

June 2024

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Board of Directors Meets

The GSA Board of Directors met April 11, led by Chair James Nelson, PhD, FGSA. President Judy Howe, PhD, FGSA, FAGHE, provided an update on the development of 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) theme, “The Fortitude Factor”; a visit to universities in Portland and Seattle in advance of the 2024 ASM in Seattle; an informal physician workgroup established to submit symposium/workshops for the ASM; and DEIA activities. CEO James Appleby, BSPHarm, MPH provided updates on the 2024 ASM, cultivating a culture of giving, and the 2024 CEO Action Plan. A Finance Committee report from Treasurer Carmen Sceppa, MD, PhD, FGSA, presented the preliminary FY 2023 operating budget financial statement. Director of Member Engagement Gena Schoen and CFO Jim Evans gave a membership update on 2023 and planned activities for 2024. Appleby and Evans gave a brief overview on possible ASM sites for 2028 and 2029 as well as a revision to the ASM site selection policy, changing “state” to “city” as the primary metric in determining a location. The board approved these revisions to the April 4, 2023, site selection policy as presented.

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GSA Presidential Candidates Issue Statements



Tamara A. Baker,
MA, PhD, FGSA

**Tamara A. Baker,
MA, PhD, FGSA**

GSA’s vision “to cultivate excellence in interdisciplinary aging” aligns with my commitment to mentoring the next generation of scholars, fostering an inclusive environment, and promoting cross-disciplinary collaborations. GSA has the strategic alliance to drive meaningful change in the discipline and broader community. This happens with strong leadership, a clear vision, and collective innovative ideas.

Serving as GSA’s secretary and chair of the Behavioral and Social Sciences Section, I’ve been very strategic to make sure that new initiatives are created to serve the needs of the organization, its members, and the larger community. From starting the Concept Coffee, hosting Conversation Cafes, to establishing the Historically Black Colleges and Universities



Roland J. Thorpe Jr.,
PhD, MS, FGSA

**Roland J. Thorpe Jr.,
PhD, MS, FGSA**

I am very excited about the nomination to serve as the vice president of GSA. It has been over two decades since I became a member of GSA. At my very first meeting I realized that GSA was going to be my professional home.

I have served in several positions over the years, including chair of the Minority Issues in Gerontology Committee (now Advisory Panel) (2014 to 2016), Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSS) Section representative at large (2016 to 2018), and the BSS Section representative to the GSA Fellowship Committee (2019 to 2020).

I plan to leverage these past experiences and relationships to make for an effective and productive vice president. In addition, I served as the president of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Sciences, which provided me experience in shared governance and shared decision-making processes.

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Internship Program Bringing Three Students to DC

GSA is welcoming three new participants in its policy internship program this summer. Established in 2019, this professional development opportunity for emerging scholars in the aging is named in memory of two policy experts with a long history of service to GSA — Greg O’Neill, PhD, a long-time GSA staff member who passed away in September 2018, and Kathryn Hyer, MPP, PhD, FGSA, FAGHE, a past GSA board chair and University of South Florida professor who passed away in January 2021.

The internship program is managed by GSA Vice President for Policy and Professional Affairs Patricia M. D’Antonio, BSPHarm, MS, MBA, BCGP.



Maizonne Fields, Jeein Jang, and Samuel Van Vleet

“We’ve already guided 10 people through this program, and we witnessed first-hand how the work they do can have a positive impact on aging policy and research. We’re proud to welcome our three new interns as we honor Drs. O’Neill and Hyer,” said D’Antonio, who also acknowledged

Continued on page 7



Practicing Generativity Across the Career Course

By James Appleby, BSPharm, MPH • jappleby@geron.org

As researchers, clinicians, and educators, GSA members regularly nurture the next generation of scholars who will carry the field of gerontology forward. While we're accustomed to thinking about a life course approach to aging, we don't always think about our career course, and how we mentor new research scientists, coach promising clinicians, and teach eager graduate students in our daily work.

We are building a scientific bridge to the future for emerging scholars in the aging field and practicing generativity — concern for establishing and guiding the next generation — across the career course.

I was delighted to participate recently in the first webinar offered by GSA's new Generativity and Aging Interest Group. The expert panelists introduced the concept of generativity, its place in lifespan development, and contemporary applications in the psychology and aging fields. The webinar also touched on how generativity manifests in our professional and personal lives. You can [view the webinar now on GSA Enrich](#).

While Erik Erikson's seventh stage of lifespan development (generativity versus stagnation) is often associated with newfound realizations of human mortality in midlife and beyond, I view generativity as a trait honed by all GSA members across the career course. I've witnessed firsthand how members of GSA's Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO) work to help fellow junior scholars as they strive to get established in the field.

I've also been impressed with how

GSA members at mid-career take on leadership and mentoring roles in the Society. And I've been gratified with how GSA fellows step up to play their essential generative role as they reach this milestone in their careers.

As a professional membership Society, GSA plays a role in fostering generativity at all career stages. As one example, GSA welcomes three policy interns this month who will spend the summer learning about aging policy at the national level. As host to the Resource Centers in Minority Aging Research National Coordinating Center, GSA is fostering the careers of scientists across the country. And as convener of the [2024 GSA Annual Scientific Meeting in Seattle](#), GSA is bringing together scholars across the entire field, the ultimate generative experience.

The most common challenge cited by emerging scholars today is inadequate funding to get to conferences, such as GSA's Annual Scientific Meeting, to present their findings, network with other researchers, and build new collaborations. If your career has benefited from the generativity expressed by those who came before you — professors, mentors, colleagues — please "pay it forward" by supporting the next generation through a contribution to a [GSA Section Emerging Scholars Fund](#) dedicated solely to student, post doc, trainee, and emerging scholar travel grants to participate in the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting. It's another example of how GSA members practice generativity across the career course.

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In Memoriam



W. Andrew “Andy” Achenbaum Jr., PhD, FGSA, FAGHE, passed away on April 29. He taught at Canisius College and Carnegie-Mellon University before becoming a professor of history and deputy director of the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Michigan. In 1999, he became dean of the College of Humanities, Fine Arts and Communication, and then dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and professor of history at the University of Houston. A prolific author and researcher, he wrote numerous books, articles, and public policy papers, exploring the multifaceted dimensions of growing older and its implications for society.

He served on the board of directors of the National Council on Aging, was a board member and editor for multiple scholarly journals, and supported GSA in numerous roles over the years — including as secretary; chair of the Humanities and Arts Committee, History and Archives Committee, Archives Development and Advisory Committee, 65th Anniversary Planning Committee, and Public Policy Committee; editor-in-chief of special publications; and editorial board member for *The Gerontologist* and the social sciences section of *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B*. In 2007, he earned GSA’s Donald P. Kent Award.

He was also a technical advisor to the 1981, 1995, and 2005 White House Conference on Aging.



Michael Anthony “Mick” Piper-Smyer, PhD, FGSA, passed away on May 3. He began his academic career in 1977 at Penn State, serving as both a professor and administrator in the College of Human Development. In 1994 he became dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and director of the Center for Aging and Work at Boston College. From 2008 to 2015, he served as provost of Bucknell University, retiring from his academic career there as professor of psychology in 2020.

He contributed importantly to the development of clinical geropsychology from the beginning of its emergence as an organized field. He was president of Division 20 of the American Psychological Association. He contributed to disseminating knowledge about the field with his co-authored book “Aging and Mental Health.” He was recognized with the M. Powell Lawton Award for Distinguished Contribution in Clinical Geropsychology from the Society for Clinical Geropsychology; the Lifetime Contribution to the Psychology of Aging, Committee on Aging, American Psychological Association; and an APA Citizen Psychologist Presidential Citation

Also an expert on climate change, he was the founder and CEO of Growing Greener: Climate Action for a Warming World.

New Books by Members

- “Current Perspectives on Centenarians: Introduction to Lifespan and Healthspan,” edited by Raya Elfadel Kheirbek, MD, MPH, FGSA, and Maria Llorente, MD. Published by Springer, 2023.

Members in the News

- On April 3, The New York Times quoted Francesca Falzarano, PhD, in an article titled “[Carefluencers’ Are Helping Older Loved Ones, and Posting About It.](#)”
- Valter Longo, PhD, FGSA, was interviewed for an April 4 CNBC article titled “[I grew up in Italy and have studied longevity for 35 years—this is the No. 1 way to eat for a long, healthy life.](#)”
- Raya Elfadel Kheirbek, MD, MPH, FGSA, authored an April 5 op-ed for The Baltimore Sun titled “[Living to 100: Making Maryland a ‘Blue Zone.’](#)”
- Judith Gonyea, PhD, FGSA, was quoted in an April 13 Caregiving Magazine article titled “[Over the Threshold: Women and Homelessness.](#)”
- On April 24, an article in The New York Times titled “[Could Eating Less Help You Live Longer?](#)” quoted James Nelson, PhD, FGSA, and Rafael de Cabo, PhD, FGSA.

Member Spotlight

GSA’s website features monthly Q&A sessions with distinguished members. The current spotlight shines on:

[Idorenyin Udoh, PhD](#)

Member Referral Program

This month’s \$25 Amazon gift certificate winner:

[Jennifer Turner, PhD, FGSA](#)

The recipient, who became eligible after referring new member was randomly selected using randomizer.org.

For more details [Katherine Kitchens, MSW](#) on the Member Referral Program visit:

www.geron.org/referral.

Reauthorizing a Foundational Law for Older Americans: Part 1

Originally signed into law in 1965 along with its enormous siblings Medicare and Medicaid, the Older Americans Act (OAA) is the foundational program providing community-based supports and services to our nation's older adults. It has now been four years and a couple months since the passage of the last and rather modest OAA reauthorization legislation [Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020](#).

To give you a sense of how long ago that was, it became law the same week that the bipartisan \$2 trillion economic stimulus package called the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act or [CARES Act](#) was signed into law. Thus, the OAA law expires at the end of fiscal year 2024 (September 30, 2024) and some in Congress are busy developing a legislative package to refresh and strengthen the current law through the reauthorization process.

GSA staff are closely monitoring the process and actively participating in the legislative discussions. Here is the first segment of a two-part article on the OAA reauthorization.

I can't resist a quick reminder of what authorization vs. appropriations bills do. The Congressional Research Service describes these two critical pieces of the legislative pie this way: "An authorization may generally be described as any statutory provision that defines the authority of the government to act. It can establish or continue a federal agency, program, project, or activity. Further, it may establish policies and restrictions and deal with organizational and administrative matters. It may also, explicitly or implicitly, authorize subsequent congressional action to provide appropriations. By itself, however, an authorization does not provide funding for government activities. ... An appropriation may generally be described as a statutory provision that provides budget authority, thus permitting a federal agency to incur obligations and make payments from the Treasury for specified purposes, usually during a specified period of time." Back to the OAA: although the end of September seems like a long way off, Congress has few legislative days remaining with long recesses planned for this election year. Staff had hoped to begin the process last fall, but most of the action has taken place only recently with a request for information from the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and two Senate hearings, one conducted by HELP and another with the Special Committee on Aging. The House Committee on Education and Workforce has not announced plans for hearings or development of a bill.

Stakeholder Input

Let's start with the [request for information](#) from the leadership and others on two committees that was released to stakeholders and the

general public on March 7. Those involved included Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Susan Collins (R-ME), Bob Casey (D-PA), Mike Braun (R-IN), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), and Ed Markey (D-MA).

The request included a number of questions, including several related to the pandemic-era effectiveness of the OAA programs, but was broad enough for advocates to address almost any concern or innovation, challenges and changing needs facing the older population, program effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. Advocates were given a mere two weeks to respond. Staff representing the HELP and Aging Committees and these members are working together to review the submissions and draft the legislation.

Hearings

Although the OAA has a proven track record of effectiveness, advocates stress that there is always room for improvement (especially if there were more funds to support the services). Hearings offer a public opportunity to share information, data, research, experiences, and stories related to the Act's role in our communities. Specific hearings on the OAA reauthorization have been held in recent weeks. The HELP Committee held a hearing on March 7 titled "[The Older Americans Act: Supporting Efforts to Meet the Needs of Seniors](#)." It provided an opportunity for an older Virginian, two advocacy organizations (National Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels America), a state department of elder affairs (Florida), and a health care provider to discuss the supply and demand for supports and services for older adults. Alison Barkoff, who serves as principal deputy administrator and performs the duties of the administrator and assistant secretary for aging at the Administration for Community Living also testified. The Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing focused on "[The Older Americans Act: The Local Impact of the Law and the Upcoming Reauthorization](#)." The senators heard from four witnesses, one older Pennsylvanian who benefits from several programs including home delivered meals and transportation, two area agencies on aging program directors (Indiana and Pennsylvania), and a state long-term care ombudsman from Connecticut. Witnesses advocated for more flexibility with the dollars being allocated to them regarding the nutrition programs, and overall encouraged an increase in funding towards OAA programs.

In noting the importance of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in serving residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities, Casey proposed tripling the program's funding. Connecticut State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Mairead Painter called on Congress to push the administration to fill the national director of the ombudsman program position, which has been vacant for several years.

Politics is part of all hearings and some senators focused on inflation as the culprit hurting older adults and Congress' tendency to borrow to pay for the needs of the country. There was some pushback by Braun on the recent OAA final regulations that expanded the definition of "greatest social need" to include LGBTQI+ and several other groups.

In addition, you may [read](#) about GSA member Jasmine Travers speaking at an April 16 hearing of the Senate Special Committee on Aging on "[The Long-Term Care Workforce: Addressing Shortages and Improving the Profession](#)." Also, related Aging Committee hearings have been held throughout the past year focusing on the programs and services for older adults, including "[Economic Challenges and Opportunities for Older Americans](#)" in August 2023 and "[Uplifting Families, Workers, and Older Adults: Supporting Communities of Care](#)" in March 2023.

Legislation

Generally speaking, the staff of the committee of jurisdiction for a law drafts the legislation with the assistance of legislative counsel, who work for all senators and members of the House. In the case of the OAA, the staff of the HELP committee are doing the drafting with the assistance of Aging Committee staff and the other senators I mentioned. On the House side, it will be the staff of the Education and Workforce Committee. In addition, all members of Congress may draft and introduce their own bills, and several bills have already been introduced regarding the OAA and there are more to come.

Screening for loneliness is the focus of S.4374, the Social Engagement and Network Initiatives for Older Relief (SENIOR) Act introduced by Senators Tina Smith (D-MN), Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Rick Scott (R-FL), and GSA has been involved in the bill drafting.

"Florida has a wonderful senior population that contributes so much to our great state. Combatting the feeling of isolation and loneliness for our aging community has endless benefits — from better mental and physical health to stronger, multigenerational relationships with families and communities," said Scott in the press release describing the bill. Specifically, the bill would allow states to provide OAA grants to programs that are tackling loneliness, such as the foster grandparent program or Meals on Wheels, require the Administration for Community Living to provide technical assistance on implementing initiatives addressing loneliness, and require a report on the impact of loneliness on seniors and possible solutions.

Two of the pieces of legislation introduced in the 118th Congress to amend the OAA are related to LGBTQI+ older adults, and both were introduced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR).

H.R.8423, the Elder Pride Act, would amend the OAA to establish an LGBTQI+ rural outreach grant program to help rural Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) offer LGBTQI+ specific services for those living with HIV.

As explained by Congressional Equality Caucus Co-Chair and co-sponsor of the legislation Sharice Davids (D-KS), "Many of

our LGBTQI+ elders fought tirelessly for equality in a world that refused to accept their identity. While they overcame tremendous odds to give future generations the rights they deserve, our elders, particularly those in rural communities, continue to face discrimination when accessing long-term care and health care. I am proud to support the Elder Pride Act because who you are and who you love should never increase your risk for isolation, poverty, and poor health outcomes as you age."

H.R.3625, the Ruthie and Connie LGBTQI Elder Americans Act, seeks to overcome barriers faced by many LGBTQI+ older adults by, among other provisions, including LGBTQI+ older adults among women, rural, and racial and ethnic minorities as a population with the greatest economic and social needs under OAA; establishing the National Resource Center on LGBTQI+ Aging; and requiring the assistant secretary for aging to oversee data collection for LGBTQI+ adults, their needs, and efficacy of state aging resources to meet those needs.

Next month I will cover more OAA legislative proposals, positions and advocacy work developed by GSA and other advocacy groups, and provide an update on the process.

Recent GSA Policy Actions

GSA supported [a resolution introduced by Rep. Joyce Beatty \(D-OH\)](#), that recognizes the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in medical education in response to calls to withhold federal funding from medical schools for engaging in such activities.

GSA attended three visits with Capitol Hill staff — led by the Adult Vaccine Access Coalition — highlighting the importance of increased funding for vaccines and vaccine research in the upcoming fiscal year 2025 federal budget.

GSA attended a briefing on Capitol Hill titled "[Exploring Obesity's Impact on Women](#)" — led by the Society for Women's Health Research — that included a panel of advocates, researchers, and policy experts who highlighted the disproportionate effect obesity has on women through the life course.

GSA continues to advocate for evidence-based research and practice areas around treatment for obesity. GSA signed on to letters with the [Health Equity Coalition and Chronic Disease Coalition](#), [American Security Project](#), and the [Obesity Action Coalition](#) urging Congress to mark-up the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act, provide more resources regarding weight loss for those in the military, and calling for expanded Medicare coverage for obesity medications and intensive behavioral therapy.

GSA, as a founding member of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, supported the Long Term Care Workforce Support Act and the Integrating Social Workers Across Health Care Settings Act.

Series A Special Issue Devoted to Urinary Incontinence, Voiding Dysfunction

The latest special issue of the Medical Sciences section of *The Journals of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, titled “[Urinary Incontinence and Voiding Dysfunction](#),” provides an update on research advances addressing the pathophysiology of voiding disorders of aging and urinary incontinence, as well as the impact of these conditions on function, independence, and quality of life.

The social stigma of urinary incontinence leads to it being both under-diagnosed and undertreated. The guest editor, George Kuchel, MD, CM, FRCP, AGSF, FGSA, of UConn Center on Aging University of Connecticut, states that great progress has been made and the future is bright for translational research aimed at improving our understanding and ultimately transforming the care of these common, yet challenging conditions. As our understanding increases, the treatment for this geriatric syndrome will be elevated from mostly palliative care to one that provides a path towards future interventions, targeting varied underlying risk factors and biological drivers which will be both effective and safe.

Thank You to All 2023 Journal Reviewers

Scientific progress depends on the generosity of reviewers who assist editors by sharing their time and expertise in the peer review process. The editors-in-chief and editors wish to thank all individuals for their assistance in reviewing manuscripts during 2023.

- *The Journals of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Science*
 - [Biological Sciences section](#)
 - [Medical Sciences section](#)
- *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*
 - [Psychological Sciences section](#)
 - [Social Sciences section](#)
- [Innovation in Aging](#)
- [The Gerontologist](#)
- [Gerontology & Geriatrics Education](#)

GSA Journals Have Several Open Calls for Papers

The GSA journals regularly invite submissions for special themed issues and sections. Find more information about publishing in the GSA portfolio, and learn how you benefit from supporting the Society’s vision to ensure we can all enjoy meaningful lives as we age, on our [Reasons to Publish page](#). Browse our open calls for papers below and consider submitting your research to one of our leading journals:

The Journals of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences

- [Translational Geroscience](#) (Rolling submissions; no submission deadline)

The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences

- [AI-Driven Measurement in Gerontological Research: Digital Metrics, Biomarkers, and Phenotypes in Cognitive, Behavioral, and Psychological Sciences](#) (Full manuscripts due July 1)

The Gerontologist

- [Hispanic/Latinx Healthy Aging](#) (Abstracts due June 14)

Gerontology & Geriatrics Education

- [Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Gerontological Education](#) (Manuscripts due July 1)
- [Education’s Role in Gerontology & Geriatrics Workforce Development](#) (Rolling submissions; no submission deadline)
- [Gerontology & Geriatrics Classroom Best Practices](#) (Rolling submissions; no submission deadline)

Why Submit to the GSA Portfolio?

GSA is committed to cultivating excellence in interdisciplinary aging research and education to advance innovations in practice and policy. The tradition of excellence in GSA’s peer-reviewed scientific journals, established in 1946, continues today.

Alongside being the largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging, the GSA portfolio benefits from impactful metrics such as CiteScore (Scopus) and Impact Factor (Journal Citation Reports) as well as membership with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Visit the [GSA journals website](#) to find more information about publishing in the GSA portfolio, and how you can support the Society’s vision to ensure we can all enjoy meaningful lives as we age.

GSA Journal Alerts: Delivered Right to Your Inbox!

Stay up to date on the latest research with [content alerts](#) delivered to you via email. This free service from Oxford University Press allows you to create custom email alerts to make sure you never miss out on the latest research from your favorite GSA publications. Just follow the steps below:

1. [Register for an Oxford Academic account](#). This will allow you to sign up for email alerts, purchase content, and save searches.
2. Once you’ve registered, click on your email address in the upper right hand corner.
3. From the drop-down menu, click on “Email Alerts.”
4. To register for New Issue Alerts (delivered with each new journal issue), click on “Add Alerts” under “New Issue Alerts.” Check the box next to any publication you wish to receive alerts from, and click “Add Alerts.”
5. To register for Advance Article Alerts (highlights the newest content weeks before it is included in an issue), click on “Add Alerts” under “Advance Article Alerts.” Check the box next to any publication you wish to receive alerts from, and select the frequency you wish to receive them (daily or weekly). Click on “Add Alerts.”
6. That’s it, you’re all signed up! You can edit your preferences at any time by logging back in to your Oxford Academic account.

Upcoming BSS Section Programming Includes ASM Symposia, Mini Mentoring Sessions

By Iggy Chang, PhD, and Monica Nelson, PhD

We are honored to serve as your year 2 and year 1 ESPO Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSS) Section junior leaders! Iggy is an assistant professor of gerontology in medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College. Monica is a postdoctoral research fellow working in Dr. Laura Zahodne's lab at the University of Michigan. The BSS leadership team has been hard at work to provide diverse opportunities for engagement at the Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and beyond. Here, we will highlight some of the activities we have accomplished so far and what we have planned for the upcoming year.

In March, we held a BSS Volunteer Orientation, where our BSS leadership team provided an overview of their roles and welcomed our BSS volunteers who make up the ASM Working Group, the Awards Review Panel, the Fellows Review Panel, and the Volunteer Workgroup. We had 25 volunteers attend. We wanted to send a special thanks to all our volunteers! We are grateful for all that you do to promote the work of BSS in GSA! You are integral to our success, and we could not do it without you.

Our next session will be a mid-career panel to be held in late summer/early fall. The BSS leadership team is in the process of organizing the program, which will include speakers who have been recognized for their exemplary mentorship within their careers.

Finally, we have several updates regarding the ASM. First, BSS received over 1,000 abstract submissions for the ASM — about 40 percent of all submissions! To all who submitted abstracts and to all who reviewed abstracts, thank you! Your work will ensure we have a high-quality and innovative program to present this November.

Some sessions we are particularly excited about are the submitted BSS symposia. The BSS Presidential Symposium will be held during the BSS Business Meeting on Thursday, November 14, from 4:30 to 6:15 pm. Our submitted session is titled “Embracing Opportunities

and Confronting Challenges in Global Aging Research.” This is the first year of a new format incorporating the Presidential Symposium into the Business Meeting, providing an opportunity to showcase these premiere researchers along with award recipients in the BSS section. The submitted ESPO and BSS Section Symposium is titled “Defying the Odds: How Minoritized Older Adults Use Psychosocial and Environmental Fortitude to Enhance Aging Health” and will feature the work of several impressive early career researchers. Be on the lookout for these sessions!

We are also looking forward to the return of the BSS Mini Mentoring Sessions at the ASM. These sessions were introduced at our last ASM and were a massive success! The majority of the respondents to the follow-up survey (both mentors and mentees) said they would participate again and recommend it to their peers. The Mini Mentoring Sessions provide opportunities for additional mentoring to occur outside of your normal network. Details about how to sign up for these sessions will be sent through GSA Connect as we get closer to the meeting!

Lastly, we will host an ASM Sneak Peek featuring some of our speakers from the ESPO BSS Section Symposium. They will provide a brief introduction to the work they will share at the meeting and will provide some tips for how to make the conference experience most impactful. More information about the ASM Sneak Peek will be shared soon!

Please reach out to us via GSA Connect if you have suggestions about programming or events you would like to see from the BSS section or if you are interested in volunteering with us! We will send updates about future sessions and opportunities via GSA Connect, so be on the lookout for these messages. We hope to see you at these events and at the ASM in Seattle!

Continued from page 1 - Internship Program Bringing Three Students to DC

the many donors who contributed to GSA in support of the internship program.

This summer, GSA will welcome:

- Jeein Jang, who is pursuing a PhD in gerontology from the University of Massachusetts Boston.
- Maizonne Fields, who is pursuing a PhD in developmental psychology from The University of Alabama at Birmingham.
- Samuel Van Vleet, who is pursuing a PhD in social gerontology from Miami University.

Each intern will spend eight weeks in Washington, DC, this

summer and be immersed in aging-related policy development and participate in this process at the national level.

Internship duties and opportunities will include attending congressional hearings; researching and analyzing issues that impact older people; meeting with federal regulatory agencies and national coalitions; monitoring legislation and regulations; contributing to GSA's *Public Policy & Aging Report*; developing policy sessions for the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting; drafting communications related to these issues impacting older people; and attending networking events with GSA staff.

Continued from page 1 - Baker

(HBCU) Collaborative Interest Group and joining efforts to host the HBCU Aging Conference, I recognize that these initiatives were successful because a need was met and because of collegial and society-wide collaborations.

To continue progress, we must 1) work together, 2) appreciate and advocate for change, 3) be creative/innovative, and 4) support early-stage investigators. I'm prepared to continue GSA's mission in promoting interdisciplinary research, expanding the movement for global collaborations, and fostering collegial alliances — while continuing my leadership, mentoring, and outreach efforts in developing initiatives acknowledging the accomplishments of and supporting my fellow colleagues.

Tamara A. Baker, MA, PhD, FGSA, is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She received her MA in clinical/community psychology from Norfolk State University (Historically Black College and University [HBCU]), a PhD from Penn State in

biobehavioral health, and postdoctoral training in public health at the University of Michigan.

She is an appointed member of the United States' Department of Veterans Affairs' Geriatric and Gerontology Advisory Committee, a member of the National Institutes of Health's Interagency Pain Coordinating Committee, editor-in-chief of *Ethnicity & Health*, editor emeritus of *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*, and a member of several editorial and advisory boards.

Baker has served as GSA's secretary, Behavioral and Social Sciences Section chair, and chair of the Minority Issues in Gerontology Committee (now Advisory Panel). She is a GSA fellow and co-convenor of the HBCU Collaborative Interest Group. Her background in gerontology, psychology, and biobehavioral health has evolved into an active research agenda that broadly focuses on understanding the behavioral and sociocultural predictors and outcomes of chronic pain among older Black adults; health disparities and inequities in pain management, access, and availability of pain management resources; and social determinants of health.

Continued from page 1 - Thorpe Jr.

If elected, I will work with the GSA membership and staff on achieving the organization's strategic goals and objectives. Using a servant leadership style, I am eager to work collaboratively across sections of GSA to advance science, practice, advocacy, and policy to ensure that all individuals are afforded the opportunity to enjoy a "meaningful life as we age." I look forward to continuing my dedication to GSA by serving in this role of vice president.

Roland J. Thorpe Jr., PhD, MS, FGSA, is a professor in the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society, founding director of the Program of Men's Health Research in the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions (HCHDS), deputy director of HCHDS, and co-director of the Johns Hopkins Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

He was recently appointed as the inaugural associate vice provost of faculty diversity. He holds joint appointments in the Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology in the Department of Medicine, and the Department of Neurology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and the Department of Sociology at the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University.

Thorpe is a social epidemiologist and gerontologist whose research focuses on the association of how social determinants of health impact health, functional and cognitive outcomes among Black men across the adult life course. In addition, he leads or participates in several training programs designed to develop scholars who belong to under-represented groups to research independence. Thorpe's overall objective is to provide insights from research to inform health promoting strategies or policy relevant solutions for Black men.

Ballots for the GSA elections will be sent by e-mail to all members with a valid e-mail address on June 7. Reminders will be sent prior to the voting deadline of July 9. Make sure GSA has your correct email address on file by checking your member profile at www.geron.org. If you do not receive your electronic ballot, contact ballots@geron.org. The full biographical sketches and personal statements of all candidates running for GSA office [will be available online](#) by June 7.

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Ballots for the GSA elections will be sent by e-mail to all members with a valid e-mail address on June 7. Reminders will be sent prior to the voting deadline of July 9. Make sure GSA has your correct email address on file by checking your member profile at www.geron.org. If you do not receive your electronic ballot, contact ballots@geron.org. The full biographical sketches and personal statements of all candidates running for GSA office [will be available online](#) by June 7.

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Podcasts

- [Culturally Congruent Care for Hispanic Older Adults with Obesity](#)
- [ACHIEVE: A Landmark Study of the Effect of Hearing Intervention on Brain Health in Older Adults](#)

funding opportunities

Federal Funds Slated to Support RRTC Program

The Administration for Community Living's National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) has announced a new funding opportunity for the Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs) program on health and function of people with disabilities.

The purpose of the RRTC programs is to achieve the goals and improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act through well-designed research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in important topic areas as specified by NIDILRR. These activities are designed to benefit rehabilitation service providers, individuals with disabilities, family members, and other stakeholders.

The [RRTC on Health and Function of People with Physical Disabilities](#) will conduct research, training, technical assistance, and related activities to contribute to improved health and function among people with physical disabilities. The closing date for applications is June 17.

NIDILRR Announces Grants for Disability/Rehabilitation Dissertation Research

The Administration for Community Living's National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) has announced a new funding opportunity for the [Switzer Research Fellowship Program](#). It will support doctoral candidates as they conduct their dissertation research focused on

a disability or rehabilitation topic that addresses outcomes among people with disabilities in one or more of NIDILRR's outcome domains: community living and participation, employment, or health and function. NIDILRR plans to make five fellowship awards under this opportunity. Applicants must demonstrate their formal academic status as doctoral candidates and have approval of dissertation proposal. Fellowship awards will have one 12-month project period. Proposals are due June 28.

AHRQ Welcomes Applications Related to Person-Centered Models of Care

The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released a special emphasis notice (SEN) to convey the agency's interest in supporting health services research to conduct research that will address questions related to the development, implementation, evaluation, and scale of person-centered models of care to optimize physical and mental health, functional status, and the well-being among older adults. This SEN builds on AHRQ's prior work, including the [Optimizing Health and Function as We Age Roundtable Report](#), [Research Agenda for Transforming Care for People with Multiple Chronic Conditions](#), and the [Multiple Chronic Conditions e-careplan](#). It also supports AHRQ's ongoing commitment to the inclusion of priority populations in health services research. The agency encourages research teams to submit applications in response to this SEN using [AHRQ's current research grant announcements](#).

new resources

NIH RECOVER Makes Long COVID Data Easier to Access

Secure data from more than 14,000 adults who participate in National Institutes of Health (NIH) [observational research](#) on long COVID are now available to authorized researchers through [BioData Catalyst](#) (BDC).

BDC is a cloud-based ecosystem developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of NIH, to accelerate research on heart, lung, blood, and sleep disorders. The research on long COVID — broadly [defined](#) as signs, symptoms, or conditions that persist or develop for at least four

weeks after an infection from the virus that causes COVID-19 — is provided through the NIH Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) Initiative.

Authorized researchers can now [request access](#) to a subset of data from adults in the observational RECOVER cohort. These data include information from more than 92,000 study visits collected between October 29, 2021, and September 15, 2023, at 79 locations throughout the U.S. New RECOVER data, including data from other studies, will be added to BDC at regular intervals.

The Importance of Inclusive LGBTQI+ Research and Education

By Minzhi Ye, PhD, Kent State University, and Amanda Collins, MPH, UMass Chan Medical School

In this article, we aim to discuss and emphasize the importance of integrating LGBTQI+ issues into gerontological education and provide educators with practical information on designing inclusive research projects, curricula, and ideas to engage with the LGBTQI+ communities. Incorporating LGBTQI+ issues into education enhances the inclusiveness of the educational environment and promotes empathy and awareness of social justice among students and faculty.

GSA's 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting highlighted the membership's interest in supporting and engaging with LGBTQI+ research and social issues by representing the members of the [Rainbow Research Group Interest Group's](#) 18 presentations, three award winners, and four task forces.

Gerontology, as the study of the aging process and older adults, has only recently begun to shine a spotlight on the specific needs and experiences of the LGBTQI+ community. The lack of thoughtful inclusion in research and education has resulted in a significant lack of understanding and support for LGBTQI+ older adults by educators, students, healthcare professionals, and social service providers. This gap urgently needs to be addressed through research, curriculum development, and thoughtful community engagement to enrich the discipline of gerontology and improve outcomes within the LGBTQI+ communities.

When data is available, it is important to meaningfully incorporate the latest research on LGBTQI+ aging, health issues, and societal needs into gerontology curricula. There is currently a fair amount of literature to guide educators in introducing LGBTQI+ topics into education, such as the [Toolkit for Creating Inclusive and Nondiscriminatory School Environments for LGBTQI+ Students](#) published by the U.S. Department of Education. However, there are limited resources specific to gerontology. To address this challenge, the LGBTQI+ communities must be engaged in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

For too long, research, medicine, and politics have taken from and attempted to erase the LGBTQI+ communities; more of the same will only continue to limit our communities. Educators must deepen students' understanding of the challenges specific to this population and promote equitable and inclusive practices. A meaningful opportunity for educators could be to invite LGBTQI+ advocates and elders to the classroom to share their life experiences. Making community connections integrates the needed queer experiences into the classroom and creates further opportunities to engage in informed and thoughtful discourse.

For instance, after classroom roundtables with the LGBTQI+ community, class discussions could analyze case studies,

legislation, and program curriculums and propose changes for better inclusion and representation. This pedagogical approach enhances students' empathy and critical thinking skills and provides practical responses and solutions when they encounter similar challenges in healthcare and social services in the future.

For educators who have started some of these practices, there are opportunities to continue creating an environment of respect and understanding for classroom discussions, such as LGBTQI+ sensitivity training for educators (e.g., [safe zone project](#)). Such training would allow educators to advance their skills in creating and enforcing an inclusive environment. Those who receive this training are better equipped to address potentially conflicting or insensitive remarks professionally and constructively, ensuring that classroom discussions are both sensitive and inclusive when exploring complex topics. In such an environment, even if there is resistance or discomfort when discussing LGBTQI+ topics, educators can use professional training and skills to effectively address potential conflicts and insensitive comments and ensure that all students feel respected throughout the learning process.

Finally, it is essential to remember that inclusion and representation in research and education continue to evolve, requiring educators and researchers to evolve. It's important to review student feedback, adapt course content or process as necessary, and remain vigilant with ongoing advances in LGBTQI+ research and policy to ensure that your language, methods, and policies are current and appropriate.

This task is less arduous when you have a thoughtful and meaningful engagement with members of the LGBTQI+ communities. It can be overwhelming to wonder where to start for your research project or course content, so lean on the experts and connect with GSA's Rainbow Research Group Interest Group and receive mentorship to help you start your journey into a more inclusive field of gerontology.

This article reviews the importance of LGBTQI+ inclusion in gerontology. It highlights the need to recognize and address the unique needs and experiences of LGBTQI+ older adults by engaging with the communities meaningfully. By promoting inclusive practices and education, we can work toward equitable and dignified aging for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. A recommended resource for further reading is the [U.S. Department of Education toolkit: Creating inclusive and nondiscriminatory school environments for LGBTQI+ students](#).

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