

THE LearningEdge

...about strengthening the workforce for a changing society



Center for
Aging & Disability
Education & Research
Boston University
School of Social Work



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The demographic revolution is here...



In This Issue

From the Director

'The LearningEdge'

New Year Brings New Name, Renewed Inspiration

By Scott Miyake Geron

This is the inaugural issue of *The LearningEdge*, our bimonthly newsletter with a new name and increased coverage of disability along with aging. You'll continue to find the same unique combination of information and analysis [you've told us](#) you valued in *IGSW News*: a concise, clear look at relevant policy issues, practice, and innovative post-professional education and training aimed at social service professionals working with older adults and people with disabilities.



[We begin the new year with a new name](#) and expanded focus for our organization and this publication, and we've heard a renewed call to the work to which we have long been committed. [Read more](#)

Boston University photo of Scott Miyake Geron

Update your skills with this timely course **Core Issues in Aging and Disability**

Creation of the new Administration for Community Living in the Department of Health and Human Services is only the latest among many changes taking place to integrate long-term services for older adults with those for people with disabilities. Learn what you need to know to work in this changing environment. [Sign up](#) now and receive a 10 percent discount! (Enter code **ENews2013** to enjoy the discount.)

[New name:
The LearningEdge](#)

[Perceptions of online learning](#)

[CLASS Act out, long-term-care commission in](#)

[News to Note](#)

Courses in the Pipeline

Watch for

- An Options Counselor's Guide to Consumer Control, Choice, and Direction
- A Guide to the Aging and Disability Networks

The Center Presents

Stop by our booth...

2013 Aging in America Conference of the American Society on Aging, Chicago, Mar. 12-16. [More info](#)

In YOUR Opinion
—Please

Got four minutes?

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The LearningEdge from the Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research at Boston University is sent bimonthly, free of charge, to

"I would definitely recommend this program to all aging and disability services staff."

—**Janice F. Adams**, L.C.S.W.,
caregiver program manager, Central Savannah River Area
Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging

Photo of Janice F. Adams courtesy CSRARC Area Agency on Aging



Issues and Views

Perceptions of online learning

Students Value Flexibility, Convenience, and...

By Susan Kryczka

Online learning is in the news these days as more institutions incorporate online courses in their curricula and increasing numbers of students go online for college credit or to continue their professional education. In 2010, more than 6.1 million college and university students in the United States were taking at least one online course. The compound annual growth rate of the number of online students reached 18.3 percent between 2002 and 2010, while the annual growth rate of the overall higher education student population for that same period was just over 2 percent. What do students say they want online, and what's missing? [Read more](#)



Photo of Susan Kryczka courtesy Excelsior College

From the ashes of the CLASS Act

'Fiscal Cliff' Negotiations Create Long-Term-Care Commission

By Edgar Rivas



Amid the furor surrounding the "fiscal cliff" negotiations last December, few people noticed that one of the casualties was the embattled CLASS Act (for Community Living Assistance Services and Supports). Congress and the Administration chose to repeal CLASS in a cost-savings bargain, rather than continuing to fight for public long-term-care insurance, which the CLASS Act would have provided on a voluntary basis at a reasonable price.

To his credit, retiring Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-VA) stepped in to save vestiges of CLASS by inserting language into the [fiscal cliff bill](#) to create a bipartisan commission to propose a plan to cover long-term care. But it's a shame that we're going back to the drawing board.... [Read more](#)

Photo courtesy Edgar Rivas

News to Note

Help for all older adults

'Sleep and Aging with a Disability' Is a Must-Read

Sleep difficulties occur more frequently and are more pronounced among older adults—and especially those with disabilities—than among the general population, says a concise and readable new publication that offers practical help. From the Aging and Physical Disability Research and

readers who have expressed an interest in improving knowledge and skills of the social services workforce for older adults and people with disabilities. If you have received this issue from a friend and wish to be added to our mailing list, click [here](#).

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**Center for Aging & Disability
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(formerly IGSW)
Boston University
School of Social Work
264 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
USA

Phone: 617-358-2626
E-mail: cadler@bu.edu

Training Center at the University of Washington comes "Sleep and Aging with a Disability." The [five-pager](#) is billed as a fact sheet, but it's more than that—it's an invaluable resource for all older adults, their families, and service providers interested in addressing and preventing a common and debilitating problem.... [Read more](#)



Elders in low-income Latino communities

Study Shows High Rate of Abuse, Low Rate of Reporting

A recent study by researchers from the University of Southern California Davis School of Gerontology finds that elder abuse in low-income Latino communities goes largely unreported. More than 40 percent of Latino elders in the [study](#) told Spanish-speaking interviewers that they had been abused or neglected in the past year—yet only 1.5 percent of the victims said they had ever reported the abuse to authorities. "Our study has revealed a much higher rate of elder abuse among the Latino community than had been previously thought," said Marguerite DeLiema of the USC Davis School of Gerontology, lead author of the study.... [Read more](#)

Learn to Recognize the Signs in this Course

Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Reports of elder abuse appear to be on the rise, with occurrences in a range of different settings. In the face of ethical and legal mandates, practitioners must be able to recognize the signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or self-abuse that they may encounter among elders in their work, and they must be able to follow up appropriately. This course provides an understanding of abuse and neglect in its various forms, the signs and symptoms, reporting requirements, and how practitioners can work with Adult Protective Services and the other legal, medical, and community agencies that deal with this difficult and complex issue.

[To sign up or learn more about this online course](#)

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Resources

Administration for Community Living

The goal of the ACL is to increase access to community supports and full participation for older Americans and people with disabilities, while focusing attention and resources on the unique needs of these populations. Visit [its website](#) for more information about the organization and leadership.

Also, to learn more about the Aging and Disability Resource Center's Program (ADRC), a collaborative effort of ACL, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Veterans Health Administration, click [here](#).

From Past Issues of Our Newsletter

DHHS Combines Aging and Disability Agencies by Scott Miyake Geron (May-June 2012) [To read the full article](#)

New IGSW Course Links Aging and Disability Services by Scott Miyake Geron (May-June 2011) [To read the full article](#)

From the Director

Center Will Develop National Training and Certification Program for Options Counselors

By Scott Miyake Geron



Here at the Center, we are still getting comfortable with our new name, our new business cards and door signs have not yet arrived—but we have been busy.

The most exciting development is that the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) has just awarded a contract to us to serve as one of the leading organizations in a major new workforce initiative of ACL and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The initiative will help older adults and people with disabilities gain access to long-term-living services and supports and will improve outcomes for consumers and service providers.

Using our expertise in creating validated, skill-based online training, we will develop a national training program for ACL "options counselors," who are set to play a key role in Aging and Disability Resource Centers across the country. We will be working with eight states in a three-year demonstration, leading to creation of a national curriculum and certification program. A national roll-out of the program is scheduled for 2015.

The ACL has stated that the Options Counseling Program will be a key tool for states to use in "rebalancing" their long-term services and supports systems toward community-based services and away from institutional care. The systems will be "more person-centered, more efficient, and more supportive of community living." We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this effort.

Scott Miyake Geron, Ph.D., is director of the Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research and an associate professor in the School of Social Work at Boston University.

Boston University photo of Scott Miyake Geron

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Kudos for the course

"I would definitely recommend this program to all aging and disability services staff. The balance between aging and disability materials fits perfectly.... This program allows those working with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers in particular to better serve both our seniors and those with special needs."

—Janice F. Adams, L.C.S.W., caregiver program manager,
Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging





**Center for Aging & Disability
Education & Research**

(formerly IGSW)
Boston University
School of Social Work
264 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
USA

Phone: 617-358-2626
E-mail: cader@bu.edu

Photo of Janice F. Adams courtesy CSRARC Area Agency on Aging

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Further Reading

Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011 by I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman (Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group, LLC, November 2011); PDF, 44 pages; free.
[Download PDF](#)

Archive Articles by Susan Kryczka

Colleges See Critical Strategic Role for Online Ed (March–April 2012) [To read the full article](#)

Continuing Education Online Is Becoming the Norm, for Good Reason (May–June 2011) [To read the full article](#)

Resources

Educators Serving Educators

Educators Serving Educators, ESEserves.org, is a nonprofit division of Excelsior College that helps institutions of higher education develop online courses.



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Online learning is in the news these days as more institutions incorporate online courses in their curricula and increasing numbers of students go online for college credit or to continue their professional education. In 2010, more than 6.1 million college and university students in the United States were taking at least one online course. The compound annual growth rate of the number of online students reached 18.3 percent between 2002 and 2010, while the annual growth rate of the overall higher education student population for that same period was just over 2 percent. There is an emerging consensus that online education will continue to be one of the fastest growing markets in American higher education for the foreseeable future.

With so many taking online courses, how do students perceive the online programs? Not surprisingly, according to [a recent study](#) by two Massachusetts research groups, flexibility and the ability to do coursework off site, conveniently at home or at work, have been noted as the main reasons many take courses online. For those who can manage their time efficiently, are self-disciplined, and can stay focused, online learning is not only convenient but highly effective in terms of learning outcomes. Students say they prefer online courses that allow for interaction and engagement, contain relevant content and activities, provide timely instructor feedback, enable students to explore and develop their own learning objectives in addition to those stated, and are facilitated by faculty who have been trained to teach in an online environment.

Perhaps the most attractive online courses are those that provide students with a sense of community. The concept of "connectedness" in an online setting is important. Students say they value education that is timely, convenient, and effective but also provides a sense of an educational relationship with other students and faculty, and often a sense of professional association and connection with the institution. Online students say they prefer courses that keep them engaged and attentive by providing course content that is highly applicable to their professional goals.

As the technology of online courses and programs becomes more sophisticated, educators would do well to keep in mind that the "personal" touch—that is, providing students with a sense of community along with the content they need and want—will make their experience successful and add to their professional knowledge.

Susan Kryczka is chief operating officer of Educators Serving Educators, a nonprofit division of Excelsior College, which helps institutions of higher education develop and offer programs online.

Photo of Susan Kryczka courtesy Excelsior College

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E-mail: cader@bu.edu

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Further Reading

H.R. 8: American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, 112th Congress, 2011–2013.
<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr8#overview>
(accessed January 26, 2013).

Resources

Advance CLASS, Inc.

[Advance CLASS, Inc.](#) is a national advocacy organization devoted exclusively to the implementation of a strong and vital long-term services and supports program. The organization comprises national organizations that serve the most vulnerable in both the aging and disability communities.



Center for Aging & Disability
Education & Research
(formerly IGSW)
Boston University
School of Social Work
264 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
USA

Phone: 617-358-2626
E-mail: cader@bu.edu

Issues and Views

From the ashes of the CLASS Act **'Fiscal Cliff' Negotiations Create Long-Term-Care Commission**

By Edgar Rivas



Amid the furor surrounding the "fiscal cliff" negotiations last December, few people noticed that one of the casualties was the embattled CLASS Act (for Community Living Assistance Services and Supports). Congress and the Administration chose to repeal CLASS in a cost-savings bargain, rather than continuing to fight for public long-term-care insurance.

To his credit, retiring [Senator Jay Rockefeller \(D-VA\)](#) stepped in to save vestiges of CLASS by inserting language into the [fiscal cliff bill](#) to create a bipartisan commission to propose a plan to cover long-term care. But it's a shame that we're going back to the drawing board.

Recall that the CLASS Act, a provision of the Affordable Care Act, was intended to create a voluntary national insurance program for long-term services and supports to help individuals to live independently in their homes and communities, or to help pay for facility-based care. Enrollees would have chosen to participate through payroll deductions. Premiums would have varied by age only, not medical conditions, income, or other factors.

Unfortunately, CLASS became a target for foes of the healthcare law. In 2011, the Administration prematurely shelved the CLASS Act, stating that they had not found a way to make it work "at this time." Last February, the House voted to repeal it, but the Senate did not follow suit.

Now, with the CLASS Act finally repealed as of January 1, we must continue to work for a similar model. The flexibility for assistance that CLASS would have provided individuals in paying for home care, transportation, and the multitude of home- and community-based services needed with chronic disease, disability, or frailty, is too important to abandon.

Edgar Rivas is a consultant in aging in Washington, D.C.

Photo courtesy Edgar Rivas

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Further Reading

Sleep and Aging with a Disability by University of Washington, Aging and Physical Disability Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (2012); PDF, 5 pages; free. This fact sheet may be reproduced and distributed freely with appropriate attribution. [Download PDF](#)

Resources

Aging and Physical Disability RRTC

The University of Washington [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Aging with a Physical Disability](#) works on research and training activities to increase the understanding of challenges faced by people aging with muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, post-polio syndrome, and spinal cord injury. Its website includes information on research studies that it is conducting, research-based information for people aging into or with a physical disability, and peer-reviewed research publications authored by RRTC researchers.

Further Reading

Determining Prevalence and Correlates of Elder Abuse Using Promotores: Low-Income Immigrant Latinos Report High Rates of Abuse and Neglect by Marguerite DeLiema, Zachary D. Gassoumis, Diana C. Homeier, and Kathleen H. Wilber; *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, vol. 60, issue 7, July 2012; pp. 1333–1339. [For abstract and purchasing](#)

News to Note

'Sleep and Aging with a Disability' New Pub Is Must-Read for Older Adults, Providers

Sleep difficulties occur more frequently and are more pronounced among older adults—and especially those with disabilities—than among the general population, says a concise and readable new publication that offers practical help. From the Aging and Physical Disability Research and Training Center at the University of Washington comes "Sleep and Aging with a Disability." The [five-pager](#) is billed as a fact sheet, but it's more than that—it's an invaluable resource for all older adults, their families, and service providers interested in addressing and preventing a common and debilitating problem.



Researchers engaged in the growing discipline of sleep studies have stressed that while people often get less sleep after age 65, mainly because their sleep becomes increasingly fragmented, it's a myth that we need less sleep in later life. Indeed, sleep disturbances in older people can profoundly affect well-being and make other conditions worse. For people aging with disabilities, the problem is compounded because many have had long-term sleep difficulties associated with their disability—as many as 40 percent, according to the fact sheet.

"Sleep and Aging with a Disability" provides useful, research-based suggestions for helpful changes in behavior and environment, preceded by a clear overview of sleep problems, related physical and chemical changes associated with injury and with aging, effects of medications and the like, and recommended readings and resources.

Elders in low-income Latino communities Study Shows High Rate of Abuse, Low Rate of Reporting

A recent study by researchers from the University of Southern California Davis School of Gerontology finds that elder abuse in low-income Latino communities goes largely unreported. More than 40 percent of Latino elders in [the study](#) told Spanish-speaking interviewers that they had been abused or neglected in the past year—yet only 1.5 percent of the victims said they had ever reported the abuse to authorities.

"Our study has revealed a much higher rate of elder abuse among the Latino community than had been previously thought," said Marguerite DeLiema of the USC Davis School of Gerontology, lead author of the study. "This indicates that family solidarity within the Latino community does not necessarily protect older Latinos against elder abuse, as some research has suggested." Through interviews conducted in Spanish in low-income

[information](#)

Resources

USC Davis School of Gerontology

The University of Southern California [Davis School of Gerontology](#), founded in 1975, offers a comprehensive selection of gerontology degree programs that study the human lifespan by exploring the biological, psychological, sociological, political, medical, and business dimensions of adult life. It aims to equip future professionals in the field of aging with the specific skills and knowledge necessary to respond effectively to the needs of an aging population.



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(formerly IGSW)
Boston University
School of Social Work
264 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
USA

Phone: 617-358-2626
E-mail: cader@bu.edu

Latino neighborhoods in Los Angeles, the researchers examined elder abuse that included physical or sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial exploitation, and caregiver neglect. They found that 10.7 percent of Latino older adults reported that they had been physically abused, and 9 percent said they had been sexually abused in the past year.

Kathleen H. Wilber, Zachary D. Gassoumi, and Diana C. Homeier, all of USC, were co-authors on the study, which was published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Learn to Recognize the Signs with This Crucial Course **Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation**

Reports of elder abuse appear to be on the rise, with occurrences in a range of different settings. In the face of ethical and legal mandates, practitioners must be able to recognize the signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or self-abuse that they may encounter among elders in their work, and they must be able to follow up appropriately. This course provides an understanding of abuse and neglect in its various forms, the signs and symptoms, reporting requirements, and how practitioners can work with Adult Protective Services and the other legal, medical, and community agencies that deal with this difficult and complex issue. [To sign up or learn more about this online course](#)

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