

# THE CHARLOTTE W. NEWCOMBE FOUNDATION

## 2011 Conference Notes – Newcombe Scholarships for Mature Women Students

Rider University      October 21, 2011

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### *Welcome*

Jonathan Meer, Rider's VP for University Advancement, welcomed the attendees on behalf of President Mordechai Rozanski. He commended the Newcombe Foundation for its constructive attentiveness to the institutions it funds.

CWNF Executive Director Tom Wilfrid thanked VP Meer and pointed out that Rider University, because of its long history of securing matching funds for all of its Newcombe grants, has awarded more money to students in the form of Newcombe Scholarships (\$1,758,455 since 1981) than any other Newcombe-funded institution.

### *Return to Learn: Re-Engaging Disengaged Students*

Boris Vilic, Dean of Rider's College of Continuing Studies, discussed the lessons Rider had learned from administering a "Return to Learn" program over the past three years. The program was established through a "Disengaged Adults Returning to College" grant funded through the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education with federal funds provided by the College Access Challenge Grant program.



An overview of the program can be found on Rider's website at <http://returntolearn.info> and Dr. Vilic's entire "Prezi" presentation is at <http://www.returntolearn.info/presentation>.

Participant questions and comments made it clear that Dr. Vilic's presentation had stimulated great interest among attendees with various institutional roles, and that many who attended would carry ideas back to colleagues at their respective colleges and universities.

### *Rethinking an institution's Newcombe Scholarships program*

Marie Lilly, Associate Director for Women's Resources in the Center for Student Diversity at Towson University, then offered an overview of Towson's approach to building a stronger community of Newcombe Scholars and enhancing services to mature women (and men) more generally. Marie, who arrived at Towson earlier this year after years in social work, applied what she knew about program design to identifying and prioritizing needed components for a program to achieve Towson's goals for its mature women students.

Towson's program is intentionally designed to accommodate the busy lives of its adult students. Events are held at a variety of times including evenings and weekends so participants are never forced to choose between the program, their classes, or their jobs. In addition to flexible



scheduling, the program maintains a strong focus on graduation, constantly asking participants how much time they have left, what classes they need to take, and whether or not they have talked to their advisors about graduation. For further information about Towson's Center for Student Diversity [click here](#). For, and the complete set of PowerPoint slides from Marie's presentation [click here](#).

Towson's program for mature students is the subject of the latest [Spotlight article on the Newcombe website](#). It is titled *Structuring the Newcombe Scholarship Program to Serve Mature Students*.

Tom Wilfrid invited members of the audience to offer suggestions that Marie might consider to further enhance services for mature students as she evolves Towson's program further. These included:

- Cira Vernazza (Fordham University) offers career workshops for Newcombe Scholars in cooperation with Career Services; students have found these very helpful.
- Rebecca Reynolds (Rutgers/Douglass) holds two dinners during the year for alumnae and current "Bunting" students whom they mentor.
- Kelly Kesler (University of Maryland, College Park) finds that it is a challenge to get the word out about Newcombe Scholarships. Many adjunct faculty members are not aware of what's available for adult students, but are in touch with many of them through the classes they teach. Perhaps adjunct faculty can be used as helpful agents for conveying program information to adult students.
- Kelly's UMCP colleague Barbara Goldberg added that a Monday "coffee and conversation" group has helped connect mature women students. Once a month they hold a special event with guest speakers from financial aid, the career center, or any other area that would interest adult students.
- Ryan Hammond (Saint Joseph's University) mentioned SJU's Women's Leadership Council, which runs special events for women to raise funds to meet the Newcombe matching challenge. This provides a way for alumnae to give back. The alumnae become invested in the current students by engaging in fund raising and through mentorships.

### ***Highlights from the discussion after lunch***

#### *Newcombe Foundation update*

Tom Wilfrid began by highlighting information from the conference handout titled "Fact Sheet – October 2011: Scholarships for Mature Women Students," [\[available here\]](#) and "Newcombe Foundation Goals for the 2011 Conference," [\[available here\]](#). He emphasized the Foundation's interest in maximizing the total resources made available for mature women students and pointed out how much more money gets to students when the funded institution matches all of its Newcombe dollars. He emphasized that the Foundation seeks to pursue its goals through partnerships with each funded institution, and that matching Newcombe dollars is a very tangible way for the institution to affirm its commitment to that partnership.

Diane Wilfrid reminded the group of the "Spotlight" section of the Foundation's website and invited new contributions – especially from institutions not currently represented. She also reiterated how much the Foundation staff and Trustees enjoy receiving letters from recipients – especially those that tell something about the student's personal story in her authentic voice. Diane continues to reply to each student's letter individually, providing additional words of appreciation and encouragement on behalf of the Foundation.

The final hour of the conference was devoted to large-group discussion of current issues about serving students,

administering the Newcombe program, institutional reporting to the Foundation, raising funds for institutional matches, the future of the Foundation's website, and possible alternate uses of technology by institutions and/or the Foundation. **Some highlights follow:**

### *Facebook*



Vicki Austin (Misericordia University) suggested that a Facebook page would be useful to students in creating a sense of community. This could be institution-centered or more widely focused on connecting Newcombe Scholars from among all institutions. A link was suggested that would take a student from the Foundation's website or Facebook page to an institution's Facebook page for information about Newcombe contacts at particular institutions and to connect with other Newcombe

Scholars.



Boris Vilic (Rider University) pointed out that use of social media has become very important. The Newcombe Foundation might consider creating a vehicle for all mature women students to connect with each other, their institutions and the Foundation.

Kathy Guerino (Bloomfield College) said that Bloomfield had recently held its first group reception for Newcombe Scholars. Students asked her to set up a Facebook page to stay in touch. It is now in operation [here](#).



Geannine Callaghan (Towson University) suggested that use of Facebook could engage alumni and help institutions and the Foundation demonstrate the lasting impact of Newcombe Scholarships for the children of recipients. Facebook could also be a place to share accomplishments among Newcombe-funded institutions.

### *Institutional websites*

Kelly Kesler offered that UMCP has a page (<http://www.sagiving.umd.edu/newcombe/>) that provides links to alumni as a way to connect Newcombe Scholars from past years.

It was suggested that the Foundation change the imbedded institutional links on the Newcombe website to connect directly to a page with information for mature women (the institution's Newcombe Scholarship page, student services page, etc.). The Foundation staff will request confirmation of the preferred link from each institution's primary contact person.

### *Newcombe website*

Ryan Hammond (Saint Joseph's University) suggested that we establish a way to receive student letters through our website. We could also request photos and develop an online gallery of Newcombe Scholars.

Larry Pellegrini (Misericordia University) said that his colleagues who work on website design had commented favorably on the ease of navigation and selection of photos on the Newcombe website.

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