Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
at the University of Denver

Annual Report
2010-2011
Welcome to our first printed Annual Report. We understand that your primary interest is being assured that we continue to maintain the level of academically focused curriculum and extra-curricular activities that you have come to enjoy, and expect. We are dedicated to fulfilling that expectation. At the same time, as a membership organization, we want to make certain that the progress and financial aspects of OLLI are available. Our books have always been open, but we feel now that we have three sites and have over 1200 members that we should begin producing an Annual Report.

As you know, we are moving more and more towards on-line communication and want you to know how much we appreciate your positive interest and participation in respect to this goal. For those just beginning to learn the intricacies of the web, we appreciate your determination and patience. We are always available to help.

We are extremely proud of OLLI at DU and we are delighted with the comments we continually hear from members. We love hearing praise, but also want to make certain you let us know if there are areas that you feel can be improved upon.

Vonnie Wheeler, Executive Director
OLLI at DU

“This has been a record-breaking year for OLLI with all three sites up and running. What struck me was the enthusiasm and dedication of the members. I said in my remarks that strong numbers are great, but what they really mean is that more and more people are benefitting from OLLI in their lives. For OLLI members, this is a very important source of meaning and enjoyment.”

Jim Davis
Dean University College at the University of Denver
(commenting at his presentation at the annual Facilitators Appreciation Dinner, May 2011)
**Some Highlights from Our Year**

- We reached a record number of 1,200 OLLI members at our three campuses – OLLI Central, OLLI South and OLLI West.
- We incorporated the “OLLI Speaker Series” into our curriculum with each attracting 125+ members!
- Our outstanding Curriculum Committees at all three sites offered over 200 classes – another record! We saw an increase in the number of OLLI members who took classes at more than one site.
- In March, 2011, through the efforts of our Executive Director, Governor John Hickenlooper proclaimed August 1-6 Lifelong Learning Week in Colorado declaring that lifelong learning “dramatically enhances the life of older people, both physically and mentally.”
- As co-founder of our OLLI program, Lucy Creighton was presented with the one-time OLLI Meritorious Service Award in recognition of her significant contributions to the program.
- We continue our strong partnerships with other community organizations that assist us with our classes such as Active Minds, the Central City Opera, the Colorado Historical Society, the Denver Art Museum, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, the Evergreen Jazz Festival, Opera Colorado and The Santa Fe Opera.
- We began recognizing our long-time OLLI facilitators with special designations – Senior Facilitator for those who have facilitated ten or more classes and Master Facilitator for those who have facilitated fifteen or more classes.

*OLLI has become an essential part of my life. When people who have worked hard most of their lives retire, there is a tremendous void in their lives. OLLI becomes an invaluable resource to fill that emptiness.*

— Len Taigman

---

*Master Facilitators, Mo Mathews, Bob Samuels & Bob Montgomery – better known as “The Three Maestros”*
Some Highlights from Our Year (con’t.)

- Our OLLI website – www.universitycollege.du.edu/olli - was revamped under the direction of Koz Badiozamni, OLLI South member. It is now easier to navigate and looks terrific! Another OLLI South member, Charles Holt, created a video for the site which captures the OLLI program in three minutes!

- Our OLLI Auxiliary program at Heritage Eagle Bend is maintaining its strong curriculum with over 90 residents of the retirement community taking courses annually.

Special Highlights from Our Three Sites

OLLI Central

With waitlists growing each term we expanded the number of classes, which necessitated the addition of another facility. The new location, with state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment and classrooms, provides the opportunity to accommodate more “students.”

OLLI South

OLLI South presented a “Sample Session” in area libraries and book stores in Douglas County during Lifelong Learning Week. Would-be students were given an opportunity to participate in a “sneak-preview” of an upcoming OLLI South course which typically provide enthusiastic and interactive learning for both students and facilitators.

OLLI West

John and Nadine Lightburn were presented with the first “Spirit of OLLI” award at a reception in their honor on November 11, 2010. As longtime members of OLLI, the award was given to honor the Lightburns for their courage, determination and heart. John, who is a retired doctor, facilitated courses in literature, current events and healthcare.

Nadine & John Lightburn

“...The biggest shock in retiring is “becoming invisible.” All the expertise and clout that a person acquires is immediately discounted. But not at OLLI. Everyone in the program is visible and valued. The persons who hold opposite opinions are considered; experience is valued. With no tests or grades this is learning at its best!“

Hilary Carlson
I LOVED my art lecture class at OLLI. The “students” were the best! They were great cheerleaders, mentors and friends and we will all keep in touch in order to share other art experiences, classes, seminars, etc., with one another! My first experience facilitating at OLLI was the most positive experience I could have ever imagined!

KAREN LINDSAY
Our OLLI Program

Along with 118 other Osher Lifelong Learning Institute programs nationwide, OLLI at the University of Denver continues to grow substantially every year. Joining our Central campus located at Central Christian Church in the heart of Denver, our West campus opened in 2007 at Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden. In 2009, with the generous funding from Osher, we opened our South campus at Valley View Christian Church in Littleton.

Our OLLI members are a diverse group from every walk of life and profession. Our smaller classes encourage lively and often heated discussion on current events, history, science, the arts, literature, politics and nearly every subject matter that interests our OLLI members. Our “Speakers Series” classes, with presentations by experts in their field, provides the opportunity for an unlimited audience. Our members now have the opportunity to take classes at any of our three sites for one tuition fee – we are surprised at the increasing number of those OLLI members who are willing to drive the distance to do so.

As a member-led organization, each OLLI site is governed by its own OLLI Advisory Council (9 members) and classes are determined by a site Curriculum Committee. Officers of the three Advisory Councils meet together as the Executive Committee several times throughout the year to discuss common issues. All Advisory Council members from the three sites come together at the Long-Range Planning Retreat in November.

We are very proud of the direction of our OLLI program – we continue to add new and excited members each term; our academic class offerings are unsurpassed and rival any college course offered; we have strong support from the University of Denver (having received the Chancellor Award for “The Best Program on Campus”); and our OLLI staff and member leadership teams are dedicated and forward thinking.

“When I retired – after practicing medicine for 43 years – I found I had few interests outside of medicine. Pre-med requirements did not allow me to explore other subjects. OLLI changed my life! I am now taking courses in history, music, world events and economics. OLLI continues to enhance my retirement.
Duval Harvey, M.D.”
In 2007, the Osher Foundation presented the University of Denver and the “VIVA” (Vibrant, Intellectual, Vivacious Adults) program with a grant to assist in the growth of their lifelong learning program. VIVA was changed to OLLI, and OLLI West and OLLI South were soon born. Thereafter, the Osher Foundation continued its grant funding until 2011 and then presented the OLLI at the University of Denver a $1 million dollar endowment. Our OLLI program is able to receive interest annually from that generous endowment. Additionally, we receive generous in-kind support from the University of Denver in the form of office space/equipment, financial accounting and website assistance.

The Osher previous grant funds have basically paid the salaries of the OLLI Administrative Assistant and both OLLI West and OLLI South managers. All three sites are now depending upon member tuition revenue and other fund raising efforts to contribute to their annual budgets to make up the lost grant revenue.

While cash donations are always appreciated, the University of Denver has created a planned giving program that offers options structured to interested OLLI donors’ specific needs and objectives such as gifts of stock, bonds, mutual funds, life insurance, bequests and retirement plan asset gifts.

For more information about these donor opportunities, contact Leigh Elliott, at 303-871-7469, Office of University Advancement at the University of Denver.
While not presented in these charts, the University of Denver provides substantial in-kind support to our OLLI program in the form of office space/equipment, financial accounting and website assistance.

*Note: The OLLI Administrative Assistant position’s salary is reflected in the OLLI West expense budget for DU accounting purposes. The OLLI grant made this position possible.*
Our OLLI Advisory Councils

Central
Tom Brightwell
Amy Davis
Bill Elfenbein, Marketing
Jerry Gordon, Budget Liaison
Jerry Henderson
Al Lackner, President
Deanna Manchion
Kathryn Tamblyn, Nominating Chair
Karen Weslar, Community Projects

South
Sherry Abbink
Sandra Alinger
Bob Armstrong, Budget Liaison
Jim Horner
Susan Long
Jerry Raskin, President
Ira Rifkin
Elaine Sloan
Jerry Wischmeyer

OLLI West
Carol Anthony
Jim Elliott, Budget Liaison
Sally Gooding
Ted Gooding, Vice Chair
Alicita Hamilton
Mark Lacey
B. J. Meadows
Jane Vanderkolk, Chair
John Wells

Our Management Staff
Vonnie Wheeler,
Executive Director
Allyson Hodges,
Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Fortenberry,
OLLI South Manager
Karen Thorne,
OLLI West Co-Manager
Karen Kalabany,
OLLI West Co-Manager
Cathy Stevens,
Facilitator Coordinator
Dottie Amber,
Volunteer Librarian

Prior to joining OLLI I had wintered regularly in Arizona. I signed up for OLLI the year it began and have not been back to Arizona since. I have never enjoyed people or classes so much in my life, and I went to school for twenty-five years!

Hy Zuckerman, M.D.