AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES (AFU): PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES, AND OPPORTUNITIES
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Montepare, J.M. (2019). Introduction to the Special Issue-Age-Friendly Universities (AFU): Principles, practices, and opportunities. Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 139-141. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.1591848
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1572008?scroll=top&needAccess=true

Andreoletti, C., & June, A. (2019). Coalition building to create an Age-Friendly University (AFU), Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 142-152. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.1572008
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1572008?scroll=top&needAccess=true

ABSTRACT: There is no single path to becoming an Age-Friendly University (AFU). This paper shares the story of one regional, public university that became the first in its state to join the AFU global network. We discuss how early efforts at coalition building both within and outside the university facilitated the campus-wide endorsement of the AFU principles. We highlight several partnerships and programs that reflect the AFU principles and discuss how becoming an AFU helped to further strengthen university ties and is now providing a valuable framework for continued collaboration and coalition building. We share lessons from our efforts, including the challenges and benefits of being the first AFU in our state as we forge a path forward. We conclude with our plans for ensuring the growth of age-friendly practices and policies at our university, and we hope that this paper will encourage you to do the same on your campus.

Chesser, S., & Porter, M. (2019). Charting a future for Canada's first Age-Friendly University (AFU), Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 153-165. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.157971
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1579716

ABSTRACT: Situated within a Canadian context, but with implications for a broad range of institutional settings, this paper describes the events that preceded the adoption of the Age-Friendly University (AFU) framework at the University of Manitoba (U of M), as well as the specific strategies being employed within the university to assess and encourage age-friendliness. These include: a) the university's Centre on Aging and its mandate to foster interdisciplinary age-related research and community dialogue, b) the creation of an interdisciplinary AFU committee and several working groups, c) innovative research projects that have assessed university age-friendliness from a variety of stakeholder perspectives, and d) an interactive undergraduate course activity being used to educate students about AFU features. Present and future AFU challenge areas and potential solutions are discussed.

Clark, P. G., & Leedahl, S. N. (2019). Becoming and being an Age-Friendly University (AFU): Strategic considerations and practical implications, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 166-178. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.1579714
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1579714

ABSTRACT: Becoming and being an Age-Friendly University (AFU) require developing a strategic plan for enlisting support across campus for the AFU principles and embarking on an ongoing process for continuing to promote them as an academic community. Throughout this process, the use of a conceptual framework for change in academic settings can be helpful. The University of Rhode Island (URI) recently became an AFU after a campus-wide process of identifying activities that already supported AFU principles and enlisting key sources of support for embracing them. In particular, an emerging emphasis within URI on developing lifelong-learning and intergenerational programs provided a firm foundation upon which to build the case. This paper proposes a conceptual framework for developing a strategy for change in an academic setting, and then illustrates how URI has utilized it to move forward with becoming more "aging friendly." Implications for continuing development consistent with the AFU principles will be discussed.

Montepare, J. M., Farah, K. S., Doyle, A., & Dixon, J. (2019). Becoming an Age-Friendly University (AFU): Integrating a retirement community on campus, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 179-193. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.1586682 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1586682

ABSTRACT: As populations age at record rates, institutions must ready themselves to be more age-friendly. Institutions with an affiliated university-based retirement community (UBRC) are particularly poised to adopt the Age-Friendly University (AFU) campus concept. The partnership of Lasell College and Lasell Village is used to illustrate how AFU principles can be implemented to extend older adults' access to various educational opportunities. Specially-designed efforts such as the Talk of Ages program provide intergenerational exchange to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between different-aged learners and mitigate negative age attitudes. Programs such as Faculty Fellows build capacity to support greater attention to aging education and extend intergenerational connections across the curriculum. Challenges inherent in leadership, awareness, classroom dynamics, and ageism are also explored alongside opportunities that an AFU approach brings in light of such challenges.

Gugliucci, M. R., & O'Neill, D. (2019). Health professions education: Advancing geriatrics and gerontology competencies through Age-Friendly University (AFU) principles, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 194-202. DOI:10.1080/02701960.2019.1576658   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1576658

ABSTRACT: This article elucidates opportunities for health professions education programs to make a mark in the Age Friendly University (AFU) initiative. Specifically, key approaches are introduced for health professions education programs based on the Age Friendly University Global Network initiative and the Academy for Gerontology/Geriatrics in Higher Education (AGHE) Program of Merit for Health Professions Programs. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that offer health professions Education. have various options to establish and enhance student gerontology/geriatrics competence and confidence. However, two options are germane to new initiatives that are making their mark in HEIs. First, Age Friendly University Guiding Principles applicable to health professions education allow health gerontology faculty to be catalysts to promote and integrate these principles within their program's curriculum contributing to their institution's readiness to apply for the Age Friendly University designation. Second, the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) Program of Merit (POM) provides specific geriatrics/gerontology competencies for health professions programs to integrate into the program's curriculum along with an option to attain recognition as an AGHE Program of Merit. Attaining both designations contributes to preparing future health professions providers with improved older adult health care skills that also benefits older adults.

Silverstein, N. M., Hendricksen, M., Bowen, L. M., Weaver, A. J. F., & Whitbourne, S. K. (2019). Developing an Age-Friendly University (AFU) audit: A pilot study, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 203-220. DOI:0.1080/02701960.2019.1572006   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1572006

ABSTRACT: The University of Massachusetts Boston endorsed the Age Friendly University (AFU) principles in 2017, becoming the second campus in the Commonwealth to join the AFU movement. In order to demonstrate what it means to become an AFU, a research team worked to audit the University's level of age-friendliness. A workgroup of 12 volunteers from across campus departments and constituencies was convened in 2018 to operationalize the 10 principles with the goal of designing an audit tool and then piloting the tool. Nineteen key informants were interviewed representing a wide range of campus life including administration, career counseling, advising, communications, student life, campus services, distance Education. and health and wellness services. Major themes emerged related to educational programming, accessibility and inclusivity. The importance of conducting an audit was demonstrated in the opportunities it presented to increase awareness among diverse stakeholders who comprise a campus community about making the vision of age-friendliness a reality.

Hansen, R. J., Talmage, C. A., Thaxton, S. P., & Knopf, R. C. (2019). Barriers to Age-Friendly Universities (AFU): Lessons from Osher Lifelong Learning Institute demographics and perceptions, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 221-243. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.1572003   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1572003

ABSTRACT: The age-friendliness of universities and colleges is a growing area of research and practice. This study focuses on lifelong learning institutes at universities and colleges who provide courses and experiences for older adults but do not award academic or work-related credentials. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) network in the U.S. is used as an exemplary case of institutes that aim to increase the age-friendliness of their supporting institutions, whilst also aiming for greater diversity among their learners. This study draws upon literature regarding OLLIs and Age-Friendly Universities (AFUs) and national demographic surveys of OLLI student members in 2014 and 2016 (n= 5,500). The study highlights the 2016 demographic characteristics of OLLI learners, notes changes since 2014, and makes comparisons to national trends. Furthermore, this study investigates the barriers to participation identified by older learners participating in OLLIs, considered in light of studies that have addressed such obstacles for underrepresented groups.

Vrkljan, B., Whalen, A., Kajaks, T., Nadarajah, S., White, P. J., Harrington, L., & Raina, P. (2019). Creating an intergenerational university hub: Engaging older and younger users in the shaping of space and place, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 40(2), 244-260. DOI: 10.1080/02701960.2019.1572010 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701960.2019.1572010

ABSTRACT: Intergenerational initiatives in post-secondary settings have demonstrated health and social benefits. However, there is a lack of detail with regard to the process by which such initiatives are conceptualized and the role of older and younger users in their development. Guided by the principles of an Age-Friendly University (AFU) alongside elements from a 'Design Thinking' approach, this project outlines the process undertaken to design a new intergenerational space to promote intergenerational connectivity. An online student survey (n = 504; 72.2% female) and focus groups were conducted with older adults (n = 22; 12 females; aged 70–95), which found similar themes across age groups with respect to: 1) past intergenerational experiences; 2) perceived benefits/challenges of accessing the space, and; 3) activity suggestions. Using these findings, alongside direct stakeholder input, Occupational Therapy students developed programming and design suggestions for the space in question aimed at strengthening interactions across age and ability. Results from this process indicate consulting with older and younger users can circumvent potential challenges and inform the design of campus-based initiatives that can promote intergenerational exchange.

ABSTRACT: As an Age-Friendly University (AFU), University of Akron is striving to support lifelong learning. A collaborative research effort developed between aging researchers at the university and a government-sponsored pilot program aimed to provide learning opportunities for older adults (OA) and engagement for individuals with developmental disabilities (IDD). The present study assessed the success of a pilot program to increase comfort with technology and community engagement. OA and IDD participants met twice a month for 9 months to discuss how to use technology (e.g., an IPad). We assessed satisfaction, perceived changes in comfort with technology, perceived changes in connection with others, and motivations for participating with questionnaires and a structured interview. On average, participants reported very high satisfaction with the group, and moderate increases in comfort with technology and how connected they feel to others as a result of participating in the group. The most common motivations for participation were related to values, strengthening social ties, seeking to learn, and bringing joy to others. These findings suggest that the pilot was successful at improving community engagement. The involvement of the university in the assessment of this pilot program situates the university as an age-friendly partner for community efforts to support lifelong learning.

For information about how your institution can join the AFU network, visit:
https://www.aghe.org/resources/age-friendly-university-principles

For Information on archived AFU Webinars, visit:

Becoming an Age-Friendly University (AFU Partner (recorded January 9, 2019)
One Vision, Many Paths: Making an Age-Friendly University (AFU Work for You (recorded February 6, 2019)
A Starting Point for Looking at Age-Friendliness on My Campus: AGHE Can Help (recorded March 1, 2019)