Educating for the Full Life Cycle-Including After 60

Phillip K. Numinen
Richard J. Colwell
St. Clair Community College, Michigan

James Lampky
Central Michigan University

Daniel R. McLaughlin
Asnuntuck Community College, Connecticut

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/perspectives/vol6/iss3/12

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/perspectives

Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Liberal Studies Commons
The Social Security Act has been a continuing source of support for more and more of the basic functions related to the Aging process. Best known aspects of this act relate to income maintenance and medical care which I will by-pass in an effort to meet the challenge given by Dr. Haak entitled "One Source of Financing Demonstration Projects."

Allow me to zero in on one title of the Social Security Act, that being Title VI, which I understand may become Title XX by the first of the year, and incidentally, a combination of Title I, IV, and XIV of the act which became effective on January 1 of this year. Needless to say, it is difficult to keep track of the Federal government and the changes that are constantly occurring.

It is helpful to know that each state is required to have a single state agency responsible for administering the act and also that services must be separated from financial assistance. An inquiry to State government, usually social service, social welfare or just plain welfare will bring you to this single state agency. Also an approved state plan must
be developed by this single state agency which is in accord with guidelines and regulations published by the Federal government in the Federal Register at various intervals, dependent upon the Administration's interpretation of passed legislation.

Now what can be funded and how does the funding affect General and Liberal Studies? Assuming your state plan has an active adult service component that encompasses all of the allowable services to adults, we might say that methodology and innovation are the keys to implementing a meaningful program for those people entering the restive (from employment stand-point) period of the life cycle.

In Michigan we have developed two systems of funding educational programs for adults. We have a state agreement with the Department of Education that allows for reimbursement of services provided our clients that meet eligibility criteria established by our department. We also have a donated funds system which allows for purchase of service from specific agencies. Due to time limitation, I will concentrate on the Purchase of Service system and pass over our inter-department agreement at this time.

The Purchase of Service system can be used in conjunction with other services to be provided by the service agency. An example of this method is the senior citizen center program. Educational services are one component of a comprehensive service package, which includes other services such as transportation, counseling, information and referral, etc.

We have also funded programs for adults through community schools of continuing education, adult education systems of local school jurisdictions. These programs are usually focused on a select population such as mentally retarded, handicapped, academically frail to the degree that independent living is jeopardized. All such programs must relate to independent living or strengthening the family unit, and again eligibility must be determined by the local department of social services in cooperation with the provider agency.

We have also purchased services from colleges and universities of a technical nature. An example of this type of purchase would be the creation of a handbook to be utilized by our department in its training program. Usually these technical assistance purchases are restricted to highly sophisticated research or unique demonstrations that would benefit our state's human service delivery system.

Our P.O.S. system also requires a donation of 25% of the total budget. It is also necessary that the donor and provider be separate organizations. Federal funds cannot be used to acquire other federal funds; Model Cities money is the only exception to this rule. Sources of donor support should be developed by the local or regional service office and should not necessarily be the responsibility of the provider agency.
In closing my suggestion for pursuing the development of a program is to start with the local, i.e., county governmental unit responsible for administering social services and seek their aid with the proposal writing process; in Michigan we have regional staff available for additional assistance. Grass roots involvement is still basic to attaining funding for any program serving people.

A Developing Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Program at St. Clair Community College

By Richard J. Colwell

I appreciate the invitation to be part of this group of educators. Bob Huber, Jim Lampkey and Phil Numinen and I have known each other well ever since those two-year weekend seminar sessions in 1969 and 1970 at Ann Arbor. They are certainly aging friends.

I will divide my remarks into four basic areas:

1) How St. Clair County Community College became involved with Gerontology in the first place.

2) The process of getting a Sociology of Aging program going given our College's complicated curriculum system.

3) The courses at St. Clair County Community College as it is now proceeding.

4) Some projections for the future of the program at our college and in the Community College movement in general.

How Did Our College Get Involved?

In 1968 and 1969, the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Michigan conducted sixteen weekend seminars over the two-year period. Twenty-eight faculty members from colleges, both two-year and four-year, across Michigan came together and were given a rather thorough grounding in the many discipline areas touched by that broad field that is called Gerontology. We were exposed to some of the pioneers in the field like Wilma Donahue, Woodrow Hunter, Clark Tibbitts and Leo Pastalan.

St. Clair County Community College was represented by Eleazar Curti from Spanish, Janet Kelly from Sociology and Richard Colwell from English. Our participation was encouraged by our then Vice President for Instruction, Dr. William Peters.
It soon became evident that the Institute expected this investment of time and money to pay off across the state. We were directed to begin to get our college involved in our local communities in aging programs. Then, too, we were encouraged and helped to begin long-range planning toward courses in aging on campus.

Our representatives to the Faculty Seminar brought together an inter-disciplinary committee and began work toward both of the above aims.

I began making contacts with our local senior-citizen housing project activities groups and started two discussion sessions a week between senior citizens and college students. Soon I was asked to join the Board of the St. Clair County Council on Aging and have been its president off and on over the last five years. Our Nursing Club started a project on taking Seniors shopping, writing letters, visiting shut-ins and other direct services to aged citizens in the community.

Then our inter-disciplinary committee held a community Seminar and invited representatives from all community agencies related to working with senior-citizens in any way: 1) health, 2) social services, 3) recreation, etc. We offered our services in courses or in information and data or in making ourselves available to speak to any groups on aging. Soon we had help in getting going on a fairly comprehensive program on aging in the community. In the area of direct services we have now:

1) Had two Continuing Education Courses, “You and the Oldsters in Your Life,” and “The Sociology of Aging.”
2) Hosted the White House Conference in 1970 for the thumb area of Michigan.
3) Held Woodrow Hunter’s Retirement Education Planning Course in conjunction with several local employee groups.
4) Held a Recreation Workshop for area Center Directors.
5) Had an on-going program of taking students to senior-citizens in various ways and bringing senior-citizens to campus for special events.
6) Developed an on-going program of lecture—social orientation for Registered and Practical Nursing students at the college and afternoon lecture-discussion session for nurses aides.

It is sufficient to say that our College is involved in aging programs in our Community.

*The Process of Offering Academic Level Courses*

Our college, like all such institutions, has an organized and some-
times lengthy process for the institution of new programs and courses. Our Inter-disciplinary committee soon saw that an important first step to any such approval was the sensitizing of our own faculty and administration to Gerontology as a discipline and to the unique place that our Community College held in our own service area as to services to the aging.

In order to institute new courses or programs, an important first step is a thorough research in the areas of bibliography objectives and transferrability. Mrs. Janet Kelly, who now teaches these courses, worked hard on these matters with the assistance of Bob Huber from the University of Michigan.

The previously mentioned programs in Continuing Education, "You and the Oldsters In Your Life" and "The Sociology of Aging," too gave us valuable experience in preparing courses in the general area of aging and especially in evaluating their acceptance in the community and at the college. Indeed, we soon found that some regular college students took the two programs in the non-credit division of the college because of an expressed interest in the study of aging.

Then, too, our committee of aging can not stress too much the all-important value of the involvement of the administration, first of all on the committee and throughout the whole process of community outreach and college sensitization to the viability of aging as a legitimate area of study in the regular college offering.

Mr. Jerry Lynch, our Director of Continuing Education, has been our faithful supporter throughout the whole process. And too, our Dean of Liberal Arts, Edward Bush, and our Dean of Admission, Earle Richardson, have helped us especially in the area of transferrability.

Most of all, the President of our College, Dr. Richard Norris, has been our encouragement. His office has been always open and he has made his time available as much as possible to speak to visiting groups of senior citizens and to other groups from the Institute of Gerontology who have made visits to Port Huron as a regular part of their programs.

Let me then, say just a few words about the final process of approval of courses at our college. We use a College Forum made up of administration, faculty and students as the method of intra-College operation about academic matters. Mrs. Kelly had made very sure that her outline for Sociology 170 had been submitted to the University of Michigan for transferability review long before the council meeting with the Curriculum Committee of the Forum. When we were approved for a transferable course in aging, Sociology 170, by the University of Michigan's Sociology department in the spring of 1973, we became the first Community College in Michigan to have such a course transferred for Sociology majors.

The Curriculum committee then readily approved the course and it was ready for offering in the Fall of 1973.
**Some Facts About The Course Itself**

Sociology of Aging, Soc. 170, was first offered at night in a three-hour block in the Fall of 1973. The course was well advertised to agencies throughout the area and had an enrollment of 29 for its first trial.

Mrs. Kelly has given me a demographic breakdown on that course.

*Age and Sex of Students*
1) The age range was from 19 to 70.  
2) There were 21 female and 8 male students.

*Recruitment of Students*
1) 8 were regular college students.  
2) 5 were nursing students.  
3) 5 were working in agencies directly related for the aging in the community.

*Reasons for taking the course*
1) 7 were taking the course to transfer.  
2) 13 were taking the course for their own background.  
3) 7 were taking the course for job upgrading.

Even the above incomplete breakdown shows you something about our Community College and about the general student body we serve. It also shows that such courses in aging offered when working people can take them will be successful.

Our second attempt, too, at offering shows something more about the above matters. It is being offered this Fall for the first time in day school at noon. Seven are sociology majors and three are psychology majors. The age range is from 19 to the mid-40's but only one student is over 25.

The course itself uses two texts: 1) *Aging and the Aged* by Fred Cottrell and 2) *Aging in Contemporary Society* by Ethel Shamas.

A simple reading of the main subdivisions from the outline might help you see the scope of the course.

Mrs. Kelly divides her course into three general areas:

I. Introduction  
II. Aging and Social Organization  
III. Aging and Social Re-organization

Under “Introduction” she covers:
- A. Concepts of aging—what is aging and who is old?  
- B. The Demography of aging

Under the Section called “Aging and Social Organization” she covers in brief:
- A. Rules and Statuses
B. Psychology of aging  
C. Physiology of aging  
D. Economics of aging  
E. Recreation and aging  
F. Education and aging  
G. The politics of aging

Then finally under the third major division, "Aging and Social Re-organization," she briefly touches upon:

A. Services to aging and aged (both Governmental and other)  
B. New Concepts in the Education of the aged  
C. Unmet needs and Challenges.

It is worthwhile to note too that Mrs. Kelly has taught for a long time a special Sociology course in Marriage and Family and has made herself an expert on the concepts of widowhood and on the newest research on Death and Dying.

She gives three hour long tests during the semester and a final exam.

The course itself has received much favorable comment from the faculty and student body but Mrs. Kelly has said that subsequent offerings, for a while anyway, will be restricted to night offerings and that she intends to advertise and offer a third section this coming spring semester especially on request of several local public agencies.

I have brought you copies of the Bibliography section of Mrs. Kelly's research in preparation for her course. If you wish to contact her about the course outline or the general plan of the course you may write to her:

Mrs. Janet Kelly  
Professor of Sociology  
St. Clair County Community College  
Port Huron, Michigan 48060

Some Projections for the Future

We at St. Clair Community College are happy with our beginning on an academic program in Gerontology. It probably is not unique nor is it having the greater impact that we eventually hope to have on our total course offering at the college.

Yet the groundwork laid in the community, with four year institutions and with the College Forum and within the whole College in general, make it obvious that aging as an academic discipline is beginning to come about at our school. The Business Department is in the generation stage for a course on the economics of the life cycle from middle age through old age with special emphasis on retirement.

Our college is building a new Union Building which will encom-
pass a Food Service and Nutrition Program; members of our commit-
tee have been asked by the Vocational Division to consider Nutrition
for Aging and Aged as a possible special offering.

Given the basic demographic facts of the population of the United
States as it moves toward the year 2000, it is obvious that such a col-
lege as ours, whose campus is truly the community, will continue to
find demands both Vocational and Academic in the growing educa-
tional field of aging.

Take a look at Schoolcraft College in Livonia and Betty Andrews' 
 excellent program in a college actually running the Senior Activities in
their special suburban community or visit Mid-Michigan Community
College at Harrison and see a college that conducts travel programs
for senior-citizens. Bob Huber and I could probably give you ten or
so other examples of both four-year and two-year colleges accepting
the responsibility for serving their community's senior-citizens directly.

And on an Academic base, too, programs are growing across the state
in the universities and also in community colleges whose students
transfer to those universities. Yes, the Institute of Gerontology is getting
its money's worth many times over from its Faculty Seminars seven
years ago.

Let me end by telling you a story about one of my experiences from
working in aging programs at our college.

As I told you, I conduct a two-session orientation each academic
year for nursing students. The first section is lecture and the second is
a visit to a residential setting for senior-citizens, a beautiful home
called Marydale Center. The Practical Nurses, however, train part of
the time at one of our local nursing homes.

One day before the second session one very young lady came up to
me and said, "Mr. Colwell, may I be excused from visiting all those
old people. I see them every day at the nursing home and they make
me nervous." She then said rather definitely, "I'm going to go into
nursing to take care of babies."

Mrs. Brunelle, the extremely competent Director of the Practical
program, had overheard the remark. She came over and pointed her
finger at the girl and said, "Listen, dearie. You'd better get over that
fast. With the way people aren't having babies these days, we nurses
had better all face the fact that old people are going to be where our
jobs are."

I think Mrs. Brunelle spoke for me too. My work with senior-citi-
zens has made me a more humane and tolerant person. It has given
many of the true satisfactions of service to people that persons edu-
cated in liberal arts can enjoy. But, from a purely economic and sur-
vival viewpoint, I see clearly that both two-year and four-year colleges
had better "get hopping." The job market potential alone is enough
incentive to make us look carefully at programs for the aged and secondly at programs for training students to work with them directly.

A Developing Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Program at Central Michigan University

By Dr. James Lampky
Central Michigan University

Sometime ago Dr. Haak contacted me about a presentation of the developing undergraduate program at Central Michigan University. I must admit that I was and am delighted to have the opportunity to share with you the "beginning," the tribulations of slow growth, and the present status of Educating for the Full Life Cycle . . . Including after 60.

Some of you might well be pondering, "How does a biologist figure in on an interdisciplinary program dealing with aging?" My interest began a number of years ago when the Institute of Gerontology in Ann Arbor offered Faculty Seminars. After attending the Seminars for about a year and at the same time searching the biological literature I began to get the feeling that there was a real dearth of pertinent interrelated biological information regarding the poorly understood processes of aging; even now I feel there remains a great void in our biological understanding of the aging process. Presently there are several workers reporting on longevity and other experimental work upon fruit flies, mice, and rats, but our understanding of the biological processes are far from complete. In addition, I have a couple of other reasons for being interested in developing an interdisciplinary program for undergraduates.

1. Most educated persons learn about the development of humans from embryogenesis to early adulthood—and that's where their education ends! Generally nothing is taught about maturing, growing old, to say nothing about death.

2. I'm not getting one minute or one day younger and neither are you! For myself, I need to know what to expect as I become older.
As I learn about the aging process and as I help both young and older persons alike learn the process, then we all gain some wisdom.

But enough about why and how I became interested in such a program—let’s turn our attention to the program itself at CMU.

In the Spring semester of 1971 I was able to develop and offer an Honors Colloquium entitled, “Perspectives of Aging.” Eighteen students were assigned readings, and through directed discussions they learned about the several theories of aging, the biological aspects or parameters of aging, and the psychological changes normally occurring with aging. In the beginning of the course it appeared that the study of aging to these 18-20 year olds was something like reading or talking about organisms from another planet; 18-20 year old students tend to have a very narrow concept of the world about them. As the course progressed the students became more acutely aware of the limitations and problems faced by aged persons. Finally, by means of an assigned study, each student made a comparison of the services offered to the senior citizens in their home town versus the services offered to senior citizens of the city of Mt. Pleasant. This comparative study was a real eye-opener in that the student learned where and how to obtain hard-to-get information, and what to do with it after the information was collected. The study has provided benefits far beyond my hopes; several of my former students have written to tell me that they were able to encourage officials to establish home town services such as free checking services, reduced medication costs, and free admission to various community events.

As a result of the success of the Honors Colloquium, beginning in 1972 the Recreation Department offered a course, Recreation for Senior Citizens, to 33 students, increasing in 1973 to 38 students, and this year (1974) has jumped to 54 students. Dr. Herb Kipke, nearly a senior citizen himself, is the instructor of this worthwhile course. The course is designed to provide information and techniques to students to propose, organize, administer, and conduct recreational activities for senior citizens, taking into account their various limitations. The course is divided into three portions: 1) older Americans in our society, 2) effects of aging on social functioning, and 3) development and administration of social programs. Invited guest speakers present and discuss on-going recreational activities statewide and the problems related to them. Films and slides are used to depict various recreational programs and the techniques used. The students are required as part of the course to participate as volunteers in the local level Senior Citizens Recreational Programs. Dr. Kipke tells me that students taking this course are considerably more aware of, and better equipped to develop a broader and more extensive recreational program for all ages.

Also as an offshoot of the Honors Colloquium, Dr. Douglas Friedrich instituted a course dealing with the psychological aspects of aging,
“Maturity and Old Age.” The course begins where most psychology courses and/or programs end. Initially the course attracted 20 students in 1972 and presently it accommodates over 50 students. The goal of the course is to present aspects of physiological, psychological, and sociological stages of stability and decline with human maturity progressing into old age. An attempt is made, where possible, to correlate all three aspects indicating the dependency of one upon the others. To supplement the lecture-theory portion of the course, students are required to volunteer their time for several weeks to work with senior citizens at a medical care facility, a food with friends program, or at a hospitality corner gathering place. After having discussed the field volunteer work opportunity with several of the students upon completion of the course, it seems that if nothing else the attitudes of the students toward senior citizens are greatly changed in a positive direction.

Due to the past and ongoing course on aging, the Psychology Department recently instituted a Colloquium which enables high-interest level students to select and research, in the library, a problem of their own choosing. This is done in conjunction with a faculty member who is interested in that particular area of investigation. The student has a great deal more latitude to delve deeply into a subject of his or her choice, while at the same time has the opportunity to discuss with and have faculty direction.

A Practicum is usually elected by each student as an experimental continuation of a Colloquium. The reading, discussion, and faculty advice gained in the previous academic endeavor usually has opened several avenues of experimental investigation. In consultation with the faculty member, usually a 1:1 situation, the student presents in writing an experimental design or model. The faculty member serves as a critic to aid the student in either enlarging or restricting the experiment, as well as acting as the director of the experimental work. Experimental work is expected to be done in the field (as opposed to the laboratory) in order to either support or refute the experimental hypothesis. This portion of the work allows an undergraduate student to ascertain for himself or herself if he or she really wishes to go on into experimental graduate research work.

I have attempted to present to you a synopsis of the several courses offered at Central Michigan University in what I consider a developing undergraduate interdisciplinary program. Although we at Central did not move rapidly into a wide range of interdisciplinary courses, we have moved steadily and with appropriate deliberation. Basically, CMU is a nationally recognized institution for teacher education. We are cognizant of the need to expand education beyond teaching to and about the young of our society because of the availability of more leisure time and earlier retirement; indeed, a whole new frontier has been opened to educators. For this reason we have been made acutely aware of the necessity of Educating for the Full Life Cycle . . . Including after 60.
Community College Action with Area Senior Citizens

By D. R. McLaughlin

This paper is presented in three parts to give a rationale for Asnuntuck Community College's involvement with senior citizens of the North Central Connecticut area. In the first section a brief framework will be given onto which one can place the action taken by the College. The second session will briefly define the role of a community college and the third will indicate the action of the College.

SECTION I: The Framework

The extended family is all but gone from North American society. This fact, coupled with other social developments, has produced a climate in which youth and aged suffer similar problems. These problems are caused, for the most part, by the large group of wage earners that serve as a wedge separating young from old.

Our society places a great emphasis upon being successful, earning a living and maintaining a nuclear family. In reality, the latter emphasis may be false, or just a public relations game, since the young are part of the nuclear family and yet are excluded or segregated for an extended period of time from the mainstream of society. They are "maintained"—not a valued part of the mainstream of society. For the most part, when a person becomes old, as all people do, they are excluded from both family and society.

The term society, used in a popular vein, is not, therefore, all encompassing. Since control of money means power, one could say that with historical developments being what they are, it is quite natural for the young and the old to be excluded from the popular conception of society. The young and the old are inconvenient to the efficient wage earner; they really are "leeches" in a streamlined world. The paradox is that the wage earner refuses to admit that he or she is aging and will be old some day. In 1970, five billion dollars were spent in the United States on cosmetics that reportedly removed signs of aging; only 1.86 billion dollars were allocated to old age assistance. Perhaps it is time for people in North America to straighten out their feelings and prejudices about youth and aging so that clear policies and action can follow. Aging is here to stay. Everybody's doing it and there is as yet to be born the person who is a middle-aged earner before his first birthday.

The extended family, as one of its benefits, provided a system where young and old related to one another, shared and solved problems together, and helped solve each others shared problems. Since the
extended family is gone from North America and the age is one of confusion, convenience and rapid change, youth and aged suffer because the shared problem-solving mechanism is missing. Death becomes a taboo subject and gives rise to the American way of death because it is not part of life. Surface solutions are substituted for basic problems: creams to prevent wrinkles and gray hair; a dance or a club to keep youth off drugs; a few dollars or food stamps to keep the old folks in the pasture.

Modern day social developments have many disadvantages just as in the “Good Ole Days.” Life today has many advantages, too. The computer has made simulation a common occurrence; a social setting can also simulate and recreate positive parts of former situations such as the extended family.

SECTION II: The Role of the Community College

There is a continuum in higher education between the role and function of a university and a community college. It is much more fun to be with a community college because that is where the action is. However, if one plays on words, one can see that a university is apart from society while a community college is a part of society. The difference here is a part of and apart from society. The university’s role should be one of researching and instructing professionals in the highest levels of decision making and knowledge as well as serving as a severe critic of society. On the other hand, the role of the community college is helping the people in its immediate community, area or society, cope with the problems that they face; the lives of the people in the immediate area are improved because the institution exists.

Another way of viewing the role of the community college is to see it as a recycling agency for people. If glass, paper, and aluminum can can be recycled, it seems logical that in an era of Future Shock, brought on by rapid change, there needs to be an agency like the community college that can recycle people and improve their situation in life. Too often there is only talk about change, not action. Higher education is noted for talking. Unfortunately, people are experiencing this Future Shock now and it is occurring at a much more rapid pace than in prior years. There has been enough talking; action is needed. The community college is where the action is. The university is where the research is and there needs to be a very direct line of communication between the university and the community college.

SECTION III: Direct Services and Simulation at Asnuntuck Community College

Asnuntuck Community College is the youngest state community college in Connecticut. It is located in North Central Connecticut in the Connecticut River Valley; its area forms the corridor between Hart-
ford and Springfield, Massachusetts and is undergoing a transition from tobacco farming to suburban and industrial development.

All college funding comes from the state legislature to the state board of Regional Community Colleges which in turn reallocates monies to the twelve state community colleges. There are two other state-funded two-year college systems in Connecticut: the technical college system and the university branch system. Like most state institutions today, there are insufficient funds to do the job required of the College. Regardless, the College has grown in its two years of operation from 200 to over 1,000 students.

Unfortunately, in Connecticut as elsewhere, the term college connotes a certain audience in most people's minds. This audience means people who are around the age of 25, give or take five years, and who are studying for the purpose of obtaining a degree. One might add to this that the purpose of the degree is to help the individual be one of the more efficient wage earners spoken of earlier in this paper. This concept of the singular purpose of higher education may have been fine for a few years after World War II, but change has occurred in society since then, and, like all institutions, higher education is a man-made institution and it too must change. Had the land grant institutions followed their initial purpose, there would possibly be no need for community colleges today.

A community college in Connecticut has an open-door admissions policy. Asnuntuck's policy is perhaps a little more open than others in that it accepts people who have dropped out, or are dropping out of high school and do not have any form of high school diploma. The student age range runs from approximately 15 through 80, or as is often stated, until death. And, courses on death are taught at the College. Special emphasis has been placed on recruitment of housewives and other populations often ignored by colleges. In the near future the College hopes to merge with the technical high school so that the institution will cover grades 10 through death with recycling recurring on appropriate community college levels.

As a part of North Central Connecticut's society, Asnuntuck's college personnel noted that, as elsewhere, many senior citizens were being shoved into non-productive roles and herded together in various ways by the efficient wage earner. While certain programs were being conducted in a few towns of the college's area for senior citizens, not all of them, and there are some 9,000 in the area, received similar benefits because of the location of their residences. Communications were lacking between programs and people primarily because identification is not with area or region, but rather with immediate town, subdivision, Hartford or New England. Confusion also reigns in some programs such as Social Security because part of the area is serviced by Springfield, Massachusetts and part by Hartford. In addition, the area's pop-
ulation growth is not communicated or understood by power figures in various agencies.

As one might guess, Asnuntuck did not have any money for action in the senior citizen area. It became a question of how does a community college accomplish its role of being a part of its community through working with senior citizens and youth when it does not have money and many other resources? Since grants are also at a premium, the College recognized that it must pursue a different course of action.

As a first step, the College sought to find out what resources or agencies were available in the area and were providing services to youth or senior citizens. Next, the College looked at what other colleges were doing in the New England area. Basically, except for Brandeis University and Leicester Junior College, both private institutions, not much is happening in New England between senior citizens and colleges.

Brandeis University is following the university model through research and model programs construction; Leicester Junior College offers seminars and a gerontology degree program. A few public colleges in New England invite senior citizens to participate in credit courses at a special fee and cultural events often at no fee. In other cases, senior citizens are invited to dress rehearsals and other special pre-performance showings without a fee involved.

In Connecticut, the state legislature passed a bill this past year waiving all credit tuition charges for people over 62 years of age. In addition, Asnuntuck requested that the Board of Trustees waive all student fees. A person over 62 now attends credit courses on the campus at no charge. Over 90 credits are being taken at the present time by people in this category. Such is not the case with non-credit courses offered under self-perpetuating programs.

This legislative action was seen as a significant step in breaking a myth that most all educational dollars are to be spent on the young. Hopefully, as more senior citizens attend the college courses, the myth that college is only for people in their twenties will also be dispelled. College personnel seized upon this change and took immediate action to further foster programs for the senior citizens, but these programs are not degree programs and are not even credit programs in most cases.

During the course of the College’s first two years of existence, faculty often commented on the richness that was added to the classroom when a spectrum of ages was present in a course. Because blood lines were not involved, generations were talking to other generations and they were discussing things that they had wanted to talk about for some time, but felt they could not raise at home or with other relatives. The simulated extended family was happening and the college had but to recognize it and capitalize on its advantages.
With the legislative action of waiving costs and the college’s natural resource of the simulated extended family in mind, the staff established an organizational framework to provide guidance for senior citizens’ activities sponsored by the College. The College has an Advisory Council which is a group of local citizens appointed by the state Board of Trustees for the purpose of providing advice to the College on a number of matters. The staff and this body nominated one of its members as its contact person for college-sponsored senior citizens’ activities. It was suggested that an area steering committee be formed by appointing three people from each of the ten towns in the region; each town’s team of three people would be composed of two senior citizens and one person known for his ability to get things done in the town. This group is called the Senior Citizens Think Tank.

Concurrent with the framework activities, the college sought ways of staffing the program. Regular state or college positions were not available due to budgetary restrictions. The College approached ACTION and was granted five VISTA workers and one Retired Senior Volunteer Program person; to this the college added one person from the student payroll. Except for the last person, each of the other program personnel actually belongs to another agency. In the case of the RSVP person, the contract agent is the Greater Hartford Council of Churches; VISTA personnel all belong to the Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford. Matching funds, some of which were in kind, were raised by the College to support the Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

Near the end of the last fiscal year a few dollars were found in the budget to conduct an in-depth study of the existing agencies in the area providing services to senior citizens. Graduate students were employed to conduct this study and it resulted in a directory of services which has been verified and is now being printed for distribution to all senior citizens in the ten-town area. Hopefully, this directory will have supplements, including one that is in its developmental stage on discount cooperative buying locations in North Central Connecticut.

The roles of VISTA and RSVP confused a number of people who were not at the local level. Resolution of the problem came only through many letters and conversations. Basically, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is singular in its purpose to get older people involved and participating in the mainstream of life through volunteer activities with non-profit organizations. Some of these volunteer activities may be as a result of VISTA activities. VISTA, on the other hand, is multiple in purpose. It was assigned the responsibility of further developing situations to simulate the extended family by mixing young and old together to accomplish tasks that would benefit senior citizens of the area. The VISTA workers were to carry out the activities and wishes of the Senior Citizen Think Tank. When viewed
as a whole, VISTA, RSVP, various local agencies and groups and the College all became mutually supportive in working with senior citizens. A point that is stressed with all of these groups is that they work for or with senior citizens; too often younger people think they know best and do things to senior citizens.

When personnel became available, more action transpired. During the summer months a pre-retirement course was developed and both VISTA and college personnel were trained to conduct the eight-session seminar. All businesses and industrial firms were contacted about the program and it is currently being offered in a variety of locations.

Asnuntuck is fortunate in having on its small staff very hard working, imaginative people. The mixture of former VISTA and PEACE CORPS members on the staff with others concerned for ecology and people resulted in the organization of an organic garden and a form of the old Civilian Conservation Corps program during the summer of 1973. The CCC program has been temporarily shelved due to lack of staff. However, the organic garden proved so popular that it was again instituted with more acreage this past summer. This whole project is operated on the spare time of the staff. By careful planning, the organic garden project fostered the simulation of the extended family by mixing the some 200 young and old participants together through the assignment of gardening plots. Next year more acreage will be required and more planning done to mix young and old not only in the garden, but also in seminar-like meetings concerning all aspects of planting on through harvesting and preserving the food produced. Senior citizens will conduct many of these meetings.

It should also be indicated here that during the 1972-1973 academic year, the college's chemist, Ms. Elaine Folkers, who is also a weaver and a former PEACE CORPS member, developed a credit course on the Chemistry of Foods. One text used in the course is Frances Lappe's *Diet For A Small Planet*. While the Commission for Higher Education's Standing Committee on Accreditation within Connecticut had difficulty recognizing the legitimacy of the course, its inexpensive but nutritious and tasty products have fed many groups. Since its inauguration, however, course credits given for the Chemistry of Foods have been found quite transferable to a great variety of institutions. This course, in a modified form, will be given to senior citizens in the college’s area to assist them in achieving a nutritious diet on a fixed income.

The Senior Citizens Think Tank was called into action with the opening of the current academic year through the help of the Enfield Jaycees. Much of the first meeting was spent dispelling the idea that a college is only for young people taking credit courses. When this had been accomplished, the people split into small discussion groups. Each group was composed of people from different towns. The only instruc-
tions given the members of the group concerned their task at hand and the frame of reference they should use in developing it: they were to act as both individuals who were senior citizens and also represent the other senior citizens not present at the meeting. Their function was to produce a prioritized list of problems senior citizens face in North Central Connecticut. This was done with some items being added by Advisory Council and College staff members. Top priority went to purchasing power, especially food purchasing power and the transportation of food from the store to the senior citizen’s home. A second meeting of the Think Tank was planned to explore, consider and take action on food purchasing and delivery systems. A number of systems were discussed including food co-ops, buying clubs, food delivery systems and local merchants. Knowledgeable consultants from a variety of agencies had donated their time to assist the Senior Citizens Think Tank in their deliberations. As a result, a committee was formed from the area to develop the best course of action which will be carried out by the senior citizens and the VISTA workers.

It became apparent during the second meeting that conflict was present in most every town’s group of senior citizen representatives. It appeared as if the conflict groups followed social class lines. Quick recognition of this allowed the Advisory Council Representative and the college to take advantage of the situation and increase the activity of the Think Tank through promoting a quasi-competitive situation between groups without actually identifying circumstances.

The productivity of the Senior Citizens Think Tank has increased to the point that the College has been forced to seek outside assistance for a director’s position and other labor costs. For example, the College’s facility is now being used during its off hours as a Senior Citizen’s Center; this fall, a Halloween party will be held for area senior citizens in cooperation with various groups and agencies. Over 600 senior citizens are expected to attend this function alone. A grant has been received to inaugurate the Whistle Stop Safety Program for senior citizens. The grant will provide the whistles which will be purchased on a diminishing return basis, and the college will provide the education or sensitizing program for the neighbors of senior citizens participating in the program.

Other activities in various stages of discussion and development are:

1. A regional transportation system through the cooperation of the area Jaycee Clubs.
2. Dial-a-Ride and Dial-a-Friend systems.
3. The College as a craft center for craft courses taught by both faculty and senior citizens.
4. The College’s facilities and personnel as resources to a Cut-Under-
The-Tape action group designed to help senior citizens investigate and solve problems with bureaucracies, agencies, and businesses. This group will be totally staffed by senior citizens.

5. A senior citizens hobby sale shop.

6. A senior citizens institute for seminars and mini-courses taught by senior citizens.

7. A talent bank of various skills available to senior citizens on a barter basis.

8. The Think Tank as a communications link to the senior citizens of the North Central Connecticut area.


10. A living museum of taped interviews with senior citizens.

11. The College facility for use as a preventative medical check station.

Other long-range planned events include:

1. The merger with a soon to be built technical high school, as previously mentioned, one by-product of which will be a food program including meals on wheels and a special nutrition program for various and typical eating problems experienced by senior citizens. This would be in conjunction with the Senior Citizens Center. A second by-product is the mixing in the institution of the young and the older more intent student to develop appropriate work attitudes.

2. The use of trained work-study students to activate the Brandeis University model for providing home care for senior citizens at a greatly reduced cost.

3. The College staff working in various ways with area businessmen to sensitize them to the problems encountered by senior citizens as they shop in their stores. Such things as the light factor, signs, steps, bus landings, etc., will be discussed both by College personnel and, hopefully, research personnel at a seminar that will be held in the area and concern aging.

SECTION IV: Conclusion

A framework, the role and the action of a community college as an area agency working for the solution of area problems which concern senior citizens and youth, have been briefly described to you. The concentration here has been upon the activities with or for senior citizens. Fulfilling its role as a part of its society and community, a community college has involved numerous people in functions that will begin to reinvolve senior citizens and youth in the mainstream of society; wage earners alone do not make a society. Skills and knowl-
edge, once passed on in the extended family, have been lost in a rapidly changing world and the young and the old shunted aside for convenience. But convenience can destroy! Young people take drugs and older people sleep; they know they are not wanted in an efficient society. Yet, wisdom rests with older people and energy with the young. What better way is there to learn? This person has learned more and avoided certain problems if he had been purposefully mixed with senior citizens during his years of formal education. Such purposeful mixing of young and old is a role of Asnuntuck Community College and such is the action it is promoting in North Central Connecticut as part of its society.