

Living the Questions
Listening to Leaders Session
Metro Area MN State Colleges and Universities Leaders
February 2, 2006

Living the Questions

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging is a collaborative of thirteen leading nonprofit organizations with statewide service and advocacy presence. Formed in 2004 to advocate for home and community-based services the Council has met with community leaders to raise awareness of and discuss the demographic, social and economic issues related to the aging of the Baby Boom generation through an initiative called *Living the Questions*.

Through a series of *Listening to Leaders* dialogue sessions, the Council is gathering information about community aging issues as viewed by foundations, housing and community developers, civic groups, transportation representatives, faith communities, disability organizations, business and industry, and others.

More information about the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging can be obtained from www.mnlcoa.org.

Background

Nine leaders from metro area MNSCU participated in the session. They were very interested in continuing the dialogue and wanted to be a part of the process and solution. They were very surprised by the data presented about the aging of the population and economic and social implications.

The MNSCU leaders voiced concerns about the continual financial pressure that they face to support their mission. They felt that new ventures in senior housing and services, through utilizing their existing facilities, might be a way to enhance their revenue into the future. Transportation to their sites was also noted as a current significant concern.

Key Questions

1. How are we going to replace and pay for faculty members when a significant proportion of the faculty is expected to retire in the next five years?
2. The community colleges have a unique set of resources (e.g., statewide coverage, physical property, and recreational, arts and library resources). Are people aware of these resources? Are there models of community colleges partnering for more livable communities, e.g., senior housing on campus?

3. How can colleges incorporate an awareness of aging issues into all relevant curricula (i.e., addressing elder abuse issues in criminal justice curriculum)?
4. Can colleges play a role in assisting individuals in planning for retirement – both college employees and as a service to the community?
5. How do colleges develop innovative models to encourage more students to enter the long-term care direct support field? Who is going to pay adequately for faculty to provide the training for these jobs?
6. Can colleges provide curriculum related to the changing nature of work and retirement for both employers and employees?

Other Questions

- What are the short-term and long-term impacts on education issues?
- How do we look at better ways to work on a part-time basis and what are the models?
- How secure is Social Security and other pension plans?
- Do we understand the origins and evolution of retirement and pension policies?
- Will educational institutions be faced with challenges as a result of increasing numbers of older voters who might not feel that community colleges/higher education are a high priority?
- How can colleges play a role in changing the mindset of society from youth-oriented to ageless?

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging exists to coalesce the resources and power of senior consumer, advocacy, social and health service organizations, and the individuals we serve and represent, to boldly advocate for and achieve positive system changes for elders in Minnesota.

www.mnlcoa.org