

OLLI at SOU Annual Meeting
June 7, 2024
Stevenson Union, Rogue River Room

In Memoriam: President Tracy Palermini called for a moment of silence while the names of those OLLI members lost this year were scrolled on the overhead screens.

Call to Order: President Palermini called the meeting to order at 2:09 pm.

Adoption of the Agenda: The agenda was adopted without objection.

Approval of the Minutes of the June 9, 2023 Annual Meeting: The minutes were approved on a motion by Mary Devlin, seconded by Phyllis Fernlund.

Guest Speaker: Richard J. Bailey, Jr. PhD, president of Southern Oregon University gave an enthusiastic welcome to OLLI members, encouraging everyone to feel connected to SOU; he sees OLLI as a particularly important part of the university community. He updated the group on the progress of the proposed senior living complex which is planned to replace the old Cascade Building, soon to be demolished. The project is envisioned as a public-private partnership which will provide a continuum of care; his office is currently taking names of people interested in being part of the planning and/or eventually residing in the residence. He intends all residents to receive SOU identity cards, integrating them into all aspects of life at SOU. He mentioned that Arizona State University's senior residence ran into unexpected problems when an all-night electronic dance studio opened across the street, but he anticipates that with Campbell Center next door that particular difficulty will most likely be avoided here. He thanked OLLI members for their support for the university and asked for our involvement in the project as it develops.

2023-24 Highlights: President Palermini outlined some of the big moments of OLLI's past year:

- **OLLI ABROAD Musical Fundraiser:** 50 OLLI members participated in presenting a fabulous original show to over 500 attendees, making a significant donation to both OLLI's funds and fun.
- **30th Anniversary Celebration:** In February, we celebrated our founding in 1993 as SOLIR; the president noted that our current fee of \$150 is equal to the 1993 \$75 fee, adjusted for inflation.
- **Curriculum:** We established a new record of 372 courses offered over our three terms this year; the president thanked our many volunteer instructors who keep the heart of OLLI beating.
- **Rogue Valley Manor Pilot Project:** The president thanked Peg Evans for spearheading the offering of courses at the Manor; 140 students (half of whom were Manor residents) took advantage of the three courses in the pilot project. Next year the Manor will be an OLLI venue, providing a welcome classroom site in Medford for OLLI members.
- **Infrastructure Update:** Despite the anodyne nature of this topic, the president pointed out that review and revision of OLLI's policies, procedures, and committee structure had long been sidelined, following the many changes for OLLI caused by the upheavals of the major renovation of Campbell Center and the pandemic. She thanked all the members involved in putting OLLI on a firm internal foundation going forward.

- **Membership Level:** OLLI membership peaked at 2,121 in 2018-19. In the first year of the pandemic, membership fell 36%, a decline comparable to other Osher institutes. Membership grew slightly the following year and then by 18% last year. This year's growth was a modest 1%, with 1,711 members. Seeing the need for an active group of volunteers to work on recruiting and retaining members, the Council approved the establishment of a Membership Committee.
- **Organizational Restructuring:** The standing committees were reorganized under four categories: Education, Membership, Support, and Administrative Support.
- **Fundraising:** The president announced that contributions to OLLI's Annual Fund as of the end of May were up 57% to \$75,000, and the campaign for our thirtieth year which aimed to involve at least 30% of OLLI members in donating had raised the percentage donating from last year's 19% to 26%.
- **New Administrative Director & Staff:** We have much to celebrate in completing the first year with our new Administrative Director who has had to work without a full staff most of the year, due to changes within SOU, staff turnover, and some health issues. This week saw the office at full strength at last.

OLLI at SOU Staff Introductions : Heather Inghram, Administrative Director, who appeared at the annual meeting last year via video, introduced full-time office staff Megan Rutherford and Paige Jensen as well as Lion Leonis, our Student Tech Assistant. Heather thanked the Office Volunteers and President Palermini for setting a collaborative leadership path and establishing a unique partnership between Council and staff.

Financial Report & Planning: Paul Christy, OLLI Council Treasurer, thanked the Finance Committee (Joyce Avery, Phyllis Fernlund, John Ferris, Tracy Palermini, Cathy Prazenica, Laura Simonds, Lorraine Vail, Dwight Wilson, and Heather Inghram) for all their work, which was based on conservative assumptions and predictions. Treasurer Christy presented the committee's detailed chart laying out financial projections for the next five years, which they hope will be an excellent tool for Council's future decision making.

He shared the favorite acronym guiding financial reports from his work in the federal government: "BLUF – or Bottom Line Up Front." In that light, he announced that OLLI at SOU is in a very good financial position over all; however, in order to meet our policy mandate of maintaining at least a 25% operating fund reserve, the committee estimates that Council will need to raise our annual fee to \$175 in 2027-28, which will still keep us within the group of most affordable OLLIs nationwide. He reminded the body that OLLI finances are a three-legged stool: member fees, donations, and the distribution from the Osher endowment managed for us by the SOU Foundation. Going forward, Council will make whatever financial adjustments are necessary as circumstances change.

President-Elect Comments: Laura Simonds, Vice President/President-Elect thanked the outgoing Council Directors (Tracy Palermini, Colleen Patrick-Riley, and Susan Stitham) and outgoing Communications and Community Outreach Chair Peg Evans, and introduced the new Council Directors for the Class of 2027 (Myrna Hall, John Schuyler, Sarah Tisch) who will join continuing Council Directors Joyce Avery, Colet Allen, Mary Devlin, Ann Magill, and Paul Christy; and the chair of the new Programs and Activities Committee (Karla Langland). She then outlined upcoming projects for OLLI's 2024-25 year: an updated website, the launching of two new committees: (Membership, and Programs and Activities [formerly

Member Services]], and the initiation of a limited travel program; there will be more information on the first two trips coming soon: watch the Newsflash and come to the Open House. Finally, we will begin work on the update of our next five-year strategic plan: OLLI 2030.

Member Survey Results: President Palermini reported that 513 members, who mirrored the demographics of OLLI as a whole, returned their surveys which gives us a very good picture. Members' overall satisfaction has risen to 4.6 out of 5, with a high degree of satisfaction in the availability and quality of courses provided. The course delivery method preference question revealed that only 12% of our members prefer online courses only but that most members appear to be influenced more by the course itself than the delivery method. Those interested in potential travel programs were focused first on local and then West Coast trips. The response to the question about volunteering for OLLI indicated that nearly 50% of our members are volunteering now or have volunteered in the past; although this is very positive, since our OLLI is run by us, we are looking forward to the reinstatement of a Volunteer Coordinator position in the office to facilitate matching volunteers with our continuing needs.

Member Questions & Comments

Patrick Alexander: asked about the cause of the significant increase in donations. The president responded that we have instituted a fall and spring appeal with a lot of help from the professionals at the SOU Foundation and are doing a better job of communicating the continuing need for donations to supplement the fees and interest from the Osher grant. She concluded by saying, "We are proud of our relatively low fee, but we also rely on those members with means to also support the organization with charitable contributions."

Elisabeth Zinzer : first, asked about the nature of our relationship with national OSHER. The president replied that the Osher Institute National Resource Center is a great support and resource for both staff and leadership. She informed the group that the number of OLLIs has been capped at 125, and that OLLI membership nationwide has been aging out since most began with a cohort of folks recruiting by word of mouth. Nationally, the Institute is focusing on developing OLLI programs that will appeal to the "young olds" -- the last of the Boomers and first of Generation X.

Second question: when fundraising, do you encourage us to talk with those who are not members but who care about lifelong learning? The answer was a hearty, yes; the president reminded everyone to talk to their family members around the country, and shared the secret that, as of July 1, people can renew their memberships even without signing up for Fall courses.

John Kloetzle: asked about OLLI's involvement in the planning for the Senior Living project at SOU. Heather Inghram assured him that, since she will be attending those sessions, she will be sure that we will be active participants.

Closing Announcements

- Open House August 6, 2024 from 1 pm to 4 pm at Stevenson Union
- Volunteer Information is available at the back of the hall.

- Members can pick up their Anniversary Recognition Pins (5,10,15,20,25,30 years) at the back of the hall or at the OLLI office.

Sing-along: Randall Walker: the meeting closed with a group singalong to Sam Cooke's standard, "Don't Know Much About History," led by a group of OLLI students from Randall's course on *Introduction to Guitar Playing* and joined by members of the OLLI class on *Back Porch Music*. The meeting ended with enthusiastic applause and relieved band members.

Adjournment. President Palermini gaveled the annual meeting to a close at 3:28 pm.

Following the meeting, the Events Team, headed by MaryBeth Limpert, served delicious ice cream treats.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Stitham
OLLI Council Secretary