



Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging Report, Prepared 04 January 2019

Subgroup description: The Centre on Aging was launched in 2011 through a generous donation by the Brenda Strafford Foundation. With its move into the O'Brien Institute of Public Health in 2016, the Centre is well positioned to function as a hub that supports the work of University of Calgary faculty and students in the area of aging. Our activities fall into four broad areas:

1. *Building interdisciplinary research capacity*

We identify opportunities to connect researchers across disciplines with one another, and also with community agencies and government. The Centre provides catalyst funding designed to launch interdisciplinary research projects and supports both the operation of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging and utilization of the data being collected. Centre personnel are also involved in an array of local and national interdisciplinary research initiatives.

2. *Promoting interdisciplinary education opportunities*

In 2017, the Centre established Dr. Barrie I. Strafford scholarships at the Masters, Doctoral, and Post-Doctoral levels. These awards are targeted to deserving students engaged in interdisciplinary work on an aging-specific topics. We also actively support student-led initiatives in Faculties across the University and provide opportunities for students to connect with each other, faculty-members, and others in the community.

3. *Engaging with the community*

A key priority of the Centre is ensuring that the growing body of knowledge on aging is shared with our local community, and that perspectives of older persons are included. We achieve this goal through conferences and other in-person events, printed material, and electronic media. We take on a leadership role by organizing events and also collaborating with other organizations and agencies to support relevant activities. We include older adults in our planning activities and advocate for others to do the same.

4. *Informing aging policy and practice*

Our Centre is positioned to inform public policy in a range of ways. We can help solicit the input of older persons, link the University community to the various levels of government and to community agencies, and support work focusing on emerging social issues related to the aging population. We strive to be thoughtful, balanced, and credible in all of these activities.

A) People

1. **Current number of members:** We do not have a formal membership, but instead have what we call a "constituency" of faculty members and others (e.g., RAs, admin, etc.) with an aging focus, with whom we correspond regularly. This list comprises 123 members; of those, 78 are faculty members, representing all faculties/disciplines except Education.

2. Thought leaders of your subgroup: Our academic leader is Dr. David Hogan, who is recognized locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally for his expertise in dementia, geriatrics more broadly, and population-level aging initiatives. His leadership is also augmented by Scientific Coordinator Dr. Ann Toohey, whose specialization is in population and public health and critical gerontology. We are also advised by an Advisory Committee consisting of senior representatives (Deans or delegates) from the Faculties of Medicine, Nursing, Social Work and Kinesiology, as well as our funders (i.e., the CEO and the Chair of the Brenda Strafford Foundation).

3. Member ‘phenotypes’ and approximate numbers (e.g., trainees, community partners, affiliations): We support trainees in several ways, including: Graduate Scholarships (1@Master’s; 1@Doctoral); Post-Doctoral Fellowships (1); Vulnerable Populations Graduate Research Assistantship (1@Doctoral student; monthly stipend); Summer Studentship (1@Undergraduate student); Project-based Graduate Assistantship (1@Doctoral student; casual hire); CLSA Research Assistant (1@Undergraduate student; part-time hours as needed); and Faculty-supervised student-led aging initiatives (\$5K per academic year dispersed to Social Work, Medicine, Nursing, Kinesiology). Toohey is also a field supervisor for a 3rd Year BHSc Health & Society MDSC 408 student (Sep 2018-Apr 2019), and supervised a 3rd Year Vet Med student who received 2018 SURE funding to begin a scoping review related to ongoing research on companion animals and aging-in-place, in partnership with CHS, Family Medicine, and Vet Med (May-Aug 2018).

We also support University of Calgary researchers with an aging focus via two funding initiatives: catalyst grant funding (currently supporting Ferrer et al (Social Work); McDonough et al (Kinesiology); Nixon/Burns (CSM/Social Work)) and a special funding program that covers data access fees for researchers who are granted access to Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) data (up to 3/annum).

We have partnered with the administrative leaders of the **City of Calgary’s** Age Friendly work group from the Neighbourhood Services business unit to assist with evaluation of the Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy via access to Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) data. Hogan is also a member of the Age Friendly Calgary Steering Committee. We are also working closely with the **Brenda Strafford Foundation** to develop a formal CFI notice of intent, and support this organization via membership on their Research Advisory Committee (Hogan and Toohey) and their Board (Hogan).

We are affiliated with several local, national, and international organizations and initiatives, including the Alberta Association on Gerontology, the Canadian Association on Gerontology, the Seniors Advisory Forum for Alberta Seniors and Housing, the CIHR’s Canadian Centres on Aging listing, the Academy of Gerontology in Higher Education (Gerontological Society of America), and the Age Friendly Universities Global Network – we are one of just six Canadian universities to have become a member. Through her research on aging-in-place and companion animal studies, Toohey also maintains relationships with Calgary Seniors, Trinity Place Foundation, and local animal rescue charities such as MEOW Foundation and Calgary Humane Society. We also participate in the Long Term Care Culture Change Collaborative that is being driven by the Marleen Raasok and the Brenda Strafford Foundation.

4. How new members find your subgroup (e.g. website, active recruitment, events, word-of-mouth): We have identified key researchers at the University of Calgary via an internal environmental scan, and are poised to publish in January 2019 a listing of all who have agreed to be included on our Web site (<http://obrienIPH.ucalgary.ca/aging>). We hosted a major public event in 2017, and are beginning to plan our next one. We actively support selected initiatives and events with an aging focus (e.g., the THIRD

ACTion Film Festival, the Alberta Association on Gerontology, the Health Brain Aging conference, the AHS Shades of Grey conference, etc.) which helps to raise community awareness of our initiatives.

5. **Gaps in membership that subgroup wants to fill:** For many of our initiatives, we require applicants to be members of OIPH (or, for trainees, supervisors must be members) which we hope will build a stronger gerontology-focused sub-community within OIPH's membership. In terms of our own constituents, we are actively trying to build stronger ties with Faculties and Departments that are not yet represented on our Advisory Committee (e.g., Psychology, Sociology, Environmental Design, Sciences, Law).

B) Activities

6. Events/activities of your subgroup:

- a. **Previous and ongoing:** In 2017, we hosted a major public event titled "Resilience in Aging: Exploring people, places, and policies". This event set the tone for our commitment to reframing older adults as being celebrated for resilience (as also mediated by supportive people, places, and policies) rather than being identified by discourses around frailty and burden.

In 2018, we hosted two visiting scholars (Dr. Annette Leibing from UMontreal and Dr. Mark Clarfield from Israel) who presented on their research in the area of gerontology and geriatrics (see below for further details).

We are actively leading two research projects involving the analysis of CLSA data – one described above (City of Calgary – Seniors Age Friendly Strategy evaluation) and a second that will explore whether the 2013 Calgary Flood had a measurable impact on participants (and thus data) in the CLSA comprehensive study.

We are also co-investigators with researchers from eight (8) other Canadian institutions for a CIHR-supported catalyst project titled "A Tale of 8 Cities and the CLSA". We and our colleagues presented findings from this project during a symposium at the Canadian Association on Gerontology scientific meeting in Vancouver in October 2018.

Additionally, we are research collaborators (or prospective collaborators) in projects being led by Dr. Meghan McDonough (Kinesiology), Drs. Victoria Burns (Social Work) and Laura Nixon (Family Medicine), Dr. Marc Poulin (CSM), Dr. Joon Lee (CSM), and Dr. Melanie Rock (CSM).

We are also working with PI Dr. Jayna Holroyd-Leduc (Chair, Geriatric Medicine) and a team of senior researchers to develop a CFI proposal in partnership with the Brenda Stafford Foundation for an innovative, interdisciplinary research program that will be located in the new Cambridge Manor continuing care facility currently under construction in the University District development.

- b. **Planned:** In 2019, the Centre on Aging will be co-hosting two events being hosted by the Canadian Frailty Network (a Road Show that is intended to increase awareness of frailty in key opinion leaders, including government, health authorities, industry, etc., as well as to engage with members of the public regarding ways frailty impacts communities and to identify unmet needs). Details around this arrangement are still being solidified.

We are also members of the planning committee for the Alberta Association on Gerontology's flagship event taking place November 13-14, 2019, in Edmonton, and titled "Vision 2030 for Seniors Services Symposium" and will likely be approached to sponsor this event. Hogan may also be involved as a speaker.

While we are in the early stages of planning our next public event around the theme of resilience and aging, we need to be careful not to over-saturate prospective audiences, in light of the two large events described above. Thus we may aim for early 2020 rather than 2019 for our next public offering.

We are also planning to organize and propose two symposia to take place during the 2019 Canadian Association on Gerontology Annual Scientific Meeting in Moncton, NB: one will focus on Age-Friendly Universities, while the other will be organized around contemporary considerations for aging-in-place with companion animals.

We will continue to sponsor local, provincial and national events, such as the 2019 THIRD ACTION Film Festival and small, grass-roots events hosted by the Calgary Chapter of the Alberta Association on Gerontology as a means of interfacing with community members and stakeholders.

7. Method and frequency of subgroup communications (including any mass communication channels to engage with its members (e.g., Events, newsletter, Basecamp, etc.) and externally-facing communication tools (e.g. Brochures, web page, social media channels, podcasts, public-facing events, etc.)):

We have created a mailman list to disseminate relevant information to our University of Calgary community, including information on funding or scholarship competitions (our own as well as external), relevant events, upcoming courses or training opportunities, and other public service announcements. We communicate approximately 2x/month, but do not communicate on a fixed schedule.

We have a single Web page embedded within the OIPH site, and a more descriptive site is currently being developed (anticipated launch before Feb 1) to include and publicize our listing of University of Calgary aging-focused researchers.

We also distribute a full-colour informational brochure (part of the OIPH family of brochures) at events and exhibits that we participate in.

Toohy manages a Twitter account, but it is not at this time associated directly with the Centre on Aging.

8. Academic outputs and societal impacts leveraged by subgroup (general description/estimated numbers sufficient):

Resilience in Aging public event (Oct 2017): Nationally and Internationally-acclaimed gerontology scholars Janine Wiles (University of Auckland, NZ) and Andrew Wister (Simon Fraser University, BC) addressed over **260 attendees**. Panel discussions and concurrent sessions featured several local researchers and community partners:

- (i) Resilience and Age-Friendly Cities
- (ii) Innovative Technologies for Resilience and Aging-in-Place
- (iii) Resilience in Long Term Care settings
- (iv) Caregivers: Deconstructing policy dependence on informal networks of care

- (v) “Our Place”: An intergenerational community gardening and horticultural therapy program
- (vi) Innovative, place-based interventions to prevent and address late life homelessness

Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy - Community-Wide Indicators Baseline Report (Jun 2018): Our contribution is acknowledged and findings included in a report that was prepared at the end of the City’s Q2 for e-mail distribution to all members of Calgary’s City Council, findings of which will inform the continued implementation of initiatives intended to optimize Calgary’s neighbourhoods and communities to become increasingly age-friendly and supportive of aging-in-place.

CLSA/Census publication (Feb 2019): Our team is finalizing a manuscript for peer-review that compares the CLSA study population with Canadian, provincial (i.e., AB), and municipal (i.e., Calgary) populations in terms of several socio-demographic measures. The intent of this manuscript will be to inform researchers using CLSA data of both the strengths and limitations of the data set, in terms of population representation.

Eight cities and the CLSA project (Ongoing): Deliverables to date of the CIHR-funded catalyst project have included a report describing the characteristics of the study population and a symposium held at the 2018 Canadian Association on Gerontology Scientific Meeting, which attracted a national audience of approximately 30 stakeholders. Knowledge users involved in the project include PHAC and local governments (e.g., City of Ottawa, City of Calgary, and others), and thus the findings will be positioned for direct uptake by these important policymakers as well as by a national research community. Peer-reviewed publications are also planned.

OIPH CLSA seminar (Feb 2018): Hogan, Toohey and Age Friendly Calgary partner Raynell McDonough presented an informational session on the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, and announced a new funding opportunity for UCalgary faculty who wish to apply for access to CLSA data to have the data access fee paid by the Centre on Aging. We received two follow-up requests to access these funds.

Annette Leibing Methods Hub Talk (Apr 2018): Université de Montréal anthropologist Annette Leibing spoke to approximately 20-25 trainees and faculty members about the methodological implications of growing focus on early detection and even prevention of dementia.

Mark Clarfield Presentation (Aug 2018): A leading international geriatrician in Israel, Dr. Clarfield engaged with an audience of approximately 10 scholars and practitioners consisting of geriatric and family medicine residents as well as doctoral students and clinical faculty on the topic of preventative screening in the population of frail elderly.

C) Operations

9. **Administrative human resources for your subgroup:** Toohey (scientific coordinator); in addition, Bria Mele (PhD student in CHS) is assisting with CFI proposal development and BSCoA Web site revamp; Samantha Norberg (BSW student) is assisting with project-specific CLSA analyses; Ashley Cornect-Benoit (PhD student in CHS) will be focusing on building our capacity around Aging in Indigenous communities via our inaugural Vulnerable Populations Research Assistantship, which began in Dec 2018 – she will also be available to provide support with our events.

- 10. O'Brien human resources upon which your subgroup relies:** Communications - in the past, we have received support with planning our major public event, and with implementing the event. Communications also supports us with PR (e.g., UToday stories; media advice; etc.). Toohey also consults with others (Jamie, MC) for administrative support.
- 11. Entities other than O'Brien Institute supporting subgroup, and type of support** (e.g. financial, HR, etc.): Brenda Strafford Foundation endowment; Geriatrics endowment; we also garnered AHS Seniors Health SCN funding (\$6K) for our 2018 Summer Student, and will be better positioned to apply for TriCouncil research funds to support our internal research interests once Toohey's Adjunct Assistant Professor appointment is finalized (anticipated Jan 2019).
- 12. Approximate yearly expenditures of subgroup:** We are working to spend down an accumulated excess of operating funds, and are currently overspending somewhat, but are aiming eventually to plan for an operating budget of \$300K per year. We may also need to keep a balance to cover both tech (e.g., fiber optic cabling) and furnishings/equipment for the anticipated 2020 move into the Brenda Strafford Foundation's Cambridge Manor facility in the University District.

D) Other feedback (strategic questions, advice): N/A.

Submit completed template to dayj@ucalgary.ca