



A TIMELY COURSE FROM THE COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Encore Transitions: Preparing for Post-Career Life helps pre-retirees and recent retirees create pathways through transition and prepare for a successful post-primary career life by focusing on personal, professional, and social satisfaction, as well as timely financial questions.

During four daylong course sessions, participants explore their pasts, presents, and possible futures, learn what makes for healthy longevity, consider both paid and volunteer post-career work, learn key transition skills, and meet people who are living fulfilling encore lives. Finally, they take some concrete action steps toward building a plan for the next stage.

Encore Transitions began in the fall of 2010 with a pilot course for University of Minnesota employees.

KEY CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 2010 COURSE PILOT

- **While participants are concerned about financial issues, they did not regard them as uppermost.**
- **Participants want to fill their time with meaning.**
- **Participants need to see for themselves that they have a future after the University.**
- **A holistic approach to retirement planning can nurture a generation of experienced, wise individuals who can keep contributing after their primary careers.**

HOW ENCORE TRANSITIONS EVOLVED

- The University of Minnesota has an aging workforce. Over 5,000 faculty and staff
- meet eligibility requirements for retirement.
- University of Minnesota sociology professor Phyllis Moen has done ground-breaking research on retirement trends. Her work helped put retirement issues on the College of Continuing Education's programmatic radar.
- In response to demographic trends, the College of Continuing Education (CCE) decided to develop programming to help people prepare for both the transition into retirement and life afterwards.
- Carol Carrier, the University's vice president for human resources, was interested in holistic approaches to retirement planning for employees.

(over)

To tell you the truth, I'm afraid of retirement. What I'm most afraid of is lack of brain stimulation... I find work at the University rewarding, fulfilling and self-gratifying. I am taking this course not so much to prepare for retirement but to learn ways to lead a purposeful life.

Course Participant

The course's facilitated opportunities for participants to talk with peers about fears and concerns regarding retirement was as valuable as the formal course content.

CCE also broadened its footprint in lifelong learning by addressing emerging interests of aging baby boomers.

That led to the development of LearningLife, an overarching brand under which diverse programming can be offered.



WHAT ARE ENCORE TRANSITIONS?

Encore transitions are major passages to second, third, and even fourth acts during the second half of adulthood. They are marked by significant worklife changes and they involve self-reinvention.

Why are encore transitions so important? We are in the midst of both a longevity revolution and an age wave.

ENCORE TRANSITIONS COURSE OUTCOMES

Encore Transitions was piloted in the fall of 2010 with a cohort of 46 retirement-eligible University employees, about a third of whom were faculty. Participants ranged in age from 50 to 73, with an average age of 60.

In June, 2011, we did a six-month follow-up survey of these participants. Of the survey's 24 respondents, eleven had decided to retire from the university by January, 2012. All eleven all felt that their participation in the course had directly influenced their decision to formally commit to a retirement date.

TOP FIVE ENCORE TRANSITIONS COURSE TOPICS

- **Mind-mapping participants' lives up until now, and clarifying and naming individual values, strengths, and interests.**
- **Positive aging, health and wellness, engagement with the world, and living an outward looking life.**
- **Options for post-primary career work, new ways of thinking about meaning and money, and ways to move toward a new role for work in one's life.**
- **Helping others, volunteering, and how we benefit from intentional helpfulness.**
- **Actively crafting participants' individual journeys into the future, including seeing options and pathways, and taking immediate action steps.**

PATHWAYS FORWARD

- Continue to offer the course annually to University of Minnesota employees and the public.
- Develop and deliver course segments to meet the needs of higher education, government, healthcare, and other sectors.
- Develop and deliver course segments to higher education retiree and emeriti centers, Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, corporate retiree engagement groups, and community-based lifelong learning groups.

10,000 Americans a day are turning 65 years old.

Number of Americans age 65 and older:

- **2006: 37 million**
- **2030: 71.5 million**

I became more positive about the idea of retirement, and could actually imagine it! I appreciate the planning, or perhaps creating a vision of what my life could be like after my current work.

Course Participant

Very important. It was at this point that I really began to think hard about what I want to do next and the importance of doing something valuable for my own mental and physical health and for my community.

Course Participant

Continue to track emerging trends and research related to retirement, post-career engagement, and healthy longevity.