

Headline: 2016 OLLI at Duke Member Survey Results Are In

Gregg McPherson
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In 2016, members continue to express an overall positive view of OLLI at Duke. The survey, conducted between January 20 and February 10, 2016 had a response rate generally in line with the 2012 and 2014 surveys. We received 777 completed surveys (from a membership of 1,949) for a response rate of 39.9%. This is high enough to have some confidence in the findings of the survey.

I want to thank OLLI board member, Mike Bahnaman for creating and tabulating the survey for the third successive time.

Demographics: Like most OLLIs across the country, we have a 2:1 female:male member ratio. Sixty percent of our members are age 60 to 69. A few folks less than 60 make up about 3% of the population and the remaining 37% are 70 and older. As for the length of association with OLLI at Duke, 22% of us have been with OLLI for less than a year. Those who have been with us between one and four years make up 42% of the membership. Finally, those with five or more years of membership constitute the remaining 36% of the membership. We are seeing a slight trend for all these numbers to be shifting towards a shorter time in OLLI as compared to 2014 data.

Overall Satisfaction: Almost 90% of our members continue to feel that they were Somewhat Satisfied or Very Satisfied with their experience at OLLI at Duke this year. This has not changed since the last survey in 2014. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 7% of respondents said they were Somewhat or Very Dissatisfied. This is one percent higher than the 2014 data. When asked another way, 89% of us felt our OLLI experience this year was the same or better than last year.

OLLI Courses: OLLI at Duke remains focused on the classroom. Almost 95% of members take OLLI courses and these courses are the most important reason why people belong to OLLI at Duke (97% of us listing this as the reason for joining). Over 85% of respondents thought their classes were good to excellent. People liked the variety of course, the course content, the course schedule, and the quality of instruction (all over 90% good or excellent responses). People were a little less enthused about the value for the money with 85% responding positively to this point, still highly positive.

OLLI Activities: About a third of our members participate in OLLI-sponsored social activities – about the same rate as in 2014.

Volunteering for OLLI: About three in ten of our members volunteer in some way for OLLI at Duke. The highest percentage cited was as a Class Assistants (17%). Other categories assessed were Teaching a Course (8%), serving on the Board or a

committee (7%), or helping with an event or activity (6%). A little over 70% have not volunteered for OLLI at Duke in any category.

Venues: Two thirds of our courses are taught at JRC and that is the preferred venue of most respondents (67%). Bishop's House has its share of supporters but make up a much smaller group (20%).

Registration: Most respondents (over 72%) register online but 27% of people felt it was somewhat or very difficult to use the system. This is only slightly better than the 33% response to the same question in 2014. As we know, getting into the class you want can be frustrating with 35% of respondents reporting that they were unable to get into the class they wanted. This is worse than it was in 2014 where only 22% had the same frustration.

Computers and Social Media: We are computer-using crowd. Virtually all members (99.6%) have a computer, smart phone, tablet, or all the above. About two-thirds of the respondents told us they use social media, primarily Facebook. The usage is rising as a little less than half used social media in 2014.

Feedback: Many of you took the time to provide written comments and we thank you for your input. Many of the comments centered on familiar themes: parking issues, inadequate space (especially at the Bishop's House), registration woes, and courses or instructors that were inadequate.

Each board member read the quantitative results as well as every comment from the survey. We are in ongoing discussions on how to address the concerns you have expressed. You will be hearing more about new initiatives and plans as the year progresses.

Summary: OLLI at Duke is in good health but it is not perfect. We celebrate our strengths: the overall satisfaction of members, the volunteers who participate, and the rich array of activities we are providing. But we also are actively working to improve in the areas that were less well received such as our wait lists, registration difficulties, and facilities shortcomings. OLLI at Duke is a cooperative organization that depends on us all pulling together to make it into the best OLLI it can be. We remain committed to that goal. Thank you again for your participation in the 2016 Member Survey.

Best,

Gregg McPherson
President, Board of Advisors,
OLLI at Duke