

Social Participation & Respect and Social Inclusion Domain Project Report

Objective #1: To establish and support the development of stronger social networks for older individuals.

Action #G: To partner with Brandon University to promote what the University has to offer showcasing age-friendly aspects (with an end goal to recognize BU as an age-friendly University).

BACKGROUND

Age-Friendly University Network:

Recently, universities around the world have begun to acknowledge that they have a role to play in the Age-friendly Initiative as they engage with community and create and share knowledge. On November 9th, 2012, Dr. Brian MacCraith, the President of Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland identified and endorsed ten principles to guide the development of an Age-friendly University.

Ten Principles for an Age-Friendly University:

DCU identified distinctive contributions that can be made by higher education institutions in addressing the needs of older adults. As a result, 10 principles for an 'Age Friendly University' were established:

- 1) To encourage the participation of older adults in all the core activities of the university, including educational and research programs.
- 2) To promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue “second careers”.
- 3) To recognize the range of educational needs of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue Master’s or PhD qualifications).
- 4) To promote intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
- 5) To widen access to Online educational opportunities for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation.
- 6) To ensure that the university’s research agenda is informed by the needs of an ageing society and to promote public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
- 7) To increase the understanding of students of the longevity dividend and the increasing complexity and richness that ageing brings to our society.
- 8) To enhance access for older adults to the university’s range of health and wellness programs and its arts and cultural activities.
- 9) To engage actively with the university’s own retired community.
- 10) To ensure regular dialogue with organizations representing the interests of the ageing population.

TARGETS

BU's endorsement of the 10 principles of an Age-friendly University will require:

- Identify and approach key stakeholders to gauge current Age-Friendly activities and opportunities at Brandon U
- Briefing note to President
- Endorsement by BU President of Age-Friendly Principles
- Join the Age-Friendly University Network (Dublin lead)
- Develop Brandon U 'older adult' web portal to relay activities and opportunities to older adult community members and retirees
- Develop an BU Age-Friendly Committee (Equity/Diversity/Inclusion) and terms of reference
- Develop a research volunteer participant pool in collaboration with the Centre on Aging UofM
- Potentially develop an Age-Friendly "Citizen Scientist" project to further identify structural/service gaps and strengths specific to Brandon University

Existing Age-friendly related strengths at Brandon University (running list):

- Research on aging
- Evans theatre
- Tuition program for aged 60+
- TALC
- Elder residence program
- Age-Friendly Brandon
- Brandon is Rural/ Westman hub
- Downtown development initiative possibility
- Centre on Aging affiliation
- Healthy Living Centre
- Intergenerational Course on Psychology of Aging
- Science Talks
- Music/Concert Hall
- Library guest account
- Alumni program?

PROGRESS TO DATE

Preliminary discussions occurred in June 2019 between Nancy Newall (AFC subcommittee member) and Katie Gross, BU Dean of Students, about facilitating BU in becoming more age-friendly. Some of the ideas discussed included:

- 1) Have a public portal that would clearly show events on campus, how to access things (like the library as guest), and how to register for classes (non-degree) or presentations like TALC. Ensuring that this portal is accessible for the larger public. Events can include speaker series, music, drama, film, cultural, etc.
- 2) Have an 'age-friendly' set of courses or workshops on various topics aimed to get people more familiar with being on campus and taking part in activities. (This is based on a model from Dublin University where they have a 'menu' of age-friendly courses for the public)
- 3) Get alumni services involved—drawing alumni back to campus in various ways (beyond homecoming.
- 4) Having the BU Notice Board (on Victoria and 18th) show event listings for the public.
- 5) Recognizing the importance of intergenerational opportunities like Indigenous Elder in Residence, designing experiential courses with senior organizations, etc.
- 6) Housing options for students/seniors

A meeting of the subcommittee and Grant Hamilton, BU Marketing Communications Officer was held to review concepts. Consensus was to compile an AF background report to review what is available now and recommend opportunities for change. BU intends to release an updated Strategic Plan for Fall 2021 and this would provide an opportunity to incorporate appropriate language/wording into the Plan during the review stage.

Communication has also occurred with Erin Mills, BU Director of Recruitment & Retention with very positive support.

Subcommittee to consider other networking opportunities:

- U of M Centre on Aging
- Bill Ashston, RDC

Next steps:

- Letter to BU President
- Outline requirements to become AF University
- Research what other Universities are doing in relation to AF concepts
- Updated review on what BU is doing in relation to AF concepts

ACTION ITEM: Subcommittee requests Age Friendly Committee pass a motion at the July 15, 2021 regular meeting requesting support of the project and to endorse the continuation as an Age Friendly Brandon initiative.