Greetings from the NRC

If we’ve learned nothing else from the pandemic, it’s that people crave togetherness. For purposes of affirmation, safety, and simple enjoyment of life, in-person socialization is fundamentally necessary. While our safety was threatened with disease transmission, digital togetherness became the lifeline at Osher Institutes. Online learning remains a lifeline for people who continue to be at high risk for Covid or have mobility limitations. A necessary convenience for those who want to participate in OLLIs but can’t otherwise, Zoom classes and events help keep us together. And digital togetherness is far preferable to none at all.

With the slow retreat of the pandemic, OLLIs are opening back up to more in-person socialization. This month’s newsletter shows us that group travel is coming back. Opportunities for professional development and networking are shifting back to in-person events, too. Still, we are forever changed. Online modalities are now better understood and widely utilized by older adults. That is a good thing. We can be thankful for this benefit at the same time we are grateful for the renewed in-person togetherness coming back into our Institutes.

With wishes for many opportunities for togetherness this month,
OLLIS AT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITIES
Director Retreat in Northern California
In September, OLLI staff and directors from across Northern California gathered for the first in-person meeting of the Northern California OLLI Directors group. This one-day retreat was held at the Concord Campus of California State University East Bay (CSUEB) and hosted by CSUEB OLLI director, Cristen Newman. Representatives from nine OLLIs attended, most in-person and one via Zoom. This full day event was filled with presentations, breakout groups, and of course food. The day was comprised of breakfast and a welcome session, three sessions of presentations, a breakout session, and ended with a dinner (and happy hour) at a local restaurant.

The directors involved found the retreat very helpful, with praises all around. “The NorCal retreat came just at the right time. It provided a needed opportunity to step back from the daily routine of my own program and hear what other directors are doing to build back membership and enrich their curricula” said Ann Nikolai, Director, California State University, Chico. OLLI at University of California, Davis director, Lisa Smith-Youngs, expressed a similar sentiment, “So glad that our regional directors were able to gather and share ideas and updates in person. While I value our zoom meetings, taking time to get away from the office for a 'retreat' leads to stronger partnerships!” Jennifer Juanitas, director of OLLI at the University of the Pacific remarked “Having a chance to connect with the other NorCal directors in person was wonderful. Being able to share ideas and challenges amongst our peers is invaluable.”

The Northern California OLLI Directors group was formed shortly after the 2022 Osher Institutes National Conference. The 2022 conference held roundtable discussions based on location and the Northern California directors found these roundtables so valuable they decided to continue the collaboration as a regional group. They aren’t the first group to form from the Osher National Conference. From "Alabama Shares" (in the Sept. 2020 newsletter) to the New England Directors Group (in the June 2019 newsletter) - collaborations and regional groups are growing across the network.

OLLI AT CASPER COLLEGE

OLLI Travels Again
Thirty-one members of OLLI at Casper College traveled to the “Islands of New England” in September on a private group trip through Collette Travel Services. The eight-day adventure included “exploring New England’s majestic seaboards, from Rhode Island to Cape Cod; visiting Providence and the gilded-age mansions of Newport; spending time in the lively artist colony of Provincetown; and experiencing the beautiful islands of Martha’s Vineyard, Block Island, and Nantucket.” This trip marked a long-awaited return to travel for many members.

OLLI director, Kat Bohr-Buresh shared that all Collette employees were courteous and prompt but the best part was the tour manager on location. He was kind, patient, and incredibly knowledgeable. They caught the edge of Hurricane Ian so had poorer weather than expected, rough ferry crossings, and the whale watch tour was canceled. The group was understanding and Collette and the tour manager did their best to make sure everyone enjoyed themselves. Members particularly loved the more unique stops, such as visiting a cranberry bog and a Rhode Island dinner theater. There was a great mix of included meals and dining on your own. Everyone loved the lobster dinner.

Kat also notes that the trip served as a wonderful member recruitment tool. They gained 23 new and lapsed members who attended the trip. “Response from members was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone kept thanking me for offering the trip. For me, it was a lovely perk to be able to travel with the group. Several people are already planning to travel with OLLI again.”

OLLI at Casper College is not the only Osher Institute committing to reviving their travel program. Institutes across the country are planning not only short local day trips, but also international adventures. One such opportunity is the 2023 Lifelong Learning Summer School at Girton College, Cambridge – the first held since summer 2019. This summer school enables participants to take academic courses for the love of
learning, live and take meals in the College, and have a pretty full and exciting social program to get the most out of being in Cambridge. It is a fantastic opportunity to spend one or two weeks experiencing the highlights of British college life in the company of other lifelong learners from around the world!

OLLIS AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO, BRADLEY UNIVERSITY & WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

What are your pronouns?

What are your pronouns? OLLIs across the Network are asking this question as well as providing learning opportunities for their members to understand gender identity and the purpose of identifying pronouns to create a welcoming space for all.

Osher Institutes at Bradley University, Chico State and Washington University in St. Louis have all offered their members the opportunity to attend a class or event focused on topics related to gender and gender identity.

Bradley University recently offered a course called “Yep, You Can Use the Word Queer,” presented by Jon C. Neidy and Lisa Uphoff, to provide members with information on the evolution of language within the LGBTQ+ community. The result for members was knowledge gained around terminology and how and when to use it.

Last year the OLLI at Washington University in St. Louis brought in a presenter from the Washington University Transgender Center to discuss both her professional and
personal experience with the process of transitioning in young adulthood. She shared with the group about the services Washington University Transgender Center provides to young adults as they transition.

The OLLI at Chico State recently held a class called “Development of Gender and Sexuality.” They also offer instructors the option to include pronouns in their course listings. For members considering how and when to include their pronouns, the OLLI at Chico State suggests adding them to their display name on Zoom or to their email signature. Noting that pronouns can be a complicated subject for many exploring their gender identity, they are always optional.

OLLI at Chico State Program Manager Ruth Alderson shared, “I’m a cisgender woman with a traditionally feminine name, so I don’t worry about people misgendering me – and being misgendered wouldn’t cause me the kind of harm it would cause to a trans or nonbinary person. For me, the most important reason to include my pronouns with my name in my email signature and on Zoom is so that listing pronouns becomes just a normal thing people do rather than something that marks trans and nonbinary people out as unusual when they list their pronouns.”

Submitted by: Ann Nikolai, Program Director, & Ruth Alderson, Program Manager, **OLLI at California State University, Chico**; Diana Klein, Program Coordinator, **OLLI at Bradley University**; and, Janet Gillow, Director, **Washington University in St. Louis**

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**NRC UPDATES**

**We want your feedback!**

**Osher Network Newsletter Survey:**

The Osher National Resource Center is conducting an interest survey to ensure that our monthly e-newsletter is serving the needs and interests of our readers. We would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete the survey. All responses are confidential, no identifying information is asked. Thank you!
What is a Woo-Hoo? A Woo-Hoo is one of those wonderful, amazing, out of the box experiences at an OLLI. All Osher Institutes have the opportunity to submit and showcase their Woo-Hoo for the Osher National Conference. The Woo-Hoos are shared during general sessions at the conference, and attendees vote on their favorites. The following is one of the winners from the 2022 Osher Institutes National Conference.

“My Life Story” from OLLI at University of Texas at El Paso
OLLI at University of Texas at El Paso partnered with the UTEP Theatre Department for an intergenerational experience called “My Life Story.” UTEP theatre students were partnered with OLLI members to study their personalities and mannerisms as well as learn about their life stories. These students then wrote and performed monologues portraying their OLLI partner. It was a memorable and moving experience for both theatre students and OLLI members and brought a tear to many eyes!

CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK
Job Board

Program Coordinator, Adult Learning Institute
Brandeis University
Program Manager, OLLI
Dominican University of California
Program Representative II
University of California, Los Angeles
Budget Office for Lifelong Learning and Community Engagement
University of North Texas
Temporary Administrative Assistant for OLLI
Dominican University of California

Is there a staff opening at your Osher Institute? Please send it to us at oshernrc@northwestern.edu