AACC Messaging Framework

PLUS 50 INDIVIDUALS (PRIMARY AUDIENCE)

Deepening or Expanding Career Skills

- **Retool vs. retire.** If you cannot retire or choose not to, continuing education at community colleges enables you to hone new skills to stay in the workforce.
- **Lighten your load.** Those who have spent a lifetime in manual labor are often ready for work that is less physically taxing. Community college education can help you gain skills to shift into new positions—even in your existing field of expertise—that put less wear and tear on your life.
- **Bridge the gap.** If you feel the world has changed since the last time you were in a classroom, community colleges can help. Learn new skills or brush up on the subjects you need to understand to stay in high demand.
- **New horizons.** After years of work experience, you might be ready to strike out on your own. Community college courses can teach you the entrepreneurial skills to start the business or venture you’ve always dreamed of.

Community-Building and Service

- **A life that counts.** Community colleges can sharpen your skills for taking on volunteer opportunities where you can do the most good—in serving others.
- **Like-minded communities.** At community colleges, building a network of contacts who share your interests and passions is as easy as getting to know your classmates.
- **Catalyst for social change.** Community colleges can harness and direct your talents and experiences to support and serve individuals and your community.

Learning for Learning’s Sake

- **Reinvent yourself.** Community colleges let you study new subjects and explore interests you may never have had an opportunity to learn before.
- **Get back to the subjects that get you going.** Courses, professors, and peers at community colleges help you rekindle passions and interests you have always had but haven’t pursued in years.
- **Keep your mind active.** Research shows that keeping the mind engaged is key to promoting mental longevity.

**BUSINESSES/EMPLOYERS (SECONDARY AUDIENCE)**

- **The ultimate investment.** Human resources are the only workplace assets that appreciate with time.
- **Experience counts.** Older workers who reenter or stay in the workforce bring a lifetime of work experience.
- **Turn losses into gains.** 78 million Americans are approaching retirement age. By taking steps to keep 50+ workers on the job, businesses can ensure availability of the experienced workers they need to keep their businesses competitive.

**MESSAGES TO OVERCOME COMMON BARRIERS FOR 50+ INDIVIDUALS**

**Issue:** Older adults think there are limited campus support services to prepare for schooling.  
**Response:** You are not alone.  
Community colleges offer support services to help learners of every age get the most from their education.

**Issue:** Campus schedules are too rigid and courses take too long.  
**Response:** Community Colleges offer programs designed with your lifestyle in mind.  
Community colleges are noted for their flexibility and user-friendly environment.

**Issue:** Older adults face increased personal responsibilities and obligations.  
**Response:** Do something for yourself.  
 Responsibilities pile up with age, but don’t forget your responsibility to yourself. Take the time to learn something you’ve always wanted to with community colleges.

**Issue:** Older adults often have limited or fixed incomes.  
**Response:** Limited income ≠ limited possibilities.  
Community colleges offer affordable programs to help you overcome the limits on your life and some financial aid options may be available.

**Issue:** Older adults think ageism causes many employers and even some campuses to be less welcoming to older adults and perhaps worry that the won’t fit in.  
**Response:** Age is a state of mind. When minds expand, options do too. Learning is one of the best ways to stay young and feel young, and community colleges are open door institutions that value diversity.
Issue: Geography—many of those entering retirement years move to less urban environments where there are fewer continuing education resources.
Response: *Get out of the city, not out of the loop.* Opportunities for learning may be closer than you think. Community colleges offer access to quality education across America in big cities and small towns; urban and rural communities.

Issue: Some may never have known what a positive and enriching experience education can be.
Response: *School like you’ve never seen it before.* They don’t make classrooms like they used to. Learn to love learning with community colleges.

Issue: Some older adults lack basic computer training and skills.
Response: *Get the computer training you need, at any level.* Community colleges offer courses that can bring you up to speed with a full range of computer skills, from basic word processing and Internet use to courses that prepare students for high-tech industries.