

Senior Scholar

Grant Type: **Dollar and nondollar support**

Dollar Amount: **First year: \$2,000; less in subsequent years**

Foundation Name: **Chapel Hill Foundation**

What was your objective with the grant or initiative?

The objective was to provide a challenging educational experience plus an opportunity for socialization for area senior citizens during a midwinter void in activities.

What were the results of this grant or initiative?

Senior Scholar has grown into a regular, 6-week winter program, 1 day a week, that offers a selection of small group seminars and other learning opportunities.

The program now offers three concurrent courses in the morning; in the afternoon, all meet together for a single class. Participants have requested an additional "semester" in the fall or summer.

The program has seen steady growth over its 3 years, with heightened local publicity about the offering. Senior Scholar not only receives expressions of interest from potential enrollees but communications from others who would like to offer courses.

Why would you say this grant or initiative had outsized impact?

Providing this program as a collaborative venture among the Chapel Hill Foundation (which provides financial support and secures teachers), the Office of the Aging (which handles publicity, arrangement of facilities, and the provision of on-site technical support and evaluation), and the Senior Citizen Council (which handles registration and financial management) allows the collaborators to offer an entirely new program without undue strain on any of the organizations. The collaborators continue to meet regularly, and now are looking for other potential initiatives, including perhaps a virtual village to facilitate aging individuals' ability to remain in their homes. The benefits of collaboration have been enormous. None of these organizations alone would have gotten this program off the ground. It took a little longer to build attendance than expected, but growth has been steady. The program's teachers, who primarily are active college professors, have enjoyed the sessions as much as their students have.

Senior Scholar also now has the ability to support attendance for individuals lacking the ability to pay the usual enrollment fee, and the program is developing a system to provide transportation for those requiring it.

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