



## Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

University of Alaska Fairbanks

University Park Building • P.O. Box 758100 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-8100

### UAF-OLLI at a Glance

#### What is UAF-OLLI?

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF-OLLI, or just OLLI for short) is a non-credit educational program of UAF's department of Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning. Membership in OLLI is open to adults age 50 and up. OLLI is "**A Health Club for your Mind**": OLLI offers short courses fall and spring semesters on a wide range of topics, including science, literature, history, philosophy, computer applications, art and exercise. OLLI sponsors a winter lecture series, free and open to the general public, on topics related to Alaska. OLLI also organizes educational group travel opportunities within Alaska. In recent years, OLLI groups have traveled to Haines, Petersburg, Katmai, Kennicott, Denali National Park, Lake Minchumina, and Prudhoe Bay. See our course catalog for specifics on classes and excursions for 2014.

#### How did we get the "Osher" name?

The "Osher" name in OLLI honors the generosity of the Bernard Osher Foundation. UAF-OLLI is one of 117 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs) spread across all 50 states, all connected to an institution of higher learning. UAF, Dartmouth College, Tufts University, and UC Berkeley all share the honor of hosting an OLLI. OLLIs vary because all are operated independently, but all share a focus on high-quality educational programs for older adults and all are partially supported by the Bernard Osher Foundation.

UAF-OLLI began as Alaska Lifelong Learning (ALL) in the winter of 2000-2001, thanks to the vision and effort of founding director Barbara Lando, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at UAF. In October of 2005, the Bernard Osher Foundation awarded ALL the first of three annual \$100,000 grants to strengthen and increase the program, with the goal of reaching 500 paid members. After reaching that goal, UAF's lifelong learning program, now proudly renamed OLLI, received a one million dollar permanent endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation in December of 2008. As a condition of accepting the endowment from the Osher Foundation, UAF agreed to provide appropriate office space and classroom space as needed for the UAF-OLLI program.

#### How is OLLI funded?

Earnings from the Osher endowment provided a little less than half of our operating expenses in 2013. Participants pay an annual membership fee (\$35 for 2014) and additional fees to register for classes (\$15 per class, or \$150 for unlimited classes for 2014). In 2013, private donors contributed \$10,170 for current-year operating expenses and another \$13,116 to bolster the endowment fund. The University of Alaska provides in-kind support, but is not responsible for any direct monetary contributions to UAF-OLLI.

# **UAF-OLLI at a Glance**

## **What does OLLI do for UAF?**

OLLI helps UAF reach out to the local community and enhance the lives of older Fairbanksans. Having this positive connection to UAF strengthens community support for the university in the age 50+ demographic. This translates into financial support for other UAF programs in addition to donations targeted to OLLI. It also builds political support for UA's needs.

OLLI members will tell you that OLLI is the best reason to retire in Fairbanks! Many current UAF faculty members donate their time to teach a short course for OLLI, as do many emeritus faculty members. These instructors love the intense interest, deep questions, and rich life experiences OLLI students bring to class. Teaching for OLLI fulfills faculty members' community service responsibilities in a way that invigorates their research and teaching. OLLI courses have also stimulated interdisciplinary connections between current UAF faculty.

## **What does UAF do for OLLI?**

UAF provides OLLI with an office, access to classrooms, tech support for computers in our office and in the partial-smart classrooms we use, and administrative support (e.g. HR, Procurement, Parking Services). The UA Foundation manages OLLI's endowment. The vast majority of OLLI classes are held in three general-use classrooms in the University Park (UPark) Building, where our office is located. UPark is a fantastic building for us! UPark is close enough to UAF's main campus to make it easy for faculty to come down the hill to teach an OLLI class, but separate enough that members feel they have their own familiar space apart from the hubbub of the main campus. Having most classes meet in one location is convenient for our members and also enhances the social aspect of OLLI.

The availability of ample parking in a flat lot close to the building should not be underestimated as an element in OLLI's success. Our parking situation could not be duplicated anywhere on the main campus or the Downtown Center.

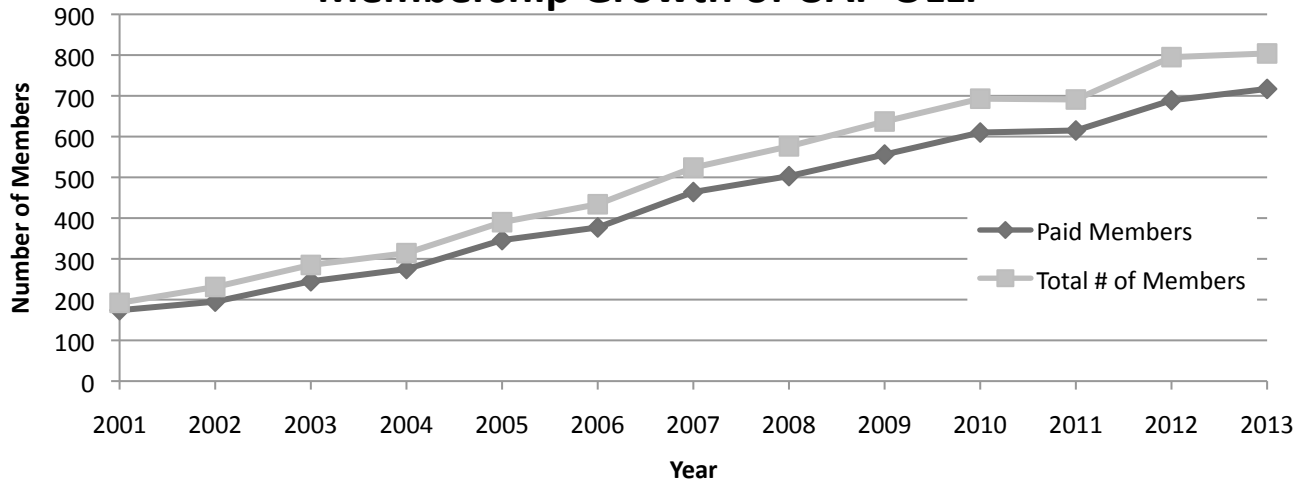
## **Challenges**

In the near term, OLLI's major challenge is retaining classroom space in UPark for our thriving, growing program. We have a strong cooperative relationship with CTC's emergency services programs (the other major user of the UPark building) and their programs are growing too. Together we maximize use of UPark classroom space, to the point where OIT has a hard time servicing the general-use "partial-smart classroom" computers because the rooms are in nearly constant use. Any reduction in classroom space from what is currently available to us would require us to cut the number of courses we can offer.

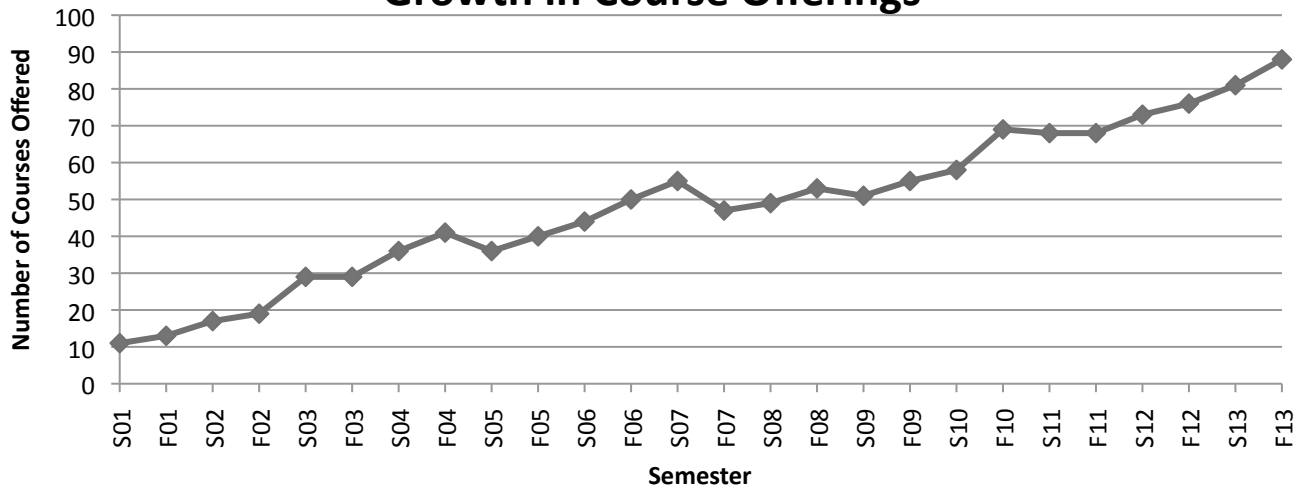
In the long term, we are concerned about the UPark building. Half of the building was converted to cold storage a few years ago. We hope that the remaining part of the building can be kept in use as long as possible, as it is such a perfect facility for OLLI. In the event that the UPark building is permanently closed some day, we ask that OLLI be remembered and our needs for classroom and office space met, in accordance with the agreement signed by UAF on acceptance of the endowment funds from the Bernard Osher Foundation.

## UAF-OLLI at a Glance

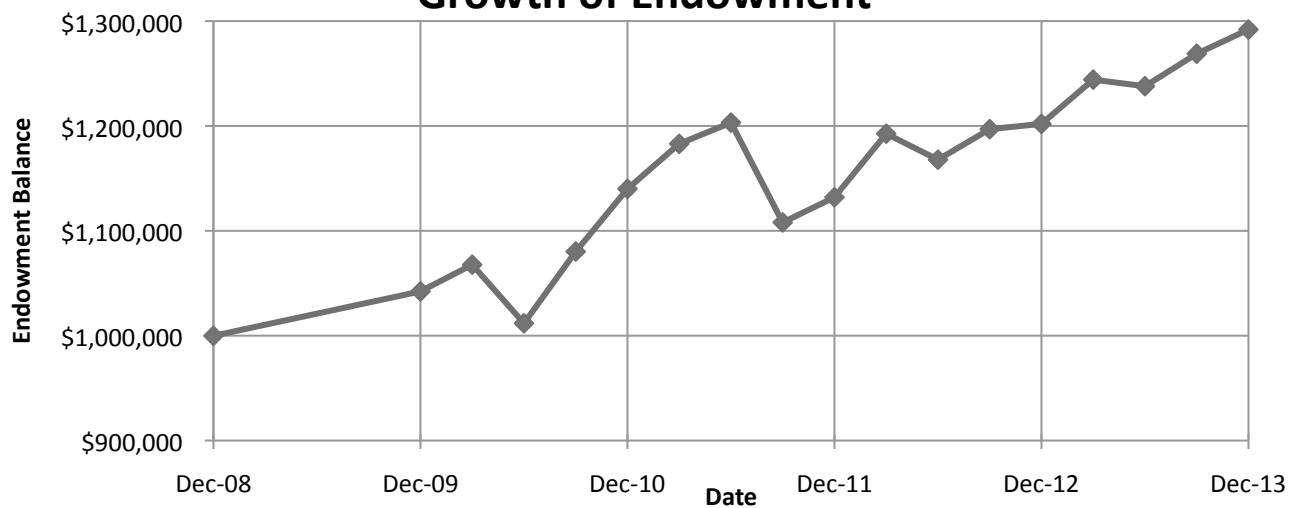
### Membership Growth of UAF-OLLI



### Growth in Course Offerings



### Growth of Endowment





2001 - 2010

A HEALTH CLUB FOR YOUR MIND!

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
at the University of Alaska Fairbanks



# 10th Anniversary 2001-2010





Office of the Chancellor

380 Sigmund Hall, P.O. Box 757000, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7000  
www.uaf.edu

Brian Rogers, Chancellor  
(907) 474-7112  
(907) 474-6705 fax  
b.rogers@uaf.edu

Bob Shetchik, Executive Officer  
(907) 474-7400  
(907) 474-7475 fax  
rshetchik@uaf.edu

June 1, 2010

Dear OLLI Members,

Congratulations on your tenth year as a program of learning for older adults! The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAF is a model program which has grown into a wonderful educational, social, and intellectual resource for citizens of our community. By offering courses and excursions which expand the minds and hearts of our seniors, you have produced a self-support institute which is a great asset to the community and the university. It is obvious that there was a need for this, as your membership has continued to grow.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is pleased to be a sponsor of OLLI, and we wish you continued success in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

  
Brian Rogers  
Chancellor

Alaska's First University - America's Arctic University  
UAF is an AAACB approved and educational institution



May 3, 2010

One Ferry Building  
Suite 255  
San Francisco  
California 94111  
Telephone (415) 861-6587  
Fax (415) 877-9972  
www.osherfoundation.org

Board Of Directors

Bairbro Osher  
Chairman

Bernard Osher  
Founder & Treasurer

Mary G.F. Biterman  
President

David Agger

Phyllis Cook

Robert Friend

John Gallo

Laurel Leander

John Pritsker

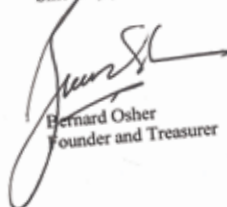
Dear Friends,


On behalf of everyone at the Foundation, we congratulate you on ten years of outstanding service to the greater Fairbanks community. The growth and development of your program since the Foundation made its first grant in June 2005 has been exceptional. We are delighted with the progress the program has made and hope that each of you takes great pride in your many accomplishments.

With the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks now providing a rich and diverse array of educational programs to more than 600 seasoned adults each year, it stands as a shining example of success—success built on the remarkable cooperation of dedicated volunteers, exceptional staff, and university leadership committed to serving an ever larger demographic in the State.

On this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we applaud all that you have accomplished and extend our best wishes for continued success in the years ahead.

Sincerely yours,

  
Bernard Osher  
Founder and Treasurer

  
Mary Biterman  
President



2001-2010

## Ten successful years of OLLI at UAF

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is a membership organization providing learning opportunities for midlife adults (50+) in the Fairbanks area. Classes, lectures, educational travel, and socials are planned and operated by the members. OLLI is a program of Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning at UAF, and has received financial support from the Osher Foundation.



## SALUTE TO OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR BARBARA LANDO



In retrospect, Barbara Lando sees her past educational and career paths as preparing her for her present job. Barbara is the founder and current program director of Osher Lifelong Learning at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). She came to Alaska to stay a year or two, as do many Alaskans. She and her husband Clif graduated with their doctorates in mathematics almost 45 years ago from Rutgers University. They were fortunate that both were able to find positions with the University of Alaska Fairbanks at that time, and they have made this their home.

While at UAF she not only taught mathematics but helped to start the computer science program. After 21 years, Barbara retired as a faculty member, and then for eight years she directed Elderhostel programs around Alaska.

University personnel she knew were people enthused about the idea of a lifelong learning program. They volunteered to help establish a program, serve on committees and teach.

So in 2000, wanting something to do to further serve the Fairbanks community, Barbara approached Provost Paul Reichardt at the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a plan for a lifelong learning program. She asked for no compensation for herself. With his approval, Barbara moved forward. Without the usual surveys or formalized plan or proposal, she gathered her professional friends and acquaintances and “just did it!” It was an instant success! Today the program is known as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

“I felt like previous jobs fit into this. I worked at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and still had connections. I knew the administrative structure and the steps that need to be taken to get things done.” Barbara modeled this program on others already in place. “We didn’t invent the concept. Already there were 300-400 models in existence and two national networks.”

For ten years, Barbara has instituted, led and directed our lifelong learning program; over these last ten years, hundreds of participants have been inspired, informed and delighted!

Barbara sees the future of the Osher Lifelong Learning program “as continually changing to meet changing needs.” With her insight, she has already moved the administration of the program in new directions. She has hired staff to help in the office with responsibilities for registration, and much of the work for publications and accounting has been outsourced. Special lectures were added to the program “to fill a gap and to just try different things.” Beginning this fall, classes will be offered five days a week for 10 weeks per semester. She hopes that when she eventually leaves her position, the continuity of the program will be sustained by procedures and guidelines that are in place.

But don’t expect to see Barbara just sitting at her administrative desk, not today or in the future. Clif and Barbara enjoy traveling, and Barbara is an active participant in life. She has biked in Europe, and this past May biked with 6 other women from Teklanika to Sable Pass in Denali National Park, where they cautiously had to guard themselves from a grizzly bear. She is part of the running and tennis communities of Fairbanks, running during the summer, as well as in the cold, dark months of our below-zero winter weather. These days she also looks forward to winter trips to warmer and more southern places.

For your vision, for your inspiration and for your leadership, the members of Osher Lifelong Learning offer a special, ***“Thank you, Barbara!”***

## What is OLLI?

OLLI – the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute – is an educational program of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), led and supported by its membership, determining its own curriculum, policies, procedures, and fees. It offers a rich array of classes and learning opportunities for adults 50 or older. Academic and general interest classes are offered in an intellectually challenging atmosphere without the stress of tests and grades. A college background is not a prerequisite for membership – members are self-motivated learners who share the common bonds of intellectual curiosity and the experience of their generation.

There are over 100 other “Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes” around the country, but each program is completely independent with many different formats, fees, and ways of operating. What Osher Institutes have in common are high quality, association with a university, and financial support from the Osher Foundation. They recognize the generosity of benefactor Bernard Osher by using the Osher name.

## Why and how did an OLLI start in Fairbanks?

Although at the start of the new millennium a wide variety of educational, cultural and recreational opportunities existed in Fairbanks, only a few were specifically directed to the schedules, life styles, and interests of older adults – those over 50. Many people choose to remain in Fairbanks after retirement – people who are still quite active in the community.

OLLI was the brainchild of University of Alaska Emeritus Mathematics Professor Barbara Lando. During her service as state director for Elderhostel she had learned about hundreds of lifelong learning institutes across the country specifically directed toward the wishes and needs of older adults. In November 2000 Barbara brought together an organizing committee of local people from differing walks of life. After four meetings they decided to “just do it” without further study and see what interest there was. They decided to call the program Adventures in Lifelong Learning, developed a constitution and bylaws, found instructors for eight courses, made and Xeroxed copies of a small brochure, mailed it to folks they thought might be interested, and scheduled a “kick-off social” for February 2001 with courses to start in March. When 100 people turned up at the social they knew the program had a future.

The first advisory Board of Directors was elected March 2001 from the general membership, volunteer committees were formed from the membership to help with administration, the first semi-annual newsletter was published April 2002, and the program has been thriving ever since

## *A Health Club for Your Mind!*

### Organizing Committee

Michelle Bartlett  
 Peter Biesiot  
 Mary Ann Borchert  
 Neal Brown  
 Denise Daniello  
 Harriette Klann  
 Cliff Lando  
 Judy Orvik  
 Irene Peyton  
 Wynola Possenti  
 Suzanne Summerville  
 Karen Wood and  
 Acting Program Director  
 Barbara Lando





– growing from 192 members that first year to 637 by 2009.

### OLLI consists of:

- Classes
- Lectures
- Local excursions
- Alaska trips
- Socials
- *PEOPLE!*

Space was made available in the University Park building, a former elementary school which now houses many university offices and classrooms. This ideal location had room for a program office as well as large and small classrooms, and there was plenty of parking.

The program began in the UAF College of Liberal Arts and was briefly with Tanana Valley Campus. In 2003 a better fit was determined to be with Summer Sessions. The name of our program was changed at this time to Alaska Lifelong Learning (ALL). Summer Sessions (now Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning) Director, Michelle Bartlett, has contributed greatly to our success over the years with her advocacy and ongoing support.

## ***Growing Pains – Birth of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute***



By 2004, over 300 members were taking 70 courses. Because Director Barbara Lando's past experiences had given her academic connections, computer expertise, and a travel background, she had been able to serve as a staff of one. But, without her, where would the program find someone to design the curriculum, recruit faculty, create brochures, set up registration and other databases, design the website, arrange excursions and answer the phone - on donated time or a part-time salary?

As the board pondered this, Barbara received an email from the Osher Foundation asking to talk with her about Alaska Lifelong Learning. Bernard Osher believed that lifelong learning programs were valuable for keeping older adults informed and engaged in their communities and his foundation had donated to various

lifelong learning programs. He was now expanding his foundation's support of such programs from his original home state of Maine to all states. His staff was looking for established, successful programs in need of a financial boost. They found ALL through our website, and they were interested in giving us funding. The Osher Foundation asked for a short proposal, and, in October 2005, granted ALL \$100,000. They said that if we continued our progress, they would provide grants for an additional two years, and if we achieved an enrollment of 500, they would give us funds for an endowment of \$1,000,000. This would be a "permanent fund," to be invested by the University of Alaska Foundation to provide future income for the program."

***"The variety, passion,  
and expertise of each  
instructor was great!"***

—Anon

All of this has happened – the endowment was received in December 2008. In return for support from his foundation, Bernard Osher asked that recipients change the name of their organization to Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, or OLLI, which we did in 2006.

The various OLLIs nationwide are completely independent of each other and operate in many different ways. In order to assist the various developing Osher institutes grow, Mr. Osher held national conventions at which participants from over 100 invited

lifelong learning programs shared what worked and what didn't. Barbara and various board members have attended four such meetings and came away not only with good ideas for the future, but also a smug feeling that the Fairbanks program was on firm footing and operating well.

Believing that each organization is the best judge of how it should operate, Bernard Osher made no contingencies on our accepting the endowment other than that the University must provide space for the program. This stipulation has ensured continued success for the Fairbanks OLLI within UAF.

## ***How does OLLI operate? VOLUNTEERS!***

Although we have a wonderful program director and staff, the success of OLLI benefits from the support of many volunteers. Program planning draws on the experiences and talents of older people in the Fairbanks area to offer new opportunities for continued learning. Anyone age 50+ who pays a membership fee may become a member. The members help plan and administer both courses and activities. Members contribute to the operation not only as study group leaders or instructors, but also as participants on the elected board and appointed committees. There are always more people running for board membership than there are open seats. Many additional members serve on the standing committees or undertake specific supporting tasks while classes are in session. The organization could not function without the many people who step up on an ad hoc basis to run the office when needed, assist with registration, make coffee, make snacks for classes, plan and serve food at the Ice Cream Social and Annual Meeting, as well as serve as cookie carriers, attendance takers, and go-fers for class instructors.

## ***Board of Directors***

The board of directors is elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting each Spring for a two-year term. The board is an advisory one which sets policies and procedures outside those determined by the university, sets goals and priorities, reviews programs, and oversees the expenditure of membership fees. It also appoints committees each year, from both the board and general membership. The initial board members were elected at the first social and Annual Meeting in February 2001.

## ***Curriculum and Instructors***

OLLI members are the primary impetus for curriculum development – the curriculum thus reflects members' needs and interests. The curriculum committee, composed of board members and other volunteers, meets with the director well ahead of each semester to offer



## **Initial Board 2001:**

Michelle Bartlett, Peter Biesiot, Louis Carufel, Harriette Klann, Mike Downing, Clif Lando, Wynola Possenti, Montie Slusher, Judith Strohmaier, Suzanne Summerville, Karen Wood

## **Other Board Members Over the Years:**

Andrea Backlund, Jane Behlke, Carl Benson, Joan Bush, Don Cook, Sandra Giddings, Nina Megyesi, Barbara Rondine, Dorothy Thompson, Pat Turner

## **Current Board 2010:**

Ruth Benson, Mary Ann Borchert, Marcia Boyette, Donna Dinsmore, Ron Inouye, Hal Levey, 'Nanne Myers, Paul McCarthy, Mary Ann Nickles, Lynn Slusher, Dorothy Stella

## **Initial faculty, first session:**

Walter Benesch, Connie Bradbury, Marjorie Cole, Mike Downing, Suzanne Summerville, Teri Viereck



recommendations for courses and faculty. The director then puts together the program. Because of her previous long connection with the academic community Barbara has been able to draw upon many instructional resources from within UAF. Community members of the committee also enrich the diversity of courses through their own connections.

Classes are scheduled to reflect the lifestyles of the many retired people who travel widely to visit far-flung family and other interesting places. Classes are scheduled primarily in two four-week sessions each spring (March and April) and fall (September and October), since members tend to travel in the winter and summer. Most classes are 75 minutes long, with 30 minutes between classes to give people a chance to mingle and get to know each other. At the start in 2001, four courses a day were provided on Fridays on this schedule. With the growth in membership and the number and variety of classes,

by 2006 Wednesday classes and a few on Tuesday and Thursday were added to allow for longer class periods – used particularly by such classes as photography, computer skills, art and other crafts, Shakespeare, and film classes. Saturday classes were added in Spring 2008 but this has proved not to be a popular time. By the fall of 2009, to accommodate all the offerings, a few classes were given on Monday. Some of the scheduling is affected by the size of classroom needed. With the move to smaller quarters in Fall 2010 classes will be more evenly spread throughout the week.

Members participate in classes or study groups covering a wide variety of subjects. Topics might be in the fields of art, computers, current events, health, history, literature, music, philosophy, social science, as well as exercise, gardening, birding, and genealogy. The format may be class or discussion groups, with no tests or grades.

Regular courses during the months of September, October, March, and April are usually four classes long. During the rest of the year, a Friday Lecture Series features talks by distinguished UAF faculty and community members. Typically, six to seven such lectures are given each year. In 2010 a winter intersession was started with three short courses being well attended. Additionally, OLLI sponsors interest groups

***“...OLLI students...are, for me, the students that I as an instructor most like to interact with. They are motivated to learn.”***

—Neal Brown

***“...none of my previous teaching has come up to the pleasure of teaching my OLLI classes.”***

—Frank Soos

### Classes offered, by type

	2001	2009	Total 2001-spr 2010
Art & Handwork	2	9	70
Exercise, Recreation, Life Style	2	10	98
Health, Nutrition, Aging Issues	0	18	85
Literature & Language	1	11	75
Media & Film	0	7	27
Music & Dance	2	3	43
Philosophy & Religion	1	5	32
Science & Mathematics	3	13	78
Social Studies	8	13	101
Technology, Photography, Computers	15	15	87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>696</b>



# *Fun and learning with OLLI!*







Photo: Paul McCarthy









***And all this fun  
wears us out!***

– the oldest being a monthly Book Club at Noel Wien Library scheduled on a regular basis in the fall and spring. Other interest groups have included hiking, synchronized swimming, skiing (called “skeezers!”), chess, and tennis – these are led by an OLLI member and meet at times designated by those interested in joining.

Instructors have been drawn from knowledgeable members of the community (including OLLI membership) and from the UAF faculty. Most of the faculty return to teach more than one course, saying they really enjoy teaching students who WANT to be in the course and often, because of age and experience, bring fresh insight to the discussion. They are impressed that students may become so engrossed they don’t want to take breaks. Many of the students are retired university faculty and staff who are as interested in the classes as anyone.

Two instructors from different academic areas were asked to comment in depth on their experiences as OLLI instructors. Both have taught undergraduate and graduate students for decades at UAF.

According to Neal Brown, a retired space scientist at UAF: “I have found that OLLI students are truly interested in and curious about the science and technology of the world we live in. They are, for me, the students that I as an instructor most like to interact with. They are motivated to learn. They ask questions. They initiate discussion with me and each other during the class to the benefit of all. . . . I know as an instructor that locals will not show up if I am not successful in engaging them.”

Faculty and student enthusiasm, and enthusiasm for each other, is not limited to the sciences. Frank Soos, a retired UAF emeritus English faculty member who has taught several literature classes for OLLI: “. . . none of my previous teaching has come up to the pleasure of teaching my OLLI classes. . . . I have heard insights gleaned from each [Alice Munro] story I’ve never heard before. How to explain this? Rich and complex life experience? Thorough reading? A comfortable level of friendship and interaction that make people feel they can say what they think?”

Neal Brown again: “OLLI students are motivated, eager, and enjoy a bit of joint laughter and frivolity with their instructors and with each other.”

And a last word from Frank Soos that reflects what other instructors, young as well as retired, have also said: “I come to every class expecting a joyful time that passes much too quickly. . . . When we get together to talk about, to celebrate what we have read, we are rewarded with shared understanding. . . . My kind of fun.”

OLLI instructors receive no remuneration other than free membership in OLLI so that they can take unlimited courses during the year they teach. One can see why they find this sufficient reward and return to teach more courses.

The variety of class offerings has been a big draw for OLLI members. From learning about subjects we’ve never had a chance to study before, to brushing up on skills

## Faculty Keep Coming Back

# Faculty	# Courses taught since 2001
2	20-23
11	10-19
19	5-9
37	3-4.5*
49	2-2.5
105	0.5-1.5

\* some teach portions of a class (one or two lectures)

***“The class was an incredibly inquisitive audience, open to discussion and very engaged. The students seemed to crave wanting to know about things. Learning for learning’s sake. Honestly, it was a joy teaching this group.”***

—Kim Carlson



**Administrative and Finance Committee** works with the Program Director in developing the budget and determining the annual membership dues.

**Curriculum Committee** participates in the development and evaluation of classes.

**Hospitality Committee** develops policies and plans for social events, including the February lunch, August ice cream social, and weekly refreshments.

**Membership/Publicity Committee** develops plans for spreading the word about OLLI to the community.

**Nominating Committee** prepares a slate of potential candidates for board membership and officer positions.

**Development Committee** considers means to encourage donations to the operating budget and to the endowment fund.

**Travel Committee** helps develop ideas for our summer excursions, in Interior Alaska and around the state.



in languages, to learning new information useful to our status as 'seniors,' there has been a never-ending variety of curriculum choices for our members. Drawing from the rich experience of individuals in our community has provided us with many new and repeated classes each year. Since the first classes were offered in 2001, 222 people have volunteered to teach classes for OLLI, and more than half have come back again.

### ***Committees, Office and Classroom Help, Special Interest Group Leaders, and Other Volunteers***

Our OLLI members are an active bunch. Many volunteer to help make OLLI the success that it is. There are committees to work on curriculum development, finance and budget, membership and publicity, travel plans, and the socials. Volunteers help in the classrooms to take attendance (we've found that if people have to sign in they're more likely to attend all the classes) and help the instructor.

Volunteers lead special interest groups, organizing hikes, continuing classes for groups who decide four classes just weren't enough, and keeping members informed on various issues of interest.

Volunteers help keep the coffee pots filled - a very important task for this group! And volunteers plan, prepare, and serve food at the several socials each year. Volunteering gives our members a way to serve the organization, as well as to spend time with friends, get to know other members better, and to keep membership costs low. There are many opportunities for volunteers to be involved in all parts of our organization.



### ***OLLI Members Out and About (or The Places They Go!)***

Some 50 travel opportunities offered through OLLI have attracted over 770 participants since our first year – many being repeating OLLI member travelers. Trips are recommended by the Travel Committee and chosen by the Director for educational opportunities and ease of implementation. The educational component of each trip, with lectures and adventures which most travelers would not have access to on their own, has made these excursions very popular. The very first trip was to Dawson, Yukon Territory, in 2001, with a day in Eagle and a sternwheeler ride up





the Yukon. Learning about gold mining and local history from the people who live there, and the ride in a four-seater plane, were adventures and a wonderful start to the program.

International trips such as touring in New Zealand and exploring Mexico were provided until OLLI joined Summer Sessions, which was itself arranging international educational travel. OLLI now concentrates on providing numerous opportunities for members to see and experience our own state and our Canadian neighbors.

After carefully noting the level of physical activity required, members have chosen to hike the Chilkoot Trail, camp in the Brooks Range, raft the Forty Mile, Tetlin, Ivishak, and Copper Rivers, and explore the Wrangell-St. Elias Park on horseback. Towns and villages such as Sitka, Kennicott/McCarthy, Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, Nome, Kotzebue, and Barrow gave a special warm welcome to OLLI tourists, people who already understood Alaska. Wildlife lovers chose the Homer Shorebird Festival, polar bear viewing in Kaktovik, learning about the sea life around Kasitsna Bay, watching birds and sea lions on the Pribilof Islands, and camping in the Brooks Range hoping to see the caribou migrate. Others took in Shakespeare in Ashland (Oregon), theater and night life in New York and Valdez, opera in Anchorage, and the Sitka Music Festival.

Linda Distad, who has traveled extensively, including several OLLI trips, speaks for many in saying, "I have found that the OLLI trips offer something special in comparison to other organized tour groups. OLLI trips provide a companionship with Fairbanks travelers that eliminates the need to keep re-introducing yourself to strangers. There is a special camaraderie of sharing." She continues, "Having lived in Alaska for many years, there are places that I had never visited. Through the years I always thought that someday I would visit areas I had yet to see. . . - and with OLLI she can."



***"A great way to keep me  
in touch with friends."***

—Anon

***OLLI stirs the laughter  
and the smiles. It wakes  
us up!***

—Suzanne Black



***“OLLI is the single best reason to retire in Fairbanks. It has raised the quality of life for retired folks.”***

—Kathy Vaupel

## ***Who Joins OLLI and Why?***

In 2006 the OLLI board conducted a survey of the membership. Of the 377 members at the time, 163 responded. Ages ranged from 50 – 89 with 63% between 60 – 74 years old. Over 72% had education beyond high school; 44% held advanced degrees. Most are computer literate – 87% used email. This allows OLLI to communicate regularly with members, and offer on-line registration and fee payment. In fact, computer and digital photography courses are quite popular.

Course areas favored by over 50% of the respondents were Alaskan topics, history/world affairs/political science, health/nutrition/medicine, crafts/hobbies, and exercise/recreation. At the time of the study 84% of the members were women – a greater proportion of men joined later after courses appealing to them were added as a result of their response to study area preference. The lecture format, with no homework and no tests, was preferred by 83%, but over 60% liked the workshop and discussion

format as well. OLLI members enjoy the opportunity for social activities, and for having time to chat with other members between classes, and many appreciate that we wear name tags.

Many respondents took multiple classes in a four-week session, with 46% taking 3-8 classes and 26% taking fewer. If they did not attend classes, over 66% cited personal travel as the reason they were not able to be here. The board used this information in revising the fee schedule by 2008

to favor both those taking a few and those taking many classes, and those who took classes in the fall or spring but not both.



## **Growth of OLLI**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>By 2009</b>
Members	192	637
Faculty	16	74
Classes per year	22	over 100
	Friday only	T, W, F, S
Monthly lectures	0	6 - 7
Winter short courses	0	3
Summer Trips	1	6 - 8
Special interest groups	Book Club	Book Club, Hiking, Swimming, Skiing, Tennis, Chess
Staffing	Director	Director + 2 p/t assistants

## And the Cost?

OLLI has been committed to making courses available to everyone. Indeed, among OLLIs nationwide, the Fairbanks program is likely to be the best bargain. The original membership fee in 2001 of \$60/calendar year allowed a member unlimited access to courses, monthly lectures, the semi-annual socials, and eligibility for summer excursions. Financial constraints in 2006 necessitated raising the membership fee to \$75/year for a maximum of 24 courses. This schedule was modified after an analysis showed 60% of members took courses only one semester a year, and 71% took four or fewer courses per year. In 2008 the membership fee was reduced to \$25/year plus \$10/course or \$75 for unlimited courses. This allows a member to take one or two classes at a very reasonable cost.

Undeniably, the generosity of the Osher Foundation has helped us keep tuition costs low. However, our income is now reduced from the direct grants of \$100,000/year which we received for three years, to the approximately \$45,000/year we can expect to receive as earnings from our Osher endowment. Recognizing that with the recession in 2008-09 our endowment might not produce income in its first years of operation, the Osher Foundation made one more grant of \$25,000 in 2009. This provided a cushion for us before the endowment earnings will contribute significantly to our budget.

OLLI is committed to avoiding any sudden large increases in membership fees and tuition. Because of the Osher grants, we have been able to save income during this transition from Osher yearly grants (2006-09) to income from the endowment, which could start in 2011. OLLI is using these savings to smooth any increases in tuition that may be necessary in the future. Also, in anticipation of needing more funding, OLLI began a development campaign in 2007 – and the membership responded generously with \$4,306 in 2008 and \$8,860 in 2009. This was especially important and appreciated with the economic downturn and lower earnings on endowment monies in 2009.

For the foreseeable future, OLLI will need donations in order to keep costs of membership and classes low. Indications are that the response to this request will be good.

***“I may not remember everything, but I enjoy the moment and know I’ll be changed!”***

—Shirley Gordon

***“They are interesting classes taught by interesting people. We are so lucky, we pay so little!”***

—Ann Swift

### Member financial support

	Amount	# of Donors
Friend	\$25-99	43
Supporter	\$100-249	35
Donor	\$250-499	8
Patron	\$500-999	1
Benefactor	\$1,000+	1





## ***The Future of OLLI***

OLLI at UAF continues to grow and evolve. The excitement and interest of our members in all of the OLLI activities has been wonderful to see, and this is what keeps the volunteers and staff motivated. Knowing that the Fairbanks area, as in the rest of the country, has an ever-increasing population of mid-life and older adults (think Boomers), the future of OLLI looks bright indeed.

Program Director Barbara Lando has been the central figure in OLLI formation and the continuing development of quality offerings at OLLI. We thank her, especially, for all that she does and for what she means to this organization.

We all see a bright future for OLLI because of the wonderful people involved, our support from UAF, and the significant financial contributions from the Osher Foundation and their belief in us. A self-support organization which provides opportunities for learning and service - what could be better?

### Publication Committee:

- Mary Ann Borchert
- Donna Dinsmore
- Marlys Henderson
- 'Nanne Myers
- Mary Ann Nickles





