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Taking the Pulse for URI as an Age-Friendly University

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LOUISA MELCHIONNO (Communicative Disorders)

Taking the Pulse for URI as an Age-Friendly University
Sponsor: Skye Leedahl (Human Development and Family Science, Political Science)

The Age-Friendly University (AFU) Initiative was launched in 2012 at Dublin University, and became an international group of institutions of higher education who have committed themselves to becoming more age-inclusive in their program and policies. The University of Rhode Island became part of the AFU Initiative in 2018. As a Communicative Disorders major seeking to help older adults, I became inspired to help the AFU initiative through the following project.This project had four main tasks. First, I tracked campus wide AFU and related activities since the university got its designation, and collaborated with Dr. Leedahl to create a detailed report of URI's progress. I gathered this information by reaching out to faculty members and examining administrative and correspondence documents to extract information. Second, I gathered quantitative data to complete the AFU inventory, a tool created by researchers studying AFU efforts across the country. This inventory consisted of questions for 14 entities/offices on campus related to age-friendliness; this helped to identify areas where the university is doing well and areas of improvement. I reached out to faculty and staff in each of these entities and compiled their responses to questions. Third, I explored what classes across campus could be included for a possible intergenerational certificate. Last, I reviewed literature on AFU and used this along with the rest of the information I compiled from the report and inventory to make recommendations for URI and its continuation of becoming more age-friendly.My project serves as a reference to AFU happenings at URI, and also acts as a tool for recommendations that URI can adopt to become more age-inclusive as a university.