What’s New

Assets, Not Liabilities: A Push for Employers to Shift Opinions on Older Workers
A new article in the April 7 edition of The Economist says that employers should begin viewing baby boomer employees as assets and not liabilities. In “Age Shall Not Wither Them,” the author praises companies for recognizing the value of older workers and soberly notes the challenges facing these workers, such as employers who fear intergenerational conflict. Yet, a growing chorus of advocates are pointing out the many assets baby boomers bring to the workplace. Their experience, knowledge base, hard work ethic, and drive are significant assets that employers should be reluctant to let go.

Plus 50 Trends: Baby Boomers and Work
A recent CBS Sunday Morning story looks at job loss and work for plus 50 adults.

Making Students Aware of Available Financial Aid
This Community College Times article advises colleges to remind students about opportunities to apply for federal financial aid. Many students who qualify for financial aid never apply, and lack of funds can force students to abandon their educational dreams before they achieve them. The Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) looks for ways to educate older students about student aid. For example, displaced workers taking advantage of the college’s one-free-semester offer must submit a federal student aid application, called the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The college is also reaching out to people who have earned some credits but no credentials. If students can transfer 30 credits, they can complete their degree free of charge, but they, too, have to fill out a FAFSA. “We’re looking at financial aid not just from the access point of view but as a definite retention strategy,” said Stephen Curtis, president of CCP.

In the News

Plus 50 Initiative in the News
“Completion Agenda for Baby Boomers,” Inside Higher Education, April 27, 2011

From the Experts

Plus 50 Voices: Designing a Program for Plus 50 Learners
In this YouTube video, Richard Mudd talks about how the plus 50 program at Community Colleges of Spokane is designed. “We had to consider where the students are coming from, what their educational backgrounds are, and age-related issues,” said Mudd. To meet the needs of baby boomers coming back to school, the plus 50 program was designed to offer flexibility, self-assessment, and goal-setting. Many of the plus 50 students in his computer course arrive lacking confidence in their technical and computer skills. He soon helps them get up to speed. While not every student may become a spreadsheet whiz, they can update their workplace skills. Mudd feels the plus 50 program is successful because students believe they can reach their goals through the college and feel supported by the staff. "It's wonderful to participate in their lives and see them becoming more proficient. We want for them to get employed and be competitive," said Mudd. The needs of the students really should influence the design of the program.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

**LEARNING**

"Discerning Learning: Colleges Find New Ways to Show What Students Know"

In the Winter 2011 issue of Focus magazine, the Lumina Foundation for Education offers a host of ideas to help colleges define alternative ways to measure student learning. E-portfolios, competencies, learning outcomes, and other ideas are discussed.

**TRAINING & RE-TRAINING**

"New Poll Exposes Age Discrimination in the Workplace"

A new poll conducted by the Associated Press in conjunction with Life Goes Strong, reveals that one in five baby boomers encounter age discrimination in the workplace and barriers to helping them succeed on the job. Fifteen percent of those surveyed said they have been passed over for a raise, promotion, or opportunity to get ahead because of their age. Nine percent said that solely because of their age, they were denied access to training or the opportunity to acquire new skills. Some older workers (13%) say they've missed out on certain assignments because of their age or heard unwelcome comments about their age while in the workplace. The poll results are not all doom and gloom—there are some positive results too. A majority of baby boomers (57%) say that since they turned 50, their co-workers have come to them for advice more often and 34% feel they are receiving more respect at their job. Only 14% of the baby boomers surveyed classified getting older as a workplace liability.

**VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE**

"Baby Boomers Still Have the Volunteer Spirit"

Volunteering remains popular among baby boomers, notes this Chicago Tribune article. The article notes that the most popular volunteer opportunities for boomers are religious groups, followed by educational or youth service organizations. Volunteer retention is highest when boomers are involved in professional or management activities.
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.