

## Workshop on Ageism

January 21, 2009

Research shows that age discrimination is endemic in North American society, arguably because of our culture's obsession with youth. Unfortunately it is also very hard to recognize. For one thing, ageism doesn't just affect the "old". For another, it is more often about what doesn't happen than what does. A staff member is denied a training opportunity because the program is designed for "young people"; a mature student is told that family responsibilities are not grounds for requesting a change in work schedule; a forty-something new Ph.D. finds that the jobs are all going to his younger, less qualified peers – he himself can't even get short-listed. These are all examples of age discrimination but probably wouldn't be perceived as such. How do we fight an invisible enemy? The first step is to start talking about it.

The Equity Committee of UWOFA and the Office of the Provost are co-hosting a half-day workshop on Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 on "Ageism in Academia." It will be held in the Moot Court Room of the Law School (Room 207), 2-5 p.m. The main purpose of this event is to raise awareness about age discrimination as a human rights issue – how does it manifest itself, who does it affect, and what are its broader consequences? A secondary and perhaps even more important goal, however, is to tap into our collective resourcefulness to come up with ways to deal with this problem. Members of the audience will be invited to share stories, observations, and ideas for combating ageism on campus. Together, hopefully, we can devise some remedies.

To get the ball rolling, the event will kick off with a series of short presentations on different aspects of age discrimination. The speakers and their topics will include:

Gaile McGregor (Sociology): *The Legal Context of Age Discrimination*

Julie McMullin (Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences): *The Signs and Impact of Age Discrimination in Employment*

Michael Lynk (Faculty of Law): *The Intersection of Age and Disability*

Donna Moore (Mature Student Advisor): *How Ageism Affects Older Students*

To provide a point of comparison, we are also hoping to have a person from the London area aboriginal community to speak about the role of elders in First Nations culture. Following the panel discussion, the time remaining will be given over to questions and suggestions from the floor.

This workshop is open to the whole university community. The atmosphere will be informal, and refreshments will be served. Interested parties are welcome to come for the whole afternoon or to drop in as schedules permit.