

## WSU News

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## Wichita State designated Age-Friendly University for focus on range of learning opportunities

By WSU Strategic Communications

- Wichita State is the first institution of higher learning in Kansas to be designated an Age-Friendly University
- Age-friendly campuses have grown in importance as lifespans lengthen.
- Older adults can find services such as academic programs and career training.

Wichita State University has joined the [Age-Friendly University Global Network \(AFU\)](#), a growing group of more than 90 higher-education institutions around the world that have committed to meeting the personal, educational and career needs of adults of all ages and to creating age-inclusive environments on their campuses.

WSU is the first institution in Kansas to become a member of AFU. Membership in AFU demonstrates WSU's commitment to provide a full range of learning opportunities that include adults at all ages and stages in life, as well as to generate knowledge and innovations that address the second half of the lifespan through research.

"Age diversity and inclusion fit with Wichita State University's main priority of providing accessible education for everyone in our community at all stages of the lifespan and life course," Wichita State President Rick Muma said. "As the only urban public research university in Kansas, we view WSU's designation as an Age-Friendly University as a signal to all our communities that we are committed to welcoming and responding to their changing interests and needs throughout the lifespan."

Age-friendly campuses have grown in importance as the lifespan has lengthened. The proportion of adults age 55 and older is about a third of the US population, and the number of people in this age group is projected to increase for many years to come.

Twenty-eight percent of the population in Kansas, 27 percent of the Wichita population, and 25 percent of the population in the Fairmount neighborhood surrounding Wichita State are 55 or older.

This is a large and diverse group of adults who have different life choices and needs than previous generations. As an educational institution with community-wide reach, WSU is uniquely positioned to provide opportunities for lifelong cognitive, social and physical activity, all of which are the foundation for wellbeing.

WSU offers a broad range of opportunities and resources for older adults, as well as for those who work with older adults. These include well-established programs of community education and lifelong learning, availability of regular academic programs to adults at all ages, career training and upskilling programs through WSU Tech, and academic programs that focus on training students to provide services to older adults.

As part of its research commitment, WSU supports the Regional Institute on Aging, which provides internal research funding for a range of projects that address the needs of older adults. In addition, WSU offers many health-related services, and arts, cultural

and athletic events that are open to all members of the community, regardless of age or student status.

As a member of AFU, Wichita State has an exciting opportunity to learn more about emerging age-inclusive efforts on campuses around the world and to contribute to the knowledge base of lifelong learning, engagement and well-being.

The AFU Global Network, led by Dublin City University, is supported in the United States by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. The recognition is part of an international effort endorsed by the AGHE to create more programs, policies, and opportunities for an aging population. 🍌