Dear colleagues,

This past year was a productive one at the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy -- full of stimulating intellectual exchanges, fruitful research projects, and enriching engagement with the community. Our faculty associates wrote dozens of papers (many of them with our graduate students), received funding from state and national sources to support their work, and gave presentations at numerous venues for academic and broader audiences. We also began offering travel awards to support students traveling to conferences to present aging research, and we co-sponsored, with the Claude Pepper Center, a dissertation fellowship and two invited speakers.

Just as much activity occurred within the two organizations supported by the Pepper Institute, the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at FSU. OLLI offered dozens of courses in fall, spring, and summer, providing educational experiences to more than 1000 older adults in Tallahassee and the surrounding area. One of the program’s highlights was its offering of summer courses in Florence, Italy. Safe Mobility’s Resource Center, housed at the Pepper Institute, produced and shipped hundreds of information packets to a variety of groups affected by, and able to affect, later life transportation issues, like Florida’s aging road users, health care providers, law enforcement agencies, and state legislators. We also created and distributed our Aging Road Users Survey, a follow-up to the first survey in 2012-2013. We received over 3,000 responses that will be used to further shape the program’s goals and strategies aimed at enhancing older adults’ transportation options.

I hope you enjoy reading more about our activities – and that they further spark your curiosity about our aging society!

Best,

Anne Barrett
Director, Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy
Florida State University
Faculty Associates’ Research Activities

Publications


Kaskie, B., Carr, D.C., & Ewen, H. H. What does the emergence of a critical mass of doctoral gerontologists mean to the field? Gerontology and Geriatrics Education.

Manning, L. K., Carr, D. C., & Kail, B. L. (2016). Do higher levels of resilience buffer the deleterious impact of chronic illness on disability in later life? The Gerontologist, 56 (3), 514-524.


doi:10.1177/1464884916665404


Stothart, C., Boot, W., Simons, D., Charness, N., & Wright, T. (2016). Age effects on inattentional blindness: Implications for driving. In J Zhou, & G Salvendy (Eds.), *Human aspects of IT for the age*


Contracts and Grants

Ai, Amy Principal Investigator (PI). “A collaborative study with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital on Missing Appointments at the Transitional Care Center”, funded by The Council on Research and Creativity, FSU Office of the Vice President for Research: Planning Grant ($6,000) [12/01/14 – 11/30/16]


Charness, Neil H (Co-PI), Sobanjo, John O (Co-PI), Weingarden, Lauren (Co-PI), Patrick, Christopher J (Co-PI), Tenenbaum, Gershon (PI), Boot, Walter (Co-PI), Folstein, Jonathan R. (Co-PI), & Li, Wen


GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA (GSA) FELLOWS

Three Pepper associates were elected this year as fellows of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), the world’s oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education and practice in the field of aging.

The institute announced May 11, 2017 the GSA election of Associate Professor Miles Taylor and Assistant Professor Dawn Carr. Earlier this year, Associate Professor of Psychology Walter Boot was also named a fellow of the organization.

The majority of Taylor’s work to date focuses on racial and economic variations in health among older adults and on outcomes with broad demographic and population health relevance, including functional health, chronic conditions and mortality. She received the 2017 Busse Research award given to one social behavioral and one biomedical scientist per year, to recognize significant contributions to research on aging.

Carr’s election as a GSA fellow is especially noteworthy at such an early stage in her career. This recognition of her research on social engagement and healthy functioning in later life signifies her as a leading expert in this area.

Boot has been an integral part of the Pepper Institute’s multidisciplinary work, contributing his expertise on cognitive aging and transportation, an important focus of the institute.

Taylor, Carr, and Boot join four other Pepper-affiliated faculty members as GSA fellows: Neil Charness, Director of FSU’s Institute for Successful Longevity; Anne Barrett, Director of Pepper Institute; William Weissert, Director of the Master of Public Health program; and Professor of Social Work Amy Ai, who was selected in late 2016 as a fellow of the American Psychological Association.
Conference Travel Award Recipients

The Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy provides conference travel support for undergraduate or graduate students working on research addressing aging issues. This year, the Institute supported two graduate students in attending the 2017 International Association of Gerontological and Geriatrics (IAGG) conference on aging held in San Francisco July 23 – 27.

Doctoral Candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant, Ashley Carter, used the travel award to present her research examining the effectiveness of an 18-month longitudinal church-based intervention to reduce cardiovascular risk in mid-life and older African-Americans, over a six month period. Using descriptive statistics and t-tests, the findings showed improvements in selected health behavior, clinical and biomarker outcomes, possibly attributed to the church-based intervention.

Stephanie Ureña Salas, along with Pepper Associates Miles G. Taylor and Dawn C. Carr, used the Health and Retirement Study and linked data files to conduct research on how combat and exposure to death during military service influences later life depressive symptom trajectories among male veterans. She also explored the moderating role that psychological resilience plays in the connection between exposure to death and mental health in later life.

Claude and Mildred Pepper Dissertation Fellowship

The Claude Pepper Center and Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy sponsored the 2016-2017 Claude and Mildred Pepper Dissertation Fellowship. This year’s recipient was sociology graduate student, Justine Gunderson.

Using the 2005-2006 wave of the Longitudinal Study of Generations (LSOG), Justine’s dissertation research focuses on exploring variation in grandparent-grandchild relationships and examines their effects on grandparent emotional well-being. Latent class analysis was performed to uncover three underlying grandparenting types that vary according to distance lived from grandchildren and amount of grandparent-grandchild interaction: Geographically Close/High Contact, Geographically Close/Low Contact, and Geographically Distant/Low Contact. Several social factors predict membership in the various types -- with older, lower-income grandparents and those with more grandchildren being less likely to belong to the Geographically Close/High Contact class and more likely to belong to the Geographically Distant/Low Contact class -- but no significant effects of membership on well-being were found.
INVITED SPEAKERS

Dr. Johnathan Oberlander - Health Care Reform and the 2016 Elections: What Happens to Obamacare After Obama?

On October 27, 2016, The Pepper Institute and The Claude Pepper Center sponsored a talk presented at Pepper’s Broad Auditorium by Dr. Johnathan Oberlander, a professor and chair of Social Medicine and professor of Health Policy and Management at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. His research and teaching interests include health care politics, policy, health care reform, Medicare and American politics and public policy.

Dr. Oberlander is the author of The Political Life of Medicare (University of Chicago Press) and co-editor of the 3-volume series, The Social Medicine Reader, 2nd ed., (Duke University Press). His recent work explores ongoing political fights over and implementation of the Affordable Care Act, health care cost control, Medicare reform, and the fate of the Children’s Health Insurance Program and Independent Payment Advisory Board.

Dr. Jean Accius – Pressures, Policies, and Politics: The Endless Possibilities of an Aging Society

On November 30, 2016, The Pepper Institute sponsored a talk at Pepper’s Broad Auditorium led by Dr. Jean Accius, a nationally recognized expert on aging policy, livable communities, and long-term services and supports (LTSS). He currently serves as Vice-President of the Long-Term Services & Supports and Livable Communities Group within the AARP Public Policy Institute.

Dr. Accius holds a Master’s in Aging Studies from Florida State University and Ph.D. in Public Administration from American University.
Since 2009, The Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy at FSU with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), working through the Safe Mobility for Life Program in the State Traffic Engineering and Operations Office, has collaborated to address the specific needs of Florida’s aging road users.

Program highlights for the 2016-2017 fiscal year included an increase in efforts to reach all of the coalition’s high priority Florida counties and to engage with partners at local, state, and national events. Some events of note included the “You Hold the Keys to Your Transportation Future” workshop series, an “Age Friendly Tallahassee” presentation at the Tallahassee Senior Center, the Coral Gables Aging Wellness Seminar, FSU’s Transportation Day, Government Day at Villages, events at Older Driver Safety Awareness Week, and the Safety is Golden Mobility Fair. Research Manager, Gail Holley, was also invited to speak at the national AARP Age-Friendly Community Conference in Chicago, IL to promote the work of the program.

Safe Mobility for Life was also featured as an exhibitor at the Florida Crime Prevention Conference where 80+ survey responses were obtained from local and state law enforcement that will be used to produce training materials to assist them in assisting older drivers.

Additionally, program representatives, Dennis McCarthy and Sandra Winter presented “Health Care Needs Assessment: Addressing Older Adult Drivers”, at the Florida Occupational Therapy Association annual conference.

Safe Mobility staff also participated in two new annual conferences, including the Symposium on Traffic Safety conference and the Area Agency on Aging Regional Training Symposium. Both of these events proved useful in making contact with both local law enforcement, as well as aging service providers.

One of the most ambitious achievements of the year was the distribution of the Aging Road Users Survey to assess older adults’ driving behaviors and attitudes. The program received over 3,000 completed surveys from Florida residents 50 and older, representing 57 counties.
OLLI at FSU

OLLI – short for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute – is a network of programs that partner with universities such as Florida State. OLLI at FSU is supported by the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy with its offices located and most classes held at the Pepper Building. It receives funding through membership dues, class fees, private donations, and endowments from the Bernard Osher Foundation.

Administered by university staff, OLLI at FSU is supported through a 16-member volunteer board and a multitude of member volunteers for various special interest groups, clubs, and activities. OLLI has been recognized by the Florida Legislature for its leadership in “engaging older Floridians and enriching lives.”

Over the past year, OLLI offered more than 100 courses between fall, spring, and May terms. Topics included art, local and world history, literature, film, music, current events, philosophy, writing, genealogy research, language, religion, health, food and wine, computers, and science. In addition, there were 18 special interest activities and field trips held locally and regionally.

OLLI continued to celebrate 25 years of lifelong learning at Florida State University, nearly all of it as an affiliate of the Pepper Institute. As part of the celebration, NPR Commentator on Aging Ina Jaffe presented a lecture at FSU’s Ruby Diamond Auditorium reaching many interested residents in the Tallahassee community. A spectacular Anniversary Gala was held at the University Center Club highlighting the achievements of the Institute and its members over the years.

OLLI members traveled to Cuba on a rewarding People to People mission this year, as well as to Italy for the OLLI Abroad Program to study art history and architecture in Rome, Florence, and Venice.