

June 8, 2012

Dear Fellow OLLI Members,

Earlier this spring we conducted a survey of OLLI members. Nearly 550 members participated and gave us valuable information about how we can make OLLI even better. For all those who participated, **thank you!**

With the help of our Survey Subcommittee, your Board of Advisors has been analyzing this input over the last few months. A full report of this work will be posted on the member website shortly, but today we are pleased to share the following summary with you:

- Overall, our members are **satisfied** with their OLLI experience – 88% indicate that they are Somewhat Satisfied or Very Satisfied with OLLI. In addition, the vast majority of members feel that their experience during the current year was the same or better than the previous year. These results are very positive and are a real tribute to everyone who makes OLLI special, from our instructors, to our volunteers, to our dedicated OLLI staff.
- Not surprisingly, **OLLI courses** are the most important factor in the OLLI experience (91% rated courses Somewhat Important or Very Important), and our members are pleased with most aspects of our courses:
 - Over 94% rate our course **variety** and **content** as Good to Excellent,
 - Over 90% rate the **quality of instruction** as Good to Excellent, and
 - Over 85% rate the course **schedule** and **value for the money** as Good to Excellent.

Our members are somewhat less enthusiastic about two aspects of our courses:

- Only 61% rate the **opportunity to socialize** as Good to Excellent, and
- Only 56% rate our **classroom facilities** as Good to Excellent.
- While OLLI courses are the most important factor in the OLLI experience, our **activities** and **volunteer opportunities** are also important. During the past year, 59% of us participated in one or more activities, like the fall picnic or the winery tour, and a full 40% volunteered in some capacity. In fact, many of our members played multiple volunteer roles as instructors, class assistants, committee or Board members, and by helping out or leading an activity. To these volunteers, we owe a debt of gratitude. **Thank you!**
- **The Spotlight** reaches more members than other forms of communication, like posting on bulletin boards or various websites. About three quarters of survey respondents indicated that they read *The Spotlight* Often or Very Often.

These are the key findings from the structured questions, but many survey respondents also offered comments and suggestions. Several themes emerge as one reads over these comments:

- A relatively small number of courses are not living up to our high standards. While few in number, even one poor course can affect a member's overall satisfaction with OLLI. We need to do a better job of working with instructors to improve these courses and provide an easy way for members to provide input, either positive or negative.
- Our facilities, notably the Bishop's House, have limitations that affect member satisfaction. While our ability to make major changes to the Bishop's House are limited, we need to take

steps to make improvements, both in the short and long term, and to expand our usage of more suitable facilities like Judea Reform.

- Some of our members would like to know more about how OLLI at Duke operates, but find that information is sometimes difficult to locate. This creates an impression of a lack of transparency in the minds of some members.
- Some of our members feel that our “sense of community” has diminished over the years as our membership has grown larger and larger. Unfortunately, the days of attending an OLLI class or event and “knowing everyone” seem like a distant memory.

As the Board reviewed these results, we decided to take the following actions:

1. **Facilities** – we have asked the Strategic Planning Committee to increase their focus on facilities issues, both short and long term. This is already one of the four Critical Issues identified in our Strategic Plan, but this increased focus should accelerate progress. One change you will see almost immediately is a greater use of Judea Reform (JRC), which our members indicated was their preferred location for classes. This fall, we will offer classes at JRC *one additional day per week* (on Mondays), and will reduce the number of classes held at the Bishop’s House.
2. **Course Feedback** – we have asked the Instructor Relations and Curriculum Committees to determine how to gather member feedback on our courses on a more regular and systematic basis than we have in the past. This information will be helpful to our instructors and to the Curriculum Committee which plans and schedules courses. This effort is just beginning, but we hope to conduct a pilot program soon.
3. **Information Sharing** – our Information Technology Committee has been working on a new OLLI member website that will be rolled out this fall. Many documents and other information will be posted here for easy access by interested members. We will also make it easier for members to volunteer and to make suggestions directly from this website.
4. **Sense of Community** – clearly, maintaining a close-knit feel in an organization with 1,600 members is a difficult challenge, but your Board is committed to trying to enhance this feeling. A few of the steps you may notice this fall are
 - Providing information on nearby cafés where members can chat while having a cup of coffee or a quick lunch. Directions to the Trinity Café, a short walk from the Bishop’s House, and the café at the Levin Jewish Community Center, a short walk from Judea Reform, will be posted on our bulletin boards this fall. We hope that you will join your classmates at these convenient venues to continue conversations that may have started during your class.
 - Exploring the possibility of offering a larger number of short, low-cost activities, like the Lemur Center and Duke Gardens tours. These shorter, less costly events may allow more members to participate and build our sense of community. Our Activities Committee will be asked to explore these options when they begin their work this fall.

Finally, let me extend a special thank you to Janice Stroud, Tamara Burkett, Pat Bogart and the entire Survey Subcommittee who conducted the survey on our behalf.

We will continue to discuss these survey results when we return from our summer vacations. Have a great summer and stay tuned!

Mike Bahnaman, President – OLLI at Duke