microphone capability in the classroom used mainly by the plus 50 program.

Clover Park Technical College

- Took the AACC Plus 50 Initiative business community outreach toolkit and tailored it to meet the needs of employers in their area. The college is distributing the toolkit throughout Pierce County.
- Offered a math refresher in a workshop format (not a class), making the content less intimidating for plus 50 students needing math remediation.
- All of the college deans are well informed about the Plus 50 Initiative and have been making presentations to their faculty during regular meetings on the importance of targeting instructional strategies to maximize the classroom experience for plus 50 learners.

Community Colleges of Spokane

- The college television station is running a 15-minute promotional piece to raise awareness about the plus 50 program.

Luzerne County Community College

- Started a basic Spanish course for customer service representatives in partnership with the Area Agency on Aging of Luzerne and Wyoming Counties.

Richland College

- Students in plus 50 career-related classes are completing a written career action plan as part of the class.

Santa Fe College

- Held three Plus 50 Career Changer mini-sessions for potential health science, business, and building and technical construction students which included special tours of the college’s state-of-the-art facilities, labs, and equipment in those fields. The mini-sessions also included information on types and length of available training, training cost, employment opportunities after training and potential salary levels.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

- Put literature review summaries about how to teach plus 50 students on their college intranet so all college faculty and staff have easy access to the information.
- Offered professional development training for staff and faculty on how to work with plus 50 students. The training included a plus 50 student panel.
Shoreline Community College

- The college president visited the Plus 50 Advisory Committee at its first meeting to welcome the members and talk about expectations for the committee.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Reports Successful Plus 50 Open House

The open house at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College last month was a huge success. One hundred people attended two open house sessions. Each department had a table showcasing featured programs. Advisors, counselors, recruiters, and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) representatives offered tips and advice for potential students. Student ambassadors helped attendees learn how to navigate the college’s website. They offered tips on how to apply, find classes, and enroll. A powerful plus 50 panel discussion was held. The panel featured two plus 50 students talking about their own experience attending college and an employer who talked about the value of retooling and keeping current in the marketplace.

Washington State House of Representatives Testimony

Clover Park Technical College (CPTC) Dean Mabel Edmonds testified before the Washington State House’s Labor & Workforce Development Committee on community and technical college perspectives. She highlighted the Pierce County Plus 50 Initiative and explained the training and outreach efforts implemented by the college. She described the college’s 29% enrollment increase overall and its 101% increase in worker re-training. “In the context of the recession, today’s two-year colleges have become first responders,” said Dean Edmonds. She also outlined how Clover Park is now a Plus 50 mentor college for the other three community/technical colleges in Pierce County. Edmonds took one of CPTC’s plus 50 students with her, Thomas Piwonski, who is enrolled in the CPTC environmental science degree program. Piwonski offered testimony to the committee on student perspectives. He shared his personal story and the difference he expects his new career training at the college will make in his life.

AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative Participates in AARP Foundation Inaugural Workforce Roundtable

Mary Sue Vickers, director of the Plus 50 Initiative at AACC, and Kelly Lapetino, workforce skills director at Joliet Junior College, participated in “Solutions with Experience: Career Development and Economic Security for Older Workers in 2011 and Beyond” at the AARP Foundation Inaugural Workforce Roundtable. They were part of a panel discussion on effective models for training and providing income support for older workers. AARP Foundation convened the roundtable to create solutions for increasing opportunities and income for older workers. An employer and industry panel discussed current and future skill and labor needs. The event was attended by representatives of business, industry, the workforce system, government, education, and employment and training providers.

Fourth Annual Plus 50 Initiative Conference Scheduled

Plus 50 Initiative will hold its fourth annual conference July 14–15, 2011 in Washington, DC, at the Westin Grand Hotel-Georgetown. This year’s conference will focus on sharing the knowledge and expertise on working with plus 50 students with the 11 new community
colleges that will be joining the Plus 50 Completion Strategy. These new Plus 50 Completion colleges will be selected this spring and named in May. The conference will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 14, and conclude at noon on July 15. Plus 50 Initiative program directors should have received information about the conference and how to register via email.

In the News

Plus 50 Initiative in the News
“Shoreline Community College focuses on 50-plus demographic for continuing education,” Journal Media Group, January 31, 2011

Student Story

Plus 50 Voices: Computer Training for a New Job
In this YouTube video, Ken McDougall says his experience at Community Colleges of Spokane, now as a plus 50 adult, is very different from his schooling earlier in life. The difference, says McDougall, is that now he truly wants to learn. Like many baby boomers, the last time McDougall went to college and took a course was in the 1960s. He likes the computer training courses he's taking at the college because they are self-paced. McDougall is taking a Microsoft Office course and the plus 50 student finds his instructors to be very helpful. McDougall is re-inventing himself so he can find a new job. He's creating a new resume and cover letter to apply for positions. McDougall recommends others making a career change or seeking computer training consider enrolling at community college.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

LEARNING

“Walking Improves Memory and Brain Health in Older Adults”
Sharon O'Brien writes in her Senior Living blog about January 2011 research published in the Proceedings of the American Academy of Sciences. The researchers found that walking and moderate exercise can slow down and even reverse declines in hippocampus size as people reach ages 55–60. The findings are significant because this is the first study to show that aerobic exercise can actually increase brain size.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

“The Causal Relationship Between Employment and Business Networks in U.S. Cities”
Conventional wisdom holds that job growth attracts people to urban areas. But when it comes to economic development in American cities, the trusted theory, "If you build it, they will come" may not work, argues a Michigan State University sociologist in this new
study published in the *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Zachary Neal found that in order to attract jobs to your city, you have to attract influential and employed people first. The findings indicate that business people come first, then the jobs.

**VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE**

**“Organizational Support and Volunteering Benefits for Older Adults”**
Researchers in this study in *The Gerontologist* found that the psychological well-being of older adults can be improved through meaningful volunteer activities that are well-organized. Researchers found that when volunteers were given adequate training, ongoing support, and greater flexibility in choosing activities and their volunteer schedules, they had greater commitment to the project, and also reaped socio-emotional benefits. Results show that how an organization treats its volunteers matters—for both the organization and the volunteers.

The American Association of Community Colleges is a national association representing close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges nationwide. Community colleges are the largest and fastest-growing sector of higher education, serving close to 12 million students each year. AACC is headquartered in Washington, D.C. See [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)

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