

Opportunities for Growth: The Changing Landscape of Certificate Programs

Wednesday, October 3, 2001

Brandeis University

The Professional Development Day Planning Committee, chaired by **Larry Isaacson** and **Scott Greenberg**, delivered a dynamic program that set a new attendance record for Region I ACHE. Brandeis University, with its beautiful campus and excellent conference facilities, hosted the event. This one-day interactive conference examined the current state of credit and noncredit certificate programs, how the field has evolved and what role higher educational institutions can play in what has become both a puzzling and exciting landscape. Additional funding for the event was received from a grant awarded by the National Office of ACHE.

The Keynote Address, entitled *Adult Students 2001: Shaping Programs to Meet Demand*, was given by **Carol Aslanian**. Ms. Aslanian is the Senior Advisor for Adult Learning at the College Board in New York and Vice President of Sales for Protocol, Inc. Protocol offers colleges an integrated management information system focusing on students, human resources and financials. Ms. Aslanian reviewed several of the findings from her new book, *Adult Students Today*. She discussed how the needs of the adult learner have shaped the direction of continuing education programs. Given the nature of swings in the economy and an ever-changing workforce, which has been driven by the needs of the market, Ms. Aslanian sees a tremendous opportunity for schools to maintain and develop both credit and noncredit certificate programs. According to Ms. Aslanian, it is essential that these institutions continually be focused on the market, assessing the needs of students and industry as they look to participate in the exciting field.

Following the keynote, there was an energetic and interactive panel discussion entitled, *Certificates: What do they mean? Who are they for?* The panel, which was moderated by **Lewis Shena**, Director of Continuing Education and Special Programs at the Rhode Island School of Design, included **Carol Aslanian**, **Steven Ozug**, Assistant Dean of Instruction, Bristol Community College and **Robin Smith**, Director, Center for Business and Industry, Bristol Community College.

After lunch, conference participants divided into three smaller groups that focused on three topics of current interest in the field: 1) *Strategies for New Markets: Marketing Certificate Programs*, led by **Amy Grossman**, Assistant Provost, Brandeis University and **Raymond Guillette**, Director of Continuing Studies, Brandeis University; 2) *Post Baccalaureate Programs: From Creation to Implementation* presented by **Judith Stoessel**, Interim Dean, University College, Northeastern University and **Rose Doherty**, Assistant Dean and Director of Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice Program, Northeastern University; and 3) *Developing Noncredit Certificate Programs* led by **Patricia Thornton**, Associate Director of Continuing Education, Rhode Island School Of Design.

At lunch, during breaks and at the end of the day, participants had the opportunity to network and share their views from their own experiences in the field. Other resources included an extensive bibliography on the day's subject compiled by Lewis Shena, along with handouts that accompanied each breakout session. Information was also made available on the current programs offered at the institutions of the conference participants.