

SPECIAL ISSUE

IU GERIATRICS

NEWS FROM THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY GERIATRICS PROGRAM & THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR AGING RESEARCH

2001-2002

Annual Report to President Brand INDIANA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR AGING RESEARCH

Collaboration

In the 2000-2001 Annual Report to President Brand our message to the Indiana University community was "growth." Since its establishment in 1997, the Center for Aging Research has grown in the number of faculty, the amount of extramural funding, and the diversity of scholarly activities.

If the 2001 message was growth, the 2002 message is "collaboration." Collaboration implies two or more people working together toward a common goal. In the case of the Center for Aging Research, our common goal has been to improve the quality of life for older adults through improvements in health and health care delivery. Fortunately, we have found an increasing number of partners who want to work together toward this goal.

One of the originally proposed functions of the Center was to maintain "a communication network to facilitate cooperation in aging research among scientists at Indiana University and the local and state community." In building this network, we started by mapping the local ecology of aging research at Indiana University. We developed a

registry of Indiana University faculty pursuing research on aging, then built a state-of-the-art web page to serve as a focal point for communications among our faculty and colleagues across the country. Next we published a quarterly newsletter, *IU GERIATRICS*, that broadcasts activities and accomplishments of the entire IU Geriatrics Program. Finally, we developed a monthly electronic newsletter that keeps our local community of geriatric faculty and staff updated.

Although this formal network represents the backbone of our communications infrastructure, there is also a vibrant informal network. This is represented in our brokering role. It is difficult to tabulate the number of times the Center has put two complementary researchers in contact with each other. In a few short years, the Center for Aging Research and its communication network have become the lightning rod for aging research at Indiana University.

What is the evidence that our network is fulfilling its intended role? Just turn the page.



Christopher M. Callahan, MD
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August 14, 2002

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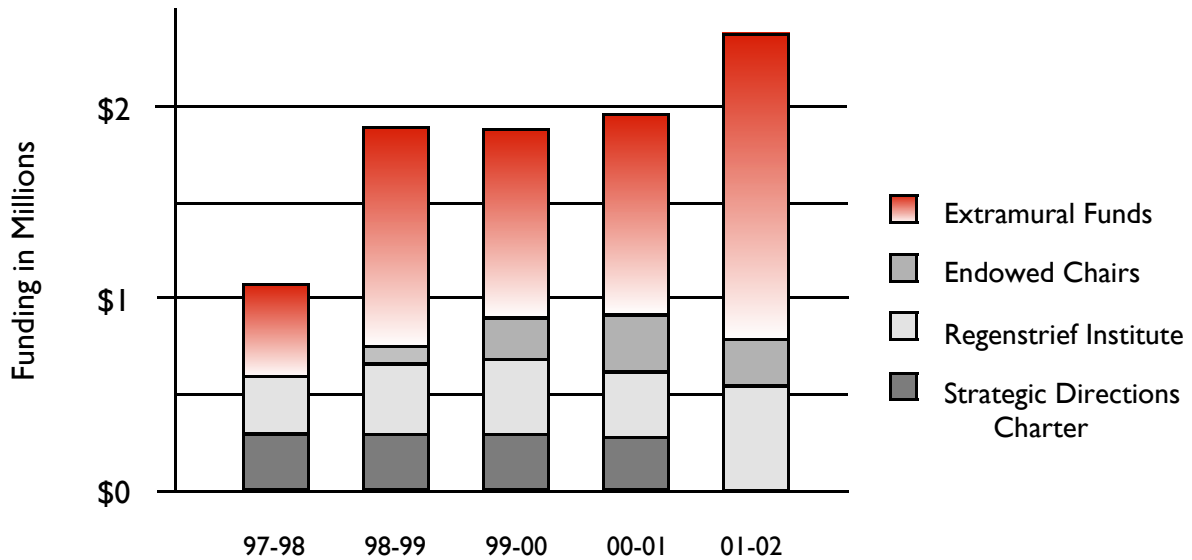


INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

COLLABORATION



FUNDING



COLLABORATION AND FUNDING

The basic premise of the organizational role of the Center for Aging Research is that an investment in the communication infrastructure will lead to collegial interactions which will facilitate scientific collaborations and interdisciplinary creativity. This melting pot of creativity will stimulate successful research grants which will produce improved knowledge on successful aging and thereby improve the quality of life for older adults. We are well on our way to demonstrating the validity of this premise.

In the dynamic figure on the opposite page, we depict all of the recent or ongoing collaborative relationships between personnel in the Center for Aging Research and other Indiana University faculty or community leaders. While the figure shows connections between

programs, this is somewhat misleading. Programs do not have relationships—people do. Thus, each of the lines in the figure actually represents two or more people from different programs working together toward a common goal. As shown in the figure, these are truly interdisciplinary efforts that expand well beyond our home in the School of Medicine. Missing from the figure are our connections with the national and international community of aging researchers and the connections we have brokered but in which we did not participate. We are particularly proud of our research collaborations with local community agencies serving older adults. We anticipate important growth in such partnerships over the coming years.

The figure above demonstrates the productivity of these relationships. Research funding demonstrates that our peers believe our work is worthy of investment and support. Over the past five years, our research funding has grown in parallel with the growth in our scientists' collaborative relationships. We have now surpassed \$2 million in annual funding including substantial yearly support for research infrastructure from the Regenstrief Institute. From this funding has come a growth in the number of scholarly publications and a growing voice in national deliberations on aging and aging research. We value our role in facilitating partnerships because it is through these partnerships that we will improve the quality of life of older adults.

The Indiana University Center for Aging Research is a portal for both local and national colleagues to access the university's considerable resources in aging research.



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SENIOR CARE AT WISHARD

A SPECIAL COLLABORATION

Since its inception, the Center for Aging Research has had a special and close relationship with Wishard Health Services. In the same year that the Center was founded, the leadership of Wishard Health Services began a major investment in redesigning its health care delivery system for older adults. Led by Dr. Steven R. Counsell, Director of Geriatrics at the Indiana University School of Medicine, Wishard sought to improve care for vulnerable older adults in Marion County. These elders suffer a disproportionate share of chronic disease, disability, and health care costs. In developing its innovative program to serve our elders most at risk, Wishard has in fact designed a health care system that serves as a resource for all older Hoosiers. While this is impressive in its own right, Senior Care at Wishard does not limit itself to providing excellent clinical care. In state-

of-the-art venues, the program also teaches geriatric principles to medical students, resident physicians, and fellows—the next generation of Indiana physicians.

In all of these endeavors, scientists in the Center for Aging Research have been close collaborators. This is true because the leadership of Wishard Health Services has recognized that the long-term viability of their innovative clinical and educational programming rests on evidence of cost-effectiveness. The scientists in the Center for Aging Research have recognized that research is most effective when it starts with a clear understanding of the needs of the patient and health care system. Within this unique partnership we have aligned both the short and long-term goals of the community and the university. The ultimate benefactors of this special collaboration are older Hoosiers.