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## Community Engagement for Health and Wellness in Aging Populations: Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry, and Innovation (iCubed)

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### INTRODUCTION

- The VCU Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry, and Innovation (iCubed) is a cutting-edge institute focused on creating collaborative connections between the university and surrounding communities through innovative academic research programs.
- As part of its inaugural mentorship program, iCubed created the **Commonwealth Scholars Program (CSP)** to pair academically talented undergraduate students with faculty members in a transdisciplinary core. In the **Health and Wellness in Aging Populations (HWAP) Transdisciplinary Core**, research is conducted on aging populations in Richmond. As part of their responsibilities, students were tasked with interviewing HWAP core faculty members to assess their perceptions of the core's mission, progress, and future applications.

### METHODS

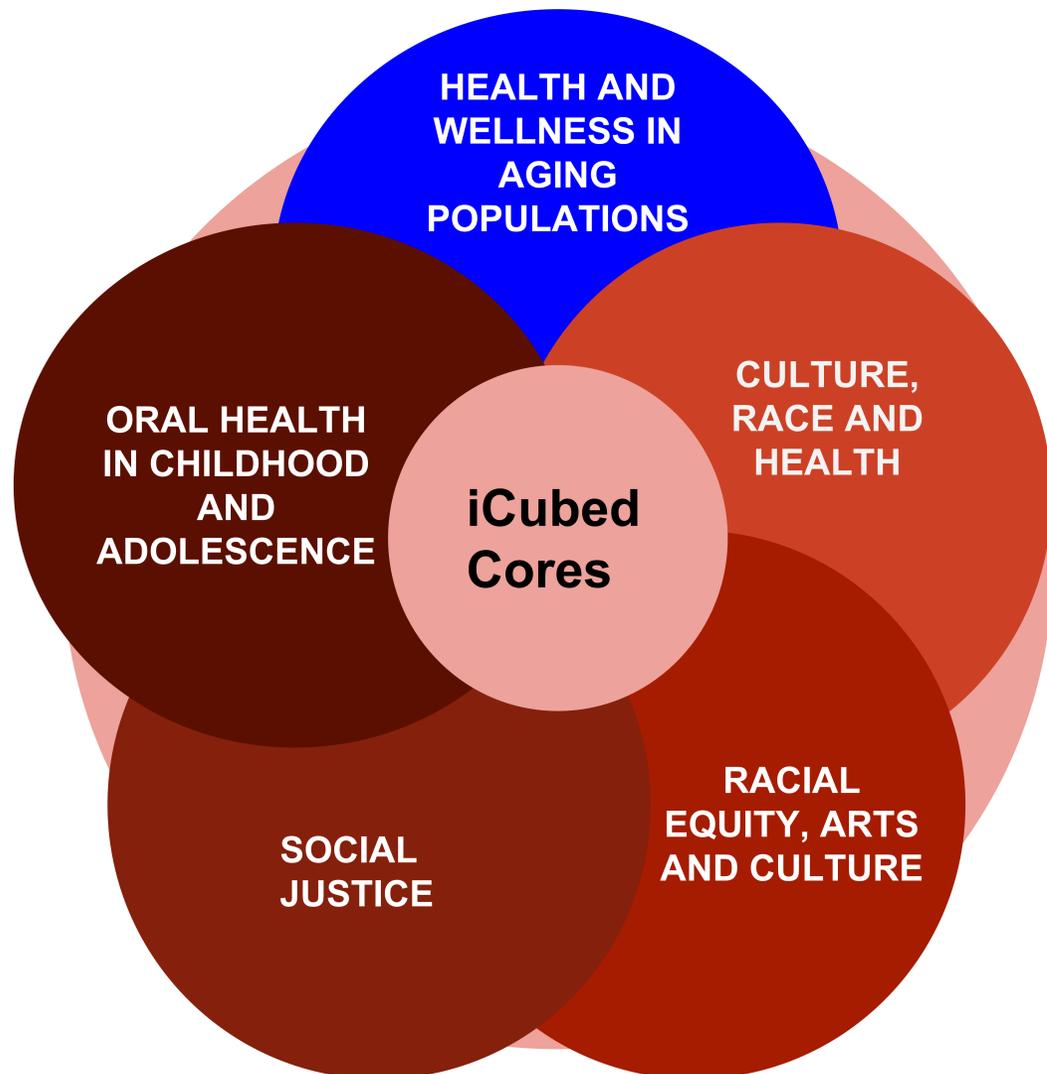
- CSP conducted interviews with HWAP core faculty members ( $N=10$ ) to establish a multiperspective vision of HWAP core objectives.
- Interviewed members come from the **Department of Family and Community Health Nursing and Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, School of Nursing; Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science, School of Pharmacy; Department of Family Medicine and Population Health, School of Medicine; Department of Gerontology, School of Allied Health Professions; and the Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs.**
- Each interview lasted approximately 10 minutes and was recorded into an electronic document. Themes from the interviews were identified and main themes are described.

### RESULTS

- Coded themes indicated that the HWAP core aims to deliver care, offer education, and help aging clients navigate the healthcare system. Findings indicated that the HWAP core has the potential to **improve the quality of life for older adults and empower community members to maintain their independence and age in place.**
- *Dr. Alan Dow mentioned, "Aging is a huge issue that's facing our society and no one is talking about it yet. Older people can give back more than others; they just need the ability."*

### DISCUSSION

Future opportunities for the HWAP core include training older adults to become community health workers to be truly vested within the mission and actions of the the core. In conclusion, the HWAP core aims to improve the lives of low-income older adults in Richmond and does so by connecting VCU researchers and students with community members.



### HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN AGING POPULATIONS

