Healthy Aging Research Initiative
Progress Report
2008 – 2009

August 1, 2009

Center for Healthy Aging Research
I. Overview of what has been accomplished this year:

Funding from the Provost’s Initiative has allowed the Center for Healthy Aging Research (CHAR) to continue progress towards our vision to become a Center that is nationally and internationally known for innovative research, education, and outreach that enhances quality of life for older adults, their families, and society. A unique feature of our Center is that we are cellular to societal – focused on discovering new ways to enhance aging processes and maintain healthspan. Each of the four research cores has a thematic aging focus and faculty from 6 Colleges (HHS, COS, Pharmacy, Vet Med, COE, CLA) are working on research related to aging. In the past year external funding to support research ($9,859,450 annual direct costs) increased an impressive 36.7% from the prior year, and is up a remarkable 365% from 2004-05 ($2,120,448), the initial year of Provost’s Initiative funding (see Appendix for grant table).

Arguably the most concrete sign of the successful launch of this Center is that faculty members are engaged in research that would have been inconceivable prior to the launch of the Center for Healthy Aging Research. A few examples include:

- Kathy Gunter, a Nutrition and Exercise Science faculty member in the Bone Health core, and Ron Metoyer, a faculty member in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in the Gerontechnology core, have leveraged a CHAR pilot grant to build technology that will promote physician prescribed activity to elders in their own homes. Their pilot data has seeded work that has resulted in two larger NIH grant applications. Dr. Gunter states, “The Center for Healthy Aging Research collaborative environment facilitated this unlikely partnership…”

- Tory Hagen, Linus Pauling Institute faculty member and director of the Diet, Genes, and Aging core, has partnered with Carolyn Aldwin and Scott Hofer, faculty members in Human Development and Family Sciences and members of the Psychosocial core, to conduct research on the relationships between psychosocial stress and biological indicators of stress. Additionally, Drs. Hagen and Hofer have ongoing work testing the potential benefits of nutritive supplements on cognitive functioning.

- Carmen Steggell, a Design and Human Environment faculty member who directs the Gerontechnology core, was awarded a state grant for $500K to evaluate the success of moving people from nursing homes into less restrictive environments. She writes, “I have benefitted from the synergies created during Center meetings, where common research interests are recognized and supported. The collaborations with other CHAR scientists have been invaluable. The Center provides authority and increased visibility to the research in Gerontechnologies and was a direct factor in the success of our grant proposal.”

But the most significant Center activities this past year have been the submission of two applications for funding that are built upon the Center for Healthy Aging Research as a valuable OSU resource. In just under four years (Jan. 2005 – Oct. 2008) we progressed to the stage of writing a Center (P30) proposal to the National Institute on Aging (NIA) for one of the highly competitive Roybal Centers for Translational Research on Aging awards. The OSU proposal, entitled, Center for Aging and Health Dynamics, was reviewed favorably by a stellar NIH study section, which included Robert Butler, founding director of the National Institute on Aging, as well as the nation’s first department of geriatrics at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Our Roybal proposal was recommended for funding. The summary statement overall evaluation paragraph states: “This is an outstanding application for a Roybal Center on Aging and Health Dynamics that will develop new methods to measure, track, and monitor individuals in their places of residence to allow for early detection of change in health domains. The tools and strategies that are developed are expected to provide useful directions for improving strategies to motivate behaviors that will reduce development of risk factors for disease, reduce functional impairment in older adults, and deliver interventions. The research team is very strong and research facilities and support at Oregon State University are exceptional.” We are waiting to learn whether the proposal will receive funding.

Center researchers are currently engaged in the process of writing an application to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to fund an interdisciplinary doctoral training program in Aging Sciences. We recently learned that our preliminary proposal has been selected through a competitive process at the national level to be developed into a full proposal to be submitted to NSF in early September. There were 444 preliminary proposals evaluated by NSF and 100 were chosen for advancement to the full proposal stage. The title of our proposal is...
Integrative Graduate Education and Research: LIFE* in an Aging Society. (*Linking Individuals Families and Environments). The panel summary stated: “The proposal represents a very important focus on aging sciences and the panel sees strength in the holistic research and training across the four core aspects. The program is viewed as integrative. This is potentially transformative for the complex issues of aging, a topic which readily translates to interdisciplinary research and applications. This focus also is problem-based and broad enough, yet specific enough to generate research with true impact.” Our preliminary proposal was recommended by the NSF review panel as high priority.

Continuing to build the infrastructure:

In this past year we continued to build the Center – primarily through adding to our faculty and engaging faculty, students, and community members in new and ongoing projects. Activities related to building the infrastructure this past year include: 1) Hiring our fourth and final tenure line faculty member; 2) Increased collaborative grant writing (as described above). 3) Expanding our networks for the benefit of collaborative research, for example we are aligned as the primary academic partner with the newly formed Center for Health Research and Quality at Samaritan Health Services. This will be an important link for future projects – especially in translational research. 4) The continued recruitment and maintenance of the human subjects panel, known as the LIFE registry (for adults age 50 and over), which has developed into a valued resource for OSU faculty and students for their research projects and is increasingly mentioned in grant applications; 6) Organizing and hosting an increased slate of colloquia that included some of the most renowned scholars in their area of aging research; and 7) Significantly enhancing the website (http://www.hhs.oregonstate.edu/healthyaging). Description of these activities follow:

Healthy Aging Research Initiative New Hire. We are pleased to report that we were successful in hiring an outstanding new faculty member, Dr. Kerri Winters-Stone, to join the Bone Health, Exercise and Function in Aging Core. Dr. Winters-Stone, Associate Professor and Associate Scientist from Oregon Health and Sciences University, studies the effects of physical activity on the health of older breast cancer and prostate cancer survivors. Understanding the benefits of both aerobic and resistance training will aid in the development of programming that better prevents bone and muscle loss that result from cancer treatments. Dr. Winters-Stone has current NIH R01 funding for her research on exercise among breast cancer survivors from the National Canter Institute. Other sources of support for her work come from the American Cancer Society, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation for the Cure. Dr. Winters-Stone is also well known for her work on prevention of osteoporosis and is the author of the book Action Plan for Osteoporosis, and numerous peer-reviewed articles that display her commitment to conducting innovative research that helps enhance the lives of older adults. Her official start date at OSU was quite recent (spring of 2009), and she is already engaged with faculty members here in writing applications for research funding.

This hire completes the goal to hire 4 faculty members, each with significant external grant funding, to strengthen the research base in aging – and allowing us to synergistically build research teams across interdisciplinary lines. Additionally, this past year we have invited Dr. Fritz Gombart (LPI) to join the Diet, Genes, and Aging core as well as Dr. Carlos Jensen (EECS) to join the Gerontechnology core. Thus, as we approach the end of our fifth year, we have assembled a very strong and cohesive group of approximately 40 researchers to identify with and take part in Center activities.

It would be remiss not to report some disappointments that we have faced in losing two key hires to other universities. Scott Hofer has left OSU to take the Mohr Endowed Chair in Adult Development and Aging at the University of Victoria. Atiya Mahmood has left to take a position in the Gerontology Center at Simon Fraser University. In both of these cases a significant factor in the decision to relocate was enhancement of career opportunities for their Ph.D. level spouses. Both Drs. Hofer and Mahmood have ongoing projects at OSU in which they will remain involved, but the loss of these faculty members will be felt by the Center and OSU. In attempting to learn from these cases it appears that in attracting highly successful researchers (whom would, of course, be attractive to other universities) we should strive to assure that their spouses have tenure line positions at OSU where their career goals can be met.
II. The following is a narrative of the Goals and Measurable Outcomes stated in the Healthy Aging Research Initiative proposal and the progress we have made:

**Goal 1: Increase Multidisciplinary Collaborative Research**

1. Hire 4 new faculty members in the first two years who will engage in aging research, ideally bridging at least two core areas.
   
   **Progress:**
   
   - DHE hired Atiya Mahmood bridges the Social and Ethical Issues in Technologies for Healthy Aging Core and the Psychosocial Factors in Optimal Aging Core.
   - HDFS hired Scott Hofer, an outstanding researcher whose expertise in methodology and cognitive aging allows him to bridge the Psychosocial Core with all of the other cores.
   - NES hired Donald Jump, a researcher who creating synergy between the Diet, Genes, and Aging Core and the Bone Health, Exercise, & Function in Aging Core.
   - NES hired Kerri Winters-Stone, a researcher who enhances the translational mission of the Center. Her work could bridge to the Diet, Genes, and Aging Core as well as to the Psychosocial Core.

   The Center for Healthy Aging Research was a key feature in the position descriptions, the advertisements, and in recruitment and the new hires have stated that the Center was crucial in deciding to apply for the position. Additionally, faculty not hired with CHAR funds, but hired in the last 5 years with an interest in aging (e.g., Carolyn Aldwin, Kathy Gunter, Rick Levenson, Kathy Magnusson, Rick Settersten, Aurora Sherman) have all stated that the Center was a “draw” for them in choosing to accept a position at OSU.

2. Increase each year in number of grant proposals submitted by faculty and funding from external agencies and foundations.
   
   **Progress to date:**
   
   - This year Center faculty applied for approximately 59 million dollars in external funds ($59,278,135), an impressive 23% increase over last year ($48,113,970) and a 219% increase over requests submitted in the baseline 2005-06 year ($18,612,028). Close to 10 million dollars in external funds ($9,859,450 annual direct costs) were brought to OSU via these grants. This year’s annual direct costs from external funding represent are up 37% over last year ($7,214,255) and a remarkable 365% increase over the baseline year ($2,120,448). Additional details on grant applications and funding for this past year are available in the Appendix.

   - A pilot grant program has been established to support faculty in developing protocols and collecting feasibility data to prepare them for submitting competitive grants to NIH, NSF, and foundations. There is a rigorous application and review process in place to evaluate the grant applications. Since the inception of initiative funding, 10 grants have been awarded and 19 CHAR faculty members have been or are currently involved in these research projects. Virtually all of these awards have been for interdisciplinary research involving investigators from multiple departments and all have partially supported students and resulted in peer-reviewed publications and/or presentations. Most have served their purpose as the first step to a larger grant application to an external agency. We will continue to monitor and support leveraging of these awards into applications that externally fund aging research.

   - A human subjects research registry (called the LIFE Registry), was launched in January, 2007 and will continue to serve as a resource for all investigators associated with the Center who utilize human participants in their research. This registry is open to all Oregonians age 50 or over interested in learning about opportunities to participate in research conducted by CHAR faculty. There are currently over 475 people enrolled in the registry ranging in age from 50 to 92 and they live in all geographic areas of the state. This is an important resource for investigators associated with the Center who are engaged in basic and translational science using human subjects. To date the registry has been approved for use in fifteen faculty studies. It is also frequently described as a key university resource in grant applications. Recruitment of participants into the LIFE Registry has the added benefit of informing Oregon citizens about the existence of the OSU Center for Healthy Aging Research and inviting their involvement in this university-based activity.
3. Establish avenues for philanthropic opportunities with OSU Foundation

Progress to date:
The existence of the Center for Healthy Aging Research shows that OSU is committed to expanding in this area, which paves the way for solicitations. Progress in the area of development is shown by:

- Healthy aging has been identified in HHS as one of the three targeted foci for development in the OSU Capital Campaign.
- In the Linus Pauling Institute, Tory M. Hagen, Director of the Diet, Genes, and Aging Core of CHAR was named the recipient of the Jamieson Endowed Chair in Healthspan Research. This new endowment may have been forthcoming regardless of the existence of CHAR, but the university commitment to research on aging does demonstrate to funding agencies and donors that this is an area in which OSU plans to build for the future.
- Since the inception of the Center for Healthy Aging Research several new donors were cultivated to align their philanthropic gifts with healthy aging. Some examples include: a) a gift ($100,000) from June and Truxton Ringe to support junior faculty research; b) a gift to build a “smart house” from the Milio’s to study aging in place; c) a gift from the Zimmerman’s to support gerontology graduate student travel to professional meetings to present their research; d) a gift from Marquis owner, Phil Fogg, to support student travel to professional meetings.
- A large gift from Don and Joanne Petersen is in the process of being considered. These generous alumnae have already endowed a chair in Family Gerontology in HHS and we are working with the Petersens on a second proposal to benefit CHAR.
- As suggested by feedback received from the CHAR External Advisory Board, the Director will be working with Dean Bray to form a development Advisory Board (in addition to the Scientific Advisory Board) and will cultivate applications to private foundations.

4. Establish ties with industry

Progress to date:
- This past year the Director met several times with John MacDonald, the university consultant on partnering opportunities with business, to discuss potential projects with which CHAR could be involved.
- Potential for collaboration with Intel, Spry Learning, and other companies through involvement with Oregon Center for Technology and Aging (ORCATECH).
- Establishment of “Living Laboratories” in Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) - We have established a research partnership with Mary’s Woods Retirement Community, located in Lake Oswego. This CCRC of 450 elders provides an opportunity to have a “living laboratory” in which to carry out cutting edge research. An interdisciplinary group of researchers – with faculty from 3 of the 4 research cores – met several times with the Executive Director, Director of Health Services, and Director of Wellness to discuss a program of research, Person-Centered Studies of Changes Over Time. One pilot study has already been completed at Mary’s Woods. We also have established relationships with Oatfield Estates and Fanno Creek in Portland and students have been conducting projects with these CCRCs. Other leaders in the long-term care industry (e.g., Marquis; Holiday Retirement Corporation; Palisades; Leisure Care) are potentially interested in partnering with CHAR.
- Potential for collaboration with other companies via ONAMI-Healthy Aging partnership (in development). Seven meetings have taken place between researchers from ONAMI and the Center and we are exploring collaborative projects. CHAR/LPI researcher (Claudia Maier) is participating in the NCI-NCL/ONAMI/EPA Collaboration group to define and interpret nanomaterial-biological interactions. Skip Rung, Kevin Drost, and others attended an ORCATECH meeting at OHSU and ORCATECH researchers came to the Corvallis HP campus to discuss ways we could move forward on technology and aging research. ONAMI is supporting our application for an NSF-IGERT training grant by agreeing to help match students to internship sites in industry.
- Samaritan Health Services (SHS) – This growing health care provider (5 hospitals in tri-county area) increased their commitment to nurturing research with the recent establishment of the SHS Center for Healthy Aging Research and Quality. The CHAR Director serves on the SHS Center External Advisory Board and the Director of the SHS Center for Health Research and Quality, serves on the CHAR Scientific Advisory Board. These links will be important for future collaborative research projects – especially in translational work. SHS is partnering with Western University of Health Sciences to open a medical school in Lebanon and this will allow for increased synergies with researchers interested in health research.
Goal 2: Create a Community of Scholars in Aging Research at OSU

Progress to date:

- **Three cross-core projects** have received external NIA funding through ORCATECH (see Appendix). The PIs on these projects (Dodge, Hofer, Steggell) have received pilot grant funding from CHAR to get feasibility data.

- **A fourth annual retreat** was held that was organized around discussion of the proposal for the NIA Robyal Center.

- **The NSF-IGERT training grant** was the impetus for several meetings of the leadership team. Although not yet finalized (application due September 14) we plan to emphasize doctoral training in the context of interdisciplinary themes of healthy aging:
  - Maintaining healthspan through stress regulation (hormesis) [prevention focus]
  - Optimizing person-environment “fit” through technological/methodological innovations [intervention focus]

- **Summer Institute on Methodology** – For the third year OSU hosted four days of intensive training workshops designed to teach graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty members about the most advanced statistical methods for analyzing longitudinal data. The Institute was conceived of and launched by Hofer and Piccinin (CHAR members) and HHS plans to make this Institute a regular summer event. It is organized as four days of intensive statistical training and attendees are typically social scientists from all over the country (and world – each year a few international scholars attend). The Institute was self-supported through conference fees and provided visibility for OSU as being a place for cutting-edge methodology in aging research. CHAR has sponsored the conference fee for 8 graduate students. In addition to the academic material, the Institute provided networking opportunities that are especially important for early career professionals and students. Not only does this Summer Institute provide state-of-the-art training to our students and faculty but it brings others to the OSU campus – thus enhancing the visibility of OSU and increasing chances of recruiting top-notch students and faculty in the future.

- **A colloquium series was established** – In the past three years 24 colloquia have been presented by CHAR faculty, OSU non-CHAR faculty, and by prominent researchers from other universities (e.g., Duke, Penn State, Syracuse University, University of Washington, University of Zurich, Salamanca University). In addition to the important social networking that accompanies these colloquia, the speakers get a chance to offer their insights and expertise to graduate students on a more informal basis that can lead to important connections for future work.

- **Eighteen graduate students have been partially funded through Graduate Research Assistantships** to work with faculty on research throughout the academic year. Four more will be appointed this coming year. The NSF-IGERT training grant, should it be funded, would provide support for approximately 20 doctoral students over five years.

- The Program on Gerontology, which serves as the undergraduate educational arm of CHAR, awarded **61 OSU Certificates in Gerontology** during the last five years. While this interdisciplinary, 27-credit transcript-visible certificate program has been in existence for decades, this is a substantial increase over prior years. It appears that as aging gains visibility across campus more students are seeking this interdisciplinary credential to enhance their marketability in an increasingly aging society.

- **The LIFE Scholars program for undergraduate students was established.** Twenty four undergraduate students (four in 2006; six in 2007; five in 2008; nine in 2009) were selected via an application process to work with CHAR faculty on research over the summer. Most of these students have leveraged this experience to solidify their interest in aging research and acquire the needed experience and scholarship (presentations; publications) to support their applications to graduate school.

- **The Intergero international exchange program** for undergraduate and graduate students interested in gerontology was funded by a grant from the Department of Education (FIPSE-EU) and European partners are Salamanca University, Vrije University, and Heidelberg University; U.S. partners are OSU, Miami University, and San Francisco State University. Student exchanges took place between American and European universities over the past three years. Although the grant is ending this summer, there is interest in keeping the student and faculty exchanges between universities active.

- **An in-house quarterly on-line newsletter** was established to enhance information exchange between the many CHAR faculty. A faculty member is highlighted in each edition so that more in-depth
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information about a particular researcher’s projects can be shared. People have responded very positively to this online newsletter.

- **The OSU-Gerontology Student Association** was established as a student club that includes participation in networking activities, service activities, and learning opportunities.
- **Re-establishment of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), a national honorary society** for students in Gerontology; OSU is the Beta Chi chapter.

### Goal 3: Establish Aging Center Identity

#### 1. Create a visible presence for the new Center

*Progress to date:*

One measure of how well the OSU Center is known is how often people seek the expertise and support of those of us associated with the Center. This past year we have received requests from the state, from AARP, and from various research institutions to collaborate and to acknowledge this commitment with letters of support. Other points of progress include:

- Establishment of an External Advisory Board of outstanding academic and industry leaders to provide evaluative feedback. Members include:
  - **Dr. Bruce Ames** – Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, at the University of California, Berkeley, and Senior Scientist at Children’s Hospital Oakland Research Institute [http://www.bruceames.org/n/about.php](http://www.bruceames.org/n/about.php)
  - **Dr. Neil Charness** – the William G. Chase Professor of Psychology at Florida State University [http://www.psy.fsu.edu/faculty/charness.dp.html](http://www.psy.fsu.edu/faculty/charness.dp.html)
  - **Claude Goodman** – President and Founder of CareWheels – Networked SmartHomes for Independent Living and Home Health Care in Portland, Oregon [http://carewheels.net/comapnay_profile/directores-advisors/](http://carewheels.net/comapnay_profile/directores-advisors/)
  - **Dr. Merry Oursler** – Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic, College of Medicine and Associate Professor of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology [http://mayoresearch.mayo.edu/mayo/research/staff/oursler_mj.cfm](http://mayoresearch.mayo.edu/mayo/research/staff/oursler_mj.cfm)
  - **Dr. Richard Schulz** – Professor of Psychiatry, Epidemiology, Sociology, & Psychology and Director, University Center for Social Urban Research at the University of Pittsburgh [http://pmbcii.psy.cmu.edu/schulz/index.html](http://pmbcii.psy.cmu.edu/schulz/index.html)

- Website established and continually updated (http://www.hhs.oregonstate.edu/healthyaging). There were major enhancements to the website this year.

- Numerous PR print materials have been developed, including brochures, posters, etc. The CHAR exhibit has been prominently displayed at numerous local events to increase visibility for the Center.

#### 2. Outreach opportunities to inform OSU, local and state community, and colleagues worldwide about Center funded by Provost’s Initiative

*Progress to date:*

- Director has met several times with National Institute on Aging administrators to discuss application for NIH-funded Center. She has met via web-based conferencing National Science Foundation administrators to discuss the application for the IGERT in Aging Sciences.

- The Extension Family and Community Health program continues to promote healthy aging by providing outreach programming and continuing education opportunities for individuals who work with older adults. An outstanding example is Sharon Johnson’s *Mastery of Aging Well* online education modules (on nutrition, exercise, depression, memory, and prescription drugs) funded by a grant from USDA-CSREES and AARP. These will roll out in late August and will be a valuable educational resource designed to optimize late life health and well-being. Another stellar outreach example is the annual OSU Gerontology Conference, which brings the latest research on aging to allied health professionals. Over three hundred individuals typically attended this two day educational event.
Presentations in the past to describe the Center to several audiences including KEZI-9 News, a featured article in the *Oregon Stater*, presentation for alumni at “Destination OSU”, HHS emeritus faculty FCD Extension conference, Bend Gerontology conference, Good Samaritan Hospital panel, Leadership Corvallis, Academy for Lifelong Learning, and OSU Retirement Association. Every professional national and international research meeting the Director attends the Center is mentioned prominently and brochures distributed. Many Center members do likewise during their professional meetings.

- Visibility on OSU/HHS website and newsletters
- Established a tie with OSU Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL) and OSU Retirement Association (OSU-RA)

**Networking with other Centers associated with aging research in Oregon**

*Progress to date:*

- Multiple OHSU connections: a) ORCATECH; b) Layton Aging & Alzheimer’s Disease Center; c) Center for Family Care in Oregon;
- Oregon Geriatric Education Center (OGEC), a consortium of OHSU, PSU, VA Medical Center, and OSU-Extension, has had OSU involved as a partner for the last 14 years. This ongoing collaboration allowed us to easily make the new Center funded by the Provost’s Initiative known.

**Easy to understand, simplified metrics for 2008-09:**

- Dollars generated (annual direct costs) from research proposals from all CHAR faculty ($9,859,450)
- Dollars generated (annual direct costs) from research from CHAR faculty hired with Initiative funds and/or who stated the importance of a Center for Aging in deciding to come to OSU (Jump, Hofer, Mahmood, Gunter, Magnusson, Settersten) ($1,040,258 in past year)
- Dollars generated from gifts to the university (~$300,000)
- Student credit hours generated from research projects (e.g., dissertation, thesis credits; independent study; readings and conferences; special projects) and new aging courses developed by Center faculty
- Number of peer-reviewed publications and presentations at national/international conferences as a measure of our faculty productivity and exposure (see Appendix)

**Summary of what OSU gets for this investment:** This initiative advances the OSU Strategic Plan in two of the three signature areas of distinction: *Improving Human Health and Wellness*; and *Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress*. The focus on increasing healthspan, optimizing aging, and prevention of diseases that lead to loss of independence is clearly health-related. Working on innovations to create new products to keep people independent and in their own homes and training students in professions to work with older adults also addresses the economic growth and social progress area. The partnerships that are in formation, with ONAMI and other companies have great potential to result in innovative products for use by older adults, their family members, or professional caregivers. The enhanced research environment and the resulting studies that are ongoing or being planned all have the goal of being relevant to processes that can contribute to healthy aging. As we are able to support more graduate and undergraduate students on our research projects we will enhance their marketability and students trained at OSU will increasingly be in demand for jobs and careers in aging.

Most importantly, several faculty members have been attracted to move to OSU. Thus this initiative has shown its value to the university in being instrumental in attracting excellent faculty to OSU, thereby *expanding capacity* for research in the area of aging. External funding for the 3 faculty members brought to OSU specifically through CHAR (Atiya Mahmood, Scott Hofer, Donald Jump) to date has brought in over 3 million ($3,008,898) in annual direct funding. We expect the fourth faculty member (Kerri Winters-Stone) to add to the external funding portfolio. Additionally, several other highly productive faculty members have come to OSU in part because of the existence of CHAR (e.g., Carolyn Aldwin, Hiroko Dodge, Rick Levenson, Andrea Piccinin, Kathy Magnusson, Aurora Sherman, Rick Settersten). LPI has made aging one of its thematic research areas and the growing synergy of a “three-legged stool” of CHAR/EHSC/LPI-Aging positions OSU to attract excellent researchers, students, and external funds. There is growing recognition of our expertise in this area at NIH, as our P30 summary critique stated: “The research team is very strong and research facilities and support at Oregon State University are exceptional.”
The vision for our initiative when it is fully developed and mature: Comment and plans
Our vision has been to create a Center that is nationally and internationally known for innovative research, education, and outreach that enhances quality of life for older adults, their families, and society. Our goal has been to exist as a self-sustaining Center with outside funding by 2009. We are almost there – if the NIH Roybal grant is not awarded we will continue to seek other avenues of funding. The significant investment made by OSU in the Center for Healthy Aging Research will continue to pay off by positioning researchers to make contributions that will have the potential to impact our understanding of optimal aging and create interventions, products, services, and policies for an aging society. This will be increasingly important as the opportunities and challenges clearly cut across every domain. A comprehensive understanding of the cellular to societal mechanisms of human aging is the vision guiding our work. Nutrition, exercise, psychosocial factors, assistive technology, and the built environment all play key roles in physical, cognitive, and psychological health, important for maintaining independence in later life – a high economic and social priority for our nation.