A NEWSLETTER OF THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

FALL 2024

Age Inclusivity In Higher Education

Promoting age-inclusive practices, programs, and partnerships in higher education.

The *Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* (AIHE) newsletter is a place where educators, researchers, campus leaders, and community members can share information about how colleges and universities are responding to aging populations and the rise of more age-diverse campuses.

This issue offers information about happenings and sessions at the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting in Seattle, Washington, where age-inclusivity efforts in higher education will be shared and celebrated.

Comments and suggestions about newsletter content and special areas of focus are welcomed from our readers. Please send correspondence to ageinclusive@geron.org.

The *Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* newsletter is produced by the Gerontological Society of America.

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Featured Article

Learners for Life: The Future of Higher Education in the Era of Longevity

The GSA Age Inclusivity in Higher Education (AIHE) initiative is featured in the most recent issue of the GSA Insights & Implications in Gerontology series. The far-reaching topic, "Learners for Life: The Future of Higher Education in the Era of Longevity," describes the trends driving changes in higher education that could combine with an age-inclusivity movement to provide solutions to many of higher education's fiscal challenges.

Many factors have affected the number of people who seek higher education and the times in their lives when they do so. In addition to the decline in the number of students at colleges and universities owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and lower birth rates, today's students are older, more likely to attend on a part-time basis, and more likely to seek graduate education.

Among undergraduates, nearly one-fourth are at least 25 years old, and many take classes online and on campus.

The Age-Friendly University (AFU) movement and the AFU Principles are featured in the publication as well as definitions of the evolving terms *age friendly, age inclusive,* and *age diverse*. The AIHE Tools for *Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* and other resources on the GSA website are also spotlighted.

The Age Inclusivity Domains of Higher Education model figures prominently throughout the publication as it provides a framework on how institutions are expanding their services. Among the case studies featured and aligned with the seven domains are:

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Continued on page 2

1. *Teaching and Learning:* The University of Connecticut "Careers in Aging" program and the Nexel Collaborative, composed of 25 colleges and universities, including: the Arizona State University "Distinguished Innovation Fellows" program; the University of Minnesota "Advanced Careers Initiative"; the University of Southern California "Distinguished Leaders" program; and the University of Texas at Austin "TOWER Fellows Program."

2. *Services and Resources:* The University of Manitoba micro-certificate program in "Facilitating Older Adult Learning" and the Northern Kentucky University "Caregiving Across Campus" program.

3. *Student Affairs:* The Northeastern Illinois University support model for advising nontraditional undergraduate and graduate students.

4. *Physical Environment*: The Arizona State University, home of "Mirabella," a continuing care inter-generational university-based retirement community.

5. *Research:* The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus intergenerational research team.

6. *Personnel:* The University of Minnesota "Age-Friendly Council."

7. *Outreach and Engagement:* The Washington University in St. Louis Friedman Center for Aging "Your Next Move: Transitioning to the New Retirement" program. Other programs include the University of California Berkeley "Retirement Center" and the campus-based retirement community "Lasell Village" in Massachusetts on the campus of Lasell University.

Joann Montepare, PhD, FGSA, FAGHE, and Nina Silverstein, PhD, FGSA, FAGHE, served on the advisory board along with Surya Kolluri, MBA, MS CRPC and Anne Ollen, Med, CEBS from TIAA Institute.



Age Inclusivity Domains of Higher Education model

This edition of Insights & Implications in Gerontology will be available to attendees at the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting in Seattle and online in late November.

TIAA Institute provided the grant funding to develop this publication.

Karen K. Tracy
Vice President of Strategic Alliances
Gerontological Society of America

Scan for Age Inclusivity in Higher Education resources

This publication may be found on GSA Enrich.

Please join us at the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting on Friday, November 15, 3:00 pm–4:00 pm, Seattle Convention Center, Room 612, for the Momentum Discussion on "Learners for Life: The Future of Higher Education in the Era of Longevity."

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Embracing Age-Inclusive and Dementia-Friendly Practices in Higher Education

With difficulties of the demographic enrollment cliff in higher education upon us, age-inclusive practices have the potential to help institutions prevail. Age-Friendly Universities (AFU) are well poised to tackle such challenges. The Age Inclusivity Domains of Higher Education (AIDHE) model endorsed by GSA also offers evidence-based guidance for age-inclusive campuses. Integrating the age-inclusive teaching and learning domain with dementia-inclusive efforts in educational interventions can add value to the educational experience.

Undergraduate students increasingly will have personal experiences with family members diagnosed with dementia, pursue careers in the field of aging and directly work with individuals with dementia, or indirectly work with individuals with dementia and their caregivers through roles in various professions such as finance or law. How can we design programming that promotes age inclusivity, is sensitive to dementia, and creates meaningful impact?

Virtual reality (VR) can be a powerful classroom tool, immersing students in experiences that are not easily accessible and encouraging a deeper understanding of the topic at hand. Dementia VR immersive experiences can help build empathy among students about daily challenges faced by people living with dementia. In a small pilot study in my undergraduate gerontology course (N=21) at Eckerd College, which is an AFU, I explored the use of Oculus VR headsets paired with a 360-degree video in the classroom to sensitize students to the experience of people living with dementia. This virtual experiential learning was preceded by an interactive lecture about the basics of Alzheimer's disease and dementia delivered by a Community Educator from the Alzheimer's Association.

Following engagement in the VR session, students were surveyed about their understanding and empathy for people with dementia and their caregivers. All students (n=5) accurately defined dementia as the "loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life" and 80% accurately responded that Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. Nearly all (80%) affirmatively responded that the training influenced their understanding of the lived experiences of individuals with dementia and their caregivers and helped them build empathy toward the daily challenges faced by people living with dementia. Specific insights gained through this VR dementia training included empathy regarding the disorientation to time and place that people living with dementia experience such as "I can understand the confusion" and "[I can better understand] the mental fog and frustration that comes." Additionally, some students showed appreciation for the personal experience that this type of training provided such as "[It was] very personal, kind of like living in someone's shoes with this disease" and "[I got] firsthand experience kinda, to see it in real life situations rather than read it."

The 10 AFU Principles and the AIDHE model provide encouragement for the many ways higher education can shape age-inclusive and dementia-friendly teaching and learning environments. By implementing these frameworks, we can promote greater empathy and understanding for people living with dementia while enriching educational experiences for students. Embracing inventive ways to engage students in making meaningful age-inclusive connections not only enhances their learning but also contributes to a more compassionate society. As we move forward, let us challenge ourselves to integrate these efforts into our curricula and campus cultures, ultimately preparing our students to be leaders in an aging society.



Tamar E. Shovali, PhD,
AGHE Vice-Chair Elect
Eckerd College

Join me at the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting to learn more:

Making Age-Inclusive Campus Practices More Dementia-Inclusive Symposium
Saturday, November 16 • 12:00 PM–1:30 PM PST •
Convention Center: Room 2A

Attending the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting and Expanding Age-Inclusivity Knowledge on Our Campuses

A Conversation With Yan-Jhu Su, MA, MM

University of Massachusetts Boston

I'm Yan-Jhu Su, a PhD candidate in gerontology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. As the recipient of the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) Student Leader Award and a member of the AGHE Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO), I am honored to share my reflections on attending the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting (GSA 2024) and providing some insights on how we can collectively expand age-inclusivity knowledge on our campuses.



GSA 2024 is more than just an annual gathering of gerontology professionals; it is a vibrant hub for intergenerational learning, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas that shape the future of aging research and practice. Attending this meeting as a student or early-career scholar is an invaluable opportunity to immerse yourself in the latest research, engage with thought leaders in the field, and connect with peers who share your passion for improving the lives of older adults.

Before heading to GSA 2024, I believe it's important for emerging scholars to consider how they can contribute to expanding age inclusivity on their campuses. Age inclusivity goes beyond simply accommodating older students; it involves creating an environment where people of all ages feel valued, respected, and included in academic life.

First of all, one of the most effective ways to promote age inclusivity on campus is by integrating aging-related content into various disciplines. Whether you're studying sociology, public health, psychology, or technology, consider how aging and the needs of older adults can be incorporated into your coursework. This not only enriches your academic experience but also raises awareness among your peers about the importance of aging studies.

In addition, intergenerational learning fosters mutual understanding and respect between different age groups. On campus, this can be achieved by creating opportunities for students of different ages to collaborate on projects, participate in joint workshops, or engage in community service activities that involve older adults. These experiences can break down age-related stereotypes and build a more inclusive academic community.

Moreover, as an emerging scholar, you have the power to advocate for age-friendly policies within your institution. This could involve pushing for more flexible class schedules, accessible facilities, and support services that cater to older students. By voicing these concerns and working with faculty and administration, you can help create a campus environment that is more welcoming to people of all ages.



Lastly, attending sessions at GSA 2024 that focus on age inclusivity can provide you with valuable insights and research findings that you can bring back to your campus. For example, the Wednesday presentation on "Age-Friendly Scholarship: Connecting Age-Friendly Ecosystems" is an excellent opportunity to learn about the latest developments in age-friendly scholarship and how you can apply these concepts to your own work. I highly recommend that you consider attending this presentation if you haven't already planned to attend.

Campus Voices

"...attending sessions at GSA 2024 that focus on age inclusivity can provide you with valuable insights and research findings that you can bring back to your campus."



One of the most exciting aspects of this year's meeting is the array of sessions and symposia focused on technology, age inclusivity in higher education, and age-friendly scholarship. There was so much interest in education and research efforts from AGHE members this year that the AGHE ESPO Junior Leaders organized the annual symposium into two sessions. The first session explores best practices and lessons learned for different types of intergenerational engagement in higher education (e.g., service learning, course-based, undergraduate research), and the second session examines technology and traditional tools for intergenerational engagement in higher education.

Attending GSA 2024 as an emerging scholar is a unique opportunity to deepen your knowledge, expand your network, and gain inspiration for your future work in the field of aging. As you prepare for this year's meeting, I encourage you to think about how you can contribute to expanding age inclusivity on your campus and beyond. Whether it's through advocating for age-friendly policies, integrating aging studies into your coursework, or promoting intergenerational learning, your efforts can make a significant impact.

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Remember to take full advantage of the sessions offered at GSA 2024, and don't be afraid to engage with presenters and fellow attendees. The connections you make and the knowledge you gain will serve as a foundation for your future career in gerontology. I look forward to seeing you there and working together to create a more age-inclusive academic community.

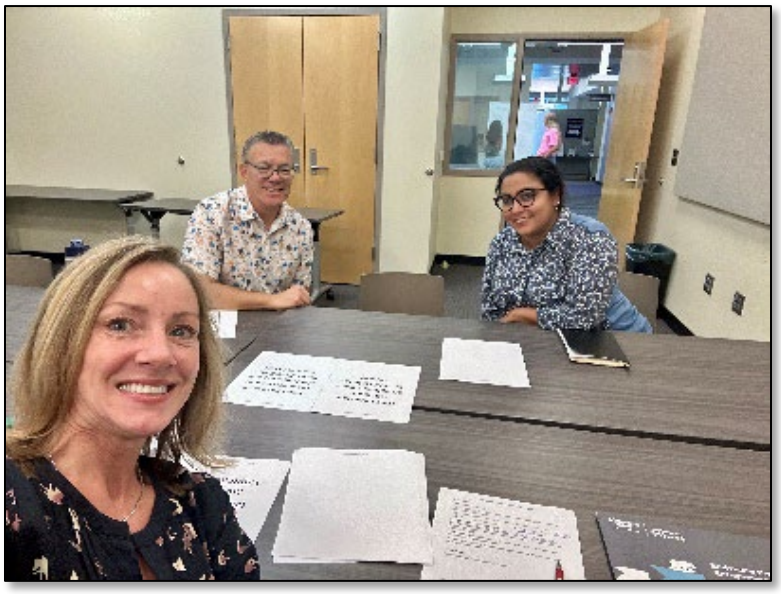
Join ESPO at the GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting to learn more

ESPO and Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education Section Symposium: *Intergenerational Engagement in Higher Education: Successes, Setbacks, and Best Practices*
Wednesday, November 13, 10:00 AM–11:30 AM PST - Convention Center: Room 3A

Technology and Traditional Tools for Intergenerational Connections in Higher Education
Thursday, November 14, 8:00 AM–9:30 AM PST - Convention Center: Room 205



News and Notes



Left to right: Lisa Hall, PhD (Gerontology), Randy Dillon, PhD (Communication), and Subha Basu Roy, PhD (Economics) gather for the first Aging Across the Disciplines meeting to discuss age-related multidisciplinary teaching, learning, and research.

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At **AFU Missouri State University**, faculty members in Gerontology, Sociology, Psychology, Biomedical Sciences, Economics, Communication, Kinesiology, Occupational Therapy, and Computer Science are convening this academic year for a ten-session Faculty Learning Community program called Aging Across the Disciplines—made possible through the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. The goal is to explore age-inclusive multidisciplinary collaboration and to support one another in developing a module on aging that can be inserted into pre-existing courses across the curriculum.

AFU University of Minnesota Twin Cities has embarked on an age-inclusivity partnership with the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging and Minnesota Northstar Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program to reframe aging in the state. Over 1,200 people participated in workshops led by the National Center to Reframe Aging. Read more in an article about Reframing Aging. In addition, new education toolkits have been launched on HIV and Aging and Understanding Benefits. These and other toolkits are designed to provide resources and tools to educators on a wide variety of topics related to aging.

AFU Quinnipiac University is pleased to announce that there Bobcat Stride Walking Program is now listed on AgeWell Across Connecticut Tour. This free program is open 5 days a week to those ages 50 years and older and has over 150 registered walkers. In addition to promoting physical health and wellness, the program has sparked the opportunity for new friendships to form.

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Resources

Please join us at these GSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting sessions to learn more about advancing age inclusivity on our campuses.

- Age-Friendly Scholarship: Connecting Age-Friendly Ecosystems
Wednesday, November 13 • 8:00 AM–12:00 PM PST • Sheraton–Aspen Meeting Room

- Building More Age-Inclusive Campuses by Engaging With Retired Faculty
Thursday, November 14 • 4:30 PM–6:00 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 602

- Age Inclusivity Domains of Higher Education (AIDHE): A Model to Support Age-Diverse Students, Faculty, and Staff (Age Inclusivity in Higher Education Interest Group Sponsored Symposium)
Friday, November 15 • 12:00 PM–1:30 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 612

- Interest Group Meeting: Age Inclusivity in Higher Education (AIHE)
Friday, November 15 • 1:30 PM–3:00 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 612

- Momentum Discussion: Learners for Life: The Future of Higher Education in the Era of Longevity
Friday, November 15 • 3:00 PM–4:00 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 612

- Assessing Age Inclusivity Using the Age-Friendly Inventory and Campus Climate Survey
Friday, November 15 • 4:30 PM–6:00 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 213

- A Look at Student Caregiving Experiences: Opportunities for Campuses and Communities
Friday, November 15 • 4:30 PM–6:00 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 608

- Intergenerational Service: Extending Age Inclusivity in and Beyond the Classroom
Friday, November 15 • 4:30 PM–6:00 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 3A

- Exploring a Range of Roadmaps Leading to the Age-Friendly University Designation and Beyond
Saturday, November 16 • 8:00 AM–9:30 AM PST • Convention Center: Room 2B

- Making Age-Inclusive Campus Practices More Dementia-Inclusive
Saturday, November 16 • 12:00 PM–1:30 PM PST • Convention Center: Room 2A

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