

Regional Institute on Aging Seventh Year Highlights 12/14

The Regional Institute on Aging (RIA) is a virtual research organization designed to serve the citizens of metropolitan Wichita, Sedgwick and the adjacent counties, and, eventually the surrounding Midwestern states. This annual report presents highlights of work in competitive research programs, community based programs and projects, university and community service.

NIA MSTEM: Advancing Diversity in Aging Research (ADAR) through Undergraduate Education (R25) Resubmission:

There are three irrefutable facts regarding MSTEM (medicine and STEM) education in the US: 1) we are failing to advance our international scientific and technical status through the training of MSTEM scientists; 2) the failure to produce MSTEM scientists is particularly acute when examined in the context of ethnicity and race; 3) a significantly expanded cadre of MSTEM scientists is required to meet the unprecedented challenges of national and global aging.***

2. Recruit faculty mentors from NIA MSTEM disciplines and provide them with training and support to effectively mentor program participants to graduation.
3. Support and retain program participants through (a) summer bridge programs; (b) intensive multi-component advising (c) research experiences; (d) financial support; (e) professional/scientific socialization, including training in the responsible conduct of research; and (f) completion of minor in aging studies.
4. Assist program participants with application, acceptance, and enrollment in NIA MSTEM graduate or professional programs with an emphasis on aging-focused programs (Ph.D.), geriatrics (M.D.), or combined programs (M.D./Ph.D.).
5. Evaluate the impact and outcomes of all program components and use those results to refine and fine-tune recruitment, selection, support, and retention efforts to enhance participants' experiences and to increase the likelihood of success in undergraduate, graduate, or professional training.

A major criticism of the initial 5/25/2013 application was the dispersal of students to several universities around the country for summer research experiences. This strategy was thought to inhibit the development of community within the student group.

In response to that criticism, the 9/25/2014 revised application developed an alliance with Douglas E. Wright, Ph.D. University of

From the early discussions which led to

acceptability of the Toolkit. La Familia Senior Community Center was the site of the focus groups. Drs. Amy Ham, LaDonna Hale and Nicole Rogers led the efforts. Physician Assistant students, several of whom were bilingual and native speakers, conducted the focus groups. The Toolkit is being revised as necessary based on information gained from the focus groups. The revised and corrected Spanish Toolkit is expected to be ready for distribution in early 2015. A paper for publication presenting the Spanish focus group work is under development.

The Toolkit is now undergoing a design “renovation” by senior faculty and students in the College of Fine Arts. That work will be completed by early 2015.

The Consequences of Intense Energy Exploration in Small Town Kansas:

This WSU—Kansas State research team conducted focus groups and interviews in Anthony, Kansas through the spring and fall of 2013 to understand the impact of intense energy exploration in a small rural town. This project was led by Richard Muma, Ph.D. and aims to understand the impacts of intense energy exploration on the residents of small towns and rural area so that community preventive measures may be developed and instituted to reduce the negative consequences. There was a particular emphasis on the experiences of older adults

The thematic data analysis has been completed and a paper drafted. The next steps are to finalize the paper, submit it for publication and then determine the subsequent research steps.

Older Adult Pet Adoption Program! (OAPA!)

This collaborative community based research program with Prairie View, Inc., Caring Hands, Harvey County Department on Aging, and the Regional Institute on Aging continues. A major problem has been the absence of an identified leader who has the time to coordinate the program. All involved are committed but have too many competing demands. After a multi-month search, a volunteer coordinator has been engaged. She is a retired social worker from Prairie View and has the necessary skill set and interests. This addition to the program development/research group will now allow it to continue and accelerate.