Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging

An overview for makeCalgary

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makeCalgary Event on Aging
OVERVIEW

- Historical overview
- External context
- Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging
- Key requirements for successful centres
- University context
- Next steps
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

- History at the University of Calgary dates back to the mid-1960s
  - A.E. David Schonfield, Donald Spence, Victor Marshall, and Gloria Gutman all on campus

- Ad hoc committee struck to investigate the possibility of a centre in 1968 – interdisciplinary research group struck

- Ad hoc committee in 1977 that evolved into a President’s Committee on Aging & Gerontology in 1978 (disbanded by 1983)
  - Held symposium in 1979 of the form and function of a proposed institute
Rapid population aging called a “game changer” leading to a number of grand challenges

- Potential of extending life span
- Promoting healthy aging (healthy brain aging)
- Living well with chronic conditions (dementia & mental health)
- Housing, transportation, and supportive technology
- Income security, sustainable expenditures, and ensuring fair allocation & an equitable society

50+ gerontology programs and aging research centres in Canada (visited and reviewed a few)

- Vary greatly in objectives, form, and functions (and success)
- A number of common functions but need to differentiate
2011 an endowed gift agreement signed establishing the Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging
  — Initially inter-Faculty centre (most centres are intra-Faculty)
  — Recently moved by mutual consent into the O’Brien Institute for Public Health

Administrative and collaborative hub for interdisciplinary research and educational programming
  — Age-related research
  — Advocacy and public policy development
  — Interdisciplinary teaching and learning
  — Community outreach
ACTIVITIES TO DATE

- **Development work**
  - Accrue endowment
  - Environmental scan and work plan
  - Alberta Association on Gerontology (AAG) consultation meeting

- **By areas**
  - Research (funding of post-doctoral fellows)
  - Public policy (older driver symposium, meeting with parliamentarians)
  - Interdisciplinary education (student research meetings)
  - Community outreach (co-funding exercise & aging symposium)
1. Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging

2. Age-friendly Calgary
ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL CENTRES ON AGING

- **Pre-conditions**
  - Critical mass of faculty, adequate funding, infrastructure

- **Key elements**
  - Interdisciplinary leadership
  - Engagement and support from institutional leadership
  - Linking activities to broader institutional initiatives
  - External funding (research studies)
  - Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY CONTEXT

- Strategic direction
  - Eyes High – “global intellectual hub” (research focus)
  - Seven academic priorities – includes Interdisciplinarity and Connection with Community
  - Six strategic directions – links with four (Brain and Mental Health, Engineering Solutions for Health, Chronic Diseases, Human Dynamics)

- Complex organization with other calls for institutional support & the commitment of faculty
VALUE PROPOSITION FOR THE UNIVERSITY

- Vision: Healthy aging within supportive communities

- Core areas
  - Age-related research
  - Advocacy and public policy development
  - Interdisciplinary teaching and learning
  - Community outreach
NEXT STEPS

 Establish/ implement ✔
  – Supportive governance structure
  – Leadership and administration model

 Ensure clear alignment with the mission, vision and research themes of the University ✔

 Obtain support from ✔
  – University leadership
  – Faculty (with their active participation)

 Create presence (footprint) in University
  – Strong profile
  – Inspiring goals
  – Demonstration of success

 Funds development
Emerging opportunities

- Becoming part of the O’Brien Institute for Public Health
- Strong relationship with W21C
  - Biomedical Innovations in Home Health Care for an Aging Population
- Strong relationship with Strafford Foundation
  - West Campus Development
NEW INITIATIVES

- Sponsor of **Walk21 Conference** plenary session featuring Peggy Edwards, age-friendly walkability and winter walkability expert from Ottawa (Sep 2017)
- Barrie I. Strafford Masters and Doctoral **Scholarships** for Interdisciplinary Studies on Aging (under review for 2018 Open Competition)
- Funding for **faculty-specific** interdisciplinary aging initiatives (2017/2018)
- **Catalyst Grants** for aging-focused researchers (ongoing)
- Fall 2017 public talk and research symposium celebrating **Resilience & Aging** (more to come soon)
- And others…
COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?