

ADVANCING AGE INCLUSIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A NEWSLETTER OF THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Summer 2022

The *Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* Newsletter is a place where educators, administrators, scholars, and community members can share news about how colleges and universities are responding to aging populations and the rise of more age-diverse campuses. This issue features the perspectives of new partners in the Age-Friendly University Global Network who share information about their journey, vision, and work to advance age inclusivity on their campuses. We hope this issue's focus will plant age-friendly seeds for new efforts in higher education.

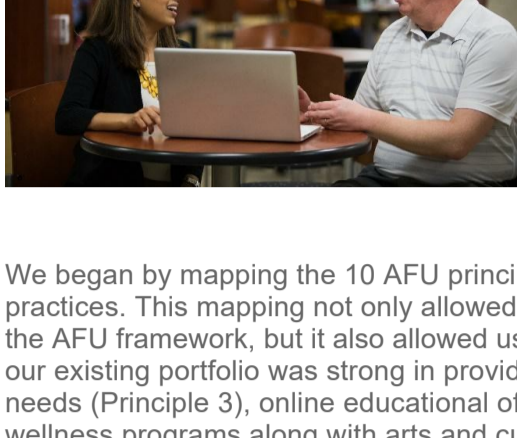
Comments and suggestions about Newsletter content and special areas of focus are very much welcomed from our readers. Please send correspondence to ageinclusive@geron.org.

Feature Article

Mapping the Principles and Finding New Age-Friendly Opportunities at Wichita State University

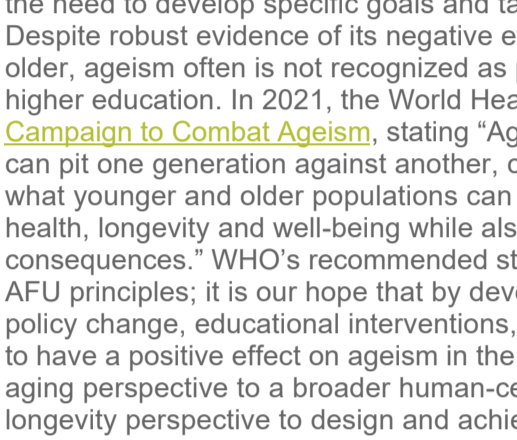
Rosemary Wright, PhD, Senior Research Scientist
Richard D. Muma, PhD, President
Wichita State University

Wichita State University (WSU) is an urban public research university located in the largest city in Kansas. For us, core responsibilities are to provide educational access to all and to help our community solve problems. Our strategic goals reflect our focus on providing services that support the community in innovative ways: developing and applying new knowledge, supporting student success, advancing community partnerships, being prepared to meet the changing needs of our stakeholders, and reflecting and promoting the increasing diversity of society.



WSU Office of Adult Learning offers dedicated meeting spaces for older students.

WSU has developed a broad portfolio of offerings that address many needs of the community across the life span. These include traditional academic programs, community education and lifelong learning courses, technical courses providing job skills training, direct health-related services for community members, programs related to job and career success throughout the life span, and funding for research related to older adults. We provide free or discounted admission to older adults for cultural, arts, and athletic events. However, we felt that if we could wrap an organizing structure around these programs and services, then we could generate greater community impact as a place where all are welcomed and supported regardless of their point in the life course. The [Age-Friendly University \(AFU\) Global Network](#) was a perfect framework to do this.



Intergenerational interaction is integral to many academic programs on the WSU campus.

We began by mapping the 10 AFU principles onto our strategic goals and existing practices. This mapping not only allowed us to see where our current portfolio fit into the AFU framework, but it also allowed us to see where gaps existed. We found that our existing portfolio was strong in providing support for a wide range of educational needs (Principle 3), online educational offerings (Principle 5), access to health and wellness programs along with arts and cultural activities (Principle 8), and regular dialogue with a range of organizations representing the interests of older adults (Principle 10). We support aging research activities funded by both internal and external sources (Principle 6). We also have begun to implement intentional intergenerational experiences in the curriculum, and our Regional Institute on Aging has developed funding to encourage the development of intergenerational teaching modules.

We also found gaps which offer us new opportunities. In particular, we are pursuing the development of an Emeritus College program to expand our engagement with our retired community (Principle 9). We also joined the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education to learn about approaches to emeriti-focused programs. To increase our support of second or encore careers (Principle 2), we are in the early research stage of developing a midlife transition/encore career program and have joined the Nexel Collaborative to learn more about how other universities provide these programs. We also are exploring the development of a university-based retirement community for older adult living, which would bring more older adults into the life of the WSU campus and provide new opportunities for intergenerational exchange (Principles 1, 4, and 7). In addition, WSU is growing relationships with the University of Kansas School of Medicine and the new Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine in Wichita, which we expect to result in enhanced health care education for students as well as new knowledge that will have a positive impact on health across the life span in our community and our state.

As we strategize short- and long-term goals for being an AFU, the greatest challenges will come from the negative impacts of culturally embedded ageism and the need to develop specific goals and tactics to address positive social change. Despite robust evidence of its negative effects and intersectionality for all who grow older, ageism often is not recognized as part of diversity and inclusion efforts in higher education. In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a [Global Campaign to Combat Ageism](#), stating "Ageism... can change how we view ourselves, can pit one generation against another, can devalue or limit our ability to benefit from what younger and older populations can contribute and can reduce opportunities for health, longevity and well-being while also having far-reaching economic consequences." WHO's recommended strategies to reduce ageism mesh well with AFU principles; it is our hope that by developing tactics that utilize these strategies of policy change, educational interventions, and intergenerational contact, we will start to have a positive effect on ageism in the WSU community. Our aim is to extend an aging perspective to a broader human-centered innovation model using a positive longevity perspective to design and achieve our objectives. We hope for big wins, but small wins will also help us move toward our age-friendly goals.

Campus Spotlights

The University of Maine Proudly Joins the AFU Global Network: Its Path to Being an Age-Friendly University

Lenard Kaye, DSW, PhD
Director of the Center for Aging
University of Maine

Twenty-two has proven to be an exciting year for the University of Maine (UMaine). Notably, we achieved R1 doctoral university status according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, signifying very high research activity.

Equally satisfying for me is UMaine joining the Age-Friendly University (AFU) Global Network, an important step to advancing active engagement of older adults at UMaine and sending a powerful message that we support diversity, equity, and inclusion in our endeavors. We are only the second university in Maine—and the first public university in the state—to be an AFU.

Our efforts toward becoming an AFU began 2 years ago by obtaining preliminary support from the Office of the President. The presence of a [Center on Aging](#) to serve as the champion of the effort was undoubtedly helpful. Our AFU endorsement was ultimately obtained by UMaine's executive administration and the faculty senate.

The support for becoming an AFU led to an assessment of existing age-friendly resources across all campus departments and units through a survey that explored resources, benefits, and programming each unit has explicitly made available to older adults. The survey also focused on opportunities that exist for collaboration between students and older adults.

A total of 54 directors across multiple academic disciplines and administrative units responded to the campus-wide survey. We discovered that older adults:

- Serve as role models, teachers, and mentors.
- Participate in the UMaine research enterprise as citizen scientists, focus group members, steering and advisory committee members, clinical subjects, and other participatory research roles.
- Lend their expertise by serving on UMaine boards, advisory panels, and task forces.
- Engage in lifelong learning through senior college classes and auditing courses.
- Take advantage of recreational and cultural opportunities.
- Volunteer their time and expertise through civic engagement and community service offered through campus-based placement programs.
- Pursue encore careers with the support of job preparation programs.

Our future AFU efforts will focus on expanding UMaine's community partnerships to help connect the wider older adult community to the university; developing marketing opportunities that encourage older adults' presence on the UMaine campus; and expanding the ways in which the university engages directly with retirees that encourage their continued involvement in university life. Possible initiatives for consideration include establishing a standing retiree institute or center; an off-boarding process in which the educational, research, cultural, and recreational benefits are formally transmitted to employees at the point of retirement; and opportunities for student mentoring.

For UMaine, becoming an AFU reinforces the explicit goal of the State of Maine to be age inclusive (Maine became a designated Age-Friendly State in 2019). It is notable that Maine has among the largest number of Age-Friendly Communities of any state in the nation. At the same time, the number of Age-Friendly Health Systems in the state is increasing. We are, indeed, proud to extend to higher education the age-friendly philosophy that is alive and well in our state.

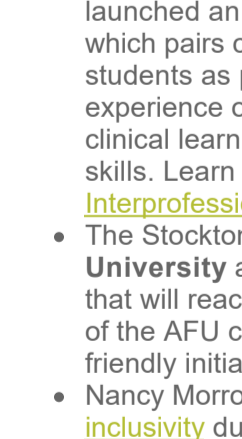


Campus Voices

Campus Conversations

On Becoming an AFU Partner: A View From a Medical Campus

Jodi Waterhouse, MHA
Director of Outreach Programs, Multidisciplinary Center on Aging
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus



Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education (AAIHE): Tell us about the University of Colorado (CU) Anschutz Medical Campus and its training and specialties related to older adults.

Waterhouse: For nearly 25 years, the faculty, staff, fellows, and students affiliated with the Multidisciplinary Center on Aging (MCoA) programs at CU Anschutz have led the way, catalyzing innovative aging-related research, delivering world-class geriatric specialty care to older adults, housing the only Geriatrics Fellowship Program in the State of Colorado, and bringing responsive community-based programming to older adults—Colorado's fastest growing age group. Beginning in 2019, the CU MCoA greatly expanded its outreach and engagement both on campus and in the community, becoming a recognized leader, premier resource, and central hub for aging work across Colorado.

AAIHE: How did interest develop to join the Age-Friendly University (AFU) movement?

Waterhouse: CU MCoA became interested in the AFU movement happening around the world, as the AFU 10 principles and 6 pillars were closely aligned with CU MCoA's strengths in research innovation and intergenerational learning as well as more recent efforts to promote encore careers. In December 2021, CU Anschutz became an AFU partner—an effort led by CU MCoA. CU Anschutz was the first campus in the University of Colorado System and only the second institution of higher education in the State of Colorado to join the AFU Global Network. Moreover, as of December 2021, CU Anschutz was the fourth academic medical campus in the world to become an AFU partner.

AAIHE: How does age-inclusivity on campus lend to broader diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts?

Waterhouse: At the same time that CU Anschutz was expanding its efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, CU MCoA was helping to drive the work to combat ageism and ensure age-friendly policies, programs, and practices are integrated in the schools/college, divisions, and departments across its campus.

AAIHE: What are some examples of research and education on campus that concentrate on age inclusivity and older adults?

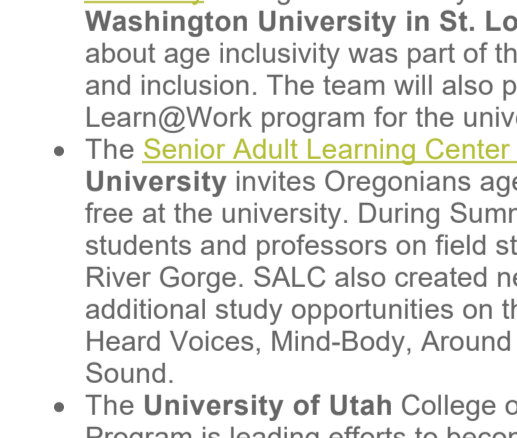
Waterhouse: As the stewards of geriatric specialty care for Colorado, CU MCoA has a tremendous opportunity to influence future generations of researchers and health care providers by increasing awareness about implicit bias and ways that ageism unconsciously influences health care, research, education, and training, thereby negatively impacting diversity, equity, and inclusion in outcomes.

AAIHE: What should other medical campuses know about joining the AFU movement?

Waterhouse: Other medical campuses are encouraged to visit our website for more information about [MCoA campus-wide signature programs](#) that support the [AFU pillar focus areas](#) of Research and Innovation, Intergenerational Learning, and Encore Careers.

News and Notes

- AFU partner **University of Minnesota (UMN) Twin Cities** hosted its first Age-Friendly University Day in June to celebrate over 200 lifelong learners, retirees, and older adults to UMN to experience what their Age-Friendly Campus had to offer. The day started with a kickoff event featuring UMN 2022 graduate Betty Sandison who achieved her goal of getting her bachelor's degree at 84 years of age. The event also featured a fireside chat with former Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page and hosted by author and speaker Richard Leider. Breakout sessions explored creating Age-Friendly Communities, finding purpose in later life, and exploring how to become a dementia friend. Planning is under way for the 2023 Age-Friendly University Day. To learn more, see the [Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation Website](#).



Justice Alan Page (left) at a fireside chat with author Richard Leider.



Team members from the Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation with UMN mascot Goldy Gopher.

- The Centre on Aging at AFU partner **University of Manitoba (UM)** in Winnipeg, Canada, funded four [AFU projects](#) to encourage campus units to advance the AFU principles. Projects leaders met regularly with the Centre Director and Associate Director who provided guidance about working with older adults to host events for the university's school of art gallery collections for [intergenerational Kaffeeklatsch discussions](#) and workshops. UM External Relations created [how-to videos](#) for digital technologies (device selection, email, apps, website, and social media). UM Architectural and Engineering Services along with the Office of Sustainability explored ways to make navigation through the campus underground tunnels simpler through accessible wayfinding signage. UM Extended Education developed a micro-certificate on facilitating older adult learning in a variety of settings, which received UM Senate approval and will launch in Fall 2022.
- The [Personal Enrichment, Action, and Knowledge Series](#), a lifelong learning initiative for older adults hosted by AFU partner **University of North Georgia (UNG)**, now offers an in-person series of free summer programs and events on the UNG Blue Ridge Campus (mornings and afternoons every Thursday, June 2–July 28, 2022). Participants are invited for lunch, and the social hour has become a highlight of the program.
- AFU partner **University of Colorado (CU) Anschutz Medical Campus** launched an age-friendly program—Intergenerational Learning Experience—which pairs community older adults with CU Anschutz Health Profession students as phone partners. This dynamic program creates a dual-function experience of alleviating social isolation in older adults while providing a key clinical learning opportunity to hone future clinicians' communication skills. Learn more about the [Connecting Older Adults to Students Through Interprofessional Telecare](#) program.
- The Stockton Center on Successful Aging at AFU partner **Stockton University** added an Age-Friendly University column to its [monthly newsletter](#) that will reach three New Jersey counties surrounding the university. The goal of the AFU column is to inform the community about local and national age-friendly initiatives, raise awareness, and provide resources related to ageism.
- Nancy Morrow-Howell and Natalie Galucia presented on [fostering age inclusivity](#) during the 2022 Day of Dialogue and Action at AFU partner **Washington University in St. Louis**. This was the first time a presentation about age inclusivity was part of this annual event focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The team will also present a seminar on ageism as part of the Learn@Work program for the university's employees.
- The **Senior Adult Learning Center (SALC)** at AFU partner **Portland State University** invites Oregonians ages 65 years and older to audit classes for free at the university. During Summer 2022, older auditors are joining geology students and professors on field studies at Mount St. Helens and the Columbia River Gorge. SALC also created new learning pathways for those who want additional study opportunities on themes that include Perspectives of Lesser Heard Voices, Mind-Body, Around the World in Art, and Journey Through Sound.
- The **University of Utah** College of Nursing's Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program is leading efforts to become an AFU global partner. AFU champions Katarina Friberg Felsted and Jacqueline Eaton are coalition building to map age-friendly campus efforts and develop a strategic plan that emphasizes inclusion across disciplines and partnerships with the Professors Emeriti Club, the Center on Aging, the Age-Friendly Health System at University of Utah Health, and the College of Architecture and Planning. AFU representatives have also joined the Advisory Board and planning committee for the Age-Friendly Communities Symposium to be held virtually September 22–23, 2022. AFU partners and interested others are invited to attend and discuss innovations that transform how neighborhoods, campuses, and health environments foster the independence, productivity, and well-being of older adults. Leaders in the age-friendly movement will discuss emerging developments and ideas that advance age-diversity and equity, including Terry Fulmer, President of The John A. Hartford Foundation; Mike Watson, Director of AARP Livable Communities; Joann Montepare, Professor and Director of the RoseMary B. Fuss Center for Research on Aging and Intergenerational Studies at Lasell University; and Patricia D'Antonio, Vice President of Policy and Professional Affairs at The Gerontological Society of America. [Learn more and register to attend the virtual symposium "Age-Friendly Communities as Platforms for Equity."](#)
- The Emeriti Academy at the **University of California, Berkeley**, successfully piloted an age-friendly panel and workshop event on ["demystifying office hours,"](#) designed to help undergraduate students to overcome their fear of attending office hours with professors. Emeriti faculty shared their experience and provided guidance on how best to approach office hours followed by conversations in small groups and one-to-one coaching sessions after the event.

Resource Center

- Read about the AFU initiative and the work of other partners in the AFU network in the article ["Embracing Learners of All Ages"](#) by Tori DeAngelis, published by the American Psychological Association in the June 1, 2022, issue of *Monitor on Psychology*.
- [Looking for more reasons to advance age inclusivity?](#) Read Becca Levy's new book, [Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and Well You Live](#), that draws on extensive research showing how age beliefs can be improved to benefit all aspects of the aging process, including how genes operate and life expectancy.

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