



The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Duke University



June 5, 2018

Dear Fellow OLLI Members,

Earlier this year we conducted our biennial survey of OLLI members. This marks the fourth time that we have conducted this survey and we were pleased that over 860 members shared their input and ideas with us. For all those who participated, **thank you!** Your voices have been heard!

During the past few months, your Board of Advisors has been analyzing your input and considering how to move forward. As I'm sure you can appreciate, this year's survey will be especially important as we begin to work with a new OLLI director, hopefully this summer.

Today I am pleased to share the following summary with you:

- Overall, our members are **satisfied** with their OLLI experience – nearly 92% indicate that they are Somewhat Satisfied or Very Satisfied with OLLI and over 90% feel that their OLLI experience was the Same or Better than the previous year. These results are very encouraging and are a real tribute to everyone who makes OLLI at Duke special, from our instructors, to our volunteers, to our dedicated OLLI staff.
- Not surprisingly, **OLLI courses** continue to be the most important factor in the OLLI experience. About 96% rated courses Somewhat Important or Very Important, and our members are pleased with most aspects of our courses:
 - Over 90% rate our course **variety, content, course schedule** and **quality of instruction** as Good to Excellent,
 - Over 86% rate the **value for the money** as Good to Excellent.

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

- About 68% rate our **classroom facilities** as Good to Excellent, and
- About 61% rate the **opportunity to socialize** as Good to Excellent.

Although these two factors are not as strong as the others, we have made progress on both during the past few years.

- While OLLI courses are the most important, **activities** and **volunteer opportunities** are also important to many members. During the past year, about a third of us (34%) participated in one or more activities like the 40th Anniversary Celebration, the trip to the Durham Bulls game or the OLLI day luncheon, and over 27% 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 with or leading an activity. To all our volunteers, we say a sincere **thank you!**
- Our electronic newsletter, *The Spotlight*, reaches more members than other forms of communication. In fact, 84% of us read *The Spotlight* most of the time or almost always. In addition, our member website (www.olliatduke.org), which was introduced in 2012, has become a valued source of information about OLLI – about three quarters of us check the website at some point during each term.
- Our members are very “**tech savvy**.” Over 99% of us use some sort of computer, tablet or smart phone, and over half of us (60%) use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Those are the key findings which are quite positive. I hope you agree.

As the Board reviewed these results and over 350 of your comments and suggestions, several themes emerged:

- Some of our **facilities** are not up to our expectations.
- Our on-line **registration system** continues to be a source of frustration for some.
- Some of our **popular courses** fill up very quickly, some in just a few minutes, preventing other interested members from participating.
- And finally, a few **courses and instructors** are not living up to OLLI's high standards.

And so, despite our overall high satisfaction with OLLI, more needs to be done.

After much thought and discussion, the Board decided to focus on the following:

1. **Facilities** – We have made progress on this issue by adding high-quality classroom space at Carolina Arbors and Westminster Presbyterian and by paving the parking lot at the Bishop's House. This spring we moved the very popular Conscious Aging Series to St. Luke's Church to alleviate parking congestion at JRC on Wednesday afternoons. We will continue to make similar incremental improvements when possible, but long-term we need to secure more first-class facilities with adequate classroom space, restrooms and parking.
2. **Registration** – Our on-line registration system has been in place for over six years and 90% of our registrations are now done on-line. Despite this progress, too many members (~18%) still report that it is Difficult or Very Difficult to register. This is a significant improvement versus 2016, but more needs to be done. To address this issue, we recently changed our system to require that members enter their user name and password only once during registration and we developed a new "help video" which is posted on the Member website. Long-term, we need to work toward achieving a registration process that allows members to log in, register for courses and pay for them, quickly and efficiently. We aren't there yet.
3. **Full Classes** – We are fortunate that many of our courses are so popular, but it is disappointing for many members when 40% of our courses are routinely "sold out." We are doing several things on this front:
 - We are striving to place anticipated high demand courses in our larger classrooms and moving sold out courses to larger rooms, when possible.
 - We are asking instructors to accept a few more students or even add additional sections to sold out courses.
 - We are increasing the number of courses offered to give you more choices.

As a result of these efforts, we were able to significantly reduce the number of waitlisted students in the recent Spring Term. We will continue with these efforts.

4. **Course & Instructor Quality** – Overall, our members give our courses and instructors high marks – over 90% rate our Quality of Instruction as Good to Excellent – but even one poor course is unacceptable. Our Curriculum Committee is working to ensure that we recruit high quality instructors and our Instructor Relations Committee is working to provide instructors with the tools and skills they need to be "great in every class." In addition, we recently began a program to recruit PhD and Post-docs from Duke and the results have been excellent.

Finally, let me use this opportunity to ask you to consider **volunteering for OLLI**. With a large and growing member base, we need more folks to step up and help us move forward. If you'd like to help but don't know how to start, contact our Volunteer Relations Chair, Richard Melanson (volunteer@olliatduke.org). He will be happy to help you get involved.

Thanks again for participating in the 2018 Member Survey! I hope you are encouraged by these results. The Board will keep you posted on our progress.

Virginia Knight, President – OLLI at Duke (*on behalf of the OLLI Board of Advisors*)