

A photograph of the University of Southern Indiana's main entrance. A large, curved brick wall features the university's name in large, silver, three-dimensional letters. In front of the wall is a landscaped area with various colorful flowers, including purple, yellow, and red blooms. Behind the wall, a large fountain with multiple water jets is visible against a clear blue sky.

University of Southern Indiana

The Bronstein Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness

Annual Report

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025



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Funded by The Bronstein Foundation



Visionaries—Sol and Arlene Bronstein

Introduction

The University of Southern Indiana (USI) Bronstein Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness is dedicated to advancing the understanding of aging and promoting the well-being of older adults through interdisciplinary education, research and engaged partnerships. On July 5, 2022, USI announced that it was the recipient of the generous \$1 million leadership gift from the Sol and Arlene Bronstein Foundation, established by Mrs. Bronstein, to expand programs of excellence in dementia care and advance care planning education. The following report outlines program progress from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, and outlines the five initiatives of the Bronstein gift agreement.

1 Conduct evidence-based training and certifications for dementia care and advance care planning education for USI students, USI faculty, regional healthcare professionals and community members.

Five education programs took place to deepen knowledge and advance skills related to dementia and advance care planning.

First Educational Program – Dementia Live



The Bronstein Center purchased 10 Dementia Live Coach certifications for the following individuals: Yaw Bredwa-Mensah, Graduate Assistant; Clara Boarman, Graduate Assistant; Abbie McIntosh, Nurse Practitioner at Deaconess Clinic; Travis Doersam, Graduate Assistant; Warda Alaisari, Graduate Assistant; Gracie Money, Grant Coordinator; Jenna Biggs, Student Worker; Mallory Mills, Instructor in Dental Assisting/Dental Hygiene; Jessica Mason, Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy; and Laurel Standiford-Reyes, Assistant Professor of Psychology. These certified coaches continue

to support dementia education and expand upon programming introduced by the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. Coaches facilitate Dementia Live sessions to offer a unique inside-out understanding of dementia and aging for direct care workers and family caregivers. The innovative program enlightens participants with a heightened awareness of the challenges faced by those who live with dementia.

We have deepened our expertise in dementia care by offering Dementia Live sessions through our certified coaches. Although we do not conduct data collection on the work of all certified coaches, they continue to host sessions in the community using their training on behalf of the Bronstein Center. In the 2024-2025 reporting period, the Bronstein team offered at least 22 sessions to students between September 2024 and April 2025, reaching at least 524 students and community members.

Second Educational Program – Two Online Care Partner Support Groups

The Bronstein Center, in collaboration with internationally recognized dementia care educator Teepa Snow, offered two virtual Care Partner Support Groups for informal (family) caregivers in southwest Indiana. Each series included five weekly sessions held via Zoom, focusing on: (a) understanding and accepting dementia, (b) common brain changes and supportive techniques, (c) sensory changes—increasing awareness and understanding impact, (d) person-centered problem-solving and (e) techniques to reduce distress.

The Fall 2024 series ran on Mondays from 7-8:30 p.m. Central Time: October 7, 14, 21, 28 and November 4. Sessions were facilitated by Carolyn Lukert, a member of Teepa Snow's team.

Six community members participated, occupying a total of 30 seats across the five sessions. Marketing efforts again focused on rural areas through Dementia Friendly Communities. Participants attended from the following Indiana counties: Jackson County (1), Vanderburgh County (4) and Spencer County (1).

The Spring 2025 series was held on Tuesdays from 7–8:30 p.m. Central Time: March 18, 25, April 1, 8, and 15. This series was co-facilitated by Amanda Bulgarelli and Shelly Edwards. Seven individuals—faculty and community members—participated, also occupying a total of 35 seats. Interest from both the academic and local communities increased significantly, prompting the planning of another series for Fall 2025, with a contract currently in progress. Participants attended from the following Indiana counties: Vanderburgh County (3), Warrick County (2), Dubois County (1), Spencer County (1) and Pike County (1). Participants have shared thoughtful feedback highlighting the impact of the program. One attendee expressed that the sessions “provided both emotional relief and practical tools that I now use daily,” reflecting the growing value of the initiative. Another participant shared their experience with the PAC support group:

“I wanted to personally thank you for the opportunity to participate. My dad took part this past spring, and I participated this fall. We both found the series incredibly beneficial in better understanding the changes occurring with my mother, what to expect moving forward, and learning strategies to support her as her dementia progresses. The insights we gained have been invaluable, and I am sharing this wonderful resource with others who have a loved one diagnosed with dementia. I truly hope this program continues for years to come to help caregivers like us.”

These testimonials reflect the meaningful difference the program is making in the lives of participants and their families.

Third Educational Program – Dementia Friendly Community programming



On January 29, 2025, the Bronstein Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness hosted a regional celebration honoring the Southwest Dementia Friendly America (DFA) chapters. Dementia Friendly America is dedicated to supporting individuals living with dementia and their caregivers through education, community engagement and awareness initiatives. The event brought together 20 participants representing Pike County, Vanderburgh County, Spencer County, Dubois County and the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library (EVPL). The

gathering served as an opportunity to come together as community partners, increase education and strengthen collaborations.

Kathy Chapuran, M.Ed., CHES, BOLD Coalition Coordinator at the Marion County Public Health Department, and Tara Weed, MSW, Public Health Manager at the Alzheimer’s Association Greater Indiana Chapter, led engaging discussions highlighting the importance of brain health and strategies to support cognitive function. Topics included the lifetime

Initiative One (continued)

risk and projected burden of dementia, evidence-based approaches for maintaining brain health, and tips for healthy aging. The Bronstein Center remains committed to supporting regional Dementia Friendly Community initiatives through ongoing partnerships, consultations and resource-sharing, contributing to the development of a more dementia-friendly community. We look forward to continuing these efforts and collaborating with our partners to advance dementia care and awareness.

Fourth Educational Program – Nursing Home Dementia Orientation

In 2022, The Bronstein Center created, in partnership with Positive Approach to Care, the dementia orientation curriculum for use in nursing facilities. The curriculum trains staff members to provide evidence-based care for people living with dementia. In 2024–2025, the dementia orientation curriculum was distributed to 11 participants across eight unique facilities. Since its beginning in 2021, 299 participants across 225 unique facilities have received the Bronstein Center’s dementia orientation.

Fifth Educational Program – Advance Care Planning

Dr. Kevin Valadares offered the third Advance Care Planning (ACP) course from November 13–15, 2024, as part of the GERO 317 (Healthcare Continuum) course. Nineteen students participated in the course, engaging in simulated advance care planning conversations and earning their ACP certifications. Plans are in place to offer another ACP course in November 2025.

Initiative Two

2 Develop and/or enhance artificial intelligence and/or smart home technology to support people living with dementia.

Minka Honors Projects

Senior Design Projects: The Bronstein Center collaborated with five electrical engineering students enrolled in ECE 471 and ENGR 491 senior design courses to develop and implement AI technologies that support older adults. Their work included projects such as a smart greenhouse to promote cognitive engagement and nutrition access, a wearable sensor system for fall detection and mobility monitoring in a smart context and the use of advanced tools like eye-tracking technology. These innovations were implemented in the Green House, with future plans to expand into the Minka home. The projects were conducted under the guidance of Dr. Ryan, who served as the students’ faculty advisor in electrical engineering, with Dr. Katie Ehlman serving as the gerontology faculty advisor. This program builds on efforts from the previous fiscal year to further strengthen the center’s expertise in gerontechnology.

Technology purchases

In collaboration with Dr. Ryan Integlia, Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering who is also the Bronstein Center affiliate faculty, several advanced technologies were purchased through a federal grant to support the AI and healthcare course. Devices

included the iPhone 16 Pro, Samsung S25 Ultra, Apple Vision Pro, Meta Quest 3, ElliQ robots, EBO Robot, EMOPET AI Desk Robot and resources from the ChatGPT Team. These technologies were funded through the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program and were used to explore how AI, mobile technology and robotics can enhance patient care, telehealth and support for older adults. The devices were specifically selected to help understand the needs of individuals with dementia and explore how such technologies can be implemented in nursing homes. Applications focused on improving geriatric mobility, assisting with socialization and loneliness, stimulating mental engagement and supporting daily activities. Additionally, Dr. Integlia is working with a total of 6 community members who are interested in AI to explore how emerging technologies can further support dementia care, mental well-being and healthcare delivery.

iMotions Collaboration – Initial Project:

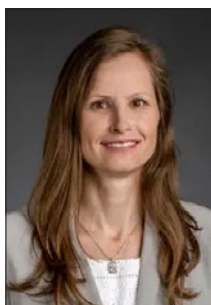
Biometric research in the Minka using iMotions glasses began with an initial eye-tracking study, which was successfully completed with six students participating. Graduate Assistants Yaw Bredwa-Mensah and Clara Boarman collaborated with the Romain College of Business to pilot the project. Faculty members Chad Milewicz, Chair of the Economics and Marketing Department, and Sabinah Wanjugu, Assistant Professor of Marketing, provided valuable guidance on student training and the development of the research plan. Participants wore iMotions glasses to track eye movements while exploring the Minka and interacting with in-home artificial intelligence and related technologies. The project aimed to gather insights on user experience and communication tools, including questions such as “Are the instructions for Josh AI user-friendly?” Data collection began in the 2024–2025 fiscal year and was completed successfully.

iMotions Collaboration – Second Project:

Following the success of the first study, a second research project titled ‘*Testing the Fidelity of a Dementia Caregiver Intervention*’ was launched. This phase was led by Dr. Katie Ehlman, with support from Dr. Nicolas Jankuhn, Assistant Professor of Marketing and Dr. Dinko Bačić, Assistant Professor of Information Systems; Director, UX and Biometrics Lab at Loyola University, Chicago. In addition, Graduate Assistants Yaw Bredwa-Mensah and Warda Alaisari assisted in the data collection phase. A total of 27 students participated in this study, which evaluated the consistency and effectiveness of a caregiver intervention using iMotions technology. Data collection began during spring 2025 and was completed successfully. Plans are now underway to expand the research to include individuals living with dementia. The Bronstein Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness continues to enhance its expertise in iMotions technology, aiming to apply these tools to improve dementia care and advance gerontechnology research.

3 Bronstein Faculty Research and/or Innovation Award to support excellence in dementia care and/or advance care planning education.

The University of Southern Indiana did not receive any applications for the Bronstein Faculty Research and/or Innovation Award this year. In response, the Bronstein team has taken steps to increase awareness of this opportunity among faculty across the campus. A graduate assistant, Warda Alaisari, promoted the Bronstein Faculty Research and/or Innovation Award, which supports excellence in dementia care and/or advance care planning education. She attended a faculty meeting on April 7, 2025, with 28 faculty members to raise awareness about the award and its opportunities. During the meeting, Warda shared detailed flyers with the faculty to provide more information. She also distributed the flyers in the Health Professions faculty mailboxes. Additionally, she attended a second faculty meeting on April 21, 2025, with eight faculty members to further promote the award and encourage participation in the initiative.



Dr. Urska Dobersek, PhD, CMPC, was the second recipient of the Bronstein Faculty Research and/or Innovation Award, awarded in the 2023–2024 cycle. She is an Associate Professor of Psychology at USI who conducted a cross-sectional research study to provide a broader explanation and understanding of diet-health and diet-disease relationships among older individuals. She reported her findings to 15 attendees at the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences and presented her research to 38 students in GERO 215 Class during fall 2024. In addition, Dr. Urska plans to submit an abstract to the Indiana Counseling Conference, to be held in October 2025. She will continue reporting on this research in the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 academic years.



Dr. Junghee Han, MSW, PhD, the 2022–2023 recipient of the Bronstein Faculty Research and/or Innovation Award, is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at USI. Her mixed-method study explores factors influencing advance care planning and end-of-life decisions among older Korean Americans in Indiana, Tennessee and Missouri. During the academic year, she shared her findings with 28 students enrolled in SOCW 326-001 (13 students) and SOCW 326-002 (15 students), emphasizing cultural competence in research. She aims to expand outreach by presenting to students in other majors, displaying her research in the Education Center, and connecting with social work organizations in Evansville. In January, Dr. Han presented her research at the SSWR Conference in Seattle, where approximately 15 participants actively listened and engaged with her presentation, offering validation of her findings and suggesting collaboration on a larger study. Dr. Han plans to continue presenting her work during the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

Initiative Four

4 Launch the Bronstein Affiliate Visiting Faculty position in the USI Bronstein Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness with a focus on dementia and/or advance care planning.



Dr. Ryan Integlia was welcomed back as the Bronstein Affiliate Visiting Faculty for the second year in a row. During the Spring Semester, he organized and taught a 3-credit-hour course titled HP 490: Introduction to Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning in Healthcare, which enrolled three students. Originally piloted last fiscal year as a two-day intensive for students and community members, the course was expanded in 2024–2025. It explored modern technology concepts aimed at enhancing communication, participation and accessibility for patients and residents. Technical mentors leveraged their work from Initiative Two to introduce gerontechnology concepts to the students. The course also featured guest speakers: Dr. Katie Ehlman, who discussed ageism, and Dr. Kevin Valadares, who addressed loneliness in the geriatric population and the role of technology in mitigating it. A total of five students attended the guest speaker sessions.

Informational Session: Dr. Ryan Integlia also held a course informational session for students on October 16, 2024, for HP 490: *Introduction to Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning in Healthcare*. The session served to market HP 490 as a multi-disciplinary gerontechnology course offered by the Bronstein Affiliate Visiting Faculty. Ten students attended the informational session to learn more about the class and meet the professor.

Initiative Five

5 International/national speakers as the *Bronstein Keynote* at the Mid-America Institute on Aging and Wellness (MAIA), an annual conference.



The Bronstein Keynote: Dr. Gary Small was selected as the 2024 MAIA Bronstein Keynote. Dr. Small is an internationally renowned psychiatrist and neuroscientist and expert on brain aging, Alzheimer's disease and dementia prevention. He was professor of psychiatry and director of the UCLA Longevity Center until 2020, when he became chair of psychiatry at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine and behavioral health physician-in-chief for Hackensack Meridian Health's 19 hospitals and 500,000+ patients. His memory training and healthy aging lifestyle programs are available throughout the U.S., and he has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *London Times*, *Washington Post*, *Time Magazine*, *AARP Magazine* and more. Dr. Small's keynote presentation was titled "Keeping Your Brain Healthy and Memory Sharp." A total of 183 participants attended his presentation and wrote that he was "the highlight of the four keynote speakers," "easy to understand and engaging," and "presented clearly and with enthusiasm."

Data Visualization

The following two figures provide descriptive data by participant classification and by initiative for the first three years of project implementation. Figure 1 illustrates distribution of participant engagement since the Bronstein Center’s work began in the fall 2022 among four participant classifications: USI students, USI faculty, healthcare professionals and community members. In the last three years, the Bronstein funding has supported 1757 participants in total.

Figure 1: Cumulative Distribution in Years 1, 2 and 3

Note: The Bronstein Center has worked to diversify our participant pool over the last three years. Engagement has grown over the last three years across three of four participant classifications.

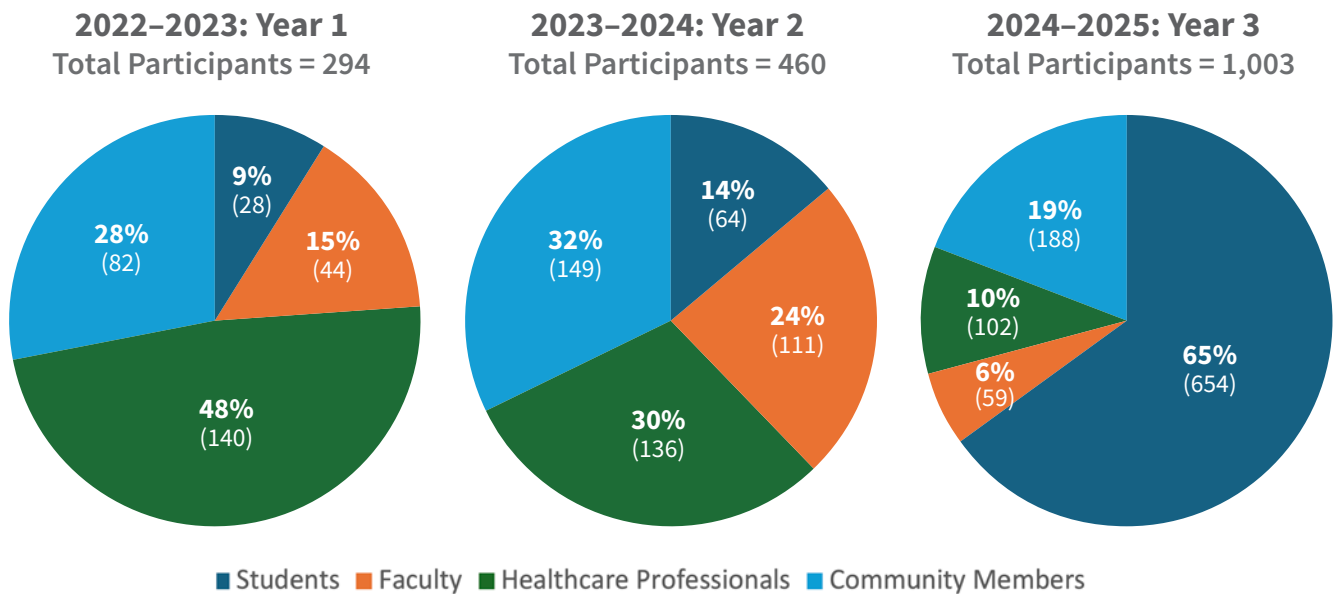
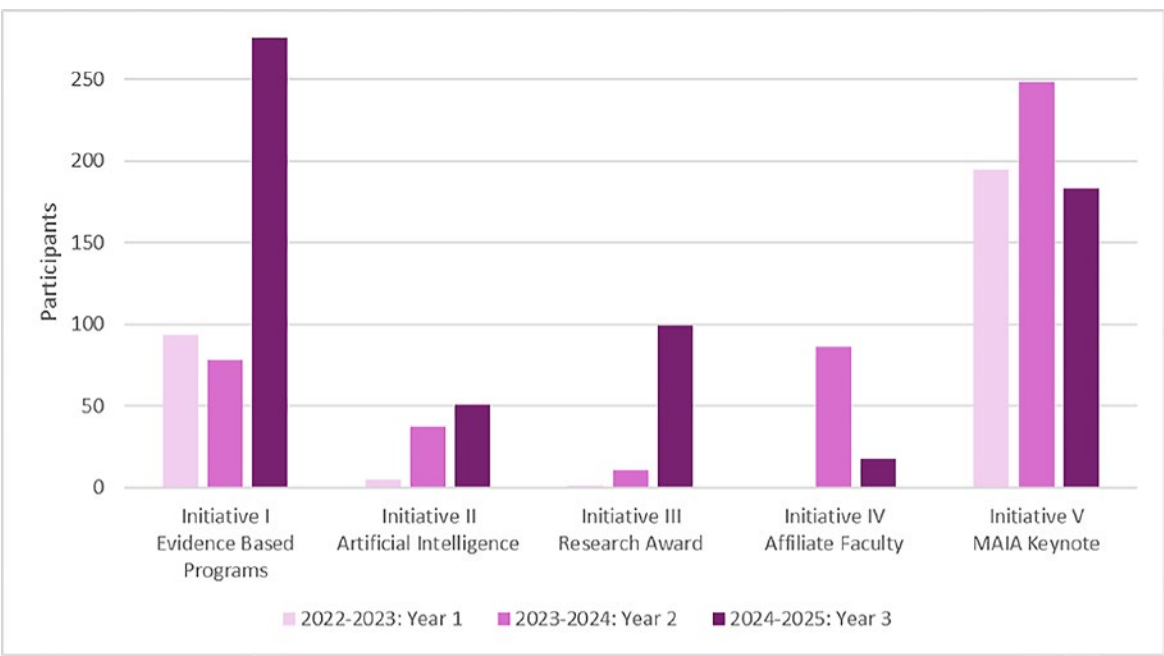


Figure 2: Initiative Engagement by Year

Note: Work in Initiative four did not begin until 2023–2024 (Year 2).



Financial Report

Reporting on the \$50,000 annual disbursement from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, the Bronstein Center spent a total of \$40,002.29. Faculty/administrator salaries and benefits as well as graduate assistant wages and institutional aid accounted for \$24,441.31. Materials and supplies for Evidenced-based Program Costs and Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Smart Home Technology were \$8,060.98. The inaugural Bronstein Keynote costs were \$7,500 to Dr. Gary Small for MAIA in 2024.

Bronstein Budget Year 3

Bronstein Proposed Budget and Expenses	Proposed	Actual
Personnel & Benefits Affiliate Faculty, Employee Salary and Benefits, Graduate Assistant	\$24,000	\$24,441.31
Materials and Supplies Evidence-based Program Costs & AI/Smart Home Technology	14,000	8,060.98
Bronstein Keynote for MAIA	7,000	7,500
Total:	\$50,000	\$40,002.29



In the heart of USI's vibrant campus stands the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well, a federal and Bronstein Foundation funded initiative of USI's Bronstein Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness, a USI Foundation initiative. Minka is Japanese for "house of the people" and it's a model for what homes can be for those seeking to age in place. Equipped with smart technology controlled by artificial intelligence (AI), it's designed to support multiple ages and abilities.



**Bronstein Center for Healthy
Aging and Wellness**

Dedicated to the well-being of older adults.

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