In the News

- “More Older Students Attending Community College, Including College of the Sequoias,” Visalia Times-Delta, January 26, 2012
- “Community Colleges Training Post 50s for Jobs,” The Huffington Post, January 21, 2012
- “Community Colleges to Train Baby Boomers for Jobs that Make a Difference,” Encore Careers, January 18, 2012

News Impacting Plus 50 Programs

Education is an Elixir: The New York Times Looks at the Middle Aged Brain
In this New York Times article, “A Sharper Mind, Middle Age and Beyond,” the author examines recent research examining the retention of memory and brain power as people age. “Education seems to be an elixir that can bring us a healthy body and mind throughout adulthood and even a longer life,” says Margie E. Lachman, a psychologist at Brandeis University who specializes in aging. For those in midlife and beyond, a college degree appears to slow the brain’s aging process by up to a decade.

Discussing Student Aid Challenges & Reform
Plus 50 students often face a serious hurdle when going back to college – as part-time students enrolling in non-credit courses, they often don’t qualify for student financial aid. Reforming the college financial aid system to better support these students, who are often adults returning to college for job training, was a key discussion topic during a recent campus town hall meeting at Tallahassee Community College (TCC). The meeting included Education Secretary Arne Duncan and TCC President Jim Murdaugh. In a follow-up interview with Community College Times, Murdaugh mentioned a TCC student who wanted to enroll in a certificate course costing $500 that would have helped him secure a good-paying job, but he didn’t have the money and didn’t qualify for student aid. “There is no mechanism to provide any help to these folks,” Murdaugh said, noting that current rules on federal student aid eligibility “disadvantage” part-time and non-credit students enrolled in
courses that can usually be completed in 90 days with jobs waiting for them. Eligibility requirements should factor in programs that successfully lead to employment. “That should be the litmus test for success,” Murdaugh said.

Professional Development Ideas: Building the Completion Movement

55,000 Degrees
This new 7-minute video from Lumina Foundation examines Louisville’s goal to raise the number of postsecondary degrees by 55,000. This ambitious campaign aims for half of all working adults in Louisville, Kentucky, to have a college degree by 2020. The video discusses the value of community partnerships in working toward a completion goal. It shows how employers, educators, and others are coming together to build a culture that supports completion. Their early results after one year show promising improvements on key indicators. Consider showing this video to your college staff and faculty. Ask them to consider how a college completion culture can be built in your community and who needs to be involved.

Upcoming Webcasts

Baby Boomer Women & Retirement
An Urban Institute webcast on February 7, 2012, 12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m. (ET) brings together a stellar panel to discuss the daunting challenges baby boomer women face in retirement. Traditional employer-sponsored pensions have been disappearing. The 2008 stock market crash wiped out trillions of dollars in retirement savings, and the worst housing slump since the Great Depression has reduced home values. Women still earn less than men, and poverty rates will likely remain high among older widows. Yet, boomer women have worked and earned more than ever before, boosting their retirement wealth. The shift toward 401(k) plans helps women with spotty employment histories. Join the panel of experts for this free webcast. Participants include Barbara Bovbjerg with the Government Accountability Office, Mary Beth Franklin with InvestmentNews, Heidi Hartmann with the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Richard Johnson with the Urban Institute, and Jack VanDerhei with the Employee Benefit Research Institute. You can watch the webcast live and registration is not required. Get more information about this webcast from the Urban Institute.

Using National Student Clearinghouse Data for College Completion
The Adult College Completion Network is hosting a webinar February 14, 2012, 12:30–1:15 p.m. (ET). The webinar will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the data in the National Student Clearinghouse. It will present sample records and potential data uses to aid your efforts to increase completion by adults with prior college credit. Joshua Leake-Campbell from the National Student Clearinghouse will be the featured speaker for this free webinar. There will be plenty of opportunities for questions and discussion following his presentation. A recording will be available after the event for those who are not available to attend. Although the webinar is free and open to all, please register to attend.
Plus 50 Story

Completion Strategy Tips: Clover Park Technical College
Helping plus 50 adults finish their educational degrees or credentials at community colleges is important. Many are going back to school to re-train for new careers so they can find jobs in today's struggling economy. In this YouTube video, Mabel Edmonds with Clover Park Technical College offers tips and advice for other colleges on how to support plus 50 adults to achieve their education goals.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

LEARNING

Not All College Degrees Are Created Equal
This Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce study found that college majors that are more closely aligned with particular occupations and industries tend to experience lower unemployment rates. Majors in healthcare, education and technical occupations tend to have lower unemployment rates than more general majors, like humanities and liberal arts. While the study focuses on bachelor degrees and above, it provides insight for 2-year programs and students.

TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

Education and Training Opportunities: A Resource Guide for Maine Workers and their Employers
Maine lags New England in the proportion of the adult workforce with 2- and 4-year college degrees, putting the state at a competitive disadvantage for both employers and employees. This resource guide by the Maine Development Foundation and the Maine Employers Initiative provides an overview of the need to increase educational attainment in Maine and encourages employers to support their adult workers returning to college for additional training. The resource guide provides an overview of services that can help workers preparing to return to school, and offers advice on how to finance education and training.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

Encore Entrepreneurs: Creating Jobs, Meeting Needs
New research from Civic Ventures in 2011 shows that in a tough employment market, millions of Americans in their 40s, 50s, and 60s are interested in creating jobs for themselves and others. Approximately 25 million people—one in four Americans ages 44–70—are interested in starting businesses or nonprofit ventures in the next five to 10 years. More than 12 million of these aspiring entrepreneurs (48%) want to be encore entrepreneurs, making a positive social impact as well as a living. Most potential encore entrepreneurs (72%) expect to create local, small organizations employing up to 10 people.
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.