



Dear ISL affiliates and Joint Advisory Board members,

I am writing to formally express my interest in becoming the permanent Director of the Institute for Successful Longevity (ISL) at Florida State University. Over the past nine months as Interim Director, I have had the privilege of leading ISL through significant research advancements, community engagements, and strategic partnerships that align with its mission of enhancing the quality of life for older adults. I am eager to build on these accomplishments and guide ISL into an impactful future as its permanent Director.

In my interim role in the past nine months since May 2024, I have:

Secured Major Research Funding: Secured major research funding, including an \$801,110 NIH R21/R33 grant for Precision HIV Prevention, a \$3.4 million R01 project examining the impact of medical marijuana and opioid use on driving among older adults, and a \$2.5 million R25 grant in collaboration with University of Florida on creating curriculum for developing a nation-wide digital course to upskill biomedical and basic science researchers' expertise in artificial intelligence. I have facilitated the teaming and development of grant applications for ARPA-H and Alzheimer's Association. These projects underscore ISL's commitment to interdisciplinary research and demonstrate my ability to attract substantial funding to advance aging research.

Strengthened Interdisciplinary Collaborations: Strengthened our partnerships with the FSU College of Communication and Information, College of Medicine, College of Nursing, College of Arts and Sciences, Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, FSU-FAMU College of Engineering, Claude Pepper Center, and the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy. We have created three Working Groups within ISL: Advanced Technology Working Group (led by me), Basic Science Working Group (led by Dr. Ravinder Nagpal), and Clinical Research Working Group (co-led by Drs. Julia Sheffler and Emily Pritchard). These new initiatives have not only expanded ISL's research scope but also encouraged cross-departmental innovation that leverages the expertise of faculty and researchers across disciplines.

Enhanced Community Engagement: Organized public events, including a well-attended "Technology and Aging" panel at the Tallahassee Senior Center on 10/9/2024, which connected FSU researchers with community members to discuss how technological advancements can address the real needs of older adults, and presented ISL in three community-facing events at Tallahassee Senior Center and Red Hill Village. These events facilitated a meaningful dialogue that bridged research and public awareness.

Expanded Student Involvement: Created opportunities for student participation in ISL research and outreach, fostering a culture of mentorship and hands-on learning. This initiative has not only enriched the students' academic experience but also contributed valuable insights to ISL's projects.

My leadership is defined by strategic vision, collaboration, and a relentless commitment to impactful research. I bring:



Strategic Planning and Execution: Proven ability to lead complex, multi-faceted research projects and manage large-scale initiatives, ensuring timely execution and alignment with ISL's mission.

Effective Communication and Relationship Building: A history of fostering strong relationships with faculty, students, community leaders, and national research agencies. These relationships have positioned ISL as a collaborative force in the field of aging research.

Innovative Thinking: My background in health informatics and data science has allowed me to introduce novel approaches to ISL's research, bridging traditional studies with cutting-edge technologies like AI and machine learning. This innovative spirit is essential for keeping ISL at the forefront of aging research.

Dedication to Inclusive Excellence: A commitment to promoting broad representation in research by ensuring that ISL's projects address the needs of aging populations. I have actively sought to incorporate inclusive excellence into our initiatives, recognizing the unique challenges faced by underrepresented groups.

As the permanent Director, I aim to:

Advance Research Excellence: Expand ISL's portfolio to include more high-impact, interdisciplinary projects that address pressing challenges in aging.

Broaden Outreach and Community Impact: Increase ISL's presence through public engagement programs and collaborations with local, national, and international partners.

Cultivate Next-Generation Researchers: Develop targeted mentorship programs and educational initiatives to train students and early-career researchers in aging studies.

Enhance Data-Driven Initiatives: Build robust data-sharing and analytics capabilities to support research that informs real-world interventions and public policy.

In sum, my leadership over the past nine months has laid a strong foundation for ISL's continued growth. My commitment to innovative, interdisciplinary research, coupled with my ability to inspire collaboration and engage the community, uniquely positions me to lead ISL as its permanent Director. I am confident that, under my continued leadership, ISL will advance its mission, drive significant discoveries, and make meaningful contributions to the field of aging.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute further to the success and growth of the Institute for Successful Longevity!

Sincerely,

Zhe He, PhD, FAMIA
Interim Director, Institute for Successful Longevity
Associate Professor, School of Information, College of Communication and Information
Florida State University