

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF RESEARCH

iog Institute of Gerontology

2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond



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Vision

The Institute of Gerontology (IOG) at Wayne State University has established itself as a premier program intensively focused on research, advanced pre- and post-doctoral student training, community outreach, and continuing education for health care providers. Our foremost goal is to inform and empower older adults and those who serve them through discovery and learning. This Strategic Plan covers the period from 2020-2025 and is designed to enhance the Institute's local, national and international impact through bolstering its role as a preeminent hub of gerontological research and training, within and beyond Wayne State's campus.

Mission

- Research: Advance understanding of age-related changes and age-related differences in neural, cognitive, economic, and, social 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 practices in gerontology to health professionals and the lay public.
- Partnerships: Build long-term programs for collaborative research and community services.

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

- Sustaining a productive program of research with a focus on aging and health;
- Forming collaborative research partnerships across Wayne State University, the City of Detroit, the state of Michigan, and the national and international scientific communities to stimulate research and teaching of gerontology;
- Engaging with local, national, and international communities 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 and friends, and the community at large.

The IOG will continue to build on the success and achievements that have elicited strong support from Wayne State's Vice President for Research, Provost, and Board of Governors as it approved a six-year charter renewal for the IOG in 2019.

Strategic Direction #1: Promote Research Excellence

Addressing complicated aging-related issues and challenges necessitates an interdisciplinary approach. The IOG acts as a hub for this work, furthering interdisciplinary research and collaboration throughout Wayne State's campus, with leading universities in the nation and across the globe. The faculty at the IOG, by virtue of their national profiles and activities, and academic and community collaborations represent Wayne State University as leaders in gerontology, while also introducing leaders in their respective fields to the Wayne State community.

Goal #1

The IOG faculty will continue to demonstrate excellence in scholarship, including research translation and implementation.

Five-Year Objectives

1. Each faculty member will be a Principal Investigator on a multi-year, six-figure grant with a goal of reaching ten R01s or similar type grants.
2. Each faculty member will average at least three publications per year in journals highly regarded in their discipline. In all, faculty will generate at least 225 publications.
3. Each senior faculty member will serve on an editorial board of a journal.
4. Seventy percent of faculty members will serve as grant reviewers for federal or foundation grants.
5. Faculty will look for opportunities to enhance funding in the areas of cognitive neuroscience; health services and outcomes; financial aspects of aging; social, behavioral and health disparities; and strive to be significant contributors to Center grant programs such as the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Center (MADC) and the Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES). In addition, faculty will document their interdisciplinary collaboration efforts and contributions to Team Science.

Goal #2

To perform high quality research with older adults, IOG faculty will seek grant funded support for their research.

Five-Year Objectives

1. Each junior 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. These will be reviewed annually as part of the formal annual performance review process.
2. Ninety percent of IOG faculty will meet the grant submission plans outlined each year.
3. Seventy-five percent of junior faculty members will submit federal and foundation grants.
4. Forty percent of faculty members will submit federal and foundation grants.
5. The IOG will continue to use grant consultants where needed and expand productive ties with the NIH grant staff and Foundation grant officers.

Strategic Direction #2: Provide Excellence in Training

The IOG offers a pre-doctoral training program to prepare students for professional careers in research with an expertise in aging and health. This program is open to a limited number of doctoral students at Wayne State University, post-master's degree or equivalent, who are committed to excellence in research and a career focused on aging. Additionally, there are often post-doctoral fellows appointed at IOG. We encourage an interdisciplinary research environment and have trained students and fellows from diverse disciplines such as anthropology, economics, sociology, psychology, and neuroscience. As the record shows, most of IOG's doctoral graduate trainees and post-doctoral alumni remain active in aging-related research areas and continue to relevant positions across the nation's universities and research organizations.

Doctoral trainees and post-doctoral fellows alike report that training at the IOG is essential for developing the depth and breadth of knowledge and honing the skills required for successful careers in gerontological research. IOG training fosters a broad scientific outlook and reminds them to eschew the narrow, stereotypical views of aging. They appreciate the opportunity to participate in scientific conferences and community engagement events, where many ideas for research and education emerge and are applied in practice. Students and fellows commented that weekly colloquia inspire their research; they especially appreciate the practical advice on professional development, including teaching, applying for jobs, external funding, and manuscript preparation. Exposure to multidisciplinary faculty and presentations from health care professionals and other aging experts are critical to understanding the field and developing these students into well-rounded scholars.

Goal

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

Five-Year Objectives

1. IOG trainees and fellows will be exposed to diverse scholarship through colloquia, interdisciplinary mentoring, and a professional development series during their academic year appointments.
2. Trainees will collectively organize and host a local or out-of-town colloquium speaker at the rate of at least one per year.
3. Each trainee will average one publication a year while they are in the training 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.

4. Actively seek diversity supplements for pre-doctoral trainees and/or post-doctoral fellows, as well as encourage NRSA and dissertation proposals (both federal and local grants). Encourage trainees to seek external funding opportunities at least once while in the program.
5. Pre-doctoral trainees will actively participate in at least two community engagement programs annually and will present their own research at Lifespan Alliance Research Day, sponsored annually by the IOG and Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute (MPSI).
6. Analyze the feasibility of the IOG submitting a T-32 training grant proposal to the NIH, with possible submission by year-end 2021.
7. Enhance post-doctoral training by increasing post-doc involvement in IOG activities. Examples include: providing more interdisciplinary mentoring to post-docs, including them in meetings and events on IOG/MPSI Orientation Day, and inviting them to present their research at colloquia or at community engagement programs related to their areas of expertise.
8. Track the publications and grants of trainees and fellows and follow the careers of our alumni. Maintain communication with IOG alumni and invite them periodically to IOG colloquia to share experiences and career advice with current trainees.

Strategic Direction #3: Lead Superior Community Engagement

The IOG's educational mission for training in aging-related areas also refers to the didactic instruction of health care providers and other professionals who work with older adults. We accomplish this through our highly successful Continuing Education programs. Our mission to actively empower older adults is translated into a comprehensive set of trainings we deliver through special lectures, workshops and conferences. We will continue to support our broad outreach and training to older adults and their formal and informal caregivers.

Goal #1

Expand our Continuing Education program to hold 275 program events and educate 25,000 professionals across the period of this strategic plan.

Five-Year Objectives

1. Continue integration of CE programs into the offerings for IOG sponsors allowing for programming to be available throughout the Southeastern Michigan Area.
2. Sustain the newly created annual fall Alzheimer's Conference and look for opportunities to create and expand a conference for family and friend caregivers.
3. Continue to offer a two-day, national level Issues in Aging conference, reaching more than 2,500 attendees.
4. Annually review program evaluations to report quality ratings achieved, plan for enhancements, make evidence-based decisions about future programming and quantify outcomes.

Goal #2

Educate over 10,000 older adults over the period of this strategic plan through IOG organized and led trainings, workshops and conferences.

Five-Year Objectives

1. Maintain the acclaimed Art of Aging Successfully Conference and Healthier Black Elders Lunch & Learn Series. These highly successful educational events draw nearly 1000 older adults each year and provide an active experience of engagement and new learning.
2. Continue our programming offerings for older adults through our IOG sponsors, thus expanding the programming to extend across the region.
3. Create a train-the-trainer model for those at other universities who want to offer extensive programming to older adults.

Strategic Direction #4: Support Older Adult Service Providers through Applied Research

Predicting the future needs of a rapidly increasing population of older adults will be a critical component of successful planning for state and local governments, non-profit service providers, community-based organizations and older adult advocacy groups. For more than a decade, the IOG has built expertise in assessing the needs of older adults and evaluating the effectiveness of the programs and services they receive.

Goal #1

Partner with governments and community based organizations that provide services for older adults to enhance and improve policy and programs related to aging.

Five-year objectives

1. Maintain and deepen existing partnerships with governments and organizations.
2. Connect community partners with existing data to help inform program development and decision making.
3. Lend expertise by formally serving on boards and advisory panels for organizations that serve older adults.

Goal #2

Apply the methods of research to practical problems of quality, effectiveness and efficiency in aging service delivery.

Five-year objectives

1. Assist policy makers and program planners in assessing the needs of a growing older population.
2. Conduct at least one funded evaluation per year of existing or pilot programs aimed at serving older adults.
3. Provide follow-on consultation and recommendations to help community partners build capacity and improve strategic planning, programming and services.

Strategic Direction #5: Enhance Research Facilities and Administration

Faculty, staff and research labs of the IOG and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute (MPSI) now occupy the Knapp building, Freer House, and the Skillman building. To manage the diverse needs of adjacent buildings, we created the positions of Associate Director for Research Infrastructure and Technology (including Space), and Senior Systems Administrator across both Institutes. They recently conducted the first three-building space inventory and plan for the IOG (and MPSI).

We now have large lab spaces in the Skillman building first floor and basement and in the Knapp basement and sub-basement, interview rooms on the Knapp first floor, and systems support well integrated into the main campus computing and support systems. This technological advance supports interdisciplinary research and student training, an essential resource to strengthen grant proposals.

We also added a third 1.0 FTE research administrator primarily supporting the IOG but available to MPSI faculty as well. The IOG has experienced some significant challenges including maintenance of an aging building and space constraints. Our major colloquia and larger group meetings take place in the Freer House and the Knapp multi-purpose room, which sometimes strains to accommodate guests. We will continue our diligence in securing quality repairs and maintenance and seek opportunities to expand our meeting spaces.

Goal

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

Five-Year Objectives

1. 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.
2. Continue to monitor the General Fund allocation and annual salary savings and development budgets and accounts to ensure fiscal responsibility in balancing the IOG's financial standing and its goal of maintaining excellent research infrastructure.
3. Work with MPSI to raise funds to renovate the Whistler Gallery in the Freer House. This will allow us to accommodate increased public programming for aging-related activities, small to medium conferences and networking events.
4. Continue to provide significant financial support in startup packages for newly hired faculty. Continue to project technology needs and costs and investigate cost-effective solutions.
5. Conduct an annual review of all costs: personnel, supplies, computer infrastructure, and space.
6. Conduct an annual review of all costs: personnel, supplies, computer infrastructure, and space.

Strategic Direction #6: Enhance Effective Fund Development

The IOG created an IOG endowment fund with a goal of \$1.5 million. We named an IOG Endowment Chair from our Board of Visitors, received seven leadership gifts to start the endowment and have raised over \$1 million for the endowment in the first 18 months of the four-year campaign (2019-2023). The IOG also raises funds annually through sponsorships, small foundation and individual support. We successfully integrated our community engagement and outreach with the sponsorship and small foundation fund development.

Goal

Meet our IOG Endowment goal of \$1.5 million.

Five-Year Objectives

1. Maintain or slightly enhance our sponsorship model success in raising \$175,000 to \$225,000 annually, inclusive of the American House Foundation support.
2. Maintain a strong and active Board of Visitors, which is directly or indirectly responsible for 50-60% of all sponsorship dollars raised.
3. Secure multi-year support for the IOG Endowment and IOG conferences.



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