In the News

Plus 50 in the News

- “Program Touts Success of Baby Boomer College Program,” The Examiner, March 13, 2012
- “Boomer U. - Older Adults Go Back to School,” The Fiscal Times, March 8, 2012
- “Recareering at 50+ Expo 2012,” CPTC in the Spotlight, March 9, 2012

The report card is in. The evaluation reviewing the work of the AACC Plus 50 Initiative shows that college programs for baby boomers age 50 and up have changed lives and helped many train for new jobs during the economic recession. Evaluators found that enrollment in courses associated with the Plus 50 program more than doubled, increasing by more than 15,000 students from baseline to the end of the program’s second year. During the first three years of the initiative, the number of workforce training courses that were targeted specifically to plus 50 students skyrocketed from 54 to 1,147—a 20-fold increase. Seventy-two percent of students agreed that their workforce training program had helped them get hired for a job. About 90% of plus 50 students in workforce training programs agreed that their plus 50 courses have helped them acquire new skills or improve upon their current job skills. Read the full report on the Plus 50 Initiative website.

Awards & Scholarships

AARP Foundation Small Business Recognition Initiative
The AARP Foundation Small Business Recognition Award will recognize employers who are, despite the challenging economy, actively recruiting, hiring and retaining older workers. This award is focused on small businesses—firms with fewer than 500 employees—because they are the backbone of the U.S. economy. Nominating a small business partner to your community college is a great way to say “thank you” for recruiting and hiring plus 50 workers. The contest ends at 11:59:59 p.m. (ET) on April 16, 2012.

Deadline Reminder: AARP Women’s Scholarship Program, Apply by March 30
Low-income plus 50 women still have time to apply for an AARP Foundation scholarship to assist with education, training and skill upgrades. Applicants must be: (1) women who are age 50+ by March 30, 2012, (2) low-income (when taking into account income and family size, an applicant must be at 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or less), (3) pursuing a technical or vocational education, an associate degree, or a bachelor degree, (4) enrolled in a U.S. Department of Education accredited school or technical program within 6 months of the scholarship award date. Since 2007, more than 800 low-income women have
received AARP scholarships. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. (CT), March 30, 2012.

**Linda Lael Miller Scholarship for Non-Traditional Students**
The Linda Lael Miller scholarship program provides up to $1,000 in funding for non-traditional students age 25 and up attending a college or university. Scholarship funds can be used for tuition, books, childcare assistance, transportation, or other educational expenses not typically covered by scholarships. Approximately $10,000 in funds will be awarded. Applicants must write an essay and complete an application form before 5:00 p.m. (MT) on September 4, 2012.

**Student Story**

“Going to College at 63: You’re Never Too Old to Live Your Dream”
Priscilla Santiago of Bridgeport, Connecticut, is a mother of three, grandmother of seven, and great-grandmother of five. At 63, she was also one of the oldest students to receive a bachelor's degree from Post University in 2011. Santiago left high school at 16 after a devastating sexual assault. Laid off from her job at age 59, she reinvented her life. She spoke with Huff/Post50 about her experience and tells her story in her own words. Read more for inspiration.

**Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program**

**COMPLETION**

“So You Think Bringing Them Back is Easy?”
In this November 2011 blog post from the Adult College Completion Network, Cliff Adelman, senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, discusses early learning from Project Win-Win, an effort to help students complete an associate degree. Some of the results are sobering—with only 60 out of 3,600 potential returning students coming back to campus to finish a degree. Some of the findings are also encouraging—several colleges had students come out of the woodwork to re-enroll when they heard that their institutions had developed completion templates and processes for former attendees who already had earned some credits.

**LEARNING**

**Adult Learner Success Strategies**
This helpful 16-page publication provides an overview of West Virginia adult learners and the state’s adult learner initiatives, including those at individual institutions. It briefly outlines the literature on adult learner learning styles and techniques, and also offers a synopsis of best practices for serving adult learners. The publication was produced in 2011 by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the West Virginia Council for Community & Technical College Education.

**TRAINING & RE-TRAINING**

**Aligning Community Colleges to Their Local Labor Markets**
Community colleges already take steps to address the workforce needs of local employers, but their efforts often are hampered by a lack of detailed, up-to-date information about occupations and skills in demand. This paper by Jobs for the Future discusses new sophisticated “spidering” and artificial intelligence technologies that can aggregate and analyze online job ads and provide a more comprehensive, “real-time” source of information about the hiring and skill needs of local employers. If proven accurate and reliable, analyses of online job ads could complement traditional ways that community colleges determine
labor market demand for program and course offerings.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

“Civic Literacy Across the Curriculum”
California State University in Monterey Bay is nationally recognized for its commitment to developing students’ capacity to lead socially and civically engaged lives. The most important aspect of the university’s service learning program is the integration of justice and social responsibility in the curriculum across campus. In this Diversity and Democracy article the author cites several examples of service learning in varied formats and subject areas.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation’s community colleges. The association represents nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree–granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACC promotes community colleges through five strategic action areas: recognition and advocacy for community colleges; student access, learning, and success; community college leadership development; economic and workforce development; and global and intercultural education. Information about AACC and community colleges may be found at www.aacc.nche.edu.