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ACADEMY FOR GERONTOLOGY  
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## Onwards to 2025

We are pleased to share the first *AGHEXchange* issue of 2025. This edition arrives slightly later than usual as we transition to our new triannual publication schedule. Rest assured, our commitment to bringing you timely updates from across the Academy and the broader landscape of gerontological education remains unchanged.

With this shift, I would also like to extend an open invitation to all AGHE members interested in joining the AGHE Communications Workgroup. This group oversees the *AGHEXchange*, contributes to the Educational Column in *Gerontology News*, and fosters meaningful dialogue on AGHEConnect. Participation offers a valuable opportunity to engage more deeply with AGHE and the Gerontological Society of America. Please feel free to reach out if you are interested in becoming involved.

The Spring 2025 semester has presented unique challenges. As an instructor teaching about the Older Americans Act and the now-dissolved Administration for Community Living, I have found myself revising course materials weekly. I know many of you are navigating similar complexities. In this evolving context, the support and collaboration of our community of educators, researchers, and practitioners is more essential than ever. I encourage you to take a moment to check in with colleagues, mentors, and mentees.

Despite the uncertainty, this issue reflects our ongoing commitment to excellence in gerontological education and to advancing the field of aging. As always, I welcome your feedback, ideas for future issues, and suggestions on how we can continue to serve this vibrant community.

Aaron Guest, PhD, MPH, MSW  
*AGHEXchange* Editor  
Chair, AGHE Communications Workgroup

Britteny M. Howell, PhD, CPG, CDP  
*AGHEXchange*, Associate Editor

## AGHE Chair's Corner

In line with GSA's 2025 theme for the Annual Scientific Meeting – Innovative Horizons in Gerontology – it is my pleasure as chair of the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) to highlight many of the innovative approaches AGHE is taking in 2025 to advance gerontology and geriatrics education.

Because of the outstanding work from past AGHE leadership – Tina Kruger Newsham, Joann Montepare, Dana Bradly, and Judy Howe – we've seen an increased commitment from GSA to uphold its educational focus. I'm proud to share that GSA's three-year strategic plan includes "elevate interest in the field of aging and foster support for aging-related education" as one of five goals set forth in 2025. AGHE leaders look forward to working closely with Marilyn Gugliucci (President of GSA), Judy Howe (Chair of the Board), James Appleby (CEO of GSA) and all members of GSA's Board as we strive to achieve this goal.

To this point, I want to highlight several areas that contribute to these efforts: The Program Resources Development Workgroup (PRDW), chaired by Paul Nash, has a heavy lift this year as they are updating the Gerontology Competencies for Undergraduate and Graduate Education. With full commitment from GSA leadership, the PRDW has over 20 GSA members representing nearly all groups of GSA to revise the Competencies. We look forward to sharing the modified version of the Competencies later this year. The Educational Resources Development Workgroup (ERDW), chaired by Linda Hollis, is working with ERDW members to strengthen AGHE-related educational materials on the GSA Enrich site. Please continue to check out the many resources on GSA Enrich and look for new materials coming soon. Last year, the Communications workgroup revised how the *AGHExchange* (edited by Aaron Guest and Britteny Howell) is delivered, and will continue this approach in 2025. We've learned that GSA members enjoy reading the *AGHExchange* and view the information as necessary to support their educational efforts. The Advancement Workgroup, chaired by Kara Dassel, continues to support Careers in Aging throughout the year, which GSA celebrates in March during Careers in Aging Month. This year, the Advancement Workgroup supported seven universities and their Careers in Aging activities through funding generated from AGHE's Tree of Knowledge campaign. Please look for an upcoming *AGHExchange* article describing these funded projects and their activities. Many thanks to all of you that support AGHE's campaign!

As AGHE chair, I am extremely excited to continue with AGHE's commitment towards collaboration with other member groups within GSA. On April 8, AGHE and the Health Sciences Section co-hosted a webinar on AI in the College Classroom and Practice. The webinar recording is posted on GSA Enrich – I encourage you to check it out to learn useful ways to incorporate AI into your courses. I am also excited to share that we'll continue building on AI and gerontological education during the annual Teaching Institute planned for the ASM in November. In the spring, we are bringing back a well-loved focus of AGHE, that is the 'AGHE Resource Exchange'. Many of you may recall the resource exchange was a valuable resource during AGHE's annual meeting. In April and May we encourage GSA members to use AGHE Connect to share at least one resource that they find useful with their teaching and instruction. Then, during the AGHE Live event on June 11, we will focus our time not

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only on uplifting connections among members, but we will also share with each other useful resources supporting our teaching and instruction. Please note: all GSA members are welcome to attend the AGHE Live event – it is a great opportunity to meet other members who teach in traditional or non-traditional environments, mentor and train students and post-docs in their research labs, guide faculty in professional development, or work closely with community partners to elevate gerontology and geriatrics education. Finally, did you know that undergraduate students can be members of GSA for free? I did not know this, and as AGHE Chair, this year I serve on GSA's membership committee where we are thinking of ways to strengthen all member types with a focus on undergraduate students, and our international members. Please check out GSA member benefits to learn more and encourage the undergraduate students in your courses and research labs or international colleagues and partners to join GSA.

Through the great work of AGHE members, we will innovatively advance gerontology and geriatric education in 2025!



Christine A. Fruhauf, PhD., FGSA, FAGHE  
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Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), Colorado State University  
Director, HDFS Engagement and Extension Programs and Initiatives  
Healthy Aging Division Director, Prevention Research Center  
Coordinator, Gerontology Interdisciplinary Minor



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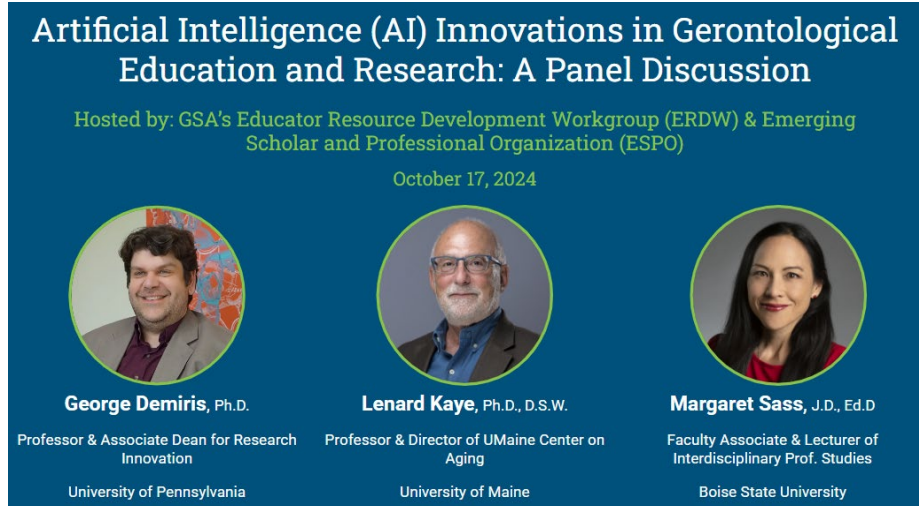
## ESPO Virtual Panel on AI Innovations

Janelle Fassi (UMass Boston) & Abby Stephan (Clemson University)

In October 2024, the Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO) Junior Leads of the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) hosted a virtual panel entitled “Artificial Intelligence Innovations in Gerontological Education and Research” in collaboration with AGHE’s Educational Resource Development Workgroup (ERDW; 2024 Chair - Lisa

Borrero, Ph.D., FAGHE). Increasingly, academics have been having conversations around the use of artificial intelligence (AI) inside the classroom and beyond. We found a growing number of colleagues asking the questions: “What does AI mean for the way that I teach and interact with students?”, “How can I leverage AI in my own teaching and research?”, and “What are the ethical responsibilities I hold when engaging with AI?” As early career scholars (Janelle, a doctoral student, and Abby, an assistant research professor), we had similarly grappled with the reality that AI, large language models, and other innovative technologies will be baked into our professional work going forward. Thus, organizing this panel grew from a desire to gain expert-level insights in addressing our and our colleagues’ concerns, as well as learn “what now?” and “what’s next?” in relation to AI use and engagement.

Featuring leading experts in technology and aging, including Drs. George Demiris (FGSA), Lenard Kaye (FGSA), and Margaret Sass, the interactive session explored AI’s transformative impact on gerontology and geriatrics. The panel began with an overview of AI presented by Dr. Demiris (University of Pennsylvania), who then shared ways that he is incorporating AI within his research to support older adults and students in his lab. He went on to describe practical strategies for integrating AI into gerontological research and provided information about past funding opportunities for researchers interested in working in this space through [Penn AI Tech](#). Dr. Sass (Boise State University) expounded with an overview of AI applications in educational settings, illustrating the engaging ways that AI can contribute to enhanced student experiences. She emphasized that AI can be used as a tool to enhance efficiency and creativity, giving demonstrations on several AI interfaces like ChatGPT and Google Gemini. Dr. Kaye (University of Maine) closed the session by addressing ethical considerations and long-term implications of AI use in gerontological education, research, and practice. He explained that gerontology researchers will be expected to have a high level of proficiency in the use of AI soon. Therefore, it is also critical that the research establishment be aware of the pros and cons of AI before using it with older adult participants. This responsibility includes



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consideration of transparency, autonomy, and privacy issues. Going forward, researchers must consider the implications of AI on older adult participants, and as much as possible, include them in the decision-making around the ways in which AI and other technologies are employed.

This event was ideal for gerontology educators, senior and student researchers, and professionals interested in the cutting-edge intersections of AI and gerontological education and research. With over 150 registrants, interest in the session and engagement from attendees illustrated a continued need for additional resources and discussions around the ways in which AI is shaping our work and how we can use it responsibly to advance gerontological education and research. We look forward to the continued conversations around AI and our work offered through GSA and AGHE in the years to come.

Interested in learning more about the work discussed in this session? Email [atsteph@clermson.edu](mailto:atsteph@clermson.edu) and [janelle.fassi001@umb.edu](mailto:janelle.fassi001@umb.edu) for a copy of the presentation.

## Thank You for An Amazing Careers in Aging Month!

Careers  
IN AGING  
—Month—



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## Welcome to the Age-Friendly University Global Network

The Pennsylvania State University  
Atlantic Technological University  
University of St. Thomas  
The Open University of China (The Seniors University of China)  
Universitat Internacional de Catalunya Fundació Privada  
Purdue University  
University of the Fraser Valley  
Federal University of Technology - Paraná  
Fielding Graduate University  
California State University, Fullerton  
University College Dublin  
John von Neumann University  
University of Zurich  
University of Strathclyde  
University of Rijeka  
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse  
Middle Tennessee State University  
University of Maine  
Escola Superior de Saúde de Santa Maria

## Updates from the Age-Friendly University Global Network

The Age-Friendly University Global Network has announced the launch of a new mentorship program to assist potential institutional members in completing their endorsement application. You can learn more at [AFU GN Mentorship](#)

The Age-Friendly University Global Network has announced the release of a new endorsement guidebook, aimed at assisting institutions in endorsing the Ten Principles of an Age-Friendly University Global Network. Learn more [here](#).

## Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council Reminder

Letters of Intent for Cycles 1 and 3 (2025) and 2 (2026) are now available to be submitted.

To learn more about gerontological accreditation, visit: [GeroAccred.org](https://geroaccred.org)



## Call For Ideas: Gerontology News Education Column

Each month, AGHE aims to bring you up-to-date news and material relating to gerontology education. A member benefit of GSA, we are now welcoming submission of ideas for the 2025 publishing year. Topics should focus on gerontology education, pedagogical advances, or emerging trends in higher education. E-mail your idea to Dr. Aaron Guest, Editor, at [Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU](mailto:Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU).

**AgeWork:** The GSA Career Center exists to Connect talent with opportunity. If you are looking for a new position, or hiring one, post with AgeWork. Accessible [here](#).

# Gerontology & Geriatrics Education

## Announcements

Gerontology & Geriatrics Education (G&GE), the official AGHE peer-reviewed journal, encourages submissions that highlight the exchange of information related to research, curriculum development, program evaluation, classroom and practice innovation, and other topics with educational implications for gerontology and geriatrics. Check out the most recent issue here: [Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, Volume 46, Issue 1 \(2025\)](#)

## Thank You!

The editorial team at Gerontology and Geriatrics Education would like to thank **Dr. Thomas Caprio** for his years of dedicated service as Associate Editor for Clinical Education in Geriatrics. Since 2017, his leadership and expertise have shaped the journal's content and advanced geriatric education. We deeply appreciate his contributions and wish him the best.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome **Dr. Craig R. Sellers** to the editorial team as new Associate Editor for Clinical Education in Geriatrics. A distinguished educator and clinician, Dr. Sellers brings extensive experience in gerontology, palliative care, and nursing education. We look forward to his insights and contributions to the journal.

**Peer reviewers needed!** Peer reviewers needed! Peer reviewers needed! *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education* needs reviewers! Contact Dr. Darren Liu at [darren.liu@outlook.com](mailto:darren.liu@outlook.com) if you are interested.

**From the Vault:** Eleazer, G. P., Humphries, J. O., Bevilacqua, J., & Faulkner, L. R. (1997). Expanding Resources for Geriatric Education and Research: A Public-Academic-Private Approach. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 18(1), 33–46. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J021v18n01\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J021v18n01_05)

The University of South Carolina School of Medicine has proactively pursued a series of projects and partnerships to meet the need for expanding geriatrics education and research. Partnering has resulted in “win-win” situations for patients, students, researchers, and organizations. In this article the authors describe the development of an academic geriatrics program using a partnership of public, private, and academic organizations. The historical background surrounding program development, the current status of the partnership, and the benefits of this approach are discussed.

**Fresh Off the Press:** Felsted, K. F., Cadiz, A., & Eaton, J. (2025). Have You Heard of House Bill 60? Promoting Age Inclusivity for Older Adults Through Higher Education. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701960.2025.2464124>.

Older adults are living longer, healthier lives which is contributing to extensions in employment, career shifts, and interest in educational opportunities. In the U.S. many states offer programs that promote cost-friendly options to participate in higher education. In Utah, this program is called House

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Bill 60 (HB60), which allows people aged 62 and older to audit courses at public universities for a minimal cost. This opportunity has been available for many years, yet it is relatively unknown and not promoted by key parties. The purpose of this paper is to describe the experience of implementing a program to 1) develop and institute a targeted marketing campaign to raise awareness of the HB60 program to university and community partners, 2) develop and administer training to academic advisors to facilitate support for those enrolling in HB60, and 3) enhance enrollment through tuition waiver support. Community partnerships increased and departmental support for marketing, communications, and processing tuition waiver funds facilitated enrollment in HB60. Over four semesters, use of tuition waivers increased by 875%. Initiatives such as this have the potential of increasing knowledge about age-friendly practices and advocacy for age inclusivity.

## **Resources**

**Women in Gerontology Legacy Project: [Video Interviews](#)**

## **Gerontology News: *Educational Column***

Did you know past issues of Gerontology News [are available online](#)? You can access past issues of Gerontology News and the Educational News Column going back to 2020. Look at the excellent educational news we have received over the years!

## ***Remember To Renew Your AGHE Institutional Membership***

GSA offers an institutional membership through the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education. If you are interested in affiliating with AGHE and you are not an institutional member, join GSA and select AGHE as your primary or secondary member group. Learn more about the [member benefits](#) and [levels](#) then join today!





# Gerontology Education at Community and Technical Colleges in the U.S.

**Jenny Sasser**, PhD, FAGHE, Gerontology Program Department Chair & Faculty (Portland Community College) and **Jennifer L. Ellis**, PhD, HS-BCP, CPG, Gerontology – Aging Services Professional Program Director and Instructor (Northwood Technical College)

In their various historical and current manifestations, technical and community colleges -- at their best -- are hopeful, even radical educational institutions (Freire, 1970). Their common mission is to respond to the needs of the local communities in which they are embedded, as well as to anticipate and address larger societal, even global issues. What's more, technical and community colleges are, at heart, democratizing institutions which believe all people deserve access to opportunities for self-directed development, not only as workers, learners, and citizens, but as whole human beings.

Technical and community colleges were created to provide a path for youth and adult learners alike into applied academic preparedness in all career fields. Whether the learner is seeking a single course, a short-term credit-bearing credential, or a degree, these educational institutions are poised to serve the needs of communities. Although technical and community colleges are a post-secondary option direct from high school, these institutions also help individuals who are upskilling or working toward employment in a different sector.

Technical and community colleges bring a unique perspective to academic disciplines including gerontology. Instructional faculty are required to bring years of experience in applied settings, infusing this knowledge into applied learning settings. Andragogical techniques attributed to Knowles and colleagues (2020) explore the need to tailor classroom techniques and learning activities to that of the learners. This approach leads to high student and faculty engagement, collaboration with internal and external partners (Hora & Millar, 2011), and a need for instructors to remain engaged and relevant in their fields of study. Further, we often serve as a bridge for students whose academic journeys may have ebbed and flowed, linking students to careers and advancing their education with articulation or transfer agreements with four-year institutions.

In technical and community college settings, educational gerontologists infuse a competency-based approach in to short-term certificates and associate degree programs focused on aging. As such, academic gerontology programs maintain the same level of rigor as Bachelor and graduate degree programs. Associate degree programs can be accredited (Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council, n.d.), and make graduates eligible for the industry-recognized gerontology credential offered through the National Association for Professional Gerontologists (2024). The Gerontological Society

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of America (GSA) also holds space for this important area of academic gerontology by hosting the Community College Interest Group under the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (2025).

As co-convenors of the Community College Interest Group, we welcome the opportunity to highlight the role that community and technical colleges play within institutions of higher education. The interest group “provides a forum to share resources and best practices for gerontology and geriatrics educators within the community college setting, while also increasing the visibility of the role community colleges play in gerontology and geriatrics education” (GSA, 2025). As educators and practitioners with decades worth of experience, we embody and share the critical role that gerontology programs have within two-year schools. Philosophically we work within a holistic, student-centered place. We teach in ever-evolving and responsive programs that drive innovation, leading to empowerment of students to be change-agents in their own communities. While gerontology and aging-focused programs at technical and community colleges in the U.S. come in many different forms, they play a significant role in promoting the aims set forth by AGHE: Prepare service delivery personnel who will work directly with older adults; Train educators who specialize in the physical, psycho-social, and policy domains of aging; Educate the society at large about the processes of aging and the implications of an aging society; and leadership on policies and issues related to higher education (Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education, n.d.).

The Gerontology Program at Portland Community College, located in the Portland, Oregon metro area, is an innovative and mature program in the national higher education landscape. Currently, two fully online options are offered: an associate degree in Gerontology; and a Gerontology Professional Career Pathways Certificate. The applied program is designed to meet the aspirations and needs of a variety of learners, including those who are new to gerontology and are exploring opportunities to develop meaningful careers in the field of aging; those who are already employed or active in age-related fields who want to deepen their gerontological knowledge; and those who are pursuing higher education beyond the associate level in gerontology, aging-studies, or an allied field or discipline. Our curriculum integrates the AGHE Competencies and includes both career and professional development courses, such as Exploring the Field of Aging, The Aging Mind, and Care and Service Coordination, as well as core social gerontology courses, such as Introduction to Gerontology, Sociology of the Life-Course, Adult Development and Aging, and Healthy Aging (see <https://www.pcc.edu/programs/gerontology/> for a full list of courses).

Northwood Technical College’s Gerontology – Aging Services Professional program is an associate of applied science degree and includes two embedded pathways certificates: Dementia Care and Gerontology for Professionals. The College serves the 11 northwestern counties of Wisconsin; the gerontology program serves a national audience with its flexible delivery model. With rolling eight-week admissions, a hyflex format (Beatty, 2019), and evening live sessions truly meets students where they’re at in their educational journey. As the only accredited associate degree program by the Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council (AGEC), the program prides itself on flexible, hands-on teaching and learning andragogy. Further, the program infuses innovative topics in the curriculum



such as culture change in long-term care, trauma-informed practices, and the heterogeneity of the aging population. This program also infuses aging and dementia simulation within the curriculum, and integrates a team-teaching framework. For more information about Northwood Tech's gerontology program and embedded credentials, check out our website: [www.NorthwoodTech.edu/gero](http://www.NorthwoodTech.edu/gero).

Want to learn more about the work of community and technical colleges in the United States? Please join us for one of our upcoming Community College Interest Group meetings. Click on the date below for the registration link:

[Monday, May 12, 12pm Eastern](#)

[Monday, August 11, 12pm Eastern](#)

[Monday, October 27, 12pm Eastern](#)

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**<https://www.napgerontologists.org/>**

# HBCUs Leading, Advocating & Serving – Our Role in Gerontology

**Dr. Ashley Jennings** Bethune-Cookman University

Historically Black Colleges and Universities were founded at the turn of the century to afford newly emancipated Black Americans access to education. The role of these institutions was to provide formal training that would help Black Americans acclimate to society. While many Historically Black Colleges and Universities were founded by missionaries, several have the distinction of being established by prominent Black men and women. Today, the U.S. Department of Education recognizes more than 100 HBCUs, representing approximately 3% of all higher learning institutions.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are integral for promoting leadership, addressing underrepresented people, advocating for equity in education and careers, and fostering a supportive community which spans beyond the student body. The HBCU environment naturally exposes students to older Black adults, including faculty and staff who may be alumni of the institution, graduates of a sister HBCU, or long-time employees. Throughout HBCUs there is evidence of students, faculty and staff working cohesively to bridge generational gaps, exhibiting family values, and learning from one another which embodies the goals of gerontology education.

One of the greatest attributes of HBCUs is their contribution to the pipeline of diverse professionals within the aging field. Gerontology's interdisciplinary framework focuses on mitigating health disparities and addressing social determinants of health. As HBCU alumni enter the aging field they bring a wealth of knowledge that includes research and advocacy to improve the quality of life for Black older adults.

HBCUs with gerontology programs are uniquely positioned to focus on the needs of the aging Black population. Bethune-Cookman University is one of many HBCUs that has a Program of Merit designation through AGHE along with several institutions nationwide. For HBCUs offering gerontology education they emphasize cultural awareness, promote safe and authentic interactions, and encourage researchers and health professionals to build rapport within the community. By doing so, researchers and health professions gain critical knowledge needed to serve Black older adults while HBCUs remain strong stewards and support systems.

Many HBCU's are nestled in the heart of Black communities protecting the underrepresented and offering resources that directly support citizens. This may include food distributions, access to campus facilities, programs and partnerships, and other outreach opportunities. At the heart of HBCU's is the concept of family and collective advancement evidenced by more than a century of education and service. As the global older adult population continues to grow we can anticipate HBCUs will maintain their relevant position in guiding conversations that address health disparities among Black older adults, advocating for social justice, and educating generations of future health professionals.

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**Do you know a deserving student who we should spotlight? What about a program or faculty member? Nominate them for an AGHE Spotlight. We accept student, faculty, and program spotlights.**

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## **AGHE In Action: Integrating Content on Aging in the Classroom: Resources for Reaching Young Children Through the 100th Day of School**

**Tina M. K. Newsham**, PhD, Professor and Gerontology Program Coordinator, University of North Carolina Wilmington **Cynthia Hancock**, PhD, Teaching Professor and Director of Gerontology Program, University of North Carolina Charlotte **Daniel Alston** PhD, Associate Professor, University of North Carolina Charlotte **Katherina Nikzad-Terhune**, PhD, Associate Professor and MSW Program Director, Northern Kentucky University **Lisa Borrero**, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Indianapolis **Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock**, PhD Lecturer, University of North Carolina Wilmington

The [100<sup>th</sup> Day of School](#) is often celebrated as a major milestone in elementary education. Students are encouraged to dress up, bring in 100 of something, and engage in the day in various ways. As part of this day, students often dress up as older individuals.

Given that some celebrations of the 100th day of school involve young children [dressing up](#) “like a 100-year-old,” our team questioned the ageist ideas this activity could reinforce. Children adopt beliefs about various social groups [at an early age](#). Children are [inundated](#) with ageist messages through books, TV, and other sources and internalize those ideas without questioning them.





To prevent ageism and its [adverse outcomes](#) (e.g., reduced life expectancy, self-imposed limitations and disengagement, poor health, strained relationships and intergenerational tension, and more), children must be taught early accurate and positive information about aging and older adulthood.

We sought to do just that by developing an evidence-based education campaign. This project aimed to provide early elementary school teachers with evidence-based educational materials related to aging (centenarians, in particular).

We created a toolkit about aging and ageism with options for celebrating the 100th day of school in a way that draws on national education standards to reinforce academic content while supporting age-inclusivity.

The toolkit includes resources on the 100th Day of School and a table of centenarians, educational standards, and sample letters from parents to teachers and principals about the program. The toolkit includes lesson plans for science, math, health, social studies, and financial literacy.

Our pilot study revealed a statistically significant improvement in expectations about aging among participating teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ) and strong qualitative support for the value of the toolkit. This resource is publicly available, and we hope our colleagues will use it for community engagement projects and share it with those who teach their children.

The toolkit can be [accessed here](#).

Also, if you have feedback on the toolkit or suggestions for improvement, we want to [hear from you](#)!

***Did You Enjoy This Issue?***

***Support the Ongoing Success of the AGHExchange and submit your material for our upcoming issues!***

***For Questions or to Submit, Contact***

**[Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU](mailto:Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU)**

# Lifelong Learning Communities: Promising Opportunities for Gerontology Students

Kate Schaefers, PhD | Kari Fagin | Craig A. Talmage | R. Jack Hansen

Lifelong learning promotes brain health, emotional well-being, and social connection among older adults. Gerontology professionals (students, researchers, and faculty) can also benefit from engaging in lifelong learning institutes (LLIs). Partnership between gerontology professionals and LLIs can result in improved research, communal impact, and even personal career development.

Many [LLIs](#) operate on campuses with meaningful connections to their local communities. Over 120 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs) are hosted by universities and colleges across the US and are represented in all 50 states. This national Network is the legacy of philanthropist Bernard Osher. Below are examples for creating valuable partnerships with local LLIs.

**Education.** Graduate students gain valuable experience by teaching non-credit courses to engaged learners at an LLI. Graduate students learn to organize a course, and to enthusiastically communicate their research in layman's terms. Each year OLLI at the University of Minnesota hires graduate students to teach courses through their [OLLI Scholars program](#). Graduate students report that this applied experience helps them in the job market. Faculty also appreciate teaching for OLLIs. They value the ability to choose the topic, teach without the burden of tests or grades, and work with OLLI learners who are highly engaged and come with significant life experience.

**Mentoring.** OLLI learners can be paired with students as a mentoring relationship, deepening the learning experience for both. [OLLI at University of Arkansas](#) pairs OLLI volunteers with nursing students to learn from each other. At Furman University, OLLI members help undergraduate students evaluate post college career and continuing education options.

**Research.** OLLIs are ideal partners for community-based participatory research. Researchers can recruit research participants through OLLIs and engage older adults in the research design process. OLLI at Arizona State University initiated a partnership with the [Center for Innovation in Healthy and Resilient Aging](#), comparing OLLI responses to non-OLLI folks in their surveys of older adults. They also conducted in-depth interviews with OLLI learners on [Big Questions](#), [Family Stories](#), and [Lifelong Pursuits](#), and engaged them in a reflection of [their experiences pre-and-post-COVID-19](#).

**Outreach.** With a vibrant, curious, and motivated community of learners who represent diverse professional and personal experiences, OLLIs offer powerful opportunities for Gerontology professionals to meaningfully engage with older adults. OLLIs can be a place to disseminate research findings to the public, address community needs, and stay connected with the communities they serve.

By connecting with LLIs, Gerontology professionals can enhance their own professional development and increase their impact. Click [here](#) to see if there is an OLLI on your campus

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# CALL FOR CONTENT

*AGHExchange* Volume 48, Issue 2

**Deadline** August 1, 2025

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submission