



OLLI 2025

Envisioning the Future

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
at the University of Denver

OLLI at DU

Core Values

Champion Lifelong Learning

Offer a wide selection of intellectually and emotionally stimulating classes

Honor the Individual

Respect and embrace diversity of thought, background and perspective

Comfortable Learning Environments

Offer classes in multiple locations with a wide range of class sizes, and facilitator approaches/styles

Collaborate

Collaborate with other learning organizations to expand and enhance the offerings to OLLI at DU members

Engagement

With an understanding of the need to stay active and engaged, OLLI at DU offers its members opportunities to engage their passions and expertise for the good of all

Statement of Purpose

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Denver (“OLLI at DU”) strives to create a mentally and physically stimulating program for the retired and semi-retired community. It encourages them to use their talents, experiences and skills creatively in shared intellectual and cultural pursuits while respecting diversity of thought in a relaxed, supportive academic environment.

Mission

To enrich the lives of our members through a high-quality learning and social environment.

Vision

OLLI at DU will grow and flourish as the premier lifelong learning institution in the Denver area by providing its members an enriching, stimulating and satisfying experience.

OLLI 2025

Envisioning the Future

Introduction

In 2012, OLLI at DU undertook their first Envisioning the Future project which focused forward to the year 2020. Since that time, much has been researched in terms of vision projects and the current wisdom (due to the pace of change) is to focus forward no more than five (5) years. Thus, this current vision project specifically focused to 2025 with an acute awareness that the trajectories determined through this project would decidedly inform the next five years and set the tone for years to come.

For our current Envisioning the Future project, we tapped into the expertise within the University College leadership, created four distinct yet inter-engaged task force groups, comprised of OLLI at DU members, and utilized specific expertise within our own OLLI at DU membership.

Goals of the 2025 Envisioning the Future Task Force as recommended by the OLLI at DU Executive Advisory Council included:

- To retain as much of our current Statement of Purpose as possible;
- To maintain our current pricing until forced to increase due to inflation or general rising prices;
- To remain in church or other low-cost facilities that meet the needs of our program;
- To analyze and explore growth, expansion and diversity opportunities.

An 'envisioning' is not intended as a plan. Rather it is a directional guide to the specific plans, both macro and tactical, to accomplish the direction desired. As a directional guide, the starting point for analysis and review is the history we have experienced. We, as a lifelong learning organization, began in 1996 and have operated with few major changes in our statement of purpose (also known as Mission Statement) or our overall approach to organization and curriculum.

Thus, the first task for this task force began with a review of our statement of purpose and our overall organizational approach. With clarity and from this starting point, these task force groups moved forward to research, analyze, and identify, to the best of our ability, future elements which will impact the future value of OLLI at DU to its members.

The speed of change today and the needs of lifelong learners, even within the next few years, create a dynamic and ever-changing landscape. Balancing our successes of today with our aware-

ness of the needs of our constituency, and our expectations of the future has resulted in a complex opportunity for our future.

As was stated in the OLLI 2020 *Envisioning the Future* report, we want our successors to know that ‘curiosity’ is at our core; that engaged lifelong learning is our basic value proposition; and that continued attention to the changing landscape of the future, both near term and distant, is necessary to our continued success.

Respectfully,

The OLLI 2025 Envisioning the Future Committee at the University of Denver

Barbe Ratcliffe, Executive Director, OLLI at DU

Steering Committee

Bob Armstrong, Chairperson

Barbara Adams

Nancy Cain

Charlie Holt

Tom Hughes

Joanne Ihrig

Barbe Ratcliffe

Internal Constituency Committee

Tish Gallagher, Chairperson

Tom Dudzinski

Joe Snoy

DeEtte Walter

Gail Wilson

External Constituency Committee

Kay Bowman, Co-Chairperson

Mark Gale

Edward Leary, Co-Chairperson

Ira Rifkin

Lifelong Learning Committee

Michael Sherwood, Co-Chairperson

Jacqueline Wyant, Co-Chairperson

Our History

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Denver (OLLI at DU) began in the fall of 1996 with 76 people taking nine classes. Then as now, we were a program of University College at the University of Denver. At that time, the organization was known as VIVA (Vibrant Intellectually Vigorous Adults).

In 2006, we received recognition by means of generous financial support from the Bernard Osher Foundation – and we became OLLI at DU, joining scores of similar educational programs throughout the United States. Two major grants and a \$50,000 gift allowed us to develop two additional OLLI program sites, OLLI West and OLLI South.

Since that time, we have launched the OLLI-on-Campus, the OLLI East and the OLLI Boulder programs. This past year, we offered over 580 courses to more than 3,200 members. We have doubled our class enrollment from over 6,000 in 2012 to more than 14,000 in 2019.

Truly, our slogan says it all!



Our Elements of Success

The continued success of OLLI at DU can be attributed to several timeless elements of success. They are reflected in our core values:

- A wide selection of academically-focused classes and less intense, more engaging classes;
- Peer-lead quality class offerings offering opportunities for engaging discussion at a very affordable price;
- Intellectual and social interaction;
- Comfortable learning environments;
- Volunteer opportunities and engagement;
- Positive connection with the Osher Foundation, the University of Denver, and the communities in which we offer classes;
- Financial sustainability - at our very low-price point.

The dedication and adherence of the OLLI at DU staff, volunteers and members to these elements of success and the OLLI at DU Core Values, have sustained the program for over twenty years and we expect will continue to be the guiding principles for the years to come.

It is from this position of sustainability and strength that we are able to envision the coming years with the challenges and opportunities that are certain to occur for our OLLI at DU program. We recognize that growth does simply mean an increase in numbers; it also means a reassessment and advancement in our way of thinking and operating. With this understanding of growth and success, we will look to the future in order to ensure that our lifelong learners of tomorrow will continue to be as intellectually stimulated as our students of today.

OLLI 2020 Vision Task Force in Summary

Before beginning the work of the OLLI 2025 Envisioning the Future Task Force, we reviewed the results of the 2020 Vision Task Force document to review the findings as well as to ensure the items identified had received sufficient consideration and implementation if deemed appropriate. We are delighted to report many of the challenges identified in the 2020 report are being met. The others were included in the data gathering and analysis of the 2025 Envisioning Task Force.

2020 Challenges Identified

Demographic Research

- **Challenge** – to establish ourselves as a resource for exploration providing an atmosphere in which people feel encouraged to be an amateur, creating a “come and try it” environment.

Result- this will continue to be an ongoing challenge as new members join the OLLI at DU organization. Attention to new members, via new member orientations and welcoming activities support this initiative.

- **Challenge** - to provide programming appealing to a wider age range with multiple interests.

Result – our Curriculum Committees at each site continue to research and review our course and activity offering in order to appeal to a wider age and interest range. The growth we have experienced over the past years is a testament to this effort.

- **Challenge** – to accommodate non-traditional retirees by potentially including evening and weekend classes and perhaps adding smaller ‘blocks’ of study along with current eight-week terms.

Result - Our sister organization, DU's Enrichment Program, offers this type of programming. Through collaboration and cross-marketing with the Enrichment Program, OLLI members have different opportunities for timing lifelong learning programs. In addition, we have implemented shorter duration courses and smaller blocks of study (e.g. Speaker Series) at many of our sites during the academic year. Our Summer Seminar Series continues to be widely popular and offers the opportunity to enjoy outstanding speakers during the summer season.

- **Challenge** - to find ways that successfully broaden our demographic base as it relates to diversity.

Result - this challenge is yet to be met and was addressed by the 2025 committee.

- **Challenge** - to continue attracting active internal volunteers.

Result - the number of volunteers in the OLLI at DU program continues to grow due, in large part, to the orientation activities designed for new members and the expansion of volunteer activities at each site.

- **Challenge** - to begin offering greater travel and inter-generational leaning opportunities.

Result - travel and inter-generational opportunities linked to OLLI at DU courses have been provided. We continue to expand this goal with multiple travel opportunities each year and through an inter-generational project.

Program Content/Equipment

- **Challenge** - to supply the needed expertise in teaching and curriculum to accommodate the increasing demands and interests of membership.

Result - this challenge has been met and continues to be an ongoing focus.

- **Challenge** - to find and maintain a healthy balance between our traditional peer-lead, academically focused classes and the additional class offerings begin considered such as large lecture classes, wellness classes and travel opportunities.

Result - based upon member registrations and feedback, the current balance seems to be healthy with very few, if any, classes cancelled due to lack of interest by our members.

- **Challenge** - to continually integrate new technologies into our OLLI at DU program while assisting our members with their use.

Result - all sites have upgraded their technology capabilities...not to the level desired by all facilitators...yet to a level which allows the vast majority of facilitators to feel confident in the technological support.

Growth and Finance

- **Challenge** - to keep up with the growth being experienced by the OLLI at DU program while maintaining the current low-cost value.

Result - soon after the release of the 2020 Envisioning the Future Task Force Report, the OLLI at DU Executive Council determined that the first increase in membership fees was required. This was accomplished in 2017. Our program's projected growth experienced a short-term impact; however it is now back on its previous trajectory of upward growth.

Facilities/Staffing and Competition

Although no specific challenges were identified in the 2020 Vision report in these areas, they continue to remain areas of focus and attention, particularly with the challenges of providing adequate, accessible facilities.

Quality

- **Challenge** - to fully communicate our principle values to serve as a guide for future leadership and to instill their importance as the cornerstone of the OLLI at DU program.

Result - it is perceived that the principle values have been fully communicated.

OLLI 2025 Envisioning the Future Task Force

The OLLI at DU 2025 Envisioning the Future Task Force committees were organized around the identified constituencies we serve. We identified these three potential constituencies as:

Internal Constituency	External Constituency	LifeLong Learning Constituency
The Osher Foundation	University of Denver - Univeristy College	The Osher Foundation
Other OLLI's	University of Colorado - Lifelong Learning College	Other OLLIs around the country
Osher National Resource Center	Communiity Colleges in the Denver Metro Area and their Lifelong learning areas	Osher National Resource Center
OLLI at DU	Denver Metro College...	The Academy
Each OLLI at DU Site - Management	Colorado Government Agencies - Age Friendly	Active Minds
Each OLLI at DU Site - Curriculum Committee	Other Aging Well organizations within the Denver area	Senior Aging Comminities
Each OLLI at DU Site - Member Relations Advisory Council	AARP of Colorado	City/Town Recreational Centers
Each OLLI at DU Site - Members		

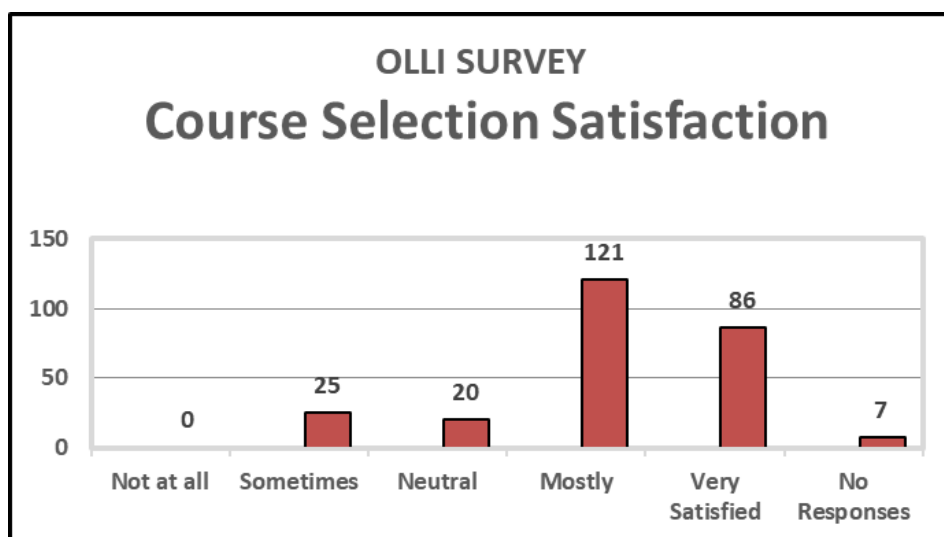
With these constituencies in mind, the Steering Committee and each of the constituency committees set out to explore and examine information pertaining to these groups.

Internal Constituency Committee

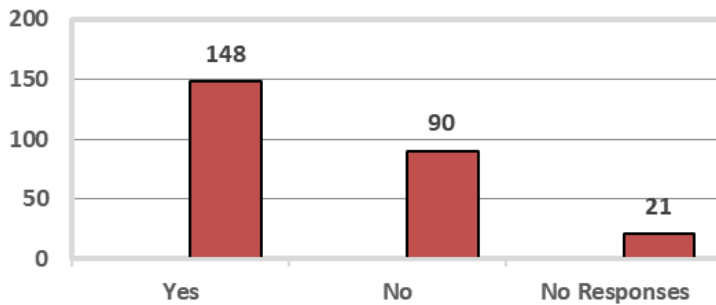
The Internal Constituency Committee focused primarily on current OLLI at DU members, creating and implementing our first OLLI at DU internal survey. The results, in terms of response rate were extraordinary (90%). This response rate provided us with a 95% confidence interval (C.I.).

The written responses were thoughtful and provided the committee with a candid “look” into the members’ satisfaction with our program.

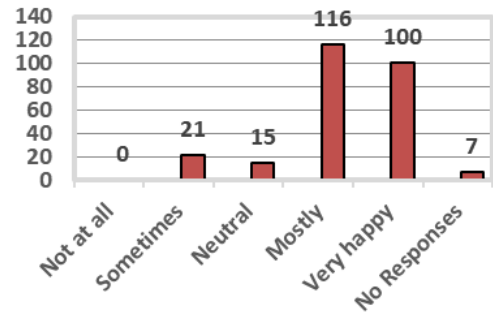
The responses indicated:



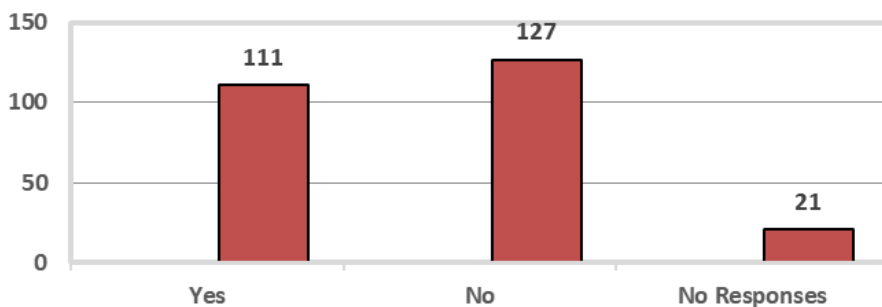
OLLI SURVEY Enhance Social Network



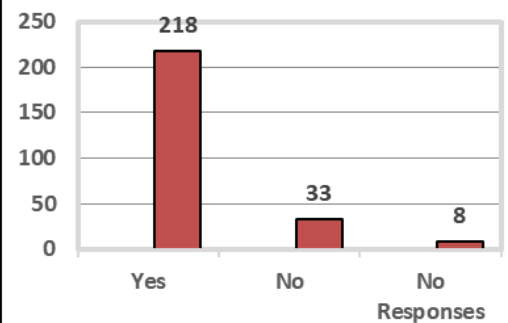
OLLI SURVEY Class Quality



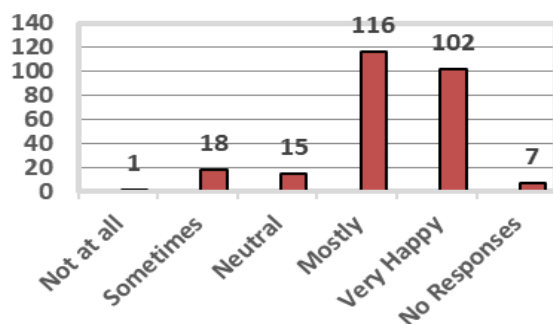
OLLI SURVEY Found Volunteer Opportunity



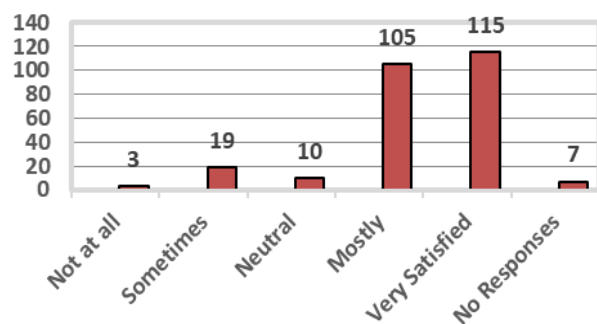
OLLI SURVEY Meet LL Needs



OLLI SURVEY Facilitator Quality



OLLI SURVEY Course Satisfaction



We reviewed all written responses – both positive and negative...

“I have been an OLLI member since 2000.”

“I would be lost in without OLLI classes. I dread breaks!”

“I don’t expect OLLI or any other single resource to meet my lifelong learning needs in total. It is up to me to find a variety of resources and make use of them.”

“I would like more variety and more depth in the classes. When I go to a class I am looking to learn more than what I would if I were to read up on the topic in my own or watch videos about it.”

“I would like to see more diversity in the facilitators/instructors and in the student population. I would like to see more classes that address racial disparity and its impact on every aspect of our society, talks on reparations, and the perspective of people that are not just white.”

“You need to have a campus up north. You have them in all parts of town except up North. I cannot participate anymore because of the massive traffic problems I have trying to get there and trying to get home again. You need to start to serve the people in the northern areas.”

Conclusion: Currently the OLLI at DU program is generally meeting the lifelong learning needs of its members. It is highly recommended that the program continues to build upon its success by keeping current with trends and optimizing opportunities as they arise.

External Constituency Committee

The External Constituency Committee focused on groups and organizations beyond OLLI at DU and other lifelong learning programs in the Denver metro area. The organizations reviewed varied from those serving different age groups to organizations serving members with different backgrounds than our traditional OLLI at DU member. One of the main areas of focus for this committee was that of diversity...of thought, opinion, and experience.

Conclusion: The key findings identified by this committee indicate clearly the following:

- It is not in the best interest of OLLI at DU to attempt to be all things to all peoples;
- As a lifelong learning organization, encouraging diversity of thought through different cultural interactions and potentially joint events may be a best way to expand our cultural awareness;
- The process of building diversity is best undertaken as a slow and organic process;
- An awareness of intergenerational diversity, in whatever manner it can be achieved, is potentially beneficial as well.

Lifelong Learning Committee

By definition this committee focused on the organizations offering lifelong learning opportunities within the Greater Denver Metro area. After gathering and analyzing data, the key findings of the committee were noted as follows:

Summary of Lifelong Learning Organizations Researched

- **Cost/per course hour:** Range of \$5-\$33 (Museums/ Cultural Institutions have highest fees);
Average of organizations researched = \$14 per course hour
- **Membership Fees:**
 - OLLI-at-CSU = \$35/year
 - Academy of Lifelong Learning = \$25/semester

- Active Minds = \$50/year
- Colorado Free University = \$25/year
- **Parking:** not included but some have free lots
- **Time of offerings:** Days; evenings; weekends
- **Type of offerings:** Ranges from audited college courses to academic/ cultural/ social/ wellness

Summary of OLLI-at-DU

- **Cost/course hour** (assuming 1 8-week course per \$130 registration fee) = \$8.10 per course hour
- **Membership Fee** = \$0
- **Parking Fees** = None
- **Time of offerings:** courses offered in daytime
- **Type of offerings:** academic; cultural; wellness; some social

Conclusion: OLLI at DU is very competitive in the Denver Metro lifelong learning marketplace. The price point, range of offerings, and availability of locations are all beneficial elements. Age and education statistics for residents of the Denver Metro area suggest that there will be an ever-increasing demand for lifelong learning opportunities for “seasoned adults” (those over 50 yrs) and that despite the number of lifelong learning organizations in the area, OLLI at DU will most certainly continue to successfully meet the challenges involved in the resulting expansion.

OLLI 2025 ENVISIONING SUMMARY

Purpose

To ensure the continuance of our strong existing program by anticipating and planning for changes over the next six years.

Mission

To enrich the lives of our members through a high-quality learning and social environment.

Vision

OLLI at DU will grow and flourish as the premier life-long learning institution in the Denver area by providing its members an enriching, stimulating and satisfying experience.

Core Values

Champion Lifelong Learning:

- Maintain excellence in the quality and variety of our classes

Honor the Individual:

- Value the diversity of experience and thought.

Enrich the Lives of OLLI Members:

- Provide a stimulating, collaborative learning and social environment.

Going forward, our story continues...

In 1996, a gem of an idea sparked the creation of a group of adult learners driven by their curiosity to learn more. Starting with one central site, OLLI at DU has expanded to over 3200 members at six sites making it one of the leading lifelong learning groups in the Rocky Mountain region. OLLI at DU is recognized for the large number and focus of courses it provides to its members every year. This diversity of thought provides for a stimulating experience for our members. OLLI at DU strives to make its program available to all adult learners by keeping the costs low and the value high. Through an extensive volunteer base and devoted management, as well as the enduring and generous support from the University of Denver and the Osher Foundation, the OLLI at DU program has continued to attract new members and grow rapidly. Going forward, the desire is to continue to broaden OLLI's exposure with a greater diversity of high-quality geographic offerings into new areas within the Rocky Mountain region. This will be accomplished through the growth of our current six sites as well as through collaboration and partnerships with other groups focused on new and diverse topics of interest to the adult learner.

New Strategic Initiatives

Lead...

Maintain our leadership in:

- course quality (curriculum and facilitation)
- value for our members
- course variety
- social interaction
- developing new fields to explore

Quality and Value Leadership

OLLI at DU is renowned for the quality of its facilitators and its broad spectrum of courses. With its large base of talented volunteers, OLLI at DU will continue to deliver a high value offering to adult-learning community.

OLLI at DU will build on its leadership in quality and value. OLLI at DU delivers a “second to none” lifelong learning experience for its members.

Expand (Broaden)...

- Continue to grow our new sites
- Establish new sites in receptive areas
- Broaden our diversity
- Expand our programs into new areas of learning
- Discover new ways of providing opportunities for learning
- Continue to add new travel opportunities to interesting corners of the world
- Widen the delivery of programs in fitness, arts and entertainment
- Increase awareness of OLLI across the Denver region and surrounds

New Fields of Learning Experience

OLLI at DU will continue to advance new fields of learning through collaboration with groups that focus on future trends in the technological area. Using research on the aging brain, OLLI at DU will also explore new areas in fitness, arts and travel to provide broader opportunities to

enhance mental and physical dexterity.

By connecting with centers of research on aging and fitness, OLLI at DU will apply the knowledge to expand the enjoyment of learning in new ways.

Pioneer...

- Keep current with research and development of lifelong learners
- Continue to test innovative teaching and techniques
- Explore new fields of learning experience
- Keep OLLI's brand 'young and fresh'

Expand

OLLI at DU continues to be popular and experience strong growth. OLLI at DU will continue to grow its existing sites as well as look for new site locations, to become vibrant centers of choice for the expanding and diverse adult-learning population.

Social Interaction...

- provide an attractive opportunity to engage socially with other adult learners
- encourage volunteerism, supporting the OLLI program and enhancing social engagement of its members
- working together to build a strong OLLI program that encourages lasting friendships.

Sense of Community

Studies have shown that the period after-retirement is typically a period of reduced social interaction. OLLI at DU will continue to provide an attractive opportunity to engage socially with other adult learners through its broad spectrum of courses and travel opportunities. By encouraging volunteerism, OLLI enhances social engagement by working together to build a strong OLLI program that develops strong and lasting friendships.

Goals

Although this was a visionary project, it goes without saying that vision is only as good as the goals or actions needed to accomplish it. Therefore, the following goals and corresponding action plans are recommended.

- Create a network of collaborative partners to expand OLLI at DU's program
- Add diversity to the program in all areas; of thought, experience, background and creed
- Add new learning methods and experiences
- Maintain the value proposition for OLLI members while remaining at least break-even financially
- Continue to expand the OLLI at DU program to serve more of the target age group
- Establish at least one new OLLI site.

Action Plans

- Create a network of at least 3 collaborative partners
 - Partner with the OATS/Senior Planets group to reduce the gap between NextGen and Seniors
 - Partner with other groups to access their programs, teachers and members

- Increase our relationship with DU to access their knowledge of aging research, future trends, and teaching methods
- Increase use of facilitators who are diverse to increase diverse membership
- Add new learning methods and experiences.
 - Investigate and experiment with online courses
 - Experiment with new types of courses (Makers, virtual reality, physical activity courses).
- Maintain the value proposition for OLLI at DU members while remaining at least breakeven, financially
 - Keep the current fee structure for all sites as long as possible
 - Add revenue through advertising and fund raising
- Increase the number of unique OLLI at DU members from 3200 to at least 5000 per academic year and class enrollment (BIS) from 15,000 to at least 27,000.
 - Continue to increase membership through word-of-mouth and program exposure in libraries.
 - Increase membership at the sites and especially at our three newest sites
 - While increasing membership, retain the quality member experience of each site, monitoring current sites as they achieve optimum membership size - resulting in the opening of at least one new OLLI at DU site.

Conclusion

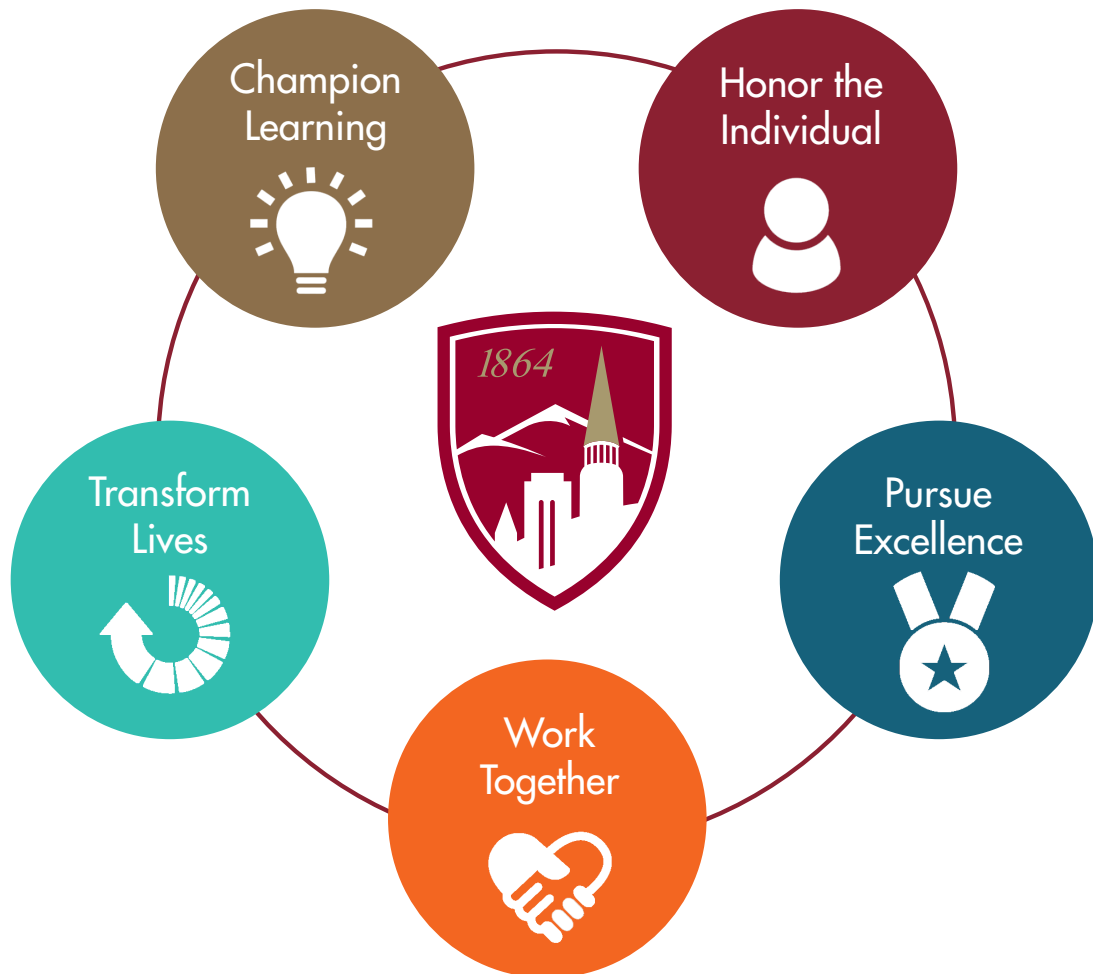
From our humble beginnings in 1996 to today, OLLI at DU has charted a course, based upon proven values and guiding principles, which has successfully served the lifelong learning population it serves in the Denver Metro area. It is imperative to chart a course for the future built upon these values and principles, ever ready to embrace the changes that come with technology, diversity of thought and opinion, and a different aging population. Although not necessarily an easy task, the 2025 Vision sets a course encompassing all of the wonderful elements OLLI at DU members have come to enjoy, enhanced with future possibilities not yet realized...some not even discovered.

The OLLI 2025 Envisioning the Future Committee believes

- our current foundation,
- the strength of our membership,
- the willingness of our volunteers,
- our current operating structure, and
- the recommendations set forth, will successfully carry us into the future.

As OLLI at DU members and staff, we are committed to ensuring the goals and actions plans outlined in this report will lead us in the years ahead. With our solid foundation and the generous support of the University of Denver and the Osher Foundation we look forward to maintaining and even exceeding our goals. We are honored to be a part of this outstanding organization and, with anticipation, look forward to the years ahead to the year 2025.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE VALUES



We meet others where they are; work inclusively; and embrace diversity of thought, background, and perspective.

Honor the Individual

We know first-hand the powerful outcomes that result when education extends over a lifetime.

Champion Learning

We make a positive, lasting impact on the lives of others.

Transform Lives

We go the extra mile to deliver exemplary educational offerings and service to others.

Pursue Excellence

For us, this begins with the cultivation of mutual understanding and extends to collaboration and collective ownership of results.

Work Together



at the University of Denver

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