

**Analysis:** A regression analysis found that older learners who felt more welcomed by faculty ( $p=.001$ ), administration ( $p=.002$ ), and student organizations ( $p=.026$ ) were more likely to feel connected to campus, and younger-older students ( $p=.031$ ) and those who did not feel their job was a barrier to attending school ( $p=.037$ ) were more likely to feel satisfied with their level of engagement on campus. Additionally, older learners felt the AFU principles were demonstrated by their university.

**Discussion:** The experiences of older learners are important as we continue to see higher numbers of students over the age of 40. Our results demonstrate the need to engage older learners as part of diversity and inclusion efforts to facilitate connection to the campus community.

#### THE INTERSECTION OF OLDER STUDENTS AND DISABILITY: HOW AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES CAN BOOST VISIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Cassandra Barragan,<sup>1</sup> and Sarah Walsh,<sup>2</sup> 1. *Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, United States*, 2. *Eastern Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Michigan, United States*

The needs of older learners differ from traditional students, and many services and resources available at higher education institutions are geared towards students aged 18-25 (Silverstein, Choi, & Bulot, 2001). Age Friendly University (AFU) principles highlight the need to consider older learners at a university. Older learners face various barriers to education including balancing schoolwork with responsibilities and accessibility of campus resources (Silverstein et al., 2001). This study examined how an AFU designated university is working to better understand their older students.

**Methods:** A web-based pilot survey of older learners ( $N=248$ ) asked all students ages 40 and older a series of questions regarding motivation to attend school, barriers and supports, campus environment, and connection with AFU principles.

**Analysis:** A t-test analysis explored differences in motivation, barriers and challenges, and connection to campus between students who identified as having a disability and those who did not.

**Findings:** We found there were significant differences between the groups in how health impacted their education ( $p=.001$ ), being able to physically access campus ( $p=.014$ ), the availability of online classes ( $p=.047$ ), and the hours of operation of student support services ( $p=.045$ ). There were also differences between groups in how connected they felt to campus based on feeling welcomed by faculty ( $p=.033$ ) and feeling satisfied with their level of engagement at the university ( $p=.002$ ).

**Discussion:** Our results demonstrate the need to fully engage older learners with a disability as part of diversity and inclusion efforts to facilitate connection to the campus community.

#### TOWARD AGE-FRIENDLY HIGH EDUCATION: AN INTERGENERATIONAL PARTICIPATORY CO-DESIGN APPROACH

Vivian, W. Q. Lou,<sup>1</sup> Esther Woo,<sup>2</sup> Nicol Pan,<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Cobb,<sup>2</sup> Xiao Hu,<sup>2</sup> and Michael Cheng,<sup>2</sup> 1. *The*

*University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Not Applicable, Hong Kong, 2. The University of Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong, Not Applicable, Hong Kong*

**Objective:** When aging becomes a global challenging, we believe it is timely important to equip aging knowledge among university students regardless of their disciplinary study subjects. This study aims to describe principles and process of development an aging-related curriculum in high education entitled “Intergenerational Participatory Co-design Project (IPCP)” and evaluate its impacts.

**Methodology:** Guided by a key principle of involving participants of any learning context as co-creators of both the learning process and learning outcomes, IPCP went through four stages of development including capacity building, co-creation on learning objectives, deliberated content learning, and learning outcome dissemination. Mixed methodology including qualitative in-depth interview and quantitative questionnaire were applied in evaluation. A total of 26 participants, from three generations recruited from one university, one secondary school, and a pool of senior champions under a geron-infusion initiative participated.

**Findings:** after attaining capacity building workshops applying Optimal Quality Intergeneration Interaction Framework, three learning groups formulated. A common theme “preserving cultural heritage” emerged, while each group has identified a specified focus (e.g., food, Tai Ji, and historic sites guide). Quotes collected and survey data revealed positive impacts in reducing stereotype and enhancing learning experiences.

**Conclusion:** IPCP demonstrated good practices in role models in multi-disciplinary collaboration in pedagogy innovation. It also paved solid way towards a learning community interwoven with continuous innovation: IPCP becomes a pioneer contributor of library’s digital data hub solution; common core office starts to develop a human lifespan cluster; two research team members started new collaboration on geron-infusion in Faculty of Education.

### Session 4365 (Symposium)

#### CURRENT RESEARCH ON SUICIDE IN OLDER ADULTS

Chair: Montgomery Owsiany Discussant: Yeates Conwell

Rates of suicide are elevated in middle- and late-life, yet studies focusing on suicidal ideation and behavior in older adults are limited compared to research in younger adults. The studies included in the present symposium offer valuable findings on suicide in older adults across the span of late-life. Owsiany et al. focus on age differences between older and younger adults in the association between anxiety symptoms and suicide risk. In Heisel et al., an online intervention is assessed for improving the outcomes of psychological well-being and suicide risk in older adult men who are transitioning into retirement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Crnek-Georgeson and Wilson reviewed the link between retirement patterns and psychological effects, including suicidal behaviors, among older adults. Additionally, this review includes recommendations for policy makers and employers in an effort to assist older adults with the transition into retirement. Utilizing baseline data from the Helping Older