A YEAR IN REVIEW

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ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-19

Photo by Damaris Cabrera
OLLI at UConn would like to thank the University of Connecticut and the Bernard Osher Foundation for their continued support.
AN annual review gives an organization an opportunity to assess the changes and direction that the entity has taken in the past year. This Annual Review illustrates a very different OLLI from a couple of years ago. The breadth of OLLI is expanding as it extends its appeal.

OLLI classes and activities occur throughout the week rather than only on Friday, and include evening classes. In addition to classes, clubs, and committee meetings, there have been lectures by UConn faculty and Reed Fellowship lectures as OLLI takes advantage of its relationship with UConn.

Membership is expanding in numbers and life experience. Many more men are participating in OLLI activities. We continue to try to extend our exposure to diverse communities looking for members and presenters. The Café attendance has been full, reflecting the popularity of the programs despite some scheduled lunch hour classes.

The Garden project, a unique UConn OLLI program, continues to attract new participants. These people have the opportunity of socializing, while working in the garden as well as outside the garden. Garden-generated groups play cards, go biking, and walk together at various times.

The Staff and Leadership Council need to explore and adapt to new interests as the membership grows. Frequently, those who are recently retired need to decide what interests they wish to explore now that they have free time. Active committees must respond to the interests of old and new members, which is why we encourage people to join committees. As the OLLI membership grows and changes, OLLI’s emphasis evolves. The changes of the last few years reflect this evolution.

Everyone has something to offer whether it is comments in the classroom, financial support, or ideas for improvement. OLLI is an entity which welcomes your input. I want to thank the Staff, especially Jenna and Fiona, and the entire Leadership Council for working cooperatively to make the above changes.

Ira Mickenberg, M.D., President of the Leadership Council
As we look back on the past year, it’s always amazing to reflect on how much has happened. We’ve had new events, such as the wonderful piano concert by Nathan Carterette in September 2018, and the UConn Gives fundraiser with talented screenwriter, Risa Mickenberg. We’ve introduced new clubs (Photography and Genealogy), new instructors, and new courses.

We’ve welcomed new members and new volunteers. We’ve also continued creative endeavors that have become part of OLLI at UConn’s identity, such as the Voices and Visions literary review, and the Greening of Waterbury that provides food and support to the local community. And we’ve brought back traditions, notably OLLI Appreciation Day on the final day of our Spring semester.

As ever, the energy, commitment, and passion of students and instructors have been inspiring, and demonstrate that OLLI is a safe place to ask questions, learn, and engage at whatever level you are comfortable.

For us as OLLI staff, it’s important to schedule classes, work with instructors, create publicity, and do the daily tasks that keep things running. But just as important – or perhaps more important – are the connections we make with OLLI members while doing these things. No matter our age, this year we’ve all learned together, celebrated birthdays, life events, and have supported each other through difficult times. This is all part of what it means to be an OLLI member, and we’re proud to share these experiences with you.

We thank you all for making OLLI more than “just a job” for us. Working for OLLI is a joy, and we feel so lucky to come in every day, to listen to you, and to understand what you value so we can help create the learning experiences you want. We’re all working towards the same goals, and are part of the same community. We are OLLI!

The OLLI @ UConn Team
Fiona, Jenna, Alondra, Laura, John & Lilly
"OLLI has expanded my knowledge...and increased my social circle."

After retirement I was searching for things to do. My friend spoke so highly of the OLLI experiences she had, both social and educational, that it prompted me to join. I enjoy the social aspect which is interwoven with the entire OLLI experience, including education and the wonderful speakers. As a member of the Café Speaker Committee I’ve gained an appreciation for people with passion and have even moved outside of my comfort zone by learning to play the ukulele with the wonderful and fun instructor, Nina Lesiga.

The very first course I took was with Alphonse Avitable and was all about honey bees. Other memorable courses include Chinese Medicine (instructor William Courtland), and movies (instructor Joseph Gambini).

Early on, I joined Nunzio Defilippis’ “Greening of Waterbury” gardening class. I’m now in my seventh year of participation and we have become like family. This rewarding experience has provided me with the opportunity to give back and form new and lasting friendships.

OLLI has expanded my knowledge, enhanced my appreciation of people with passion, and increased my social circle with a powerful and positive impact on my life.
"OLLI makes me feel like a college student all over again. I feel young, alive, important."

I've been an OLLI member for six years. I wanted to keep busy and use my mind. I was thinking of taking some courses at a community college when I saw a flyer for OLLI on the bulletin board at the local library and knew immediately it was just what I was looking for.

I like the socialization and learning something new. I think both are important. That is why I like OLLI Café where we all have lunch together. You can meet new and interesting people. I am really surprised by the number of people who are interested in learning like I am.

The friendliness and helpfulness of both staff and fellow participants are great.

OLLI has me thinking about new and different subjects. OLLI has expanded my knowledge, enhanced my appreciation of people with passion, and increased my social circle with a powerful and positive impact on my life. OLLI makes me feel like a college student all over again. I feel young, alive, important.
The bonds made at OLLI extend beyond our classroom walls.

Instructor Angela Buzzelli held her final "Are You Calabrese, Pugliese, Siciliana... Or Italiano?" class at a local Italian restaurant.

Timothy Padgett, Photography instructor, took his class to do a photo shoot of downtown Waterbury.

Nunzio De Filippis, Instructor of Italian culture and opera courses, took his students to the Brooklyn Bridge.
OLLI's annual operating costs are approximately $150,000. Two-thirds of our income comes from registration fees and grants, and one-third comes from the Osher Foundation endowment. The chart below shows how we use our funds.
OPEN HOUSE AND REGISTRATION

As we reimagine OLLI's registration process and plan for future success, we have made some changes to our Open House and registration timing. Now, OLLI's Fall Open House will take place in early August, which will allow members to attend sample sessions of courses before they fill up. Additionally, registration will now open up closer to the start of the semester. This new registration date will give brand-new OLLI members an equal chance at getting into popular OLLI classes that have traditionally already filled up by the time of Open House.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Organizations and programs need to have a sense of direction and measurable goals so they understand what to achieve and how to get there. OLLI at UConn is no exception! A strategic planning group of OLLI members and staff is working through 2019 to craft a strategy that will help us fully understand and articulate our priorities, and create goals to keep us on track in creating the best OLLI experience for our community.

FIVE POINTS GALLERY

This summer, OLLI is renting space from Five Points Gallery in Torrington to showcase the work of more than 50 art students this academic year. The exhibit will run from June 25th – July 8th, 2019. We’re having an opening reception for the public on June 28th starting at 5:30pm. We extend a warm thank you to all OLLI art instructors, including Thelma Appel, Judy Jaworski, Rose-Ann Chrzanowski, and Tim Padgett for making this art show possible.

The gallery is located at 33 Main St. in Torrington, CT 06790. We hope to see you there!
GIVING BACK

SPOTLIGHT ON GIVING

This academic year, the John & Joyce DeCesare Renaissance Fund made it possible for OLLI to purchase supplies for our creative arts classes including: new tabletop and floor easels, sketchpads, and supplies for the OLLI Photography Club’s upcoming dark room.

We thank Joyce DeCesare for her continuing support of OLLI at UConn.

WAYS TO GIVE

year-round:

Click the "Donate to OLLI!" button on our website

Respond to our Annual Appeal

Donate to the DeCesare Renaissance Fund

each spring:

UConn Gives (March)

Give Local (late April)

Visit olli.uconn.edu for more info!
OLLI AT UCONN WOULD LIKE TO THANK...

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- University of Connecticut
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- Connecticut Community Foundation
- The Palace Theatre
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THANK YOU TO OUR ANONYMOUS DONORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND INSTRUCTORS
At UConn Waterbury, students get all the benefits of a prestigious public research university in a small college setting. For more than 70 years, UConn Waterbury has opened its doors to educational access and excellence for thousands of Connecticut residents. Today, the campus is located in a leading-edge facility in the heart of Waterbury’s revitalized downtown. OLLI is grateful for the University's generosity in donating classroom and office space in addition to being incredibly supportive of our program. Thank you, UConn Waterbury!