

Report on the Response of Virginia Commonwealth University to the Impact of the Aging of

Virginia's Population

Submitted November 14, 2014

Pursuant to Code of Virginia §§ 2.2-5510 and 51.5-136, Virginia Commonwealth University submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

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Submitted: November 14, 2014

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### Executive Summary

#### Strengths

Virginia Commonwealth University is fortunate to have a Department of Gerontology (School of Allied Health) which provides information, support and expertise that is available in a variety of settings. VCU is currently serving older Virginians presently and is also preparing for the impact of an aging population. A variety of programs assist caregivers and professionals to learn about aging and how to maximize positive outcomes.

There is also a broad base of individuals who have a strong desire to work with aging individuals. This is exemplified in the Statewide AgeWave Forum. In September of this year, more than 30 leaders of over eight Age Wave initiatives gathered in Richmond for the first Statewide Age Wave Forum. The purpose of this event was to exchange ideas, identify successful tactics and learnings gleaned from Age Wave planning work in various locations. The forum created an aligned traction across the state.

One of the more promising new programs under development is the GeroTrifecta. It is an intergenerational advocacy and community canvassing project that is gaining infrastructure and moving towards a pilot. There is a sense that we are making progress in examining what works and what does not in terms of elder care.

This past summer, the School of Allied Health Professions created an innovative program call the 2014 Summer Pipeline projects to educate VCU undergraduate students and students from other statewide colleges and universities about the value of the Allied Health Professions. The Department will be repeating this project going forward.

#### Concerns

Our concerns tend to be with meeting all of the service demands of older Virginians. It is difficult to gather appropriate data as well as to meet the service demands. It is often difficult to get some important data that could make the path to providing services more doable.

We are also concerned at the Federal level in terms of preservation of Social Security and Medicare at existing benefit levels. Any reduction in benefits will adversely affect older Virginians, 40 % of whom rely on Social Security for 80% of their income.

A second Federal issue is the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended. This act provides the foundation for the Area Agency on Aging network and its related home and community based program. Our concern is that this Act not be diminished in terms of resources.

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### Agency Description

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs is the chief academic officer for the university, responsible for developing academic planning and supporting the academic mission of the university. The provost ensures that students enjoy a high-quality educational experience during their time at VCU, that faculty and staff have the resources they need to produce world-class scholarship and creative expression, and that the university maintains its strong commitment to the community of which it is a part. The office's functional areas of responsibility include academic finance and administration; curriculum and degree development; faculty recruitment, retention, and professional development; student recruitment, retention, and engagement; planning and decision support; teaching and learning; international education; and the VCU libraries. The provost also leads development and implementation of the university's strategic plan, including strategic and long-range planning with other university divisions.

The Office of the Provost is dedicated to ensuring a safe, high-quality and engaged learning experience for all students; ensuring that the institution recruits and retains a talented and diverse faculty and provides the resources necessary to conduct world-class teaching, scholarship, research and creative expression; and maintaining a strong commitment to the global engagement of students, faculty and staff that transforms lives and communities.

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State Agency – Aging Impact Survey 2014

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- 1. If your agency has undertaken any actions to respond to the current and future impact of an aging population, such as needs assessments, strategic planning, or use of best practices, please briefly describe those actions. Please indicate what assistance from DARS could help your agency as it prepares to serve an aging Virginia population.**

VCU's Department of Gerontology in the School of Allied Health Professions was founded in 1976 and remains the only MS in Gerontology in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Our mission is to offer innovative education for optimal aging for individuals and our communities. This is evident through graduate and continuing education, scholarship, and university-community partnerships. VCU Department of Gerontology graduates further a person-centered, transdisciplinary mission largely in the areas of Administration, Education, Advocacy, and Entrepreneurship.

VCU's Department of Gerontology offers interprofessional graduate level course offerings and certificates with other schools and programs including Pharmacy, Nursing, Social Work, and throughout Allied Health.

VCU Department of Gerontology graduates seek careers in four primary areas: Administration, Education, Entrepreneurial, and Care Coordination. Two MS (Gerontology) graduates were

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recently featured as Entrepreneurial Gerontologists in the latest publication of J. Grabinski's 101+ Careers in Aging.

In addition to academic offerings, the Department of Gerontology provides continuing education throughout the Commonwealth to direct care professionals, caregivers and elders. Over 2000 individuals are trained annually through face to face and webinar offerings.

As part of its strategic revisioning, the Departmental mission has been amended to keep in step with recognizing that over 80% of individuals 60+ age well and independently. As a result, the program emphasis has shifted to reflect that the realities of aging are largely positive, engaged, and consistent with younger cohorts. The Department of Gerontology strives to represent best practices of positive gerontology through teaching, research and community engagement.

An example of engaged aging is the Greater Richmond Age Wave Readiness Plan which came to be housed in VCU's Department of Gerontology in the Summer of 2013. This is a collaboration between the Department and Senior Connections, our region's Capital Area Agency on Aging. It has been developed from a two-year grant from the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation and will be focused on making RVA a better place to age. Further information can be found at: <http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/gerontology/pdf/AgeWaveInitiative.pdf>.

The Virginia Center on Aging (VCoA), located at Virginia Commonwealth University in the School of Allied Health Professions, was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1978. It was intended to "be an interdisciplinary study, research, information and resource facility for the Commonwealth of Virginia utilizing the full capabilities of faculty, staff, libraries, laboratories and clinics for the benefit of older Virginians and the expansion of knowledge pertaining to the aged and to the aging process." VCoA is the only such center in Virginia and is home to a number of programs and services for older adults, although not exclusively targeted for those 60 and older.

- 2. Briefly describe your agency's services that are used primarily by older Virginians and the funding streams (types and amounts) that support those services. If these particular services or funding streams are provided in conjunction with other state or local agencies or other for profit or non-profit organizations, please list them.**

VCoA manages the VCU Elderhostel/Road Scholar program. Older adult learning programs are based in Richmond, Natural Bridge, Staunton and Harrisonburg.

The Virginia Center on Aging is a founding sponsor of the Lifelong Learning Institute in Chesterfield. The Lifelong Learning Institute in Chesterfield is a member-supported organization designed to meet the educational and social enrichment needs of adults age 50 and "better". The Institute is a learning community of peers who are committed to ongoing education

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and their own intellectual development. Members want to stay current, curious about the world of ideas, and involved with their own learning. The Institute develops and offers daytime courses, lectures and special events on a wide range of topics; there are no exams, no credits and no college degrees required. The program consists of spring and fall terms and a four-week summer term. Classes during the spring and fall terms range from four to eight weekly sessions of up to two hours each. In addition, we have a series of lectures during all three terms. Professors and other course leaders are well known, informed and experienced professionals who enjoy sharing their knowledge and expertise.

Sponsorship from the Virginia Center on Aging at Virginia Commonwealth University, Chesterfield County Public Schools and Chesterfield County made the Institute possible. LLI partners with John Tyler Community College, The Midlothian YMCA, civic organizations and is part of the Elderhostel Institute Network. LLI Chesterfield is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization that is equal opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin. Our Institute is a member of the Elderhostel Institute Network (EIN), an umbrella organization for lifelong learning institutes in the United States and Canada.

Through its “Age in Action” quarterly publication and other educational materials, the Virginia Center for Aging disseminates aging-related information and resources to older adults and their families and care givers. See <http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/vcoa/newsletter/index.html>.

VCU also houses the Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Research Award Fund (ARDRAF) and is administered by the Virginia Center on Aging. Since 1982, the number of funded grants have varied greatly. The original funding came from the General Assembly and is managed by the Virginia Center on Aging. That unit deals with application processes and identifies applicants for awards. Awards can vary, but all awardees must be affiliated with colleges or universities, research institutes, or other not-for-profit organizations located in Virginia.

In terms of funding streams in conjunction with other entities. The following information regarding collaborative projects are cited in the Annual Report for the Center on Aging for 2013-2014:

A Facilitated Discussion on Aging and Abuse (Furr). A training on awareness of abuse in later life for individuals and community groups, funded by the Virginia Department of Health (\$8,726) completed in (October 2013. (Furr)

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Virginia Elder Justice Training and Services (Kupstas, PI). Training and interprofessional collaboration project awarded \$400,000 for three years (2012-15) through the Enhanced Training and Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women Later in Life Program, US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. The project is led by VCoA and the Virginia Department on Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Southwest Virginia partners include: Abuse Alternatives, Inc., City of Bristol Department of Social Services, City of Bristol Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, City of Bristol Police Department, Crisis Center, Inc., District Three Governmental Cooperative, Washington County Department of Social Services, Washington County Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, and Washington County Sheriff's Office. Statewide partners include: Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, Virginia Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council, Virginia Department of Social Services, Virginia Network for Victims and Witnesses of Crime, Inc., Virginia Office of the Attorney General, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, and Virginia Sheriffs' Association. (Furr, Kupstas, Young)

Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later Life: (Paula Kupstas, PI) VCoA administers two sponsored projects on behalf of this task force. 1) The Central Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later Life Project (\$32,946) is funded through the Virginia Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution (V-STOP) Violence Against Women grant program, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. 2) The Family Violence Project (\$9,318) is funded through the Virginia Domestic Violence Victim Fund, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. (Furr, Kupstas, Young)

### **3. Identify current agency programs specifically designed to serve older Virginians that fall into any of the following eight categories:**

#### **Health Care/Wellness**

#### **VCU Department of Gerontology/Virginia Department of Social Services Annual Contract**

The VCU Department of Gerontology maintains an annual contract with the Virginia Department of Social Services to train over 1500 healthcare professionals working with older adults in Virginia's assisted living communities and adult day centers. Trainings are held quarterly in Abingdon, Fairfax, Hampton, Richmond West End, Richmond East End, Salem, Virginia Beach and Woodstock on topics ranging from Person-Centered Care to Mental Health and Aging.

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**VCU Department of Gerontology-Greater Richmond Age Wave Readiness Program**

Age Wave Grant was developed in the Summer of 2013. This is a collaboration between the VCU Department of Gerontology and the Senior Connections program. It has been developed from a two-year grant from the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation and will be focused on having a measurable impact on health and healthcare issues confronting Virginians. Further information can be found at: <http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/gerontology/pdf/AgeWaveInitiative.pdf>.

The **Greater Richmond Age Wave** is a collaborative of public and private organizations, businesses and individuals working to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of our region's growing aging population. A critical objective of the effort is implementing, monitoring and evaluating the *Greater Richmond Regional Plan for Age Wave Readiness* completed in 2012. The Plan is a shared blueprint that prioritizes targeted actions to improve our collective well being and making RVA a better place to grow old. Community members gather to partner, share ideas, align networks and learn how other communities in Virginia and across the U.S. are engaging residents and supporting older adults.

In 2013 the VCU Department of Gerontology and Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging signed a Memorandum of Understanding to lead implementation, as joint managing partners. Both are uniquely positioned and committed to building broader awareness, adding academic expertise, and leveraging deeper partnerships as a strategic planning tool for other organizations, businesses, service providers, and localities. The Planning effort is led by a Leadership Committee of over 30 diverse community partners, and supported by four project based Work Groups. The project has a long term outlook for creating and monitoring community change over the next five years to ten years.

The collaborative is supported by Richmond Memorial Health Foundation (two-year grant 2013-2015), Genworth Financial Foundation, The Community Foundation and AARP Virginia. Further information can be found at: <http://www.agewellva.com>.

**OASIS CATCH Healthy Habits** program is a local partnership led and implemented by the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Gerontology and Senior Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging. This unique intergenerational program overcomes barriers contributing to obesity by instilling lifelong healthy eating and active living habits among children and adults, targeting those from under-resourced communities. Adapted from the nationally recognized, evidence-based Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) curriculum, trained adult volunteers, age 50-plus, teach children in grades K-5 ways to adopt a healthy diet and become physically active through a series of hourly sessions facilitated in after-school and summer camp settings. Sessions are comprised of hands-on nutrition lessons, nutritious snacks, and fun, team-based games designed to improve cardiovascular health. This program builds on a national model of OASIS, active in over 23 cities across the U.S. Richmond

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is the only city in the Commonwealth that has this program. Further information can be found at: <http://www.oasisnet.org/Richmond>

### **VCU Health System's Adult Day Services program**

**Adult Day Center on the MCV Campus.** This facility is open to dependents of VCU faculty, staff and students. The program is designed for older adults who need socialization and supervision during the day. For more information, contact Dee Caras, Gerontologist, at [dcaras@mcvh-vcu.edu](mailto:dcaras@mcvh-vcu.edu) or (804) 828-8027.

Please visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD7QpWc8g7g> for more information.

## **Education**

### **Commonwealth Society**

#### **The Commonwealth Society, a program for adults of all ages, features short courses, lecture series and travel opportunities.**

United by common interest, The Commonwealth Society connects community learners to the resources of Virginia Commonwealth University. Through courses and activities, the Commonwealth Society promotes and supports the connection between learning and life. Since becoming part of the esteemed VCU School of the Arts in early 2013, the Commonwealth Society has tapped into tremendous creative resources that have enhanced support of this important learning-life connection.

In the information that follows, you will find the Fall 2014 Commonwealth Society opportunities. All members are invited to attend Book Group, Brown Bag Lunches, one-time lectures and travel opportunities. Members will also receive notification about other lectures, seminars and performances on the VCU campuses or sponsored by various VCU and School of the Arts departments.

For more information, please visit <http://arts.vcu.edu/programs/commonwealth-society/>

### **Statewide AgeWave Forum**

On Monday, September 8th, more than thirty leaders of over 8 Age Wave initiatives across the state of Virginia gathered in Richmond for the first **Statewide Age Wave Forum**. The purpose of this event was to exchange ideas, identify successful tactics and learnings gleaned from Age Wave planning work in various locations. The forum was also an opportunity to learn with and from one another in an effort to create aligned traction across the state. The meeting was initiated and coordinated by Greater Richmond Age Wave Readiness Coalition and principle partners, the VCU Department of Gerontology and Seniors Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging, as well as the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Topics ranged from funding

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and marketing strategies to workforce development and data management. For the full report: <http://www.vadars.org/vblc/awp.htm>

**VCU Department of Gerontology** designed and launched a new course during the summer 2013 semester, ALHP 591, currently titled “Operationalizing AgeWave Readiness. The course is co-taught with an academic and community lead in Age Wave planning. Students successfully designed a neighborhood assessment tool, building off national and local best practices and evidence based models to support elders successfully aging in place.

**The Lifelong Learning Institute in Chesterfield** is focused on meeting the educational and social enrichment needs of adults age 50 and “better”. “The institute is a learning community of peers who are committed to ongoing education and their own intellection development.” It imposes no exams, no credits and no college degrees required.

**The Virginia Center on Aging** offers conferences, workshops and other educational programs. These programs are open to a variety of community service providers as well as adult learner of all ages.

The Elderhostel/Road Scholar program has provided education and travel organization for adults and “offers diverse and affordable adventures in lifelong learning”.

### **Public Safety (including Adult Abuse Prevention)**

The Virginia Center on Aging at VCU has a focus on issues affecting the safety of older individuals. Specifically, there are four programs that fall into this category.

- a. Virginia Elder Justice Training and Services. This project focuses on abuse in two locations in Virginia (Washington County and the City of Bristol). Training is provided to for professionals in criminal justice, advocates of victims and governmental agency staff. Another focus is to “strengthen collaboration across and within the organizations that serve older victims in the community.
- b. The Central Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later life. This Task Force involves trainings and workshops for a variety of providers who work with older adults.
- c. The Central Virginia Training Alliance to stop Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation. This program was funded from 2006 thru 2010. “With the project completed, collaborators can continue to engage in this work through the Central Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later Life.
- d. Take Back Your Life. This organization “is a solution center focused on providing resources to help empower individual individuals concerned with domestic violence in later life.” The program received generous grants from The Cameron Foundation and The Verizon Foundation.

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### Recreation

- a. As noted in the Section on Education, many individuals would perceive the Elderhostel/Road Scholar program as having the quality of a recreational aspect as well as an educational aspect.
- b. The VCU Department of Gerontology, along with the organization of Seniors Connections, the Capital Area Agency and the Arthritis Foundation are “managing partners for the Active Aging Week” annually. This event includes both learning experiences, but also a strong element of recreation.

### Active Aging Week in the Richmond Region

Led by the International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA), [Active Aging Week](#) (AAW) is an annual health promotion event held during the last week of September. This year Richmond’s first region-wide celebration was collaboratively managed by VCU Department of Gerontology, Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging and the Arthritis Foundation, Mid-Atlantic region. Over 40 community partners participated in this celebration of older adults in our communities by hosting an array of activities, workshops and forums to promote proactive approaches to healthy aging. For more information you can visit the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RVAActiveAgingWeek>

### **Housing Accessibility (including Livable Communities <http://www.vadrs.org/vblc/>)**

A study by the National Aging Information Center (NAIC) of mobility and self-care limitations shows that people had one or more limitations at a rate of 9.65% for ages 60-64, 13.3% for ages 65-74, 25.8% for ages 75-84 and 49.8% for ages 85 and older (NAIC, 1996). Two factors of housing accessibility will be important in assessing the fate of people who becoming increasingly more difficult to find a setting using universal design as well as a Livable Community. The VCU Department of Gerontology (School of Allied Health Professions) in conjunction with Senior Connections (The Capital Area Agency on Aging) address the Housing Accessibility by pointing out that “(b)y 2030, more than 250,000 Greater Richmond region residents will be ages 60 and older. ...we will experience increasing demands for supportive services, health care choices and lifestyle options that promote independence, safety and optimal aging.” To a large extent housing accessibility will depend upon **universal design** in terms of increasing the factors of independence and safety.

The term **livable community** means a metropolitan, urban, suburban, or rural community that—

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- (A) provides safe, reliable, and accessible transportation choices;
- (B) provides long-term affordable, accessible, energy-efficient, and location-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities;
- (C) supports, revitalizes, and encourages the growth of existing communities and maximizes the cost-effectiveness of existing infrastructure;
- (D) promotes economic development and economic competitiveness;
- (E) preserves the environment and natural resources;
- (F) protects agricultural land, rural land, and green spaces; and
- (G) supports public health and improves the quality of life for residents of, and workers in, the community.

### **Financial Security**

The Virginia News Letter points out that, while many of the aging population is financially secure, there are others who are clearly financially insecure. Data cited indicated that poverty rates are higher for older women than for older men. “Thirteen percent of Virginia women ages 65-84 live in poverty, compared to 7 percent of men. Among women ages 85 and over, the poverty rate climbs to 32 percent, compared to 18 percent among men. Dependence on husbands’ incomes, high occurrences of widowhood and longevity all contribute to higher poverty rates for women.”

### **Transportation**

VCU Department of Gerontology’s Greater Richmond Age Wave Readiness Program is working with AARP and other community members to develop neighborhood canvassing audits to review connectivity between elders and resources for those aging in place outside of the long term care continuum through its GeroTrifecta community committee.

The GeroTrifecta is an intergenerational advocacy and community canvassing project that is gaining infrastructure and moving towards a pilot. It is intended to engage students, seniors and community leaders to invest in local communities by conducting walkability audits and learning to recognize emerging neighborhood strengths and identify challenges. This project is led by AARP Virginia alongside the Greater Richmond Age Wave and leadership team of VCU Department of Gerontology and Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging. Other important partners include the RVA Rapid Transit coalition, Richmond Regional Planning

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District Commission and Partnership for Smarter Growth. The goals of this project are to: empower, serve, and inform. This project is currently a pilot moving to a full launch initiative over the next two years. Project outcomes include:

- Educating people on the importance of a livable community for people of all ages and abilities
- Identifying locality-specific challenges and collecting data needed to inform local governments/ organizations to direct finite resources to create positive change
- Bridging informal communication networks which are often fragmented and/or lack coordination
- Serving as a catalyst for local level systems change and future implementation actions to enhance quality of life for people of all ages and abilities

**4. Is your agency able to meet all of the service demands of older Virginians for the services listed above? If there are any instances where the demand for services exceeds your agency's ability to meet the demand, please indicate the service and the extent of the unmet demand. Also, if your agency maintains waiting lists for services, please provide this information, including the waiting list numbers for each service.**

It is difficult to know what percentage of service demands are met by VCU. Some are obvious, such as the gap mentioned above in terms of financial security and housing accessibility. It is likely that health care/wellness, transportation, as well as public safety are most probably unmet for a significant number of the aging population. Recreation and education probably have sufficient service demands, but that may be confounded by the population interested in, and well enough, to take part in recreation and education. We do not maintain waiting lists.

**5. Provide the number of persons, by gender if available, who received services from the agency in each of the past five state fiscal years (FY 2010 through FY2014) who fell into the following age ranges: 60-64; 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If your agency lacks specific information about the numbers of older Virginians it serves but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer older Virginians than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.**

We do not have information as detailed as this request. However, we do have some evidence is serving a larger number of elderly Virginians.

For instance, the Geriatric Pharmacotherapy Program has experienced a significant increase in participation by aging individuals to the extent that they have, in recent years, added three additional full-time faculty who have expertise in geriatric Pharmacotherapy (originally had

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only had one faculty dedicated to working with geriatric clients; that individual is still involved with the Program).

One faculty member earned a Doctorate in Pharmacy with a focus in aging studies at VCU and is now responsible for working with 6-8 students who are also pursuing a Pharm D with an emphasis on aging populations.

Pharmacy also has a student chapter of Consultant and Geriatric Pharmacists. In addition to doing practice at VCU, students also participate with residents of nursing homes, long-term care facilities and hospitals under the supervision of a faculty member.

It should be noted that the Pharmacist Collaborative Care and Outreach in the Community (PCOC) program, on November 4, 2014, was awarded the C. Peter Magrath University Community Engagement Award, a very prestigious award in terms of community engagement.

A faculty member in the Department of Occupational Therapy presented a program on Long Time Care for aging individuals who have lifelong disabilities.

In 2012, the post-baccalaureate certificate in aging studies concurrently with the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling was created.

Joint certificate in Aging Studies has been created to partner with the Pharm D. degree as well as with the graduate degree in Occupational Therapy.

VCU provides tuition waivers for senior citizens who wish to take classes here. Citizens must have annual income of \$15,000 or less. The number of tuition waivers has remained stable with 92 waivers in 2007-2008 and 91 waivers in 2013-2014.

### **6. Referring to the services or funding you described in item two, describe any services or funding provided to older Virginians for which the accessibility or availability varies considerably in different parts of the Commonwealth.**

As with the response to (5) above, it is very difficult to get data on this. We do know some things about the distribution of services to older Virginians. For instance, we know that there are pockets within the City of Richmond that are significantly different from many suburban locations in terms of providing accessibility and availability for our older population. It is certain that there are portions of Virginia which are very affluent and others where there is substantial poverty. Beyond that, there are most probably aging people in Virginia who may not even be aware that services for aging exist. Virginia also hosts a cohort of people whose English language skills are poor and again, that cohort may not know what services exist.

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**7. Over the next five to 10 years, in what ways do you anticipate that an aging population will impact your agency's services, funding streams, or policies? Consider the impact from an increase in the number of older Virginians and whether the needs of older Virginians will differ from those of today's older adults. Please include any anticipated impacts upon the cost of services, changes in type of services or the manner of service delivery, or modifications to agency policies, staffing needs, or procedures.**

VCU School of Allied Health Professions' graduates healthcare professionals who comprise some 50% - 60% of the healthcare professional population. From Gerontologists to Occupational Therapists and Rehabilitation Counselors, the School of Allied Health Professions is working to meet the growing needs of an aging population. With the highest numbers of nationally ranked programs, the VCU SAHP currently resides in 6 buildings across VCU's academic and medical campuses. In order to meet the needs of Virginia's aging population, co-location of the ten departments, programs and the Virginia Center on Aging will be imperative.

The VCU SAHP is further engaging in innovative programs such as the 2014 Summer Pipeline projects to educate VCU undergraduate students and students from other statewide colleges and universities about the value of the Allied Health Professions. Over the course of two weeks in June, emerging Allied Health students are brought to campus, educated on the unique programs and services offered by the SAHP in an effort to recruit new graduate students to support the immediate and emerging needs of our aging population. This program will be repeated and grown during the Summer of 2015.

**8. Please describe the primary steps that should be taken at the federal, state, or local levels to meet the future demands of older Virginians and to make services delivery more effective and efficient.**

The most important issues for older Virginians at the Federal level are the **preservation of Social Security and Medicare at existing benefit levels**. Any reduction in benefits will adversely affect older Virginians, 40% of whom rely on Social Security for 80% of their income. A second Federal issue is the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended. This act provides the foundation for the Area Agency on Aging network and its related home and community based programs.

At the state level, continued state investment in aging programs is warranted. We also need a legislative initiative to continue planning for an older Commonwealth especially in those areas that encourage a healthy lifestyle and supportive communities for older Virginians, perhaps a statewide AGEWAVE process. We also need a continued emphasis on quality for all providers who work with older Virginians – Home and Community Based Services, assisted living facilities, nursing facilities and the like.

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At the local level we need to continue to foster cooperation between agencies serving older Virginians, especially in terms of programs such as No Wrong Door. Localities also needs to evaluate their age wave readiness.

**9. Identify the extent to which your agency provides “customer-oriented” publications and websites that are designed to be “senior-friendly.” If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to older Virginians, please identify any steps your agency is taking to improve their access to this information.**

The VCU Department of Gerontology offers a quarterly electronic newsletter that is emailed to over 8,000 elders, caregivers and healthcare professionals. Information from this newsletter is also housed at [www.agewellva.com](http://www.agewellva.com).

**10. Describe any other services or programs that your agency plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia’s population.**

In January 2015, the VCU Department of Gerontology will collaborate with healthcare professionals and business owners in the Historic Triangle (City of Williamsburg and portions of James City and York Counties) to organize the “Health and Business of Aging” conference which will be open to elders, caregivers, healthcare professionals and business owners interested in the unique needs of current and emerging elders.

In addition, the VCU Department of Gerontology’s Greater Richmond Age Wave Readiness Program houses a committee chaired by Genworth Financial’s Beth Ludden. This committee will specifically address what it means to be a business that supports positive aging in the Richmond’s Planning District 15.

**11. Please indicate if your agency is experiencing an increase in employees retiring later and describe any actions your agency is taking or plans to take to accommodate its aging workforce with innovative practices.**

Our Benefits staff have not noticed an increase in employees retiring later.

### Faculty Transition Incentive Program (FTIP)

The university does have a transition incentive program that provides a phased-in (transition) plan for faculty for up to three years, leading to separation. It provides flexibility for tailoring appropriate transition incentives prior to an agreed-upon date for separation of a faculty member from full-time employment with the University.

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### Services for Retired Faculty

Retired faculty are valued members of the VCU community and receive a number of continuing benefits for their service to VCU and the Commonwealth. The group meets several times a year in October, February, and April. Meetings are held on both campuses and include time for conversation and refreshments. Past programs have included building tours, talks with VCU's president and professors, VCU Basketball games, and cultural events. Retired faculty are entitled to free parking; may keep their VCU email accounts and receive discounts for internet access; have the same access and borrowing privileges at VCU Libraries as active faculty, and receive the same discounts for the VCU Bookstores, VCU musical productions, VCU Theatre tickets, and VCU sporting events as active faculty. Retired faculty members more than 60 years of age are eligible to audit up to three courses a semester, tuition-free, under the provisions of the Senior Citizens' Higher Education Act. Our

### Services for VCU Employees

- VCU's Division of Human Resources (HR) provides information to VCU employees approaching or planning for retirement through individual counseling sessions and investment education seminars. In addition, HR maintains a retiree roster of individuals who may be interested in returning to work at VCU on special projects or temporary assignments.
- VCU Human Resources works with the Senior Connections to provide services to assist VCU employees who are caring for elderly relatives or friends. The VCU Health System's Geriatric Services program is also available to provide assistance to VCU and VCU Health System employees. The Work/Life coordinator is available to provide general information regarding long-term care, in-home care, elder law, nutrition, etc.

### Adult Day Services

The Virginia Commonwealth University Health System offers an on-site, adult day care center for employee dependents designed for older adults who need socialization and supervision during the day.