Greetings from the NRC

We find ourselves in the fall of 2021 at an obscure and in-between position. It’s one that varies widely depending on where we live and the nature of our localities. Some of us are largely returning to pre-pandemic social activities while others are taking even more precautions due to rising COVID-19 outbreaks. The information we receive is sometimes confusing and contradictory – from sources we may question. But one thing seems certain, our lives and our country will never quite be the same. This brings us things to grieve, and others to celebrate.

One of the things Osher Institutes can say with certainty is that the camaraderie – even virtually – of our learning community is to be celebrated. Coming from a time when most of our members had scant experience in online learning or the potential of video communications, we’ve come a long way in a short time. Do we crave being able to meet and interact in person? A resounding yes. But have we learned there are important advantages to these new technologies? Another resounding yes!

Things may never be the same, but we are more capable and healthier from the experiences of adjusting to and learning from these changes. This month, we offer examples of OLLIs adjusting to change and learning from the past along with the present situation. We hope you appreciate these ideas presented from Osher Institutes in Illinois, Ohio, and Oklahoma.
Finally, a suggestion: if you think any of your OLLI colleagues might have interest in our monthly e-newsletter, pass along this link for them to subscribe. Our National Newsletter is not restricted to just staff and members from Osher Institutes, but is intended for a wide variety of people interested in lifelong learning. We welcome anyone who supports lifelong learning for seasoned adults.

With all best wishes for the fall term,

Steve Thaxton, Executive Director

Osher NRC
National Resource Center for Osher Institutes
Occasionally, Osher members publicly share the books or movies they are watching as recommendations. But these are often without benefit of an ongoing collection or curation. OLLI at Bradley University in Peoria has found a way to keep this practice alive and growing into a resource for members.

In 2015, an OLLI member who was interested in knowing what other members were reading began to informally inquire and document the results in a spreadsheet. As interest grew, a Google Site was created to provide a way to share the spreadsheet information. The site was called OLLI Reads and it allowed others to see the contents and to submit their own contributions to the effort.

In 2019, OLLI Reads expanded to include YouTube videos, Podcasts, and TED Talks. The new Google Site was branded OLLI Learns and now has a growing list of about 120 entries.

Over the past 24 months, the site has registered at least one or two visitors daily. Occasional news articles and mentions often push usage to 10 - 20 visitors in a single day with overall visits now totaling around 1,000.

A few lessons were learned as this effort progressed. Success depends on members sharing content, and getting members to share means they need to be reminded to do so. OLLI at Bradley University staff include OLLI Learns info (and the link) in all program evaluations, created its own page on the Institute’s website, passed out “recommend a title” cards at study groups, included it in flyers at large group gatherings and classes, and promote the feature monthly in email newsletter. The originating volunteer also added in playlists from a jazz study group and remains on the lookout for added recommendations. OLLI staff suggest making this sort of effort a permanent part of a weekly e-newsletters and to use social media sites such as Goodreads for added book recommendations.

Members continue to respond positively to OLLI Learns, with typical comments like, “What a great idea! I snooped around and liked what I saw,” and, “I think this is excellent, and certainly will become my first stop when it comes to selecting my next book (print or audio) or podcast.”
“We love it when members get ideas from one another and are able to find added value in their membership,” said Michelle Riggio, OLLI Director. “When they talk about recommendations they’ve taken from each other on this site, we know community is building at our OLLI.”

Check out OLLI Learns.

Submitted by: Michelle Riggio, Director of OLLI & Associate Director of Continuing Education, OLLI at Bradley University

OLLI AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Prelude to Justice

“Prelude to Justice: Art, Reform and the Work of Sister Helen Prejean,” a five-week, six-session multidisciplinary public series, hosted by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Oklahoma State University focused on the works of Sister Helen Prejean, author of Dead Man Walking and River of Fire. Discussions centered on jurisprudence, the criminal justice system, and recovery through art. The goal was to raise awareness through a unique, profound experience that was to inspire, educate, and encourage activism. Sister Helen joined via live stream for two classes; one hour was an interactive Q & A, and the other a discussion of her two books. Arthur G. LeFrancois, jurisprudence scholar, was the
moderator of the panel discussion. To conclude the series, OSU Professor April Golliver-Mohiuddin gave an operatic recital featuring works composed by Jake Heggie and words by Sister Helen. The recital included artistic collaborations between April and two additional music and dance faculty.

All events took place at the McKnight Center for the Performing Arts on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Live streaming was available for participants outside Stillwater.

The intention of the series was to educate participants on the fundamentals of law and how the basis of the criminal justice system is grounded in various philosophies. Through dialogue, participants were able to discuss the various schools of thought related to law and explore their perceptions of the incarcerated. They also discussed the local and national criminal justice systems, as well as the personal and social ramifications of the incarcerated.

The series was the first of its kind in collaboration with such diverse campus colleges and departments. While this was the first year, OLLI at Oklahoma State hopes to continue building the series and partnerships across campus.

Submitted by: Robbin Davis, Director, OLLI at Oklahoma State University

Hybrid Classrooms Across the OLLI Network
As educational institutions transition to new modes of instruction, Osher Institutes are doing the same. Across the network, Institutes are exploring blended learning, continuing with online classes, coming back to campus, and, moving into hybrid learning formats. Hybrid learning is proving challenging for many OLLIs as the formatting and technology required are relatively unexplored territories. Given the numerous technology options, questions such as what is the best camera, microphone, or software can be difficult to pin down and varies between Osher Institutes.

Nevertheless, many Institutes have made the transition to hybrid, and found effective technology options to fit their budget and needs. OLLI at the University of Texas El Paso keeps it simple, utilizing the built-in camera and microphone on a tablet (with a volunteer to operate the tablet) to track, record, and interact with at-home members. Also in the “keep it simple” arena, Casper College uses tripod mounted webcams run though a laptop. With more advanced technology, the OLLI at University of Miami uses an Owl Pro camera and microphone set-up. This camera/microphone device (mounted on a tripod) offers an all-in-one package that contains a 360-degree camera, mic, and speaker. Similarly, OLLI at University of Georgia is employing the Swivl Robot, a video capture system that allows for tracking and a variety of audio setups in one device. Likewise, OLLI at University of North Florida is using a Huddlecam, another all-in-one device. OLLI at Clemson University is using a cross between pre-existing cameras and microphones in particular classrooms with new hardware. Finally, several OLLIs are lucky enough to have access to their university’s smart classrooms. These classrooms are typically outfitted with camera, microphone, and hardware integration that requires no extra cost to the OLLI.

As many OLLIs transition into new classroom delivery models, they are finding new needs and challenges. Some have found that hybrid learning is not a viable option for their Institute. Others have found that hybrid learning offers another avenue to reach their members. Overall, these Institutes are seeking the most effective options of their OLLI. As the saying goes “to know one OLLI, is to know one OLLI,” and in the case of technology and hybrid learning the saying might be better put as “what is best for one OLLI, is what is best for one OLLI.”
Mark your calendar for the next Osher NRC webinar of 2021 on September 26th beginning at 2pm Eastern/1pm Central/noon Mountain/11am Pacific/10am in Alaska and 9am in Hawaii. This webinar is open to all staff, volunteer leaders and members within the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Network. [Register for the webinar here.]

**Your OLLI Marketing Toolbox**
Many Osher Institutes have a need for marketing tools, especially in digital formats. In conjunction with the marketing team of Erin Sarris & Leighton Guerrero, the NRC has commissioned the creation of a toolbox containing design, audio, and video assets for Institutes to use in their promotional efforts. In this webinar, the presenters will unpack the wide range of materials in the Toolbox, while providing instruction on how to use them. Discussion will also include background on suggested creative and marketing opportunities the Toolbox can fulfill.

**Presenters**
Kevin Connaughton  
Manager of Adult Learning, Osher NRC

Leighton Guerrero  
Graphic Designer, Leighton Guerrero Design

Erin Sarris  
Copywriter and Creative Director, Spun Copy & Creative

If you have interest in being a presenter or have ideas for future webinars, please contact Kevin Connaughton ([kevin.connaughton@northwestern.edu](mailto:kevin.connaughton@northwestern.edu)).
Dear Olli,

I am a volunteer on the programming committee at my Osher Institute. Currently, we are looking at the types of class formats we can use in planning for next term: hybrid, online, etc. It would be helpful to know what other OLLI’s are doing or planning. Do you have any information that could help?

~OLLI Volunteer

Dear OLLI Volunteer,

You are in luck! In September, the NRC conducted a survey of the Osher network on this exact question. In this survey, we asked: “For the Fall 2021 term, what is the Institute’s estimated percentage of types of courses?” Meaning, what percentage of the Institute’s courses will be online only, in-person only, hybrid/hyflex, or blended. Each Institute’s total needed to equal 100, and the chart above shows the overall average for each type of programming across all reporting Institutes. I hope this data helps you plan for next term!

~Olli

Have a question for Olli? Please send it in care of Kevin Connaughton (kevin.connaughton@northwestern.edu).

QUICK TIPS FOR HELPING OPERATE AN OSHER INSTITUTE

Quick Tip - Use Quick Codes
Quick Codes (QC) can be a great tool for Osher Institutes as programming returns to the in-person classroom. OLLI at the University of South Carolina Beaufort reports that while they used to administer course surveys via paper at the end of a class, they are now using Quick Codes that members can scan with their phone or tablet right from the PPT display which takes them to the class survey.

[Check out this site for easy QC generation.](#)

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**CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK**

**Job Board**

Program Manager for Learning Community, Division of Educational Outreach

[University of Nevada Las Vegas](#)

Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

[University of Minnesota](#)

Asst Director of Osher Lifelong Learning

[William & Mary](#)

Program Assistant 2, OLLI at the School of Professional Studies

[Northwestern University](#)

Coordinator, Osher Lifelong Learning

[William & Mary](#)

Is there a staff opening at your Osher Institute? Please send it to us at [oshernrc@northwestern.edu](mailto:oshernrc@northwestern.edu)