

BACK: Northwestern OLLI will be back on campus this fall.

Given the vastly improved local health landscape and the significant progress we have made in planning a return to campus, I am pleased to announce that OLLI will return to in-person experiences this fall. I couldn't be more excited to meet all of you in person, and to see this warm, wonderful, and vibrant community come together on campus again!

BLENDED: Enjoy both on campus and virtual experiences.

Because we have discovered so many unexpected [benefits of virtual learning](#) during this last year, beginning this fall, we will continue to offer some virtual experiences in addition to our in-person experiences. For example:

- Nearly 30% of our coordinators across both campuses chose to offer virtual only study groups and bonus groups this fall. This will be an exciting complement to our in-person study groups which make up 70% of our offerings. We anticipate that this blended approach will become a permanent Northwestern OLLI model.
- While noontime lectures will be back on campus, you will also be able to access these exceptional programs virtually. In addition, to continue our access to speakers across the globe, we may offer virtual presentations from those outside of the Chicago area.

Blended, not Hybrid. We will not offer hybrid study groups in which some people from a single study group are in the classroom while others are on Zoom. Study groups will either be 100% virtual or 100% in person. Experience and data show negative impacts to engagement when operating as hybrid, especially for our peer-led environment. As with all that we do at Northwestern OLLI, we will continue to assess this decision and determine if a future adoption of hybrid is possible and appropriate in certain areas.

BETTER: Coming back better than ever.

OLLI is not just returning to our pre-pandemic program; we're coming back new and improved! In addition to the outstanding peer-led learning, programming, and community you previously enjoyed, below are some of the many ways we will be better than ever:

- **Choice.** Whether you prefer virtual, in-person in Evanston, in-person in Chicago, or some combination thereof, Northwestern OLLI will give you options that meet you where you are.
- **Convenience.** If you are traveling, live outside the Chicago area, are caring for a loved one, or have your own physical limitations, OLLI's virtual options will continue to provide you with the convenience you need to access OLLI Anywhere.
- **Community.** Over the last year, we have truly become one OLLI. Study groups filled with a combination of members from both the Evanston and Chicago campuses have created broader friendships, more diverse conversations, and even richer community. Committees working across campuses have helped ensure that we have the most relevant, timely, and interesting programs, without gaps or overlap.
- **Culture.** Throughout the pandemic year, the whole world had to pivot to a new way of living, working, and learning. At OLLI, as we made these adjustments, I emphasized kindness, patience, positivity, and respect — values that I call *The OLLI Way*. These values were prevalent this last year as staff helped members, as members helped staff, and as members helped one another along this unbelievable journey. As we return to campus and interact with staff and one another going forward, I am certain we will all continue to benefit from embracing *The OLLI Way*.

Logistics

While some logistics will continue to unfold in the coming months, below are a few key items for our fall return:

- **Vaccinations.** During fall registration, members will be required to attest to being fully vaccinated. (*I hereby attest that I have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 with an FDA- or WHO-authorized vaccine, or that I have one of the following two vaccine exceptions: a sincerely held religious belief or a documented health condition. If I have a vaccine exception, I commit to wearing a mask at all times while on campus, including in the classroom.*)

Proof will not be required. All members will be required to attest even if they select only virtual study groups, as they could be on campus for programming or other services such as the University library. Details about the process to follow.

- **Masks.** Masks are now optional for individuals who are fully vaccinated; unvaccinated individuals are required to continue masking indoors. Please respect the choice of those who continue masking as well as vaccinated individuals who prefer to unmask.
- **Staff Schedule.** While we are making a lot of preparations, the OLLI staff is not yet consistently back in the office. We continue to support OLLI from our home offices. We will notify you as soon as we are available in-person. In the meantime, the best way to reach us continues to be via email (olli@northwestern.edu).
- **More To Come.** We will share additional details as the times gets closer. If you have questions, they will likely be answered in future communications. We appreciate your patience.

We have navigated great change together over the past 15 months. I have tremendous gratitude for every single person involved in continuing to make this program vibrant, strong, and successful, and for doing it with kindness, patience, positivity, and respect. I am so happy to be a part of this incredible program and to soon have the chance to enjoy being Back, Blended, and Better than ever!

Joy in Learning and Community,

Kari

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