Scope, Volume, Achievements

- The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at NC State (OLLI) had a record-breaking year in terms of number of memberships and overall enrollment. OLLI offered 129 short courses, 82 lectures, 29 study trips, and four events, with a total enrollment of 10,818, a 9% increase over the previous fiscal year and the largest enrollment in the program’s history. The total number of offerings is an increase of 8% from the previous fiscal year.
- OLLI membership totaled 1,700, which is record total and a 7% increase over the previous fiscal year. The membership renewal rate was 73%, similar to previous years and a percentage that exceeds the 65% renewal rate benchmark.
- Fifty-three NC State current and emeriti faculty, staff, and graduate students from 31 different campus units taught for OLLI this year. In addition to NC State faculty and staff, 27 instructors came from other colleges/universities, with the remaining 121 instructors drawn from the community. Thirty-seven of these 201 instructors were also OLLI members.
- Engagement with OLLI gave NC State faculty the opportunity to educate members of the general public about the importance of the university’s mission and research impact. In 22 of the OLLI offerings, NC State faculty described their research on a wide range of subjects, such as biotechnology, linguistics, cybersecurity, textiles, climate change, astrophysics, and metaphysics.
- OLLI continued its relationship with the NC State Office of Sustainability, providing information about OLLI programs that had sustainability themes, as the university defines the term; 55% of all OLLI offerings included sustainability themes.
- A total of 346 volunteers (instructors, committee members, hosts, ambassadors, SIG leaders) contributed to the program.
- The 29 study trips were content-dense and covered a range of issues. Twelve of the trips were OLLI-only experiences, developed by OLLI’s assistant director, and which had exclusive content unavailable to the general public. Eight trips were in partnership with NC State units and connected members with the research and programs of the university. A three-day history themed study trip took members to Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown, and a six-day study trip explored the Sedona and Grand Canyon areas of Arizona.
- Three OLLI instructors, who have a long association with the program, were recipients of three different awards for their work:
  - Dr. Jim Clark, professor emeritus of English at NC State, was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame;
  - Dr. Chuck Korte, professor emeritus of multi-disciplinary studies at NC State and co-founder of the OLLI program, was recipient of the 2019 William L. Turner Award for Outstanding Contributions to Extension and Continuing Education;
  - Dave Milidonis, OLLI instructor and founding director of the National Veterans History Archival Institute, was awarded the 2019 William C. Friday Award for Distinguished Service in Retirement, given annually by NC State’s Association of Retired Faculty.
- OLLI launched two new special interest groups, a Scrabble Group and a Local Live Theatre Group.
Fifty-seven percent of members chose to register online, a percentage that continues to rise each year.

In early June, the OLLI staff held a donor and volunteer recognition reception to thank members for the critical role that they play in the program. Certificates were presented to members who were rotating off the standing committees, and Maureen Deis, who has played key roles on the Program Development Committee over a number of years, was presented with the 2019 Betty Poulton Volunteerism Award for outstanding service.

Program Reviews
In accordance with NC State’s and OLLI’s Strategic Plan goal to “enhance organizational excellence by creating a culture of constant improvement,” OLLI has established quality benchmarks that are regularly reviewed by staff, standing committee members, and the OLLI Advisory Council.

- OLLI staff track classroom capacity/fill rates to monitor program efficiency and ensure offerings are keeping pace with growth. A year-end analysis showed that lectures were filled to 82% of classroom capacity, multi-week courses to 85%, and study trips to 96%. The benchmark is a minimum fill rate of 70% and the fill rates for both lectures and courses are a few percentage points higher than last fiscal year’s rates.

- On end-of-course evaluations, participants gave an average overall rating of 4.6 for both instructors and courses, and a rating of 4.8 for their overall OLLI experience (on a 5-point scale, where 5=Excellent). Evaluations for the study trips were also strong, with respondents giving an overall rating of 4.8 for those educational experiences.

- Inherent in OLLI’s mission is the goal that participation will positively impact members’ quality of life. The following quotes are a small sample of the hundreds of comments that members made on the course evaluations in the past year about how the program has affected their lives:
  - “These courses stimulate my intellect, get me out of the house and among people I don’t know, expose me to new ideas and perspectives, all of which is important now that I don’t go to work.”
  - “It’s nice to be around intelligent people who are continuously expanding their personal boundaries.”
  - “Sometimes I would like to remain in my cocoon and not face traffic and parking issues, but OLLI keeps bringing me out.”
  - “Every class I take expands my knowledge, sparks my curiosity, and gives me deeper insight into myself and those around me. The expansive variety in OLLI course offerings is wonderful and often attracts me to subject matter I wouldn’t normally think about.”
  - “I have learned a lot, made some wonderful friends, and have something to look forward to every time I wake up on an ‘OLLI Day.’”
  - “Any time you can walk away from a course, lecture, or activity knowing a little more than previously, your quality of life is impacted positively.”
  - “Knowing that this program exists on our University campus enriches me. It adds a dimension to education that keeps it open-ended and in process.”

Initiatives
- In the past, members of the Membership Development & Marketing Committee (M&M) made phone calls to inactive OLLI members both to invite them back and to gauge program satisfaction. Increasingly, phones were not being answered, so instead, an inactive member survey was sent in October to 987 members/couples who had been inactive during the last two years. The response rate was 16%; only 13 asked to be removed from the mailing list, and only eight made negative comments about the
program (cost and quality). Most of the respondents made positive comments about how they missed the program, but for various reasons were not presently participating.

- In February, a retreat-type meeting was held for Program Committee and Subcommittee members. With 54 volunteers contributing to program development through a system of subcommittees, this event was an opportunity for the volunteers to meet and for staff to describe “the why” of OLLI’s program development structure. The meeting was judged a success and will be repeated in the next year or two.

- OLLI participated in NC State’s first Day of Giving, one of 22 units/funds competing for additional funding on the University Priorities Leaderboard. OLLI finished fourth in number of gifts made and ninth in the most money raised on this leaderboard. Fifty-one percent of OLLI’s Day of Giving donors were new donors to OLLI.

- In addition to the usual member engagement activities such as the Cuppa OLLI sessions, Fall Sneak Peek, and the social events, OLLI committee members took the lead on creating new member retention efforts in FY19:
  - Volunteers with the M&M Committee invited members to ride the Wolfline bus to the Talley Student Union to get their Wolfpack One ID cards and to get a mini tour of the main campus, University programs, and the Union’s amenities.
  - Volunteers with the Hospitality Committee and M&M Committee joined forces to make phone calls in late autumn to all new OLLI members. They were able to field questions and gauge the level of satisfaction from these new members. Feedback from these calls were shared with relevant staff and committees for consideration or action.
  - Volunteers with the Hospitality Committee hosted two “meet and eat” gatherings. New members were invited to bring their lunch and join new and veteran members for mingling and to have their newcomer questions answered.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INCLUSIVENESS

- Thirty-two courses, lectures, and study trips gave Osher Lifelong Learning Institute members the opportunity to develop their cultural competency, and included subjects such as African American history, Native American history, exposure to different religious traditions, and intercultural communication.

- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute members volunteered for three campus research projects:
  - An NIH-funded study conducted by NC State’s Daily Well-Being Lab, focusing on older adults with varying levels of cognitive ability, under the direction of NC State psychology faculty Dr. Shevaun Neupert and Dr. Tom Hess.
  - Industrial design graduate students, who were enrolled in “Advanced Industrial Design Studio,” interviewed OLLI members about age-friendly design and used this information to create prototypes for the course.
  - OLLI members who were aged 65+ volunteered for a driver simulator study conducted by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education on diverging diamond interchanges.

- OLLI members volunteered five times with three Triangle-area nonprofits. Additionally, a team of eight OLLI members volunteered for a 5K event that raised funds for Note in the Pocket, and OLLI held two “Knit-a-Thons” to make mittens, scarves, and hats for Note in the Pocket, a nonprofit that provides suitable school clothing for Wake County children in need. OLLI members knitted 43 hats, 49 scarves, and three sets of mittens for the children.
• OLLI members were generous in contributing to the NC State Feed the Pack food pantry. Staff organized two weeklong classroom food drives, once during the fall semester and repeated during the spring semester. OLLI members donated a total of 1,557 pounds of food for the pantry.

• Volunteers with the Membership Development & Marketing Committee made 18 presentations to Triangle-area community groups and represented OLLI at community/wellness fairs.