

CSULB Gerontology

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Happy Holidays!

The Gerontology Program faculty wishes you and yours a very happy holiday season. We celebrate our hard-working, dedicated, and compassionate students, who strive to make the world a better place for aging and older adults. We appreciate our supporters, partners, and collaborators for cheering us on and encouraging us to keep growing and achieving!



Dr. Carpiac's Nana turns 97 in October 2024!

Beach EDGE Age-Friendly Community

Effective Fall 2024, Consumer Affairs majors can earn their BA and Masters in Gerontology in five years. The program is one of the first of its kind at CSULB.

Gerontology Program faculty continue to explore opportunities for making the CSULB campus more inclusive and welcoming for non-traditional and older learners.

Gerontology students are provided with opportunities to connect with the greater Long Beach community through internships, service learning, and alumni events.

Check us out! 

www.csulb.edu/gerontology
Instagram: @AgingCSULB
www.facebook.com/CSULBGerontology
Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/groups/13545267/

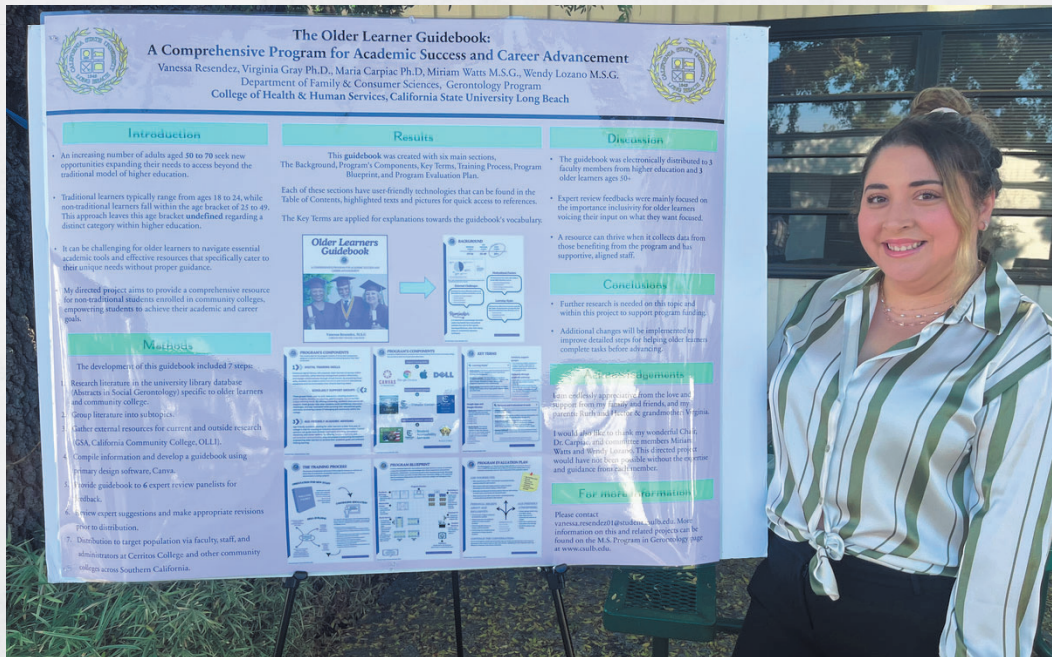


CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
LONG BEACH

Gerontology Program

CONGRATULATIONS

graduates



Vanessa Resendez presented an academic poster at the FCS Graduate Student Poster Session on December 9, 2024. Her directed project is the development of the Older Learner Guidebook: A Comprehensive Program for Academic Success and Career Advancement. Her goal is to provide the guidebook to community colleges throughout the state of California.

CONGRATULATIONS

graduates

Trang Doan (Gerontology Minor, Nursing Major) will be starting my new grad RN program at Cedars-Sinai in February.

Mary Eng (Gerontology Minor, Nursing Major) is seeking a position as a nurse in the Adult Emergency Department at Loma Linda University Medical Center. We wish you the best, Mary!

Aiden Morguita (Gerontology Minor, Health Sciences, Community Health Education Major) shares: Immediately after graduation, I am embarking on an EMT program. While working as an EMT, I plan on attending nursing school, and I am aspiring to become a registered nurse that specializes in geriatrics! I will pursue further schooling to become a nurse practitioner to widen my scope of practice.



CONGRATULATIONS

graduates

Christina Taylor Nguyen (Gerontology Minor, Speech-Language Pathology Major) says: I'm so excited to be graduating and starting the next chapter of my journey! I've loved studying Speech Pathology and working with the adult population, and I'll be continuing my education in graduate school at Maryville University, thanks to a scholarship I received that will help cover most of my tuition. One of my upcoming projects is presenting my first research on stuttering at the California Speech Convention in Pasadena. I love learning and using my knowledge to help others, which is why I also earned my RCFE Administrator certification. My ultimate goal is to one day open a facility, using my knowledge to help adults build daily living skills in a supportive environment.

Another fun fact: I also earned a Leadership certification at Cornell University, and I speak English, Vietnamese, and sign language.

Rania Rawas (Gerontology Minor, Kinesiology-Exercise Science Major) plans to find a position in the nutrition department of a facility that serves the older adult community. As a nutrition major with a passion for working with elders, she is dedicated to using my knowledge in dietetics to help them age successfully.



CONGRATULATIONS

graduates

Katrina Watson (Gerontology, Management Information Systems, Health Humanities, and Comparative World Literature Minors, Healthcare Administration Major) has taken the university (if not the world) by storm! We are THRILLED that she will be joining the CSULB MSG Program in Spring 2025. She has won numerous awards and honors during her undergraduate career:

- CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement - William Randolph Hearst Foundation Scholar (2024)
- Team captain to the 1st place undergraduate team in the College Bowl, a healthcare case competition (2024)
- California Affiliate - Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Scholarship (CA-AFCS) Scholarship (2024)
- Certificate of Recognition - CHHS Student Council (2024)
- The SCAN Health Plan Scholarship for the Health and Independence of Seniors (2023 & 2024)
- Janice Frates Memorial Endowed Student Award from CSULB & Mr. Steven Frates (2023 & 2024)
- Louise and Roy Woolsey Memorial Scholarship from Friends of OASIS (2023 & 2024)
- Inaugural recipient of the LIFT Scholarship from ACHE of Southern California (2023)
- Fearlessly Authentic Leadership Annual Scholarship (2023)
- President's Honor List (2021-2024)

Creative Classroom Assignments: Reflecting on Aging Issues through Comic Strips



by Kainoa Fernandes in Jesse Archer's GERN 400 Class

Creative Classroom Assignments: Reflecting on Aging Issues through Comic Strips

"Lost in Time: A Glimpse into Alzheimer's Confusion"



by Rian Ahasan in Jesse Archer's GERN 400 Class

Careers *in Aging*

Careers in Aging Week will officially take place in March 2025, but students in GERN 500: Introduction to the Professional Practice of Gerontology got a jump start on meeting fantastic people that have dedicated their careers to working with older adults and their families.

We would like you to meet them as well:

Carla Garcia - SCAN Independence at Home

Carol Hahn - MSN, RN (Retired)

Dr. Thao - Grace Geriatric Care

Rose Trujillo, MSG - Kaiser Permanente

Dr. Dung Trinh - Healthy Brain Clinic

Andrea Alanis - Critical Care Unit Nurse

Alexandra Wilkinson - CSULB Lecturer

Meet Gerontologist Carla Garcia: by April Bonus

Carla Garcia is a dedicated professional in the field of Gerontology who demonstrates the impact of passion and purpose in making a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults. Carla and I discussed her journey of compassion, innovation, and commitment to improving the lives of the aging population. She holds a bachelor's degree in human development and a gerontology certificate from California State University, Long Beach. Her career began at an adult day care center, where she developed care plans and connected older adults to resources. After four years, Carla knew she wanted to deepen her impact on the community, connecting more seniors to opportunities.

Carla's career turned into an exciting journey when she interviewed for an outreach position. When asked about her dream job, she described her passion for teaching older adults how to use technology to stay connected and combat loneliness or isolation. To her surprise, one of the panelists informed her about a new digital literacy program for seniors and caregivers and asked Carla if she would like to be part of the team. Today, Carla is content in her current role at SCAN, Independence at Home, where she works as a Digital Coach/ Technology Assistant. She assists older adults and caregivers in accessing health services online, linking to their doctors through telehealth, and teaching them how to use social media apps to stay connected with their families and friends.

Carla talked about her continued inspiration as a Gerontologist. Earlier in her career, she witnessed the growing needs of older adults, recognizing the disparity and limited resources for older adults compared to other vulnerable groups. She wants to improve the quality of life of older individuals. She believes that her small actions can significantly impact on the daily lives of older adults. This keeps her motivated, as she says, "The ability to bring comfort or just a moment of joy to someone is incredibly rewarding".

Her goal as a gerontologist is promising. Through active interaction with older adults, she ensures they feel valued, respected, and heard, especially those struggling with chronic illnesses and independence.

Finally, Carla advises those starting their journey in Gerontology to pursue their passion. What you choose to do will resonate with others, especially with older adults, "Believe me, they know and feel it." Carla's story is a reminder that the simplest gestures can make a difference in the lives of many, and in humble ways, they can come back to us in unexpected ways.

Meet Gerontologist Carol Hahn: by Jee Hyun Lee

Carol Hahn, MSN, RN, and I met through Westside Pacific Villages (WPV), a nonprofit community-based organization that offers support and services for older adults aging in place. I was WPV's social media coordinator, and Carol was and still is a volunteer.

Carol recently retired from her career as a registered nurse, a dementia practitioner, a fall prevention educator, and the community educator at OPICA, an adult day care that provides support for older adults living with memory loss and their families. Carol became interested in gerontology when she was a nurse specializing in orthopedics, primarily focusing on sports medicine. She also treated many older patients who had suffered broken hips and underwent knee and hip replacements. Although she enjoyed working with athletes, she recognized the significant need to support older adults.

In 1982, when Carol attended college, she took a gerontology course which, at that time, was not officially part of the curriculum, and the focus was mainly on the aging process from anatomical and biological perspectives. Carol said that gerontology courses have evolved significantly since 1982. They did not cover topics like they would now, such as Erikson's Stages of Development, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, examining life losses, or end-of-life issues.

Carol's introduction to dementia was when her father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She sought support from the Alzheimer's Association in New Jersey as she took care of him. After his passing, she wanted to give back and volunteered with the Alzheimer's Association. Carol became certified as a dementia practitioner through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. She then began teaching dementia practitioner certification courses. The certification course is 8 hours and includes topics such as an overview of dementia, behaviors of individuals living with dementia, the impact of their physical environments, and how to create supportive settings.

Carol often discusses Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the importance of fulfilling our basic needs. For individuals living with dementia, the situation can be particularly challenging when they are unable to express or meet these basic needs themselves, such as expressing that they are hungry or thirsty or have to go to the bathroom. As a result, a person with dementia might communicate their discomfort or needs through their behavior, which can include hitting or biting. This can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and anger from family members, such as a daughter or son towards their parent who is living with dementia.

Meet Gerontologist Carol Hahn: by Jee Hyun Lee

(cont.)

Carol says that when engaging with older adults living with dementia, it is essential to include them socially so that they feel like valued members of the community. A good way to engage them in conversations is to provide opportunities for them to contribute rather than simply asking questions. Additionally, it is important to pay attention to non-verbal communication. Before Carol's retirement, she was the community educator at OPICA, where she greatly enjoyed educating people about dementia. Her classes were held at various locations, including churches, senior centers, police and fire stations, and even businesses like Raytheon. I was surprised when she mentioned Raytheon. She said that dementia can impact anyone, either directly or indirectly.

I asked Carol about some of her favorite resources for older adults. She is often surprised that older adults do not take advantage of free or low-cost services such as Meals On Wheels and transportation services. She said a service like Meals on Wheels is important because it provides older adults with the nutrition they need.

I asked her about her favorite ways to support older adults in her community. She enjoys spending time with her neighbors by dropping by their homes or by simply giving them a call. She mentioned a neighbor who stays home due to Parkinson's disease and feels like he no longer has a purpose. So, she had an idea to bring him work that volunteers did at OPICA or to make calls for OPICA, creating opportunities for him so that he could feel like he was still contributing to the community.

Carol just entered retirement and thought she would have a more difficult time, but she is enjoying it. She and her husband have plans to visit all the national parks. So far, they have visited 37 out of 63 national parks. She is also trying new activities such as country line dancing through El Segundo Parks and Recreation.

Meet Gerontologist Dr. Thao: by Max Macadaan

I conducted an interview with Dr. Thao from Grace Geriatric Care in Garden Grove to take a peek into a day of a Gerontologist. She's a geriatrician at the clinic and was very helpful and informative during our talk. The biggest AHA moment I had during the talk was the fact that many of her patients were surprised at the care that they received there compared to the care they received at other places. She said that they themselves did not know what they needed and once they were under their detailed care, did they realized that there were so many things they could do and have checked to better improve their health. Dr. Thao said that this was what made her want to work in this field is to provide care that others typically wouldn't give or focus on for older adults.

I was also shocked to hear that she mentioned how she is usually questioned a lot for the procedures and care she is giving to her patients due to being unaware of what proper older age care is compared to other hospitals that is specializing in a more general care. Another surprising thing that she told me was that even though their clinic was for older adults, she had come across 18-year-olds going through some of the same things that older patients would and were sent to their clinic instead. The lack of knowledge for care for older adults was so immense that they would receive younger patients if they had symptoms of older adults. Dr. Thao said that she is usually saddened yet relieved to see new patients due to the fact that they were neglected of what they are truly needing, not from only going to non-specialized doctor, but from also have no family to be around to help figure out when something goes wrong. She said that she could tell I am a rather emotional person and working in this industry would need a strong sense of control for emotions. What she also told me to practice as I choose my career in this field would be a lot of patience. She emphasized it almost every topic that patience is a strong trait to work in the field due to the idea of certain mental situations as well as dealing with families as well. Since there are a lot of older adults who aren't able to fully advocate for themselves, being able to practice patience with them and their family is key to being able to help them.

Overall, I had a great talk with Dr. Thao and it was rather inspiring and empowering.

Meet Gerontologist Rose Trujillo: by Karla Reyes

I enjoyed interviewing Rose Trujillo, Research Associate II with Kaiser Permanente and CSULB MSG alum. I first met Rose in September this year as a guest panel participant for Dr. Carpiac's GERN 500 course. I was captivated by Rose's experience with her thesis about adults aging with autism, which eventually led to her career in research.

In her current role, Rose conducts assessments with older adults who are experiencing memory issues to rule out whether the patient is struggling with dementia. Rose collaborates closely with nurses and physicians to ensure newly diagnosed patients receive specialty care for their dementia in a primary care setting.

A pivotal moment for Rose that helped her break into research was her thesis. She conducted a full-scale research project from start to finish. Rose had to navigate the IRB process, recruit participants, and collect and analyze data. This journey became the foundation of her research career. This "a-ha" moment gave me a lens to see the value of working on a thesis vs. a directed project for my future career goals.

I asked Rose about obstacles she's faced in her career, and she shared that her age or being the youngest member of her research team has led to challenges. Patients assume that because of her young age, she is not qualified to conduct the assessments, and she needs more experience before she can say anything about their memory issues.

Colleagues also make assumptions about Rose based on her education. Rose shared that a lack of a Ph.D. has led her colleagues to question and/or diminish the knowledge she contributes to the work. However, Rose takes both obstacles in stride and pushes through these assumptions to show that neither her age nor her education will hold her back in her career. Rose happily shared that she is in the process of applying to a Ph.D. program.

Meet Gerontologist Rose Trujillo: by Karla Reyes (cont.)

The second focus of my interview with Rose was asking about valuable insights she gained as a graduate student. I learned from Rose that building connections with other cohort members is a crucial step for my journey in this program. I shared with Rose that I have been feeling isolated as a student.

Now, I see the urgency of turning to my current and future classmates to build those connections in addition to participating in graduate student center events and workshops. Rose also highlighted the value of building connections with the faculty. She encouraged me to use office hours as much as possible to have one-on-one time with professors outside the classroom.

Interviewing Rose was an invaluable experience that clarified my objectives as a student. Although the idea of pursuing a Ph.D. program in the future feels incredibly intimidating and triggers feelings of imposter syndrome, Rose helped me reframe my view that it's an attainable goal for myself, too.



Gerontologists visit GERN 500 for “Careers in Aging” speed mentoring event. Rose Trujillo is at bottom right of the group!

Meet Gerontologist Dr. Dung Trinh: by Stan Wada

Allow me to introduce you to Dr. Dung Trinh from the Healthy Brain Clinic (healthybrainclinic.com) located in Long Beach, CA. He is a doctor of Internal Medicine and has been practicing for over 20 years in Orange County with Bristol Medical Group and Memorial Care. He is also the founder of TongueOut, a non-profit philanthropic group that “provides children in need with tangible help, hugs, medicines, and supplies. More importantly, we want to share the Good News of God’s Love and Unique Embrace with each and every child.” (tongueout.org).

Through his practice over the years, Dr. Trinh has become a Gerontologist. I have known him for the past 16 years, as he started training (I have been a Certified Personal Trainer for 28 years) with me in 2008. He serves on several boards and is a devout Christian and family man. He is a survivor of the fall of Saigon and fled on the last day with his family, being rescued via helicopter onto the aircraft carrier USS Midway in 1975. He also served for 5 years with the 4th Medical Battalion in the Marine Corps. I have come to know Dr. Trinh quite well over the years, training him 2-3 times a week for the past 16 years. I consider him a good friend and mentor. We have had many conversations about older adults, and I was able to work for him teaching a senior fitness class at Emerald Cove for research last year.

Some key points we discussed are:

- A significant portion of preventing or delaying dementia is behavioral. People can make a difference by altering their lifestyle, focusing on nutrition and exercise. He wishes people would take more personal responsibility and take advantage of the services already provided before it is too late. I wholeheartedly believe that prevention is key.
- While there could be a happy medium, ensuring life-saving drugs are affordable, he believes that the financial incentives for pharmaceutical companies are crucial for continued innovation.
- Dr. Trinh's biggest concern is the preparedness for the aging baby boomer population. He clearly states that we are not ready for baby boomers to come of age, as there are not enough healthcare professionals to provide adequate services for older adults.

Meet Gerontologist Andrea Alanis: by Carly Hyder

I interviewed a nurse in Long Beach (Andrea Alanis) she has a BSN with a certificate in gerontology, and is working towards becoming a Geriatric Nurse Practitioner. Andrea has been a friend of mine for many years and she currently works on the Critical Care Unit. Her patients range in age but her favorite ones have always been older adults.

One takeaway moment was how big of a role social isolation plays in both physical and mental health issues in older adults. Isolation can lead to depression, malnutrition, and even more rapid cognitive decline. She mentioned how often her elder patients in the unit are so isolated. The isolation aspect alone is a big cause of concern when the patients get discharged, and the patients are more likely to have been in and out of the hospital for some time, with the severity of the incident increasing with each visit. She also mentioned how sad it was to hear them discuss how their interactions with the hospital staff are the only social interactions they have had recently.

Another big takeaway was that geriatric care is not one-size-fits-all. Older adults have unique health needs, influenced by their life experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal goals. She discussed how treatment varies so far and wide for each patient, and that people often think treatment may look the same for two individuals with similar diagnosis but their cultural background plays a huge part in different medical decisions that will be made. She also stressed that for a lot of elder adults- aggressive treatment may take away more from them than it may add to their quality of life.

Andrea pointed out as well that mental health conditions are often overlooked in general healthcare settings and without someone on staff who really understand geriatric medicine the patient may be misdiagnosed or ignored completely. At the same time, some patients themselves overlook their mental conditions and write it off as "just getting older". She also shared how her perspective on care has evolved.

Meet Gerontologist Andrea Alanis: by Carly Hyder (cont.)

In the CCU, the focus is on immediate survival, while geriatrics emphasizes long-term quality of life. She often has to think with a different mindset than some of her colleagues when coming up with treatment plans for patients. She has to balance medical interventions with the patient's personal values and goals that are also realistic for life after a severe medical incident.

My final "aha" moment came when I asked her what made her so interested in geriatric care other than elder patients being her favorite to work with. She shared with me that the sheer volume of patients entering in and out of hospitals was overwhelming, and then when she realized what the demographic of these numbers was- she herself had an aha moment. If we didn't start NOW, and people didn't start learning how to change how healthcare is managed not just treated that the people we loved the most were going to be treated just as how she saw the patients for many years- a number.



Commercial Break: Age-Friendly TV Shows We Recommend for Winter Break Viewing

- **A Man on the Inside - Netflix**
- **Matlock - CBS**
- **Golden Girls - HULU**
- **Grace & Frankie - Netflix**
- **The Golden Bachelor/Bachelorette - ABC**

Do you have your own favorites? Let us know!!

Meet Gerontologist Alex Wilkinson:

by Georgette Shobeiri

I interviewed gerontology lecturer Alexandra Wilkinson. Alex teaches gerontology at CSULB. She graduated from the same program we are going through, and I was a student of hers during my undergraduate program. In fact, she helped motivate me to get a master's in gerontology.

Alex said she was motivated to go into gerontology because of her grandmother, who helped raise her. After her grandfather passed away, she moved in with her and their relationship blossomed. Her grandmother guided her through many pivotal moments in life, providing support and advice. And while she was in school, she decided that she wanted to go into gerontology, even though she didn't know that was even a thing at the time.

She did an internship at the VA Hospital, doing psychiatric research and working with people with Alzheimer's, dementia, and PTSD. The work was challenging, but it was also extremely intense, dealing with those issues. As she was already working in gerontology, Professor Maria Carpiac invited her to be on a "speed dating" panel for her GERN 500 class. During this event, Professor Carpiac casually mentioned that if anyone was interested in teaching, they should let her know. Alex thought she would absolutely love to teach, so she submitted herself as a candidate. That led to her being invited to teach one class, and the many positive evaluations she received prompted the faculty to offer her a full-time position.

I asked what gerontology students should do to prepare themselves. She shared that she feels it is really, really essential to do at least one internship because it is an opportunity to learn what you like and what you don't. For instance, while she appreciated the opportunity for her internship at the VA, there were many personal reasons that she felt she would not like a job there. She intended to go into research, which the VA internship allowed her to pursue, but there were too many aspects that she didn't enjoy. However, she loves teaching, and this position also allows her to do research, making it a happy choice.

Meet Gerontologist Alex Wilkinson:

by Georgette Shobeiri (cont.)

I followed up by asking her advice about going into teaching, and she shared that she thinks what it takes to be a good teacher is connection. A person thinking of going into teaching should create a warm openness in conversations, which she sees resonates with many students, especially in this field.

When asked for advice for the program, she shared that students shouldn't feel they have to have all the answers. Professors don't even have all the answers. Both students and professors are still learning all the time. There isn't always one right answer.

When I asked her about current topics of interest, she shared something she is working on. She pointed out that in Disney movies, many show an older person as the bad person trying to steal something from a younger person, which is one way we have been taught to fear older people. There are so many stereotypes we learn about older people that make us turn away or view them as lesser members of society.

Professor Wilkinson said this made her realize that she needed to reprogram herself and that we also needed to reprogram others. This starts with getting more education to individuals working in this field. The more gerontology professors do this, the better this field will be. This will improve care for older people because it will improve people's ability to care.

The last thing she shared was that no matter what any gerontology student chooses to do or where they choose to go, we all need to practice self-care. This is essential for several reasons. The biggest reason is that when we interact with older people, we take on a lot of their or their family's stuff. That can squeeze us so much that we won't have enough left to care for ourselves or our loved ones.

I have always appreciated Alex's openness and advice. And I feel that her advice during this conversation will serve me well as I work towards completing my Master's degree and navigating my future career.

Championing an Age-Friendly Long Beach: Insights from the 9th Annual Livability Summit
Sofia Poulsen Hodjat, MSG, CPG
Healthy Aging Center Coordinator
City of Long Beach, Department of Health & Human Services

This October, I had the honor of serving as a keynote speaker at the 9th Annual Livability Summit, held aboard the Queen Mary in Long Beach. The Summit is a day-long event that gathers City staff from across departments and levels to develop strategies for improving the quality of life for all Long Beach residents.

Each year, the Summit focuses on a different theme, and this year's topic, An Age-Friendly Future, highlighted the experiences of older adults in our city. It was a powerful opportunity to explore resources, identify challenges, and reimagine how public services can better support livability for residents of all ages. Over 130 staff and managers from 22 departments attended, sharing ideas on how to design and deliver services that enhance quality of life across generations.



The event included site visits to key programs and locations, offering a hands-on look at the resources available to Long Beach's aging population and the challenges they face. These visits included:

- Programs & Services: Long Beach Senior Center & Healthy Aging Center
- Nutrition: Meals on Wheels & HSA Congregate Meal Program
- Quality of Life: Billie Jean King Library & Digital Inclusion
- Housing: Century Villages at Cabrillo
- Safety: Emergency Operations Center Dispatch
- Transportation: Dial-A-Lift & Long Beach Transit

The vision for the day was to provide City staff with an opportunity to learn about the older adult experience in Long Beach, understand available resources, and rethink how the City supports its aging population, ensuring that every individual, regardless of age, can thrive in our shared community.

As a gerontologist, it was invigorating to contribute to this dialogue. My keynote presentation focused on what it means to be an Age-Friendly Community, the progress Long Beach has made in this area, and how older adults and an aging population are transforming our society. I also showcased innovative age-friendly practices from one department and provided actionable strategies for others to adopt. Attendees shared that the presentation sparked fresh ideas for tailoring city initiatives to better meet the needs of older residents.

In the afternoon, participants engaged in SCAN's Trading Ages Workshop, an immersive experience designed to build empathy for age-related challenges and inspire actionable change.

Long Beach has always been my home, and it's inspiring to see our community's growing commitment to creating a more livable and inclusive future. The energy and dedication displayed at the Summit were truly uplifting, and I'm grateful for the chance to be part of this important work. Together, we are building momentum toward a community that values and supports older adults as integral members of our society.

How Age-Friendly is CSULB?

Students were asked to reflect on ways in which the CSULB campus is age-friendly and opportunities for improvement.

Age Friendly Characteristics

Online classes, evening classes, financial resources, gym, Student Health Services, continuing education, Older Student Degree Program, age-inclusive/diversity inclusive, basic needs programs, career services, Shakaarian Student Resource Center, Osher Lifeline Learning Institute (OLLI), Center for Successful Aging, LifeFit, Bob Murphy Access Center (BMAC)

Opportunities to Increase Age Friendliness

Physical campus (size, stairs, hills) make navigation to classes challenging, technology, opportunities to develop a community and social circles, transportation around campus, educate the entire campus about aging and older adults (we agree!), workshops about programs and government assistance for older adults, faculty/staff training, targeted career services for those pursuing a new career later in life.

What can a GERONTOLOGY CLASS DO FOR YOU?

We asked students in a gerontology course to explore how a Gerontology Course (or even a Minor) could enhance their major and career plans. Here's what they said...

As a studio arts major with a focus on graphic design, gerontology has no direct correlation to my career path. However, I see myself utilizing it in the future if I have older clients who need design services. Understanding the aging process and the unique needs of older adults can help me create more effective and inclusive designs. For example, if I work on projects for older clients, such as designing websites, marketing materials, or user interfaces, knowing about issues like visual impairments or cognitive changes can help me make designs that are accessible and user-friendly. By integrating this knowledge, I can ensure that my work better serves clients of all ages and contributes to a more inclusive and supportive design environment.



I can apply what I learned in this gerontology course to my major in many ways. I am a Kinesiology major (with an emphasis on exercise science), and this information in this course has given me more insight into how to help older adults move their bodies in safe and effective ways. With my major, I plan to go into the medical field so this course will be useful for when I have to treat older patients. For example, if I were to treat an older adult who has some concerns with getting treatment, the information from this course has given me the confidence that I will be able to give that older adult the best quality care.



I am a biology major and a pre-optometry student. Gerontology is very relevant to my major because I learned about all biological/molecular changes that can occur during aging. Also, my biology major conducts many studies and can devote research to learning more about how aging can affect an older adult. Additionally, once I am an optometrist, I can apply what I learned about gerontology to older patients. My background knowledge of gerontology will allow me to have a deeper connection and understanding of my patients and their experience with changes regarding their vision. Knowing how healthcare providers influence an older adult's life, I now have the tools to ensure my older adult patients are cared for.

What can a

GERONTOLOGY CLASS

DO FOR YOU?

I can apply gerontology to every single aspect of my major. I am entering my first year of grad school pursuing my MS in Gerontology while afterwards I aim to receive my PhD in Neuropsychology as a career path. This course was just the beginning of the material I will be diving into deeper this upcoming fall. From every chapter to every video provided in this course will be important to keep with me throughout my journey as a Gerontology major. As for my career path, I will be able to utilize multiple concepts from Gerontology as I plan to focus my time working with patients diagnosed with dementia or involved in any traumatic brain injuries. The majority of this population will be older adults and by obtaining the most of my Gerontology major, it will allow me to medically treat and serve to the best of my ability the older adult community.



As a wealth management associate, I work with a lot of older adults who are trying to maximize their income for retirement. This class has given me a lot of research-based information regarding living arrangements, the advantages and disadvantages of the options that older adults have, as well as some background information on sensitive topics for older adults, the health and social challenges that they face, and a real-life perspective of what aging actually looks like in the U.S. All the things that I learned in this class will help me be a more understanding and open individual that can have important discussions with my clients regarding their retirement plans beyond the financial aspect.



Gerontology can be applied to electrical engineering in many ways. Issues that older adults face everyday could be improved with the help of advanced technologies such as assistive technology, medical devices, and smart homes. Specifically, electrical engineers would help design and develop these sort of technologies, and by having knowledge of the principles and topics studied in gerontology they would be able to cater to those issues. For example, a company named Intuitive is dedicated to transform the future of surgery and healthcare with advanced technology. With their robotic surgical system such as the Da Vinci Hands, they aim to enable less invasive surgeries. This benefits patients who might have underlying issues such as high blood pressure and heart problems. Older adults can benefit significantly by these kind of technologies as traditional surgeries are always risky and their recovery time may be longer.

What can a

GERONTOLOGY CLASS

DO FOR YOU?

I believe that the most applicable way that gerontology can be applied to my major is through the development of different biological ways to increase peoples lives. There has been so much research recently about how to lengthen the lives of our telomeres (the mechanisms that actually ages us biologically), and I believe that gerontology will help us understand the ethical reasoning behind continuing this research or choosing to stop the research. Living forever is something that has always plagued the minds of people, but if the quality of that life is terrible and means you are bed-ridden for many years on end, I do not believe that it is worth it.



I am on the career path to becoming an English teacher, and what I have learned throughout this class will no doubt bring me so much clarity and perspective on a group of people I was largely uninformed about. I aim to work in high schools or middle schools, however, I am open to the possibility of becoming a professor. With that, it is important to acknowledge that the demographics for my students could include older adults. Having a classroom where anyone and everyone feels welcome and comfortable is one of my dreams as a future teacher, and this class has put me one step closer to making that dream a reality.



Once I am done with my education at CSULB, I will have also obtained a certificate as a Mediator. I will be able to apply the knowledge I gained about gerontology when I am working with any [older adults] during mediator meetings. The skills and knowledge from this class will allow me to be more compassionate and understanding towards the [older adult] community especially during a difficult time they may be going through at the time of mediation. This class allowed me to better understand what life will be and currently is for many [older adults] and how we can make changes for the better future.



What can a GERONTOLOGY CLASS DO FOR YOU?

I am currently majoring in film. Specifically directing and producing. A seriously helpful way I can apply this course after class is in writing. I love to write my own scripts and stories. A goal of mine is to write and direct my own project. A few semesters ago I wrote a script featuring an adult and a senior. I had trouble writing for the senior character because I couldn't relate to him or put myself in his shoes. They always say write what you know best. However, I knew while taking this class I would have an opportunity to start studying elder behavior as reported in the textbooks. This class really did help! I just said in my evaluation that I feel closer to my actual grandparents after this class because of the opportunity I got to pick their brains and read real facts and evidence on the subject.



I will be receiving my bachelor's in Sociology this summer. After taking this class I think it will apply to my major in many different ways. One being learning to understand aging and social structures, because this class explored how aging affects social roles, relationships, and structures. Policy and program development helped get informed more about sociological research on social policies. Programs that are aiming at supporting older adults in healthcare, retirements, and social services. Overall, this class helped provide a more valuable perspective on analysis and research on aging and it's implications that come with aging.



I graduated from San Diego State with a degree in Exercise Physiology. I have been a personal trainer and a strength and conditioning coach for the past 30 years. I recently taught a group strength training class at a Senior Community Home for about 10 months. It went very well and it was done to help with research for the Healthy Brain Clinic. We quickly surmised that exercise, especially strength training will improve cognitive functioning. It improves physical, psychological, and socioeconomic well-being for all participants who consistently performed in class. I am hoping that by taking this class and others like it, I will be able to enter the MA program here at CSULB. I feel like I can make a significant impact in Senior health management. I have a strong background in exercise and nutrition. It would certainly help to gain more knowledge in other medical aspects, and government programs and assistance to be able to be more of an asset for my current clients and future ones as well.

faculty achievements

- **Hill, M. S.**, Baker, R. B., Park, E. S., & Fagioli, L. (2024). Understanding Student Beliefs and Choices Related to Cross-Enrollment to Square Practice with Theory. The Journal of Higher Education, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2024.2422761>
- Hart, C. M. D., Xu, D., Alonso, E., & **Hill, M.** (2025). COVID-19 in California Community Colleges: College Responses, College Resources, and Student Outcomes. Research in Higher Education, 66(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-024-09819-1>
- Dr. **Maria Carpiac** was a guest on the “Hotter Than Ever” podcast on September 13, 2024, speaking about women and aging.
- Dr. **Maria Carpiac** presented a workshop about the Blue Zones to Soroptimist International, Long Beach Chapter, on September 18, 2024.
- Dr. **Maria Carpiac** presented “Age Inclusive Andragogy/Gerogogy to faculty and staff through the Faculty Development Center on October 29, 2024.
- On November 5, 2024, **Alexandra Wilkinson, MSG** spoke about the CSULB Friendly Caller Program through the Center for Successful Aging.
- **Dr. Iveris Martinez** was awarded sabbatical for Spring 2025 to conduct research on integrating aging content in various disciplines
- Fathering in Later Life: Evolving Roles, Health Implications, and Gaps in NCFR Family Focus (Spring 2024), **Mary Marshall, Ph.D.**; Amber J. Majeske, Ph.D.; Jeremy B. Yorgason, Ph.D.; and Áine M. Humble, Ph.D.
- The Enduring Impact of Fathering on the lives of Fathers and their Adult Children. Presented at International Association for Relationship Research Conference, 2024. Amber J. Majeske, **Mary Marshall**, Áine Humble, Jeremy B. Yorgason, Sonia Molloy, Madison Jacques

Thank You

AND BEST WISHES

The Gerontology Program would like to extend special appreciation to two university leaders that have promoted the age-friendliness of the CSULB campus.

President Jane Conoley and CHHS Dean Monica Lounsbery, we thank you for your support and encouragement.

We wish you the best as you move on to the next chapters of your lives.



GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The GOAL: \$25,000 by 2025

Our PROGRESS: Over \$13,000

**How you can CONTRIBUTE: Please visit
www.csulb.edu/gerontology**

**The fund will support our future
workforce in aging careers. If each person
reading this newsletter contributed just
\$10, we'd make quite a dent in the
amount we still need to raise!**

**Receipts for your tax write-offs can be
provided!!**