

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN:
INITIATIVE ON AGING**

**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF APPLIED LIFE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

AGING INITIATIVE

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

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Aging Initiative Executive Committee

Warwick Arden, Veterinary Clinical Medicine
Wojtek J. Chodzko-Zajko, Kinesiology
John Erdman, Professor, Nutrition and Food Science
Steriana Elavsky, Graduate Student, Kinesiology
Ellen Evans, Kinesiology
Monica Fabiani, Psychology
Paul Gold, Professor, Psychology
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Art Kramer, Psychology
Denise Park, Psychology
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1. The Initiative on Aging at UIUC:

In August 2001 the Colleges of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences; Applied Life Studies; Liberal Arts and Sciences; Medicine; and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign announced the establishment of the Initiative on Aging at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The vision of the Initiative on Aging is to build on existing strengths in the areas of research, education and outreach with the goal of developing a world-renowned program on aging at UIUC. An Executive Committee was formed with representation from each of the five participating colleges. The Committee established a series of research, educational and outreach goals for the Initiative. Faculty were encouraged to join the Initiative in a series of electronic mailings. By April 2003, approximately 50 faculty and 20 post-docs and graduate students had joined the Initiative. More than twenty different departments are represented. Review of the Faculty and Student Directory reveals that a wide variety of different research themes related to aging and the aging process are present on campus. Examples of research themes with significant expertise already in place on campus are; Molecular Biology of Aging; Cognitive Function and Aging; Physical Activity and Successful Aging; Disability and Functioning in Aging; Legal and Ethical Issues and Aging; Assistive Technology and Aging; Images of Aging in the Humanities. In February 2003, the Aging Initiative was awarded \$200,000 in one time funds from the Chancellor's Cross-Cutting Research Investment Initiative.

2. Key outcomes of the first two years of the Initiative include;

- ❑ Developed and implemented a comprehensive web-based resource center for aging related projects at UIUC (<http://aging.als.uiuc.edu/>).
- ❑ Identified key research themes already present on campus and compiled a directory of faculty researchers.
- ❑ Funded an incentive grant program designed to facilitate faculty submitting new major grant applications to government or private sources for the study of gerontological issues. Eight incentive grants, of \$10,000 each have been awarded.
- ❑ Established a weekly colloquium lecture series with expert speakers external institutions and each of the participating colleges
- ❑ Compiled a comprehensive listing of undergraduate and graduate courses in areas relating to aging and the aging process. Links to each of the identified courses have been posted on the Initiative website.
- ❑ Organized and implemented an Annual Meeting with external speakers invited to address the faculty and students.
- ❑ Developed a newsletter that was distributed at the weekly colloquium. The goal was to increase the visibility of Aging Research on campus and to facilitate increased contacts and collaborations among faculty members.
- ❑ Developed collaborations with local agencies that provide health care, educational and social services to older adults in the community. Local agencies have agreed to assist in identifying research participants and developing assistantship opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students.
- ❑ Convened an External Advisory Committee comprised of experts from research, education, government, and industry in order to advise us on the future direction of the Initiative on Aging.
- ❑ Established links and provided assistance to DHHS, Office of the Surgeon General, NCOA, and other federal and non-governmental organizations.

3. Phase Two – Extending the Aging Initiative (2003-2005):

In our initial budget request to the Provost and Chancellor (November 2002), we proposed an investment from central campus of approximately \$500,000 per year for a five-year period. Our goal was to use these funds to support the development of world class Institute on Aging which would coordinate aging-related programs across the campus, with particular emphasis on research, education and outreach. Despite a very promising initial response from the Administration, it has become clear that the State and University budget is such that our initial proposal is no longer tenable. Accordingly, we have revised our plan to provide a stable base of funding for the Initiative for the next two years. Our proposed budget combines the funds received from the Chancellor's Cross-Cutting Initiatives (\$200,000) with a greatly reduced annual investment from each of the participating colleges (\$5,000 per year). Our goal is to provide adequate support for the initiative for two years during which time concerted efforts will be made to secure external funds to support the initiative.

4. Aging Initiative Activities (2003- 2004):

The following activities were performed by the Aging Initiative during the 2003-04 academic year.

- ❑ **Colloquium Series:** The Aging Initiative continued to offer a weekly research colloquium in the Fall and Spring semesters. The following six themes were selected with four speakers for each theme: (1) Quality of Life and Aging; (2) Neurodegenerative Diseases and Aging; (3) Social Cognition and Aging; (4) Phytoestrogens and Aging; (5) Aging and Social Security; (6) Biological Models of Longevity. Each theme invited external and internal faculty speakers as well as a presentation from a post-doc or graduate student.
- ❑ **Faculty Incentive Grant Program:** The Aging Initiative continued to fund an incentive grant program designed to facilitate faculty submitting new major grant applications to government or private sources for the study of gerontological issues. In this year's competition, two grants were awarded to the following individuals.

Award One - Dan Morrow, PhD, Institute of Aviation. "Increasing medication-taking knowledge and skills among older adults with diverse cognitive and health literacy skills" The goal of this proposal was to increase medication-taking knowledge and skills among older adults with diverse cognitive and health literacy skills. The investigators intend to help nurses to collaborate more effectively with older adults to help them develop accurate and feasible plans for taking medication.

Award Two – Hong Li, PhD, School of Social Work. "Balancing Informal and Formal Services to Improve Effectiveness of Case Management Services for Rural, Low-Income Older Adults with Functional Disability". In this project the investigators propose to apply Litwak's task specific theory (1985) to the development and testing of a case management program for rural older adults with functional disabilities in performance of basic activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs).

- ❑ **Provide seed money in support of Program Project/Training/Center Grants:** Limited funds were made available to senior faculty in support of Program Projects/Training and Center Grants in the area of aging. Successful applicants were asked to include funding for administrative support of the Aging Initiative into the proposals whenever appropriate. A mechanism for applying for seed money was posted on the Initiative web-site.
- ❑ **International Conference on Measurement and Evaluation in Aging:** The Aging Initiative co-sponsored an International Conference on Measurement and Evaluation Issues in Aging from October 16 – 18, 2003. The conference was attended by approximately 200 researchers, scholar, and students from all over the world including more than ten different countries. The theme of the conference was assessment issues in aging. Included among the participants were program officers from several federal agencies including the National Center for Complementary and Alternative

Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control. The program included a graduate student poster session and a discussion of Tai Chi and Qi Gong assessment led by a Tai Chi grand master from China. The proceedings from the conference will be published in a book by Human Kinetics Publishers.

- ❑ **Collaborate with Other Campus Wide Interdisciplinary Programs:** One of our goals was to partner with other Chancellor's Cross-Cutting Initiatives to develop interdisciplinary programs which highlight areas of connectivity between and among programs from across campus. This year in September 2003 we collaborated with the Illinois Program for Research on the Humanities on a joint program examining the status of the emeritus in academia entitled "Rethinking the Emeritus". The participants were Professors Nina Baym, Ed Bruner, Paul Gold, and Denise Park whose remarks helped to shed light on the complexity of issues related to the many contributions and skills that older faculty members bring to the University.
- ❑ **Curriculum Development:** A Freshman Discovery course has been developed by Professor Park. The course is tentatively to be offered in Fall 2004. It was agreed that the course should be coordinated by a senior faculty member and that the responsible faculty member will rotate from year to year. The decision to offer a course will need to involve both the faculty member and the department head of the faculty member's department. A small amount of money is available from the Office of the Provost to help cover costs of the course. The Aging Initiative may be able to supplement these funds to a limited degree. The Initiative Colloquium was offered as a graduate level seminar course for students from units from across the university.
- ❑ **Expand and continue to support comprehensive web-based resource center for Aging related projects at UIUC (<http://aging.als.uiuc.edu/>).** The Aging Initiative continued to maintain and support a web-site on which colloquium announcements and calls for proposals were posted. In addition, an e-mailing list was used to exchange information and provide updates to participants.
- ❑ **Maintained a comprehensive database of undergraduate and graduate courses in areas relating to aging and the aging process:** As part of the web-site the Initiative maintains a comprehensive listing of undergraduate and graduate courses in the area of aging. Faculty developing new courses are invited to post information on the Initiative web-site.
- ❑ **Expand collaborations with local agencies:** Aging Initiative faculty participated in a variety of workshop and health fairs sponsored by local community agencies. For example, Professor Ellen Evans represented the Initiative in a day long Health Fair in Monticello Illinois on April 17, 2004.
- ❑ **Expand contacts with State agencies working in the area of aging:** Initiative faculty were actively involved with a variety of State Agencies including the State Department on Aging and the State Department of Health. A research grant from the Illinois Department of Health was awarded to Professor Zhu to assist them with their work in addressing concerns related to inactivity and obesity throughout the state.
- ❑ **Expand links and provided assistance to DHHS, Office of the Surgeon General, NCOA, and other federal and non-governmental organizations:** Initiative faculty continue to be very active in research and support functioning involving a wide variety of federal agencies. During the past year funds have been received from NIH, CDC, and the Administration on Aging to provide assistance to these agencies with respect to planning federal programs in the area of aging.
- ❑ **Secure Funding from External Sources in Support of the Aging Initiative:** The Initiative sought advice and assistance from the UIUC Office for Development regarding a mechanism by which gifts and donations to the university can be targeted for use the Chancellor's Cross-Cutting Initiatives. We are awaiting advice with respect to the best strategies for achieving this important goal. The Aging Initiative was featured in the University of Illinois Foundation alumni events in Phoenix and Tucson in January 2004.