In the News

“More Baby Boomers Head Back to College,” Fox Business, August 12, 2011

“MHCC and Rho Theta Create an Easier Path for Students to Restart College,” Gresham on AmericanTowns.com, August 9, 2011

Plus 50 in the News

- “STLCC Enhances National Effort to Train Older Learners,” PrimeLife Circuit, July 26, 2011
- “Atlantic Cape Expands Efforts to Educate, Re-Train Older Learners,” Atlantic Cape CommuniCator, August 11, 2011, page 8

Plus 50 Programs at Community Colleges Featured in AARP The Magazine
Community colleges offer a supportive environment for plus 50 adults seeking job training, according to an article in the September/October issue of AARP The Magazine. Read about AACC, efforts at community colleges to train out of work baby boomers, and a successful student from the Plus 50 program at Joliet Junior College. Read the article online on pages 31–34.

What’s New

Fall Course Roundup: See What’s Happening With Plus 50 Around the Country
Online Course: Making Age an Asset in Your Job Search —Cape Cod Community College

Plus 50 Computer Basics —Clover Park Technical College
September 21 Webinar: Building and Sustaining Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Programs

If you would like more information about creating and enhancing your college’s prior learning assessment program, then sign up to participate in a PLA webinar September 21, 2011, 2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. (ET). Attendees will learn what PLA is, when and how colleges start PLA programs, the role of faculty in a PLA program, and who benefits from a PLA program. Presenters will be Joyce Lapping, director of the Office for Prior Learning Assessment at the University of Southern Maine, and Elizabeth Turesky, assistant professor in leadership and organizational studies at the University of Southern Maine. Access the webinar here. To join the conference, enter the participant code, 75120805, and your name, company, and e-mail, then click start. After you have joined the conference online, dial in to 877-366-0711, and enter the conference code when prompted: 62242759#. To register for the webinar or learn more about it, contact Mary Beth Lakin at 202-939-9704.

Employment and Earnings Among 50+ People of Color: New Urban Institute Data Brief

According to a new data brief from the Urban Institute, “The number of people of color in the workforce—particularly Hispanics and Asian Americans—will soar in the next two decades as the older population expands, grows more diverse, and works longer. But African Americans and Hispanics age 50 and older face substantial workplace challenges, including relatively low earnings, high unemployment, and limited access to self-employment. Older Asians fare better, but still lag behind their non-Hispanic white counterparts on many indicators.”

The brief, by Richard Johnson and Janice Park of the Urban Institute’s Program on Retirement Policy, provides the data and details. Among men ages 50 to 61 employed full time, 2009 median earnings totaled $56,100 for non-Hispanic Whites, compared with $40,800 for African Americans, $35,700 for Hispanics, and $50,000 for Asian Americans. Median inflation-adjusted earnings fell between 1999 and 2009 for men 50–61 in all groups. In addition, for men in that age group—too young to collect Social Security unless they have serious disabilities—labor force participation has been slowly falling over the past 30 years, especially at ages 50–54. The decline has been concentrated among those with limited education.

For women 50–61, Hispanics exhibited the highest 2010 unemployment rate (10.7%), followed by African Americans (8.7%), Asian Americans (6.6%), and non-Hispanic Whites (5.6%). Self-employment, which often provides more flexible work arrangements than standard wage and salary jobs, was much more common in 2010 at older ages than at younger ages. However, workers of color were less likely to work for themselves than non-Hispanic Whites, possibly because of difficulty gaining access to the financial capital needed to start a business.

Tips and Tools

Standards of Excellence Profile: Develop Community Partnerships

Forging linkages to organizations and employers in the community can be vital to building
support for your community college’s plus 50 program. At Luzerne County Community College, they’ve built partnerships with the Area Agency on Aging, CareerLink, Chamber of Commerce, senior centers, and AARP. The community partners help market the plus 50 program at the college and help even more people know about the resources the college has available to help plus 50 adults who want to return to the classroom. Get more information from the Plus 50 Initiative Standards of Excellence.

Plus 50 Story

Advising Plus 50 Adults
In this YouTube video, Doug Ammons, librarian at Clover Park Technical College, talks about supporting plus 50 students as they return to campus and helping them use technology. Often students are unsure of what questions to ask or lack confidence, says Ammons. Spending a little extra time with students can go a long way to helping them be successful. He describes helping a student who returned to college to work on a GED and did not know anything about computers. The student overcame her fear of computers and is now working on an associate degree.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

LEARNING

The College Completion Agenda State Policy Guide
Produced in cooperation with the National Council of State Legislatures, this policy guide from College Board provides helpful information for state policymakers seeking to raise the percentage of students completing college degrees or postsecondary education credentials. An overview of relevant research, questions to ask, strategies for increasing the completion rate, and policy samples are included.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

Older Workers, the Great Recession, and the Impact of Long-Term Unemployment
This 7-page research brief from Rutgers University examines somber data about the impact of long-term unemployment on older workers. The Great Recession has left 15 million people unemployed, 2.1 million of them over age 55. Older workers were less likely than younger workers to find work if they were laid off, and more likely to take a pay cut if they find a new job. The researchers say that workers age 55 and up have the lowest reemployment rate of any demographic group at 15%. Many older workers gave up looking and the researchers summarize attitude data they collected from unemployed workers age 55 and up. The portrait that emerges of today’s unemployed older workers offers helpful insights for those trying to help this population get retrained for new jobs and back in the workforce.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

“For Many Boomers, Volunteering Stays Close to Home”
Volunteering locally is important to many baby boomers, writes this columnist at Fox Business. Mary Malagiere, manager of volunteers for the Caregiver Volunteers of Central
Jersey, shared how a local chapter serves the people of their community. She discusses skills baby boomers bring to their volunteer experiences and how they are increasingly targeted by nonprofits for volunteer roles.

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 12.4 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.