

WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF RESEARCH

**iog** Institute of Gerontology

## 2013 - 2018 Strategic Plan

*Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond*



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## **Vision**

Our foremost goal is to empower older adults and those who serve them through discovery and learning. The Institute of Gerontology (IOG) at Wayne State University has established itself as a premiere program intensively focused on research, advanced training for pre- and post-doctoral student training, community outreach, and continuing education for health care providers. Execution of this strategic plan will bolster the Institute's role as a preeminent hub of gerontological research and training, on and off campus, and will enhance its local, national and international impact.

## **Mission**

- Research: Advance understanding of age-related differences and age-related changes in neural, cognitive, financial, social and behavioral processes with a goal of improving our community's health through research.
- Education: Prepare tomorrow's leaders in aging research.
- Outreach: Disseminate current knowledge and best practice in gerontology to health professionals and lay public.
- Partnerships: Build long-term programs for collaborative research and community services.

The faculty, trainees and staff at the Institute pursue this mission by:

- Sustaining a premiere program in research with a focus on aging and health;
- Forming collaborative research partnerships across Wayne State University, the state of Michigan, and the national and international scientific communities to stimulate research and teaching of gerontology;
- Engaging with the local, national, and international community of scholars and practitioners, and sharing our expertise and fostering contacts with world leaders, experts, and innovators in conceptual, methodological, and translational aspects of gerontological research and practice;
- Training students, post-doctoral fellows and professionals working with older adults;
- Strengthening private financial support of the IOG through partnerships with organizational sponsors and individual donors;
- Pursuing research that is relevant to the lives of older adults, their care providers, family, friends and the community at large.

We will continue to build on the success and achievements that brought the Institute the support of the Vice President for Research, the Provost, and a six-year charter renewal by the Wayne State University Board of Governors in 2012.

## **Strategic Direction #1: Promoting Excellence in Research**

From 2007-2012, our 10 to 11 faculty members were widely recognized in their fields, as evidenced by the fact that most were promoted to associate or full professor by 2010. Almost all faculty members were funded investigators during this period. Since 2002, our strategy has been to expect each faculty member to lead a program of research and also to be a Principal Investigator on research project(s). The IOG faculty decided to focus on expanding research into cognitive neuroscience, health services and outcomes, and financial, social and behavioral science. During the past three years, two senior faculty members retired and one left after a decade at the IOG. We replaced these faculty members with outstanding new junior faculty. During these next few years we will focus on providing increased research supports in our environment for our junior and senior faculty across the Institute.

Since 2002, we have continuously brought in annual grant funding at the rate of 200-300% of any previous high watermarks. During the previous strategic planning period (2006-2012) our faculty were Principal Investigators or Co-PIs on seven R01s, two NIH Center grants, three large foundation grants and were co-investigators on numerous other grants. Competition for grants today has never been more challenging. The NIH, for example, has reduced its overall budget each year since our last strategic plan. The IOG faculty must enhance their chances of funding success by looking for federal, foundation and private philanthropy support. The IOG will also continue to identify resources and infrastructure to support the goal of increased grant productivity.

The IOG furthers interdisciplinary research across Wayne State University and with other leading universities. Addressing complicated aging-related problems necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, and the Institute of Gerontology serves as a hub for this work. During the past five years, half of the Institute's research has been collaborative with other faculty at Wayne State and other universities. Our faculty, by virtue of their national profiles and activities, represent Wayne State University as key leaders in gerontology, and bring to Wayne State University key thought leaders in the field.

### **Goals**

1. The IOG faculty will continue to demonstrate excellence in scholarship, including research translation and implementation throughout the period of this strategic plan.

### *Objectives*

- a. Each faculty member will be a Principal Investigator on a multi-year, six-figure grant with a goal of reaching seven R01s or similar type grants.
- b. Each faculty member will average at least three publications per year, with two-thirds of these being in highly regarded journals. In all, faculty will generate at least 225 publications.
- c. Each senior faculty member will serve on a journal editorial board.
- d. Seventy percent of faculty members will serve as grant reviewers for federal or foundation grants.

- e. Faculty will look for opportunities to grow the funded research in the areas of cognitive neuroscience; health services and outcomes; financial, social and behavioral aspects of aging; health disparities, and the Healthier Black Elders (HBE) Participant Registry.
2. To enhance research success and optimize community impact, IOG faculty will develop and apply state of the art grant tactics to their program of research and their grant proposals.

*Objectives*

- a. Each faculty member will develop an annual plan for grant submissions/re-submissions and include a timeline, and step-by-step process from identifying grant sources to drafting the final grant proposal. This will begin in 2013.
- b. Ninety percent of IOG faculty will meet the grant submission plans outlined each year.
- c. All IOG junior faculty and 50% of IOG senior faculty will enhance their grant skills.
- d. By fall 2013, all junior faculty members will increase their knowledge of sources of grant support through work with a consultant, have at least two drafts of their proposal reviewed by the consultant and, where desired, have a final review by a professional scientific editor.
- e. Seventy-five percent of junior faculty members will submit both federal and foundation grants for their main research ideas.
- f. Forty percent of faculty members will submit both federal and foundation grants for their main research ideas.
- g. Continue to expand productive ties with the NIH grant staff and foundation grant officers.

## **Strategic Direction #2: Providing Excellence in Training**

During 2001-2012, the IOG was home to one of only a few NIH T-32 (institutional) training grants at Wayne State University. Since 2007, 26 pre-doctoral trainees have been supported, with 20 receiving their PhDs by 2012. The IOG has made a commitment to continue its training program regardless of funding through an apprenticeship program. The IOG program is one of the few research intensive environments (i.e., beyond the program of individual researchers) that can greatly enhance the chance for pre-doctoral students to excel in aging research after graduation. Over 90% of the IOG's pre-doctoral graduates since 2001 remain in aging-related research across the nation's universities and research organizations.

Doctoral trainees report that their training at the IOG is essential to develop the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills required to be successful researchers in aging. The training also reminds them not to be so "microscopic" in their views of aging; they appreciate the opportunity to participate in scientific conferences as well as community engagement opportunities where many ideas for research and education emerge and are applied in practice. Students commented that weekly colloquia inspire their research and said they especially appreciate professional development training, topics related to teaching, applying for jobs, external funding, and manuscript preparation. Exposure to multidisciplinary faculty and presentations from health care professionals and other aging experts are also critical to their understanding of the field. A new era of training began with the ending of the T32 funding. While a setback, this era allows us to broaden the set of trainees beyond psychology and economics for better integration across faculty research efforts.

### **Goal**

1. Build on an apprenticeship model of interdisciplinary training for pre- and post-doctoral trainees at the IOG.

### *Objectives*

- a. From January-May 2013, the IOG faculty will work together to create a vision for the next generation of training for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral students.
- b. IOG pre-doctoral trainees will experience diverse colloquia, interdisciplinary mentoring and a series of professional development learning experiences during their academic year appointment with the IOG.
- c. Enhance the colloquia series by having each trainee and his or her mentor organize and host a visit by a local or out of town colloquia speaker at the rate of at least one per year.
- d. Enhance gerontology scholarship by having each trainee average one publication each year in the program. The IOG faculty will work to provide the trainees an opportunity to collect primary data or to make available secondary data sets that match the trainees' interests where appropriate.
- e. Actively seek diversity supplements for pre- and/or post-doctoral trainees, as well as encourage NRSA and dissertation proposals (both federal and local grants) by trainees. All trainees will write at least one grant every other year they are in the program.
- f. Trainees will actively participate in one community engagement program each year and participate in the Graduate Research Exhibition put on by the WSU graduate school.

### **Strategic Direction #3: Leading Superior Community Outreach Activities**

The Institute of Gerontology's educational mission for training in aging related areas also refers to the didactic instruction of health care and other professionals who work with older adults. We accomplish this through our highly successful Continuing Education program. We grew our community engagement programming so that in the last two and a half years, we matched the previous six-year mark of educating 10,000 professionals and older adults. Our interdisciplinary training of professionals will expand over the next five years.

Our mission to actively empower older adults is translated into a comprehensive set of trainings delivered through special lectures, workshops and conferences. We will continue to support our broad outreach and training to older adults.

#### **Goals**

1. Expand our Continuing Education program to hold 275 programs across the period of this strategic plan and educate 20,000 professionals.

#### *Objectives*

- a. CE programs will continue to be integrated into the offerings for IOG sponsors allowing for programming to be available throughout the Southeastern Michigan Area.
  - b. Integrate the applied and clinical research areas of IOG faculty into at least 50% of the CE programs.
  - c. Sustain the newly created annual fall Alzheimer's Conference as well as an annual conference outside of the Detroit metropolitan area.
  - d. Continue to put on a two-day, national level Issues in Aging conference drawing over 3,000 attendees across the period of this plan.
  - e. Annually review program evaluations to report quality ratings achieved, plan for enhancements, make data driven decisions about future programming and quantify outcomes.
2. Educate over 10,000 older adults over the period of this strategic plan through IOG organized and led trainings, workshops and conferences.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Maintain the successful and acclaimed Art of Aging Successfully and Healthier Black Elders conferences. These conferences draw nearly 1,000 older adults each year and provide an active experience of engagement and new learning.
- b. Continue our programming offerings for older adults through our IOG sponsors. This enables our programming to extend across the region.
- c. Create a train-the-trainer model for those at other universities who want to engage in offering extensive programming to older adults.

## **Strategic Direction #4: Enhancing Research Facilities and Administration**

Since the previous strategic plan, the IOG has significantly enhanced its brand through research, programming and space. IOG development and outreach staff now occupy the first floor of the Knapp Building, which was also refurbished in 2007. Thus, the IOG and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute (MPSI) occupy the entire Knapp building. In 2001 when our first strategic plan was developed, we occupied three-quarters of the second floor and one lab space in the basement of Knapp. In 2008 the Director of the IOG also became Director of the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute. This provided an exceptional opportunity to integrate research administration support, space planning, and lab construction across three major buildings: Knapp, Skillman and the Freer House. This development allowed the IOG to mature in its planning and coordination for space and technology. We created the position of Associate Director for Research Infrastructure and Technology (including space) and the position of Senior Systems Administrator across both institutes. We also conducted the first three-building space inventory and plan for the IOG (and MPSI). We now have large lab spaces in the Skillman building basement, Knapp basement and Knapp sub-basement as well as interview rooms on the Knapp first floor, as well as systems support well integrated into the main campus computing and support systems. This technological advance helps to support interdisciplinary research and student training.

We also increased our research administrative support to having a third talented research administrator 80% time and supporting the IOG primarily, but available to support MPSI faculty as well. At the same time, the IOG experienced some significant added challenges. The IOG lost two full-time clerical staff due to budget cuts and became responsible for salaries of all IT lead and support staff. Nevertheless, we were able to respond to the opportunity to increase space for the cognitive neuroscience laboratories for the two new IOG cognitive neuroscience faculty in 2010 and again in 2012-13. Our major colloquia and larger group meetings take place in the Freer House and the Knapp multi-purpose room. The opportunity to expand quality meeting space continues to be an important goal to pursue.

### **Goal**

1. Maintain and improve the excellent research infrastructure support that benefits IOG faculty, staff and students.

### *Objectives*

- a. Complete the cognitive neuroscience lab spaces in 2013.
- b. Continue to support 1.8-2.0 FTE of research administrator support for faculty and students to utilize in pre- and post-award grant activity.
- c. Continue to monitor the General Fund allocation and annual salary savings and development budgets and accounts to insure fiscal responsibility in balancing the IOG's financial standing and its goal of maintaining excellent research infrastructure.
- d. Work with MPSI and raise funds to renovate the Whistler Gallery in the Freer House. This space advancement will allow us to significantly increase our public programming on campus for aging related activities, as well as for small to medium conferences and networking events.

- e. Continue to provide significant financial support in startup packages for newly hired faculty.
- f. Continue to project technology needs and costs and investigate cost-effective solutions.
- g. Conduct an annual review of all costs: personnel, supplies, computer infrastructure, and space.

## **Strategic Direction #5: Enhancing an Effective Fund Development Effort**

Beginning in 2003, the IOG director and faculty realized that the declining Michigan economy would provide fewer resources for the Institute. At the same time, we knew we would be expected to provide more funds for essentials such as research personnel, lab renovations, start-up costs for new faculty and monies for retention efforts. The IOG also recognized the need for philanthropy support to build its community engagement program. Between 2007 and 2012, five of six faculty retention efforts were successful largely due to the funds available from our philanthropic success. In addition, a Director of Community Outreach was hired and a record 6,000 individuals received education and training through Institute sponsored programs last year alone. A viable fund development program was created and sustained across the past six years. The need for research funds, raised through private donations, has only increased in the past five years. The National Institutes of Health is able to support significantly less research than it did a decade ago. Community engagement efforts continue to need private philanthropy support.

The Institute of Gerontology joined the first Wayne State University Capital Campaign in 2003 and had modest success during its first years. Beginning in 2007, however, based on the creative and integrative sponsorship model of our part time Development Officer, we began to build momentum. We ended up raising over \$2 Million in the six-year Capital Campaign and have raised nearly \$1.1 Million in the now three-year quiet phase of the next Capital Campaign. Our ambition is to maintain our sponsorship model and create an effective Major Gift initiative. In the summer of 2012, along with MPSI, we hired an experienced Major Gift Officer, our first person to hold this position. The investment in a Major Gift Officer underscores the Institute's belief in our fund development program and the need for private philanthropy.

### **Goal**

1. Meet all our Capital Campaign Goals by the end of this strategic plan.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Maintain or slightly enhance our sponsorship model success in raising \$225,000 - \$275,000 annually, inclusive of the American House Foundation support.
- b. Grow our Major Gifts from current total of approximately \$50,000 per year to \$200,000 per year.
- c. Maintain a strong and active Board of Visitors, who is directly or indirectly responsible for 50-60% of all sponsorship dollars raised.
- d. Establish one to two strong case statements for program support to assist the work of our Major Gift Officer.
- e. Secure multi-year grant support for the Issues in Aging conference and/or other CE activities averaging \$10,000 - \$15,000 per year and \$50,000 from 2013-2018.





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