



# **VISION 2025:** **A Game Changer**

**June 22, 2021 Event Briefing**

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## Executive Event Summary

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, Vision 2025's virtual event was held with the primary goal of informing university leadership how a senior living and health services leadership program can fit within their university's strategic plan. The exclusive event had approximately 115 attendees with representatives from 10 industry associations, 22 providers, and 37 universities.

University leaders and program directors shared that to start a senior living and health services leadership program and ensure that it benefits a university's strategic plan, one must develop partnerships, identify a program leader that is connected and passionate, and emphasize the importance of marketing in student recruitment. Various speakers during the event emphasized the need for the industry to be thoughtful regarding diversity especially as we continue to recover from COVID-19 and face leadership shortages. Dr. Doug Olson, Vision 2025's Founding Director, then walked attendees through his 5 P's (purpose, passion, plan, patience, and perseverance) which demonstrates how we can move Vision 2025's initiative forward to successfully accomplish its goal of 1,000 paid field experiences, 15 mutually beneficial partnerships, and 25 robust senior living university programs. During the breakout groups, attendees were able to discuss barriers that their organization/university are currently facing when growing or starting a senior living leadership program and tools or resources Vision 2025 may be able to provide to overcome these barriers. Some of the key takeaways could be broken down by stakeholder:

*Providers*- Need a way to connect with universities such as a checklist/toolkit

*Universities*-Need to be engaging with providers/organizations and associations regularly and raise their awareness about their program

-Need to communicate what role partners play within the university

-Publicizing career paths & success stories will help with accrediting programs

*Associations*- Need to connect with universities to provide resources to leaders and students

The event closed with Vision 2025's co-chair, Sean Kelly, sharing the potential for us to work together to allow the outside world to see the potential in aging services. He invited attendees to connect with Vision 2025 through its website and social media.

### **Next Steps**

The steering committee is contemplating the necessary factors to keep the energy and staff support in place. We invite attendees of Vision 2025 events and others with related interests to get engaged or voice their ideas and perspectives. Leadership of the effort will be at association conferences this fall to share progress, the vision and gather feedback. Individuals can also stay up to date with what is happening this fall and/or as Vision 2025 begins to plan its large in-person symposium in Chicago, IL for June of 2022. Please reach out with any questions or thoughts using the contact us link for VISION 2025.

Thank you for your interest and support!

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## **Opening Notes and Remarks**

On June 22, 2021, Vision 2025 held a virtual event, VISION 2025: A Game Changer, with representatives from associations, providers, and universities. The event's purpose was to focus on raising the awareness of university leadership and share how adding, growing, or strengthening a senior living and health services leadership program can aide a university's strategic position. Despite being virtual, over 22 new Universities were in attendance when compared to the attendees at the 2019 symposium held in Chicago. The goals of Vision 2025 were sent out in advance and highlighted at the beginning to establish a common understanding of the all the participants. Vision 2025's goals are to foster the creation of 25 robust university and college programs across the country, 1,000 paid field internships to allow students a great developmental experience while not having to worry about financial issues, and to create 15-20 mutually beneficial university and provider partnerships.

The event was opened by Ed Kenny, president of the LCS Foundation board, who touched on the important internal goals that each university and partnership should be focusing on. These goals mainly focused on the students and future healthcare leaders. Kenny encouraged developing, fostering, and nurturing these students to help them become the healthcare leaders the industry needs. He also emphasized the incredible efforts of those working in the healthcare industry, and how their commitment and kindness to their work exceeded expectations given the unknown circumstances brought on by COVID-19. Dan Hermann, President and CEO of Ziegler, spoke about his experience working with Universities and partners. Hermann discussed the labor shortages they as a partner see across the nation in healthcare positions. Ziegler sponsored June 2021's virtual event as it recognizes the role that universities play in filling these labor shortages, especially the increasing leadership openings.

## **Keynote Message**

This year's keynote speaker was Freeman Hrabowski, III, President and Chancellor of the University of Maryland – Baltimore County. He began by discussing the aging population of baby

boomers, including how most seniors in that age range will be entering retirement and looking for aging services where they will be respected and understood. Next, Dr. Hrabowski discussed the importance of expectations and diversity. As the baby boomers continue to age, senior living and health services will need to innovate to meet their increasing needs and expectations. To meet these expectations, the industry needs have high expectations for ourselves and others in adjacent fields. Establishing these high expectations will allow us to reach our goals and develop new solutions.

Partnerships were also emphasized during Dr. Hrabowski's message, people who work in senior living and health services have that same goal. He suggested that creating a community to share ideas is the key to success. Universities need to build partnerships with providers, industry associations, and community organizations to develop a sustainable program. These partnerships can add strength to an organization, build representation, a new perspective, and confidence.

Dr. Hrabowski shared that the incoming senior population are looking to be cared for by those who understand their interests and needs. To do this our industry will need to put an emphasis on diversity. Universities begin this process through recruitment, but providers can elevate the process with special attention, scholarships, and collaboration with niche colleges/universities. Dr. Hrabowski left with a quote "Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny, dreams, and values".

### **University Leadership Panel**

During the University Leadership Panel, we heard from Dr. James Schmidt, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire; Marvin Krislov, President of Pace University; and Dr. Philip Rous, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Maryland - Baltimore Campus moderated by Steven Nash, President of Stoddard Baptist Homes. The key concepts discussed during this panel were paid internships, placement rates after graduation, strong partnerships, inclusivity, and

the importance of marketing. Paid internships were a large point of discussion as having these experiences before graduation prepares students for their future career. This is strongly due to the ability for students to gain hands-on experience under the supervision of a seasoned professional and use their classroom knowledge in real-world scenarios. All three of the University leaders stressed the importance of paid internships and their positive correlation in the placement rates after graduation.

Once again, the importance of partnerships was highlighted by the panelists. They shared that paid internships and job shadowing opportunities wouldn't be possible without valued partners who are willing to mentor and educate students. Inclusivity is also something universities need to be working on especially when it comes to age during enrollment. It was shared that some admissions departments are seeing an increase in older students coming back to get their first degree or further their education. This means that universities and programs need to pay greater attention and welcome these experienced students. Some of the panelists encouraged university leadership to leverage the increase in adult learners for a degree in senior living and health services leadership as it is an attractive degree for those who are already working in the industry or those who may want a career change. Finally, all three of our panelists agreed with a final point that the industry needed to do a better job marketing the industry and the vast opportunity available to students. Vision 2025 has developed a career pathway document that is available to attendees in the *Resources* area, the charter group is working on further developing this document into an interactive digital experience.

#### **Academic Program Director Panel**

During the Program Director Panel we heard from Dr. Lennox Graham Assistant Professor, Howard University; Dr. Pamela Saunders Director, MS in Aging & Health, Georgetown University; Dr. Nancy Swanger Associate Dean and Founding Director, Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living, Washington State University; Jennifer Wagner, MPH, HSE, LNHA, CEAL, Assistant Practitioner Professor and Internship Coordinator, Bowling Green State University; and Dr. David G. Wolf Professor & Chair,

Department of Health Services & Senior Living Leadership, Lynn University moderated by Steve Chies, Program Director at St. Joseph's College of Maine and Convener of VISION 2025. During this panel the key concepts that were discussed were internships, involvement, and placement of aging services within the college. Internships were a large part of the conversation, as many internships required by senior living and health services leadership programs are 1,000 hours to meet state licensure requirements. Because of this time frame, it is crucial that we work to make sure students are compensated. Aside from internships it is important for students to be involved in other ways such as volunteering or working in the board spectrum of senior services. These different experiences will ensure that students are more ready to take on a position in aging services right after graduation. Finally, the program directors discussed where and how their senior living and health service leadership program fits into the University. The findings were that because of the many skills that go into working in this field services the program best fits within a college of business or a related school with Gerontology interests. The directors also reiterated the importance of working together and networking through Vision 2025 to ensure all around success.

### **The Foundational Elements of VISION 2025**

Next, Dr. Douglas Olson, Professor in the Health Care Administration program and the Director of the Center for Health Administration and Aging Services Excellence at the UW-Eau Claire, and the Founding Director of VISION 2025 discussed the necessary ingredients to move forward based on his experience and the culture of the initiative. He used the framework of the five P's and the important role they play for this leadership and aging services effort. Olson's five P's include purpose, passion, plan, patience, and perseverance. *Purpose* is "providing the best talent possible for people who are deserving of it, the seniors of our country". We need to lift the senior living leadership profession as a mainstream discipline in universities. Second, he revealed that *passion* comes after exposure to the industry through internships and connections with people who are passionate and serious about this

field. “We need the energy of providers, associations, and universities to come together and have a mutual respect to accomplish Vision 2025’s goals.” Next is the *plan*, which is already laid out within the goals of Vision 2025. These include robust programs within Universities, paid field internships, a laid-out successful career path for future students, embracing mutually beneficial partnerships, understanding of where aging services are going, working with stakeholders to create mutual success. Olson then shifted to *patience*, which entails “knowing that this work is hard and will take commitment and grit”, but, in the end, it will be worth it. Dr. Olson closed with *perseverance*, which was tested during the continuing pandemic, knowing the VISION 2025 road has not yet been paved yet our stakeholders choose to continue with us on the journey. “Having a long-term vision is essential to what we are doing”.

### **Breakout Discussions & Gathering our Thoughts**

The next part of the event was focused on gaining feedback and insight from attendees. The entire group was split into groups of five to eight where they were given two questions to discuss takeaways or ideas that stemmed from the previous discussions. The group then reconvened to discuss important takeaways. Here are a few items of note:

- Providers need a way to connect with universities such as a checklist or toolkit. This will make it easier on them, in turn making them more likely to continue working with the University.
- Universities need to be engaging with providers/organizations and associations regularly to raise awareness about their program. It is also important that universities communicate what role partners could play.
- Participants asked how to connect existing team members to University programs to advance their skills.
- Paid internships and connections to the industry need to be more accessible to students.
- Publicizing career paths and success stories will help with accrediting programs as people will see the wide variety of jobs within aging services that are available at different levels.
- Participants discussed the need to see diversity in all levels and positions.

- The idea “No Margin, No Mission” was cited as the explanation for why there needs to be more financial support behind internships and senior living programs because without financial stability, these efforts will not survive.

After breakout groups, attendees regrouped to discuss key findings. Sean Kelly, President and CEO of The Kendal Corporation and Co-Convener of VISION 2025, pointed out the importance of going into this work with a humble mindset. Another topic of discussion was changing the perception of long-term care. There is a stigma around long-term care which can be dispelled as senior living becomes a mainstream program of study in universities. Kelly also discussed the importance of having dedicated faculty to lead the programs that are created or reinforced. Finally, the discussion emphasized opportunity that this industry brings to students as most begin with a strong position and commensurate salary with a fulfilling career.

### **Make it a reality**

Next, Marvin Krislov, President of Pace University, shared how building a senior living and health services leadership program can become a reality. Mr. Krislov mainly focused on student learning and the senior population. With COVID-19 came lots of struggles but it also allowed for University programs to grow in a way that wouldn't have been possible without it. “Because of COVID, more people are willing to do their learning online, also older adults are more willing to come back to school and continue their education.” Krislov explained that universities will see a decreasing number of applicants in the 18 to 22-year-old age group forcing schools to look elsewhere for enrollment. He shares that senior living provides opportunity for those working in the field to return to school and advance in their career with advance degrees and licensure. We know that there will be an increase in a demand for aging services soon and we assume that we will need additional leadership at all levels to operate those services. It will require efforts from all stakeholders, including government, to work together to meet this increased demand.

## Closing

Vision 2025 is working to connect stakeholders together who want to join in reaching its goals. To end the symposium Sean Kelly, developed his own alliteration. These include *purpose, pay, prestige, and professionalization*. *Purpose* is for the people working in this field and their desire to lead purposeful lives at work. *Pay* is the idea that working a job you love is just as important as being able to afford to live. *Prestige*, these heroes working on the front lines taking care of people should be seen and treated in the same way as we see “first-responders”. Finally, *professionalization*, which will allow the outside world to see the potential in aging services, with age comes new possibilities. With all these ideas, partnerships, and support we will exceed the expectations and goals set by Vision 2025. Kelly closed on behalf of the entire steering committee, by inviting attendees to connect with Vision 2025 through the website to stay up to date with what is happening this fall and as Vision 2025 begins to plan its large in-person symposium in Chicago, IL for 2022.

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