

UVic Retirees Association Elder Academy Report for the 2016 AGM

Introduction:

The UVic Retirees Association Elder Academy was launched in September 2014 to provide ongoing learning experiences for the 55+ demographic. Topics are chosen on their relevance primarily for this demographic, and have generally been offered in a series of four related presentations. The intent is to provide some relatively in-depth information, rather than a single presentation.

There is a minimal charge of \$20 for the series or \$6 for individual sessions. The attendance has been between 30 and 60 people, and the sessions have been between 90 minutes and 2 hours in length. The response has been extremely positive. This format seems to have worked well. Often this demographic are not able to commit to long courses, and there is a need to consider accessibility, parking, and the time of day when delivering the mini-series.

Over the past two years, the following topics have been offered:

1. *What is the Elder Academy?*

2. *Series by the School of Nursing and Others*

- Engaging in Healthy Aging
- The New Science of Aging Well
- What Makes a Community Age-Friendly? Lessons Learned
- Nurse Practitioners: Who are They and What Can They Do for Me?

3. *Advances in Aging and Longevity*

Every day, we read about the importance of physical activity in preserving health as we grow older. These four presentations will address the areas of cardiovascular health, back health, the importance of strength, as well as maintaining or reaching a healthy body weight, to offset some of the effects of getting older. The role of physical activity in the control and treatment of age-related medical conditions, such as Type 2 Diabetes, Parkinson's, and dementia, will also be included. The presentations will be based on the latest research findings and *provide practical recommendations* to meet our physical activity needs as we grow older. Time will be allocated for questions and dealing with individual concerns.

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5. Horticultural Series

This series examines the science and art of organic farming.

- Tour of Haliburton Farm: "The Hidden Jewel in Saanich"
- "Chocolate Cheesecake, Soil Microbes, and How You Can Grow Healthy Dirt"
- "Tales from Underground!"
- "Soil Blankets"

6. Indigenous Language Revitalization

The UVRA is continuing to offer short series on specific topics of interest. We are really fortunate to have this series on Indigenous Language Revitalization with some of the most well-known speakers and researchers in the field, who have kindly agreed to share their knowledge with us.

- Nqwalutenlhkalha: Our Languages, Voices of the Land plus a tour of the First Peoples House
- Many Tongues, Many Voices: Languages around the World
- Indigenous Language Revitalization: Non-Indigenous Allies in Academia
- Adult Language Learners in Language Revitalization

7. Workshop series on Physical Activity and Wellness

A series of workshops is being offered by the UVRA Elder Academy in conjunction with the UVic Department of Athletics and Recreation on how to exercise safely and effectively. The workshops will address the theory as well as the practice of effective and safe exercises to enhance health and well-being, especially for those 55+. Although practical in nature, the workshops will not be strenuous, but focus on correct technique and progression. There will be an opportunity to indicate interest in future specific courses dealing with specific types of fitness offered through the Department of Athletics and Recreation.

- Cardiovascular training
- Weight training exercises
- The use of therabands to increase strength and endurance
- Developing Core/Back Stability

UVic Retirees Association Elder Academy Report for the 2016 AGM

8. UVRA Elder Academy Presents – Election 2015: Everything you need to know to vote!

The 2015 federal election is unlike any other, as polls suggest the closest race between national parties in generations. This series of presentations is designed to provide us with the information we need to make an informed decision when we go to cast our vote, and hopefully cut through the party rhetoric that tends to cloud many important issues. There are 4 presentations as part of the series with 3 leading to the election on October 19th, and the last one examining the outcome and the possible aftermath. We are fortunate to have lined up three outstanding people with insights into the political process and positions to help us deal with the major issues surrounding this election.

- All You Ever Wanted to Know About the Canadian Electoral Process But Were Afraid To Ask!
- Platforms: What Is Each Party Promising? What Are the Implications for BC Voters?
- Changing role of Social Media in the Contemporary Electoral Process Election
- Results Are In... Now What?

9. The Immune System: Function and Dysfunction

This series explores the recent developments in the fight against bacteria and viruses, including the latest advances in vaccines. Ed Ishiguro has received numerous awards for his teaching and his ability to make difficult concepts easy to understand and apply to our daily living. All sessions will be presented in non-technical language. Those of you who have heard Ed present know what to expect and if you haven't heard Ed present you are in for a real treat of information and insight into how our bodies respond to attack from outside agents.

- Overview of the immune system
- Vaccination
- Dysfunction in the immune system
- Cancer and its interactions with the immune system

10. Who am I? What do I want? What is preventing me from achieving what I want? What are my choices?

This will be a very interactive series based on Psycho-linguistic Programming with lots of time for discussion and questions.

- October 23rd (2.30-4.00pm) Environment: Present state and desired state. External constraints/when and where?
- October 30th (2.30-4.00pm) Behaviour: Self behaviours, side effects and stress, making a choice.

UVic Retirees Association Elder Academy Report for the 2016 AGM

- November 6th (2.30-4.00pm) Capabilities: Expanding one's awareness of resources. Strategies and state of mind.
- November 13th (2.30-4.00) Beliefs and values: Permission and motivation. What makes me think this way?

During this series, you will be challenged to examine much about yourself that may lead to transformative changes or confirm you are doing well.

11. The Body Works? Function and Dysfunction

The series will cover how four body systems work, what happens to them as we age, what we can do about it, and the medical interventions that are possible. The intent of the series is to provide information that will be helpful to you when communicating with medical personnel as well as understanding what is happening to your own body. The series will be presented by an anatomist in conjunction with a medical practitioner.

- The heart and cardiovascular system
- Joints or articulations (the hip and knee)
- The digestive system
- The back and neck, how to protect it, and what can be done when things go really wrong

12. 55+ Strength, Stretch & Stamina

New to fitness or returning after some time off? Want to feel more comfortable using the equipment in a safe and effective manner? This 7-week course will teach you the basics of exercise under the guidance of a certified personal trainer in the new CARSA facility. You will gain experience and learn how to use the strength and cardio machines, have an introduction to free weights and resistance bands, learn about flexibility and stretching, participate in a low impact cardiovascular class and receive theoretical information about exercise and the body so you can be successful in incorporating more activity into your life.

13. Genetics: Can We Really Blame it all on Our Genes?

Genetics is a key element in health and propensity for age-related disease. This series will explain the basics of genetics and how the human genome project has enhanced our understanding of disease and disorders. In addition an understanding of genetics can have profound implications on how treatment and medications are individualized for optimal effects.

- An Introduction to Genetics
- How is Genetics Important for your Health?

UVic Retirees Association Elder Academy Report for the 2016 AGM

- Understanding the Genetics of some Common Diseases and Disorders
- How Medicine can work with your Genetics to Improve your Care

Other topics being considered for the upcoming months:

1. A repeat of the very popular “Immune System: Function/Dysfunction”. This is a repeat of the very successful series presented by Ed Ishiguro. This presentation was “sold out” last time with sufficient people wanting to take it and requesting we offer it again.
2. “Technology for an older population”. This will be a four part series that explores the use of technology and how it affects our lives. It will also include how technology can be used to improve our lives.
3. The stories behind the artists and their work. This series will examine art and more about the artist and the forces behind their creative works.
4. “The science and art of making wine”. This series will explore the chemistry and science behind wine making, as well as a visit to local vineyard to see how it is done.
5. “Visit to Psychology Labs”. This series will involve visiting several laboratories in the Psychology Department to see first-hand how they gather and analyze their data, and the impact the work is having on the field of Psychology.
6. “Physical Activity Workshops”. This is a repeat of the workshop series offered in July 2015, and in response to many people who wanted to take it but could not when it was offered.
7. “The Story of Islam”. Given the current interest in Islam, this series will explore the diversity that exists in Islam in regard to its history, religion, and culture.
8. “Cognition and Aging”. This series will describe what current research tells us about the aging brain, and what can be done to offset some of the negative effects.
9. “The Body Works? II. Review of sensory systems and the effects of aging and associated medical issues and fixers (vision, hearing, nervous system, and balance)
10. Visit to four laboratories in the field of Exercise Science including Neuroscience, Behavioural Science, Psychomotor Learning and Cognition, and Neuromuscular Control of Movement.
11. Series on Astronomy, coordinated by Lyle Robertson and Colin Scarfe -- in the Fall/November.
12. Series on Native Plants, coordinated by Peter Liddell -- in the Fall/September.
13. Series on Literature (The relevance of Shakespeare in the modern world), coordinated by David Docherty.
14. Series on Nutrition, especially dietary requirements for optimal health and wellness as well as the pros and cons of GM and organic foods -- in the Fall/October.
15. Series on the role of the gut and good health -- Spring 2017.

If you have any topics you wish to present or know of people who would be willing to participate in the UVRA Elder Academy, please let me know. Thanks.

Submitted by:
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