What’s New

Older Americans Month is in May, Sponsors Connecting Generations Video Challenge

“Older Americans: Connecting the Community” is the theme for this year’s Older Americans Month. Annually celebrated in the month of May, Older Americans Month is about recognizing older adults and their vital roles in society. This year’s theme pays homage to the many ways in which older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities. It also highlights the many ways technology is helping older Americans live longer, healthier and more engaged lives. The Administration on Aging, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has sample logos, posters, articles and more information. As part of the celebration, the Connecting Generations Video Challenge invites teams of two or more to submit videos that creatively demonstrate the role of older Americans in connecting the community. Teams must include at least one person age 60 or older and one person younger than 60. Challenge entries will be posted online and participants can view and comment on all videos.

Free April 20 Webinar from the SEED Center: Creating Demand for Green Collar Jobs

The SEED Center will offer a free webinar, “Community Colleges Creating Demand for Green-Collar Jobs through Community and Business Outreach,” on Wednesday, April 20, from 1:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m. EST. With their strong ties to communities and businesses, community colleges are at the forefront of helping to create demand for green jobs. Hear speakers from Oakland Community College in Michigan and Gateway Technical College in Wisconsin discuss how they actively outreach to local companies and the public to “go green.” Their efforts have expanded company capacity, increased consumer demand and provided students with real-world experiences in the clean energy industry sector. Register at the SEED Center website.

In the News

Plus 50 Initiative in the News

“RLC’s Plus 50 Program Praised, Supported Through Grants,” Richland College Weekly Updates, March 29, 2011
Class Allows Adults to Pen Their Life’s Story
It’s not unusual for North Idaho College instructor Sue Hill Crowley’s students to cry in class. Yet, Crowley thinks that she is the luckiest teacher in the world. She learns as much from her students as they do from her, and her classroom is filled with storytellers and budding writers—none of them famous, but each of them with a lifetime of knowledge and experience to share. For those enrolled in the Autobiography for Older Adults class, the class is an opportunity to put their life’s memories onto paper. Read more about this class in Community College Times.

Student Story

Plus 50 Voices: Re-Inventing a Career at Plus 50
For plus 50 student Neil Tanger, Cape Cod Community College is a friendly and accessible place. In this YouTube video, Tanger says that the instructors really care about student learning. He was also surprised to meet other students, much younger than he is, who are taking courses at the college to embark on their second and third careers. He is pursuing course work in massage therapy, and is taking a class in stress management for optimal health. He’s also taking a computer applications course, and feels that he is "catching up" in some ways on learning he missed over the years. Neil encourages other baby boomers who are considering going back to school to enroll, and heartily recommends the community college experience for others.

Special Feature: Resources to Support Completion
Would you like to know what other community colleges are doing to support the completion initiative? Then you won't want to miss The Completion Agenda: A Call to Action. This 11-page report includes many examples from community colleges. The document summarizes November 2010 meetings of the American Association of Community College Commissions and Board of Directors that were conducted in a focus group format. Attendees discussed how to support colleges to raise by 50% the number of completed certificates and degrees by 2020. Attendees offered suggestions for a completion toolkit and discussed strategies for overcoming obstacles facing colleges as they implement this initiative. Accountability was a key discussion item for participants and several resources are listed to help colleges. If you are seeking a document to stimulate your college staff and faculty to consider the many multi-layered issues involving completion and how your institution can be involved, this is a great document to start from.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

LEARNING

“Older Adults and Social Media”
Social networking use among Internet users ages 50 and older nearly doubled—from 22% in April 2009 to 42% in May 2010, says a Pew Internet and American Life Project report. During the same period, use among those ages 65 and older doubled, rising from 13% to 26%. Email is still the primary way older users maintain contact with friends, family, and colleagues, but their embrace of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter is
increasing. One in five (20%) online adults ages 50–64 say they use social networking sites on a typical day, up from 10% one year ago. Among adults ages 65 and older, 13% log on to social networking sites on a typical day, compared with just 4% who did so in 2009. At the same time, the use of status update services like Twitter has also grown—particularly among those ages 50–64. One in ten Internet users ages 50 and older now say they use Twitter or another service to share updates about themselves or see updates about others.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

“How Did 50+ Workers Fare in 2010?”
Richard Johnson and Janice Park at the Urban Institute discuss the difficulties unemployed plus 50 adults continued to encounter in 2010. Unemployment rates remained high for men and women 50 and older, and more than half of unemployed workers in this age group were out of work for more than six months. Their February 2011 paper notes that workers age 50 to 61—too young to qualify for Social Security retirement benefits—have fared worse than those age 62 and older since the recession began in late 2007. Men over the age of 50 have also been hit harder than women in the hunt for jobs.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

“Does Volunteering Give Job-Seekers an Edge?”
Volunteering can give job-seekers a leg up, notes this SmartMoney article, but the author advises job hunters to pick wisely when selecting an organization with which to volunteer. Find a volunteer position that relates to the field you want to be hired in, recommends the author. Reference the skills you already have under your belt and not just the ones you want to learn.

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.

The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on four critical social problems: aging, disadvantaged children and youth, population health, and reconciliation and human rights. Programs funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Viet Nam. To learn more, please visit www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.