

A Multifaceted Volunteer – From Climate Change to “Mr. Chocolate”

Syd Kaufman likes the learning experiences and opportunities to meet new people that OLLI provides. It also gives him a way to make significant contributions. Since joining in 2008, he has been an instructor, a student and a committee member. Syd says: “Volunteering is perhaps the wrong word; *participating* is somewhat better”. He currently participates in both the Lectures and the Study Group Committees. In this OLLI semester, Syd also leads a chocolate tasting study group and the Mystery Book Club. The Mr. Chocolate title comes from the many study groups he has conducted on the making and tasting of chocolate treats. He also led classes on brain health, weather and climate change.

The Lecture Committee plans and administers the Thursday morning Lecture series. Besides working on planning, Syd enlisted and introduced speakers for the Supreme Court and Russia lecture series in the 2016 and 2017 period. “In both these instances I got to know the speakers far better than I would otherwise, an opportunity only made possible by volunteering...definitely a big plus”.

The Study Group Committee plans, evaluates and supervises the wide array of OLLI study group offerings. Syd wrote the Instructor’s Manual and a Course Vetting Manual. He also serves on the Science subcommittee, which seeks new subjects for classes, reviews course proposals and vets new instructors for study groups.

Syd has a PhD in Metallurgy from Carnegie-Mellon University and has spent 28 years at Ford Motor Company’s Research Lab. He also taught undergraduate courses at U of M Dearborn and undergraduate and graduate courses at Wayne State University. After leaving Ford, Syd started a recycling company based on a patent he holds, where he worked for six years. Later, he retired as a consultant in metal recycling. These days, Syd continues his research in chocolate making.