Dear Dr. Rogal,

In follow-up to my voice message earlier this morning, I would like to explore a potential collaboration between Graphic Design and the Department of Aging and Geriatric Research.

I came to UF almost a year ago from the National Institute on Aging to chair the Division of Clinical Research.  The focus of our clinical research in on understanding and preventing disability in aging, and we have three large multi-center studies that address various aspects of disability prevention as well as several smaller NIH- and UF-supported studies.

I am interested in partnering with Graphic Design (and/or other appropriate programs) to develop recruitment materials that are innovative, “eye-catching,” and meet specific needs of the older populations we target.  Most of our studies include persons 70-90 years of age, so we do have practical considerations such as color contrast, larger print, less intricate designs.  However, given these constraints, I would really like to make our recruitment materials ones that recipients find intriguing to the point that they are not automatically discarded as “just another advertisement.”

Regarding collaboration – the challenges for graphic design students would be to learn about a clinical study and translate its purpose and goals into a 2-dimensional representation that catches the attention and conveys a message to older persons who are potential participants.  The challenges to the research partners would be to communicate scientific approaches to non-scientists and to gain an understanding of artistic representation in communication that goes beyond photographs of older people doing exercises (the usual approach, that I have been struggling to change).  Thus the theme  of the collaboration could focus on improving communication about research through graphic design.

We do have funding through the individual studies to support some student efforts, whether as part-time employment or as stipends earned in competition.  Also, I have noticed a few grant opportunities that could fund this type of collaboration as a pilot program in arts and sciences (we are quite experienced in grant-writing!).  If we could come up with a pilot program between Graphic Design and Aging that is successful, there is potential for this to expand to the  UF Clinical Translational Research Institute . . .

Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Sincerely,

Susan Nayfield

PS.  I noticed you are a VCU alumna.  I did my medical residency and fellowship at MCV and was on the faculty there for several years before I moved to the NIH in Bethesda, MD.

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What I really hope to get from this for my junior faculty is an understanding of what graphic design can do and insight in what it has to bring to their research initiatives.  Your course in visualizing science will help with one end of the research (and I can’t wait to take it!), but I need to have them gain appreciation from the other end.  It’s not just a logo – it’s a design plan that extends throughout recruitment and retention, and it’s a team effort.

This collaboration is something that Michael Marsiske and I have dreamed about since I came to UF and started working with the Pepper Center last year.  If it doesn’t work with this project or application, I hope we can find another way to make it happen.

To susan

I meant to send you these comments earlier but perhaps more importantly I also saw this conference that may be of interest on design and health care at the Mayo Clinic that may be of interest:  <http://centerforinnovation.mayo.edu/transform/index.html>

Not totally applicable to us but interesting.

AGING AND DESIGN CONTEST

   The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) has launched

a student contest focused on aging and design. This "Aging Means

Business" Student Design Contest invites undergraduate and graduate

students

in gerontology,

engineering, business, industrial design, architecture, and social work

to

showcase their

design ingenuity by proposing an original product for adults age 50+.

The

judges

panel will assess entries based on innovation of design, appeal

and appropriateness for the 50+ population, and marketability of

the product.  The contest winner will present at Aging Means Business:

Design for a New Age, a one day conference that is held in conjunction

to GSA's Annual Scientific Meeting.  Competition entries are due

October 7, 2011. This information should be shared with any

interested students.

For more about the contest, or to submit a design, visit:

<http://www.geron.org/designcontest>

<<http://ntserver2.geron.org/t/63651/393431/4170/0/>>