Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Denver

Annual Report

2014-2015
It is with pride that we submit our 2014-2015 Annual Report to our members. It is you, our members, who are responsible for the continued success of the program we all value. We are dedicated to maintaining our commitment to excellence and, as a membership organization, we feel it is our responsibility to make certain that the progress and financial aspects of OLLI are readily available. Our books are always open.

As our membership increases, so does our programming. This past year we kicked off OLLI WELLaware with wellness classes and hiking, walking and cycling groups at each site. We offered numerous different “Speakers Series” classes, worked with new community partners and have just begun development on WorldView, an on-going, international program that will focus on one country a year beginning fall 2015. Your enthusiastic support encourages us to venture even further into new and exciting areas, both in and out of the classroom.

We are extremely proud of OLLI at DU and are delighted with the comments we continue to hear from our members. We love hearing praise, but also want to make certain that you feel comfortable in relating areas that you feel can be improved upon. And, also let us hear of your good ideas!

Vonnie Wheeler, Executive Director
OLLI at DU

Message from our Executive Director

Over the past year, I have had the pleasure to meet more new and continuing OLLI members, and our conversations have been engaging, interesting, and stimulating. While OLLI at DU membership continues to grow numerically, so too does the level of energy and enthusiasm the members demonstrate for the OLLI community and program offerings. The passion that the members demonstrate for intellectual and social engagement is a trait that I truly admire. I look forward to my next discussion with OLLI members.

Michael McGuire
Dean University College at the University of Denver
About The Bernard Osher Foundation

The Bernard Osher Foundation was founded by Bernard Osher in 1977. Through the Foundation, Mr. Osher’s philanthropy has benefited a wide range of educational, cultural and other non-profit organizations, primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area and his native state of Maine. Bernard Osher is a successful businessman and community leader, a patron of the arts and education, whose philanthropy has affected countless organizations over the past quarter century. His wife, the Honorable Barbro Osher, Consul General of Sweden in San Francisco, serves as chair of the Foundation.

At present, the Foundation supports 119 lifelong learning programs on university and college campuses across the country, with at least one grantee in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Foundation also supports a National Resource Center for Osher Institutes which is located at Northwestern University.

The Foundation has not been highly prescriptive in the type of lifelong learning program it has chosen to support. While there is considerable variation among the Osher Institutes, common features remain prominent: Non-credit educational programs specifically designed for seasoned adults aged 50 and older; strong support from the leadership of the university or college; a diverse repertoire of intellectually stimulating courses; robust volunteer leadership; established mechanisms for evaluating participant satisfaction with educational offerings; and sound organizational structure. The characteristics shared by all Osher Institutes strengthen the possibility that the individual institutes will become not only successful but programmatically and financially sustainable.

With OLLI, I had the opportunity and took well-presented, thought-provoking, stimulating interactive classes in subject areas that I could not take in college where I focused on courses to learn my profession as a geologist.

Stan Hamilton

Highlights from Our Year

With anticipation of beginning to offer OLLI Central classes on the Denver University campus, all OLLI members were welcomed to tour the DU campus in August. Beginning at the DU library, over a cup of coffee, we were able to see firsthand what was offered by the University and available to our OLLI members.

While OLLI at DU has always been focused on strengthening our minds with academic classes and activities, this year we branched out and created our new WELLaware program. We are focusing on strengthening our bodies by presenting the latest health related information combined with active group activities. Each month we have groups of OLLI members walking, cycling or hiking, building stronger bodies and developing friends in a new way.

As part of the Summer Seminars of OLLI, twenty-two OLLI members embarked on a three day canoe, camping, and geology trip on the Gunnison River in the company of Geologist, Ed Adams. All in all five boats flipped during the trip making everyone ready for “Happy Hour” each evening which was followed by delicious meals and meaningful conversation.

At OLLI South, the Curriculum Committee continued to offer an array of classes which paid tribute to the 100 year commemoration of the start of the Great War in Europe. Many members took classes in economics, visual and performing arts, literature and other genres to become more schooled on our “grandparents” war. To culminate the series, a trip to the World War I Museum in Kansas City was arranged. Special speakers and docents gave OLLI members an in-depth look at the
contributions, tragedies, and life at home during this turbulent time in history. Members also enjoyed seeing the Eisenhower and Truman Libraries in route to the museum.

We paid tribute to our 2014-2015 facilitators at our annual dinner in May and honored five new Senior facilitators and 16 new Master facilitators. Our OLLI Senior facilitators have facilitated at least ten times and Masters have facilitated 15 times. This new group of distinguished facilitators joins the 31 current Senior and 23 Master facilitators at OLLI at DU.

Our OLLI Weekend in the Rockies in May was held at the Aspen Lodge outside of Estes Park where OLLI members gathered with old friends and new to enjoy a weekend in the company of DU professors. Lectures on “Cultivating the Virtuous Life in the 21st Century” and on the philosophical roots of the simple life with examples that included Plato, Ben Franklin and Teddy Roosevelt. The casualness of the rustic lodge allowed for relaxed sessions with plenty of time for socializing in addition to walks in the beautiful surrounding woods.

OLLI West began plans for their first Summer Session that will include a class and numerous field trips during July. The session is a chance to see other members, introduce friends and family to the program and participate in different activities. As the OLLI West membership continues to grow steadily each year, they secured additional classroom space in a church near the current OLLI West church campus. This site gives OLLI West an opportunity to offer even more great classes and accommodate the growing number of new members.

OLLI members also enjoyed two different field trips to Taos, New Mexico that was the culmination of an art course entitled Taos Tales & Trails. Members learned about numerous Taos artists and visited the several museums including The Harwood Museum and the Taos Art Museum.

The entire OLLI community enthusiastically welcomed Michael McGuire as new Dean of University College at DU. Michael has acted as interim dean for over a year and has been a staunch supporter of our OLLI program.

I love to learn and therefore I love OLLI.

Jack Dais

THE OLLI AT DU MEMBERSHIP EXPANDS at a steady pace with 2,520 unduplicated members (4,657 total members registered) for this fiscal year. Each OLLI site is diligently working toward sustainable financial stability with the generous support of The Bernard Osher Foundation, the University of Denver and our charitable OLLI members. Our annual appeal campaign and fund raising efforts have all resulted in greater revenue for much needed audio visual equipment as well as expanded curriculum programming.

In addition to the annual appeal, the University of Denver has created a planned giving program for our OLLI members offering options such as gifts of stock, bonds, mutual funds, life insurance, bequests and retirement plan asset gifts. For more information about these donor opportunities and how they might meet specific planning needs and objectives, contact the Office of University Advancement at the University of Denver at 303-871-7469.
Our OLLI Program – Where “Curiosity Never Retires!”

Our OLLI members are actively involved in selecting the topics to be explored, and share their expertise and interests while serving as teachers and learners. Our members, from diverse backgrounds and professions, share the desire to stay intellectually active and engaged. There are no tests, no grades, no prerequisites, limited out-of-class assignments, and all class participation is voluntary. No one is a stranger for long at OLLI. Because everyone who joins has the same desire to learn in the company of peers, friendships are made easily. Be it in class, during coffee break, or at any of the annual social events, people gather together to enjoy casual conversation, share opinions, or just make plans for lunch.

Our OLLI classes cover academic subjects in history, music, political science, writing, literature, philosophy, science, religion, global issues, and more. Workshops and seminars expand the OLLI academic curriculum for adults. Topics lend themselves to practical application and keeping the brain active, such as learning a foreign language. Seminars will cover topics relevant to our member’s interest and concerns.

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

I love this organization, it is simply marvelous. I admire the facilitators and all the hard work they put into each class.
Ilse Nordenholz

OLLI Central members registered

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OLLI South members registered

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OLLI West members registered

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<tr>
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OLLI Total members registered

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Our Community Partners

Many local community organizations support OLLI at DU through the donation of space and offering lectures and classes to our members. We appreciate their support:

- The Museum of Nature and Science
- Colorado Shakespeare Festival
- Denver Public Library
- Douglas County Library
- Opera Colorado
- The Colorado Symphony
- The Newman Center
- Active Minds
- Colorado Jazz Group
- History Colorado
- Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation
- The Denver Art Museum

I am a strong believer in fitness, at any age. I go to a fitness center for my body and OLLI is the way I keep my brain fit! And the best way to exercise at OLLI is to facilitate a class. Preparing for the class stretches your brain, delivering the material requires imagination, and answering member’s questions is the final exam.

Paul Mauro

Our OLLI 2014-2015 Advisory Councils

Central
Anita Leitner, President
Joan Baronberg
Nancy Cain
Julie DeTemple
John Fritschel
Vicki Jones
Mimi Karsh
Barbara Lilly
John Piper
Art Strasburger

South
Susan Long, President
Bob Armstrong
Shirley Bartlett
Ruth Harthun
Margaret Hayward
Jim Hornor
Pat Proctor
Barbe Ratcliffe,
Gayla Solomon
Florence Welch

West
Stan Hamilton, President
Jack Dais
Fran Fraser
Tom Hughes
Mary Meinig
Kirsten Morgan
Nick Muller
Nancy Murray
Joan Sample
Hank Zeile
Our Management Team

Vonnie Wheeler, Executive Director
Vonnie was President of Wheeler and Co., Inc., a major program development firm for corporations, educational institutes and state offices when she co-developed the Lifelong Learning Institute for DU. Before forming her company she was Vice President of First National Bank of Denver (now, Wells Fargo) where she directed the bank’s Corporate Foundation and was Directing Officer of the Community Affairs Department.

Michelle Runyon, OLLI Central Manager
Michelle has been a Facilities Director, Event Manager and Human Resource Director, for the past 20 years beginning in Arizona and continuing in Colorado since her move here in 2000. During this past year Michelle has been very excited about teaming up with the staff at DU in serving as the OLLI Central Manager.

Debbie Loftin, Office Manager
Debbie is a third-generation Denver native. She has been with OLLI since May of 2013 and is thrilled to be a part of this wonderful organization. Before joining OLLI Debbie worked for a bar exam preparation company for 15 years.

Jennifer Fortenberry, OLLI South Manager
Jenny Fortenberry has been involved in education for many years. She has a BS in Elementary Education and a MA in Counseling as well as Administration and Supervision. Getting involved in Lifelong Learning was a natural progression for her. It’s the best job ever for an educator; all of our students want to learn, all of our facilitators are volunteers, and I don’t have to deal with parents. It’s an educator’s dream job!

Karen Thorne, OLLI West Manager
Karen has over 30 years experience in private and non-profit management, development, marketing and community relations. Highlights of her career include being director of community relations for an AMEX-listed oil/gas company and executive director for two Colorado foundations – the Lake Dillon Foundation for the Performing Arts and the Douglas County Educational Foundation. She has also worked as a consultant to numerous organizations to develop strategic plans, marketing plans and development campaigns.
### OLLI Central

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<th>Central Christian Church</th>
<th>Harvest Chapel</th>
<th>Ruffatto Hall, DU</th>
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| 3690 Cherry Creek Drive South  
  Denver, CO  
  (303) 871-3090 | 3651 S Colorado Boulevard  
  Englewood, CO  
  (303) 871-3090 | 1999 East Evans Avenue  
  Denver, CO  
  (303) 871-3090 |

### OLLI South

**Valley View Christian Church**  
11004 Wildfield Lane  
Littleton, CO  
(720) 339-1379

### OLLI West

**Jefferson Unitarian Church**  
14350 West 32nd Avenue  
Golden, CO  
(303) 717-4299