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In the News

Plus 50 Initiative News

• “Retirees Back at School,” College Surfing Insider, March 28, 2012
• “AARP Re-Careering @Plus50 Expo,” The Olympian, March 27, 2012

Baby Boomers in the News

• “For Baby Boomer ‘Solopreneurs,’ Business is Booming,” Business News Daily, April 3, 2012
• “Baby Boomers Will Transform Aging in America, Panel Says,” The Huffington Post, April 2, 2012
• “Middle-Aged College Student Enrollment Up,” WHIZ, March 26, 2012

May is Older Americans Month: Get Free Resources

The month of May is a time to focus on older Americans and the vibrant lives they lead today in our society. This year’s theme is “Never Too Old to Play.” There are posters, a newsletter article draft, and other resources to hold your own “day of play” available online.


Considered the nation’s most widely used source of career information, the Occupational Outlook Handbook produced by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on hundreds of occupations. The information is invaluable to counselors, students, parents, teachers, job seekers, career changers, education and training officials, and researchers. This edition of the handbook reflects the Bureau’s 2010–20 employment projections and includes many improvements. The 341 occupational profiles cover 536 detailed occupations, or 84.8% of total employment. The 2012–13 handbook contains individual profiles for many occupations that were either covered in groups, covered in abbreviated profiles, or not covered in detail in the prior edition.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program
“Low-Hanging Fruit”
Whether they called them "near-completers," "ready adults," or "stop-outs," the educators and policy experts gathered for the Institute for Higher Education Policy meeting in 2011 tried to identify ways to help students complete their educations. Several strategies for improving completion rates are discussed in this Inside Higher Education article.

What Works: BridgeConnect Stories from the Field
Bridge programs have emerged as an effective strategy for preparing low-wealth, low-skilled individuals for jobs that require more education. By providing the necessary academic, employability, and technical skills, these programs help participants enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training and, ultimately, the labor market. This Workforce Strategy Center website offers case studies from BridgeConnect sites: Center for Community Action, the Richard J. Daley College and Central States SER, Central Piedmont Community College, and Lutheran Family Health Centers.

A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education: Review Data by State
The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems estimates the need to educate nearly 800,000 more college graduates each year from now through 2025 to meet the growing needs of the workforce. Lumina Foundation’s goal is to increase the higher education attainment rate of the United States to 60% by the year 2025. This helpful data summary examines how many additional degrees each state needs to reach these goals, based on 2008 U.S. Census data.

Focus on the Finish: A Report on Illinois Community Colleges to Governor Pat Quinn and the Illinois General Assembly
In this report presented to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, Lieutenant Governor Shelia Simon shares her concerns about the state’s economy and how she thinks community colleges can be the solution. Simon claims that for every 100 future jobs, one quarter could go unfilled because of a lack of skilled labor. “Until this skills gap is closed, our state is at risk of losing quality employers who seek to locate in areas with a stronger talent pool. Our community colleges are positioned to bridge this skills gap, but to do so, they must shift their focus from access to completion,” said Simon. She goes on to say that when a student enters community college the odds should be that they’ll leave with a certificate or degree. Today that is not the case. In 2011 only one in every five students that entered community college reached those goals. The report mentions AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative and its focus on the completion strategy, which involves three Illinois community colleges, in efforts to help baby boomers finish marketable credentials or degrees.

LEARNING

Helping Adult Learners Succeed: Tools for Two-Year Colleges
This report explores how colleges used the Adult Learning Focused Instrument Toolkit developed by the Council for Adult & Experiential Education (CAEL). Colleges used the toolkit to provide valuable information to institutional leaders, program directors, faculty, and staff concerning adult learners, their perceptions of the institution they attend, and the
TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

Building a Technically Skilled Workforce
In this Center for American Progress report, authors Louis Soares and Stephen Steigleder assert that in order for the United States to keep its leadership position in the global economy, its workforce must be able to keep pace with the knowledge and innovation that drives the development of new industries. One key component to making this happen is increasing the number of “middle-skill level workers”—such as nursing assistants and welders—most of whom get their degrees and certifications from community colleges. The study says that incubating the world’s best scientists and engineers to break down scientific barriers is an important part of being on the cutting edge, but these people only make up a small portion of the necessary industry workforce. They say that at the rate things are going there will be a shortage of nearly 5 million middle-skill workers by 2018. There is a solution and it is already in place—the community college. Community colleges are at the crossroads of higher education and the professional world. They have a more diverse student body than a traditional 4-year college, and have more experience working directly with the private sector in creating or adapting college programs to fit the needs of the marketplace. Soares and Steigleder propose incorporating a competitive grant program into the community college system to “scale up” the number of community college and industry partnerships that lead to associate degrees and 1-year technical certifications. They include examples of programs they’ve seen succeed in the marketplace.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

Idealist Guides to Nonprofit Careers
This website is a virtual career center. There are links to several free books (in PDF format) that offer advice, strategies, and resources for people considering a career in the nonprofit sector. The books are written by the staff of Idealist.org and other experts in the nonprofit and employment world. Some titles include The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for Sector Switchers, The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for First-time Job Seekers, and Service Corps to Social Impact Career – A Companion to The Idealist Guides to Nonprofit Careers.