

Gerontology Initiative



BAYLOR
UNIVERSITY

DIANA R. GARLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Gerontology Initiative (GI)-*Preparing Leaders for the Age of Aging*

Prepares students for practice and research in gerontology and produces applied research designed for the well-being of persons 55+, their families, and communities. A few generous endowments help sustain the GI's social work education and applied research programs, but as our initiative continues to grow, the needs do as well. Currently, ten faculty, staff, and students collaborate in this initiative.

Current Research Programs

The GI is currently engaged in research programs that include:

1. understanding the views of God and human adaptation
2. exploring impacts of grief in older adults
3. career resilience of nursing facility administrators and nursing facility social workers;
4. behavioral health of residents and family members;
5. hopeful and resilient flourishing among impoverished and alone community-dwelling older persons;
6. spirituality and resilience among persons with early stage dementia and their carepartners; and
7. family of origin impact on resilience and psychological flexibility of pre-deployed service members.

Educational Focus (*Community partnerships with Ms. Inez Russell, Executive Director, Friends for Life; Texas Guardianship Association, Debbie King, Director of Nutrition Services for Meals & Wheels Waco and John Fitch, Owner of Birkeland Current*)

Offers educational opportunities and networking including Gerontology Student Interest Group career enrichment sessions; graduate specialization in gerontology; minor in gerontology; compelling gerontology internships; this year (2018) more than \$60,000 in scholarship awards will aid 11 students; an educational option leading to licensure as a Nursing Home Administrator and/or certification as an Assisted Living Manager for BSW and MSW students; a Provost and Dean-funded Grand Challenge course: Social Innovation with At-Risk Older Persons; collaborations with UTA and business owner John Fitch and Birkeland Current and production (in-progress) of a 24/7 asynchronous, Certificate in Guardianship program.

Research Teams

1. Views of God and Spiritual

Assessment: Holly Oxhandler, Jim Ellor, Matt Stanford, and Grace Sandblom (student)

2. Cognitive Impact of Grief in Older

Adults: Helen Harris, Christina Lee, and Gaynor Yancey

3. Nursing Facility Professional Role Behavior:

Rob Rogers, Hap LeCrone, Kathy Kelley, Hannah Eaton (student), and Dennis Myers

4. Spirituality and Resilience among At-Risk and Alone Older Persons:

Clay Polson, Leigh Greathouse, Pete Grandjean, Beth Lanning, Suzi Weems, Debbie King, Dennis Myers, and 5 Graduate Student Associates

5. Positive Psychological Factors among Persons Living with Early Stage Dementia:

Jocelyn McGee; Holly Carlson, Dennis Myers, and Hannah Eaton (student)

6. Family of Origin and Service Member Pre-Deployment:

Janet Crow, Dennis Myers, Jim Ellor, and Sidney Barham (student)



Healthy Aging Initiative *(Partnership with Hankamer School of Business, Robbins College and LHSO)*

Aspirations

- Form partnerships around research and education related to health aging.
- Offer learning opportunities that will prepare Baylor baccalaureate and graduate students for leadership in energizing human flourishing among persons 55+.
- Create and deliver interdisciplinary research that informs healthy aging, responsive policy and organizational arrangements, and age-friendly communities.

Research & Education

- Healthy Aging Seed Funding Initiative (HASFI)
- Minor in Aging
- Master of Gerontology Degree
- Online Graduate Certificate in Gerontology

The Future Impact

Investment in education, research, and service programs in yielding these benefits:

1. Improved personal, relational, and spiritual well-being of older persons and families served by residential and community long-term care services;
2. Prepared, faith-informed social workers who are competent to apply empirically validated, asset-based approaches to social work practice with older persons and families within a changing long-term care environment;
3. Competent guardians for older persons in need of assistance with Management of daily living and financial decisions;
4. Prepared social workers and other professionals for leadership and administration of residential long-term care facilities; and
5. Innovative approaches for congregational contributions to the well-being of baby boomers, older persons, and families in long-term care settings and in the community.

We need your support!

You can help the faculty, staff and students of the Gerontology Initiative by:

1. Helping us find funding for endowing a Gerontology Research and Education Center to support the wide-ranging work of GSSW faculty and university faculty and compliment the launching of the Lenn and Danny Price Initiative for Quality Long-term Care with Older Adults;
2. Identifying possible internship placements for students interested in working with older adults (preferably with stipends of \$8000 per year);
3. Supporting the guardianship certification program by sharing the good news about this project or supporting a module at \$1500;
4. Taking time to write a note of encouragement to one of our Gerontology Scholarship students; and
5. Telling us your ideas about how we could raise the visibility and interest in gerontology among Baylor constituents.