

CAROL ASLANIAN, PRESIDENT, ASLANIAN GROUP

Make marketing your program a priority

When you're crunched for time and your budget seems almost nonexistent, marketing your program can fall to the bottom of your endless to-do list. However, advertising is key to attracting students. And just because you're not marketing to prospective students doesn't mean that your competitors aren't.

For more than 25 years, **Carol Aslanian** served as director of the Office of Adult Learning Services and the Office of Community College Relations at the **College Board**. Now, Aslanian uses the skills she learned in this position in her role as president of the **Aslanian Group**, a firm that helps institutions market their adult programs. She is also a member of the *Nontraditional Students Report* advisory board.



CAROL ASLANIAN

"The number one reason to market your program is increased competition," she said. "There are more and more players in the field."

Also, adults expect institutions to make content and information about academic programs available to them as they research where to go to college.

"We are no longer in the mode where we can say 'Oh, they can find us,'" Aslanian added.

So what are some of the top methods for advertising to adults? Here are Aslanian's recommendations:

- **Web sites.** "The data says that adults go to a Web site to check out a college, but I don't see nine out of

10 continuing education units giving their site much attention," Aslanian said. Your Web site should have strong content, be easily navigable, and provide opportunities for your unit to stay in touch with the prospect (e.g., places to capture the prospect's contact information).

- **The Internet.** Your program needs to be visible all over the Internet.

For example, list your program on search engines including **Google** or **Yahoo!**.

- **E-mail.** You can always buy prospects' e-mail addresses from a list broker, but there are less expensive ways to obtain this information. For example, save e-mails from any prospective students.

- **Direct mail.** Aslanian recommends that you use direct mailings to get the word out about your program and drive people to your Web site.

And remember that even if your budget is tight, "you've got to give to gain," Aslanian said.

Although she stresses that you should use some print advertising, consider focusing more on electronic advertising options such as Web sites, e-mails, podcasts and blogs. These methods often reach a larger number of people and are far less expensive than print ads.

For more information, contact Carol Aslanian at info@aslaniangroup.com. ■

Mark your calendar!

Learn how to use technology to recruit students at the Aslanian Groups' seminar: *Advanced Online Marketing: Recruiting Adult and Graduate Students in the Information Age* offered May 30 to 31 in Chicago. Visit www.aslaniangroup.com for more information. ■

Nontraditional Students Report Board of Advisors

- **Carol Aslanian**
President
The Aslanian Group

- **Dean Dienslake**
Coordinator, Adult Re-Entry Center
University of North Dakota

- **John DeJoy**
Associate Dean, School of Graduate
& Continuing Education
Marist College

- **Ruth Freiburger**
Director, Adult Student
Access Services
University of Wisconsin
Oshkosh

- **Thomas Fuhr**
Director, Continuing Education
& Summer Sessions
State University of New York
College Potsdam

- **Maureen Grasso**
Dean, The Graduate
School
University of Georgia

- **Dawn Hodges**
Dean of the Marietta Campus/
Chattahoochee Technical
College

- **Charlene Lutes**
Transition Coordinator, Bridge
Northwestern Michigan College

- **Esther Powell**
Director, Graduate Services
Winston-Salem State University

- **Emily Richardson**
Dean, University College
Widener University