



OLLI @ UTEP
(915) 747-6280



OLLI Coordination Council

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Chair

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Financial Oversight

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EU Advisor

Lynn Provenzano
Executive Director
Curriculum
Marketing

Read about OLLI's
Council Members
starting on page 12.

OLLI at UTEP

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | *All New*



We launched into a new academic year fully engaged in our new lounge, new Memorial Gym location, and new OLLI classroom spaces along with new courses, lectures and tours in our Fall 2025 sessions. Spring and Summer were periods of transition that brought us to this point in time...and it's all good and getting better.

I'm sending you a big, personal welcome to both new and returning members. Memberships and registrations are what sustains our OLLI program. Let's think of our OLLI as a pantry of benefits and opportunities for our members. We'll keep working to fill our pantry with new and interesting topics and activities that fuel us with excitement, enjoyment, and connectivity. We learn from our experiences, our classes, and from each other. We make new friends and acquaintances. We simply add a quality to life. So, *Each One Reach One* continues to be vital in keeping our OLLI teeming with possibilities.

This program has been here for more than 35 years. As OLLI, we've overcome challenges, adapted to change, and have never wavered in our commitment to continuing education and social connectivity as we move through our older years. This is for you.

It's a pleasure to be of service to our OLLI members.
Thanks for being here.

Lynn Provenzano

WORDS FROM THE COORDINATION COUNCIL CHAIR | *Thanks*



Greetings. The fall semester is almost over and I hope this fall semester has been all you expected and more. Moving to Memorial gym has been "a good thing" once we adapted to the temperatures in our rooms. Hope you have made new friends and expanded your brain power. OLLI has so much to offer - glad you are member.

A big thank you to all the volunteers. We appreciate you taking time out of your day to help out in the office. I also wish to give Karen Fraser a special thanks for all she does to keep the office running smoothly.

I also want to thank the members that donated on "Day of Giving"; those funds help our OLLI grow. Finally, we need members to keep our OLLI strong.

Wishing you a marvelous holiday season!

Helen Schmid

EXTENDED UNIVERSITY (EU)

is UTEP's hub for online and other nontraditional academic programs, professional training and education, and community enrichment.

EU strives to improve access to UTEP's outstanding educational opportunities for all who seek them out.

EU's component units provide educational opportunities and services to support both nontraditional students and educators interested in new modes of teaching.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN | *A Little Extra*



This fall, I had the joy of travelling to Ireland for the first time. Our trip included three days in Dublin, three in Galway, two in Cavan, and then back to Dublin for a night's stay in a castle before heading home.

Beyond the beautiful green landscape with rainbows appearing everywhere, the festive live music in the pubs, the fish-n-chips with a nip of Jameson, and the fun of driving on the opposite side of the road from the opposite side of the car, one thing that truly stood out was the warmth and friendliness of everyone we met. One evening captures this spirit perfectly. We had tickets to the Ireland vs. Hungry World Cup Qualifier match. My sister-in-law, Karen, lives in Dublin, and she invited us to a pub to meet her friends who were also going to the match. That's where we met Joe.

Joe didn't just point us in the right direction—he walked us all the way to our gate, even though his gate was on the other side of the stadium. After the game, he came back to find us, walked us back to pub to celebrate Ireland's comeback win in proper Irish fashion. As we got ready to leave, rather than giving us directions on how to get back to our hotel in the heart of downtown Dublin, Joe—and now also his brother—escorted us to the train station, entertained us with stories about being the eldest of 12 children on the train ride, and continued to walk us toward our hotel. When we realized the midnight train, the last train from the city to his neighborhood, was just minutes away, we *insisted* that he turn around and head home. He reluctantly did so while wishing us "safe home."

The next day, we told Karen about Joe's generosity, and her response? "Yes, Joe is great, but that's just how the Irish are. In Ireland, visitors are seen *safe home*," a phrase we delighted in hearing everywhere.

So, this holiday season, let's sprinkle some Irish kindness into our celebrations and follow Joe's example of doing a little extra for others. Wishing you all joy, peace, and *safe home* this holiday season!

Dr. Beth Brunk

GET READY FOR SPRING 2026

January Memberships and Registrations: January 12 to February 6

OLLI is dedicated to providing service to the OLLI community and welcomes new members.

Each One. Reach One.

Invite friends, colleagues, and relatives to join OLLI.

Enjoy learning and feeding your curiosity together!

Inspired Writing

Facilitated by Mónica E. Gómez, OLLI members discovered new insights through discussions, creative writing, reading aloud and more. Copyright remains with the authors, who have granted permission for use of their writing in the OLLI Newsletter and/or Bulletin. Authors share their Fall 2025 Inspired writings.



Tom Shaughnessy

Pick a number, any number. Ok, pick 6. Why 6? No reason. Numbers are a language. They solve questions that cannot be answered with letters. They are figures representing a quantity. The #6 can be assigned to indicate a position in a group. When someone has your 6, they are covering your back.

6 is the smallest perfect number. 6 is considered to be the number of nurturing and support. It symbolizes equality, balance, energy, and a spiritual journey.

6 represents the 6th sense. A person that is a "6" is compassionate, emphatic, refined, with artistic traits.

Delving deeper into the language of numbers and focusing on the #6, it can represent many traits and qualities of the human spirit.



Marie Livingston

When bubbles come together, they form hexagons. This image brought to mind the Eden Project in Cornwall, UK. Huge domes that house many different plants both edible and decorative. The domes come together like bubbles to make six sided shapes.

It's fascinating to think of all the hexagonal forms found in nature. Bees fill the square shape of manmade hives with their hexagonal honeycombs making it easy for beekeepers to harvest the honey and wax. Each hexagon of the hive stores the honey of one bee's entire lifetime. Wild bees make their own hives wherever they decide to form them. Rounded and sculptural hanging from trees and still there is the basic hexagon.

Artists have worked with bees giving them a sculpture that the bees build their hives on. Collaborating with the artist their wax additions of hexagons that they fill with honey.

When honey is harvested the wax is also. Beeswax is used in many different products. Artists use the wax to mix with paint or sculpt into new forms and there is a circle or hexagon completed.



Richard Rheder

Alone and Far from Home

Milan Kundera's novels *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* offer a peek into the "bad" old days under Soviet rule in Czechoslovakia. Despite living under an oppressive regime people found ways to carry on with their individual, imperfect, precious and privately beautiful lives.

Life's sweetness came from simple daily joys such as friendships, dancing, eating, drinking and – yes – love affairs which in the novels sprang up unexpectedly like weeds in the cracks of crumbling pavement. Human connections could not be denied – not even by the watchful, totalitarian state. Perhaps those connections were a form of resistance. It was as if the Eastern Bloc socialist experiment offered just enough freedom from want for those who kept their heads down to pursue private lives with a full component of hope and folly.

As the world saw when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the Soviet-aligned regimes of Eastern Europe fell with breathtaking speed like so many dominoes. Their collective collapse suggested that those governments were just hanging on. Were they merely being tolerated by a populace that was biding its time and waiting for the inevitable?

Saying all of this, I recognize that I run the risk of trying to seem smarter than I really am. There is a pretentious word for that: *ultracrepidarianism*. Go look it up if you want. In truth my only claim for musings on life under Soviet rule in a personal memoir is an ephemeral encounter in East Berlin in the summer of 1964. The memory lingers like a blind spot after a flash photo. It's as if a few frames of grainy newsreel footage were spliced into an otherwise mundane Super 8 home movie from my Texas childhood. An unsuspecting viewer of such a movie might ask, "What did I just see?" "Did you see anything?" "Did that really happen?"

More creative writing from the “Inspired Writing” classes with *Mónica E. Gómez*



Liz Young

I took for granted a very sensitive soul who accompanied me for forty-five years.

I finally see what I once missed.

His love was multidimensional. Although he was a particularly affectionate man his tender touches and warm embrace said volumes about his love for me.

We had our highs and lows but through it all he was faithful to me. There were no fights or blame, just an unwavering presence and peace about him.

He let me walk my chosen path from my choice of faith practices to friends. He was frugal and wise about finances but let me have my freedom to buy within limits.

He always had my back no matter what projects I took on. He was there like a guiding light in the dark. Most times words were hard for him to express but his actions showed more than words.

I know he loved me from the deepest part of his soul. Never demanding nor argumentative. He had a silent strength that came from deep within him.



Alex Reyes

The Language of Possibilities

The Language of Possibilities. Having been born into a Spanish-speaking household, it was often frustrating to listen to people speak English. Those who spoke English understood metaphors, abstractions, puns, and humor. I lived for years in a world filled with comments and ideas I did not understand.

This confusion gradually diminished as I began reading more English. I started with poetry, specifically Edgar Allen Poe. I loved his tales of horror, like *The Pit and the Pendulum* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*. *The Raven* became one of my favorites because of the Vincent Price movies. The poem was complex, but I kept at it and learned to appreciate the story it told of lost love.

As I learned English and Spanish at higher levels, I looked for abstractions and the complexities inherent in language. As I have delved deeper into language, the literary worlds open themselves to me in new and intriguing ways. The world of *Pygmalion* is mine to embrace. The path not taken is mine to take. Life is less a walking shadow, and I am more than a player fretting and strutting on the stage of life. I remain the player upon the stage, looking at life through different lenses and marveling at the fractal nature of sight and mind.

The infinite possibilities of communication and language are so fascinating.



Mónica Gómez

For two years, my guitar slept in its case, my singing voice dormant without the flow of air vocal cords need to billow into song. I taught my workshops and wrote my poems, but the music was missing. Inspired by a monthly songwriters’ circle, I finally unlatched the heavy black case, gently lifted my old classical (made in Mexico’s “guitar capital”, Paracho, Michocan), tuned the nylon strings and let my hands explore the neck, gradually remembering how to play my songs. Humming then singing softly, dialing in the notes until I could put some air behind the sound. I found my voice again.



Ida Chavira

Fall

The bright red flowers of our geraniums are beginning to wither and fall onto the ground that has been cooling off and cooling off, thickening itself for winter. The smells of rosemary and mint weave in and around sleepy air – softening and calming the day like a grandma’s touch. Shadows lengthen. Navy blue nights come sooner. Fall is like a mom tucking in her creations for a long nap, preparing them all for new growth.

OLLl’s “Inspired Writing” classes are sponsored by the



THE OLLI CONNECTION | OSHER National Resource Center

124 Osher Institutes 339 cities/towns 131,067 Members

“Funded by The Bernard Osher Foundation, the National Resource Center for Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes is a non-governing center of excellence, hosted by the School of Professional Studies at Northwestern University, benefiting older adults, through the national network of 124 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs).”
<https://sps.northwestern.edu/oshernrc/>

The Osher NRC’s mission is to help Osher Institutes thrive by:

- connecting ● collaborating
- consulting ● celebrating



Bernard Osher (center) with a breakout group at the 2025 Osher NRC National Conference.

2025-2026 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 552 or more

Moving into Spring... EACH ONE. REACH ONE.

Back to membership recovery. We have settled into Memorial Gym and are enjoying the benefits of the location. The required membership based on our endowment is 500 with a 5% annual increase. OOPS...we landed at 441 last year.

Bring a friend or relative on board. Give the Gift of OLLI.

OLLI at UTEP is honored to be one of 43 OLLIs selected for the NRC’s OSHER ONLINE national program.

New opportunities await. Be sure to register! www.utep.edu/olli.

Expand your world of learning!

Osher Online is a benefit to OLLI Members.

13 seats per course are set aside for each OLLI.

Osher Online

in collaboration with Northwestern University
School of Professional Studies

OSHER ONLINE WINTER | January – February 2026

22 offers in topics that span history, health, culture, music, movies and more.

These courses are offered during our winter break. Tap into one or more of these courses.

Keep feeding your curiosity.

OSHER ONLINE SPRING | March – May 2026

17 offers during our spring sessions.

Ghosts, popes, architecture, comic books, music, culture, the brain and more.

Osher Online Courses are 6 weeks long. Classes are 90 minutes on Zoom at various times that complement OLLI schedules.

Course fees apply.

OLLI members say...

“Courses are taught by experts that talk on given subjects and they are not prone to speculation or personal desires. I highly recommend these courses to anyone who pursues a deeper level of knowledge.” Andy Mendoza, OLLI Member

THE OLLI CONNECTION | Nonprofit Community Partners

Expanded Space and Classroom Accessibility



"We are the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation. El Paso's largest cancer support community. Every day, we anticipate and meet the needs of patients and caregivers facing EVERY type of cancer, at EVERY age and at EVERY stage in their journeys. Here, learn about the many ways that we promote education, awareness, early detection, healthy living, quality of life and financial and material support in our area."

Sponsored OLLI classes: *Chair Yoga, Inspired Writing, Healthy Cooking Classes*

Classroom host for: *Folk Guitar/Folk Music Club, Crochet/Knitting Therapy, Inspired Writing, and Memoirs classes.*

Location: 616 N. Virginia, El Paso, TX 79902 (915) 562-7660 www.rgcf.org



Deliciousness at This Sponsor's Location and Jackie Cordova's Healthy Cooking Classes.

"Desert Spoon Food Hub was established in 2015 with a mission to build a more local and inclusive food system. The organization serves a crucial, but often invisible, part of the local food system acting as a facilitator by our values-based approach to ensure all entities along the supply chain, from farmers and farmworkers to consumers, benefit from our food systems model."

Location: 1714 Yandell, El Paso, TX 79902 (915) 219-8900 www.desertspoonfoodhub.org

El Paso Opera's *From Concept to Curtain: The Making of Puccini's La bohème*

Fall's Progressive class took OLLI members to more El Paso locations offering amazing insights into the production of Puccini's *La bohème*, starting with ideas for the creative process and leading up to the opera brought to life. Participants will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the opera and can look forward to the actual early February production of this famous opera.

Coming to OLLI again in the Spring



OLLI members learned about container gardening in Summer 2025. Angelee "Gigi" Shamaley Ph.D., Family & Community Health Agent of the AgriLife Extension in El Paso County returns to give us ... *a Taste for Reducing Food Waste* in a 4-week Spring course. 301 Manny Martinez Sr. Dr. 2nd floor | El Paso, TX 79905
ph: 915.273.3502 | angelee.shamaley@ag.tamu.edu

Location: 1714 Yandell, El Paso, TX 79902 (915) 219-8900 www.desertspoonfoodhub.org

Our OLLI **GRATEFULLY** received monetary gifts of support from the community. The Paso Del Norte's *El Paso Giving Day* is an annual event supporting non-profit organizations. More than 260 organizations participated on October 16, 2025, including our OLLI.

THANK YOU!

OLLI VOLUNTEERS | Team Support

OLLI Volunteers participated in many events and projects that continue to benefit OLLI members and contribute to the sustainability and growth of OLLI's programming and membership.

The most important part of the team... Volunteers

Grazie Mille . Gracias . Merci beaucoup . Thank you

15% of our OLLI membership sign on as volunteers.

Volunteers are the impactful internal and external network of our community.

ADMINISTRATION

*Office Support Team
Aceware Team
Special Task Team
Registration/Events
Lounge Hosting
Classroom Hosting*

*6 OLLI Members have credentials and training in our Aceware system.
9 OLLI members make up the general office support team.
7 OLLI members currently serve on the Coordination Council
8+ OLLI Members serve as class hosts and/or attendance takers.
58+ OLLI Members distribute catalogs, set-up and manage fairs, and more.
1+ OLLI was fortunate to have volunteer UTEP students in Fall 2025.*

COMMITTEES

*Membership
Community Advocacy
Volunteer Coordination
Marketing
Curriculum
Technology
Finance*

Committee members are hands that help to create awareness recognition, programming and partnerships for OLLI.

Join a committee or the OLLI Coordination Council.
Share your ideas. Be part of an OLLI brain trust to explore or create opportunities.

INSTRUCTORS & GUEST SPEAKERS

We appreciate ALL of our instructors for the quality they add to our programming. 40% of our OLLI's curriculum is supported by volunteer instructors and guest speakers assisting us to keep our program affordable, diverse and engaging.

EXTENDED UNIVERSITY TEAMS

Special Acknowledgments

It takes more than an OLLI village to create our successes. It's the additional support of our UTEP community that helps us all to thrive.

UTEP is our host and Extended University is our umbrella.

*EU Leadership Team
EU Business Center
EU Marketing Team
P3 (Professional & Public Programs)
Center for Instructional Design
UTEP Online (formerly UTEP Connect)*

*Communication/Oversight
EU Accounting, Tech, Compliance
Catalogs and Promotions
P3: OLLI's non-credit cousin & neighbor
CID: Team support to OLLI
For-credit online education*



The OLLI QR Code takes you to the OLLI website.

OLLI MEMBERS | Generosity and Support

OLLI relies on the Osher Endowment, Membership Fees, Registration Fees and the generous donations and sponsorships from the OLLI/UTEP community, the community at large and partnerships.

\$ 4464 : Individual Donations and Gifts
\$ 3,625: Sponsorships (*Rio Grande Cancer Foundation*)
\$ 1920 : Paso Del Norte's El Paso Giving Day
\$ TBD: UTEP Raise Your Pick Giving Campaign 2026

\$ 10,009 TOTAL (November 2025)

**OLLI Members support UTEP Students
...recognizing food and housing
insecurities.**

FOOD PANTRY

Founded in 2014, the UTEP Food Pantry provides support and assistance to UTEP students experiencing food insecurity.



Food and housing Insecurity are concerns in the UTEP student population. The El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank supports UTEP students with a weekly mobile pantry in collaboration with the UTEP Food Pantry. However, recent changes in funding and rising food prices have affected the flow of supplies to the UTEP Food Pantry. The Pantry serves approximately 200 students per month.

FHAR Mission:

To connect foster, homeless and adopted individuals through education and advocacy with resources that will assist holistically with their UTEP experience.



Omar Cano, UTEP Food Pantry Supervisor, shares his thoughts.

“Now, more than ever, we need to help each other out, extend a helping hand, and support our students. Fortunately, we are reaching more students. Yet, this means we need more donations and support. Your generosity is always gratefully received.”

The UTEP FOOD Pantry is located just around the corner from the OLLI Lounge.

COLLECTION AREAS are in the OLLI lounge for ongoing support.

PLUS

The teachers of the Mu Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma collaborate with OLLI and contribute monthly to the UTEP Food Pantry throughout the academic year. “Teachers for Students”. The Mu Kappa chapter will donate 75 Christmas stockings filled with toiletries for students registered with FHAR.

We're off to a good start!
As of November 1, 2025
(academic year 2025-2026)
53 direct individual donations
Plus Giving Day & Sponsorship
\$10,009
(43% of last year's total)

Last year's 2024-2025 total:
\$23,023
142 individual donations

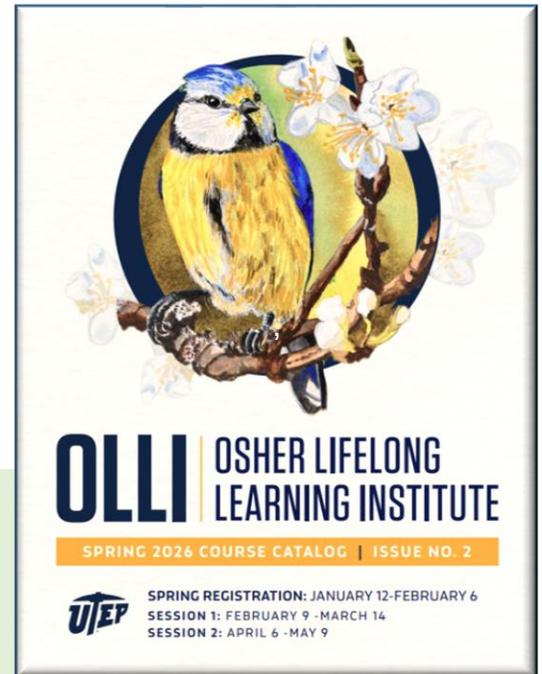
Your generosity and support enables OLLI to maintain quality programing and services to Members.
Thank you!

“Spring Bird”

Catalog front cover adapted from a watercolor painting by OLLI Member, Michael Faulkner.

Thinking SPRING 2026

- NEW! The **Mahjong Club** incubated during the Fall term and off to splendid mornings of clicking tiles and gaming enjoyment.
- El Paso **History Tours: El Paso’s Historic Districts**
- **Unique Lecture Series** to feed your curiosity:
 - *Times of Historical Significance*
 - *Reshaping Health and Wellness*
 - *Life: Taking Charge*
- **OLLI Movie Afternoons** with popcorn and good company
- **OSHER ONLINE** Winter and Spring Courses
- **The OLLI Cookbook Committee.** Tasty meetings. inspired recipes.



Catch the Dates!

November 14 | Osher Online Winter Registration opens

November 17-28 | Thanksgiving Break
Two-week break.

December 16 | 11AM-1PM | The OLLI ANNUAL LUNCHEON
Good people. Good food. Good time.

December 22 -January 6 | Winter Break
OLLI office is closed during this break.

January 12 | Spring Registration Opens ONLINE

January 14 | Spring Registration Event
Open in-person spring registration. Meet up with friends.
Enjoy your coffee or tea and snack.

January 28 | Zoom-in Practice with Fun
Registered students - Online

February 9 | Spring Session One Begins

March 16-April 4 | 3-week Spring Break

April 6 | Spring Session Two Begins

April 21-22 | UTEP Raise Your Pick Giving Day
Financial Support for OLLI.

Every OLLI term is filled with new courses, lectures, tours and/or activities for enjoyment, intellectual stimulation, and social connectivity.

Our OLLI members are a wealth of information and expertise.

Do you have knowledge that you can share?

We welcome volunteer instructors and guest speakers!

OLLI's intergenerational collaborations have become inspirational for OLLI members, UTEP faculty and students!

FALL 2025 Campus Collaborators



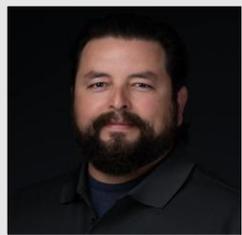
Cecelia Fierro, OTD, OTR
Late Summer Aquatherapy



Soyeon Lee, Ph.D.
UX Co-Learning and Tech Support. Intergenerational Collaboration



James (Jay) Stratton
"My Life Story" Intergenerational Collaboration



Randy Anaya
Gaia Makerspace Tour and Guest Speaker



Cherry Duke
Progressive "From Curtain to Call" Lecture Series with EL Paso Opera



Natalia Villanueva Rosales, Ph.D.
Community Advisory Board on Research Projects

Research Participation

OLLI members participated in UTEP research programs on campus.

- **UX Intergenerational Surveys** w/ Soyeon Lee
- **Smart Social Connector** w/ Natalia Villanueva Rosales
- **Additional study** w/ Natalia Villanueva Rosales' Team

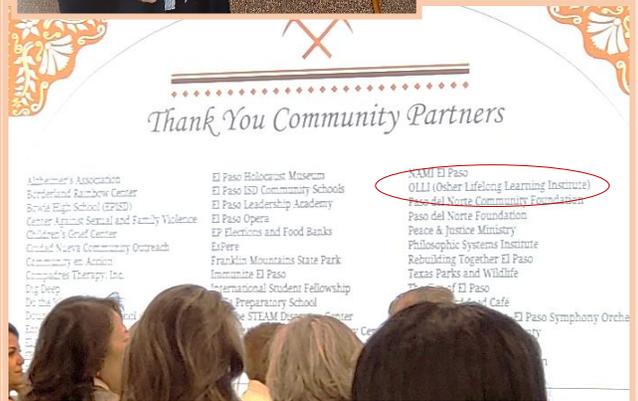
"It was a valuable experience to work in the intergenerational technology project and experience the connection with the students to contribute to what would certainly be a valuable outcome of their work. They will be the designers of the future for us."

Alfredo Arroyo, OLLI Member

The Importance of Community



OLLI and UTEP 2025



The Sport of Living

by Lynn Provenzano

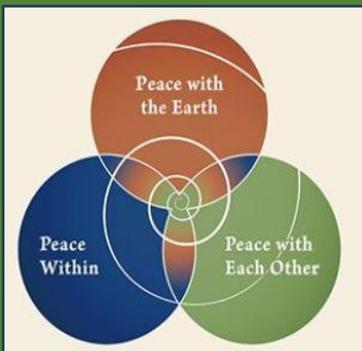
Winding down in 2025 gives us a pause for reflection. It's been a year of amazing transition for our OLLI at UTEP. We'll end the year with a firm footing in our Memorial Gym OLLI Lounge and Office with classroom space and new neighbors.

The pairing of our OLLI with Memorial Gym has been a bit of an enigma. We associate this building with our university's definition of sports. And so, it has been. We've cheered on the Women's Volleyball Team and weathered the many other sports events and graduations in the building. On the academic side, we've nodded to kinesiology students, who study the mechanics of body movements, in the hallways.

Let's not discount the OLLI population. *We are pros at the sport of living.* OLLI members have had wins and losses along their ways to this very moment. Our opponents may not have been wearing team jerseys but have crossed our paths in many admirable or less pleasant ways. We've strategized and struggled to gain points in our careers, finances, living situations and families. We've faced our challenges with the grief of losses, the joys of small and large successes, the grit of resolve, and memorable joyful moments. Academia is a bonus for us now. Participants in our OLLI fitness and fun programs (and pickleball!) are a testament to the positivity in the science of body movements as we age.

Apparently, UTEP's Memorial Gym is a good space for our Institute. We can add the sport of living to the roster of team sports that we cheer on. We are in the major leagues of an older community, and our OLLI makes for good team spirit. Go Miners! Go OLLI!

International Peace Day Symposium



Our OLLI participated, once again, in the International Peace Day Symposium on September 20-21, 2025 held at the UTEP Tomas Rivera Conference Center. We participated with Unity Through Creativity, UTEP's Centennial Museum and many other non-profits in El Paso.

"We hope this video will bring you strength and inspiration at the start of your Season of Peace."
Laurie Marshall, Founder: Unity Through Creativity

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrETvqS_OOU

more at: [International Day of Peace Symposium 2025 - YouTube](#)

Do you need a gift
for someone special?

**Give the Gift
of OLLI**

Easily share
the benefits of OLLI.

**OLLI AMBASSADOR
CARDS**

Carry a few with you and
share in conversations.
Available in the OLLI Office



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

OLLI Ambassador
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Extended University

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www.utep.edu/olli

Fall 2025 Snippits

Fall launches OLLI into a new academic year. It's been busy.

- ❖ **87 offers** in courses, lectures and tours in-person, online and/or hybrid participation. 48% of the Fall curriculum was offered as hybrid which, overall, translated to:
 - 61% in person opportunities
 - 92% online opportunities
- ❖ Fall 2025 was the first full term utilizing classrooms and **space in Memorial Gym** fully enjoying our versatile OLLI lounge, refreshments and conversations before and after classes.
- ❖ **OLLI name badges** were issued to all OLLI members serving as identification when in Memorial Gym and in emergency situations.
- ❖ The **OLLI Pickleball Club** showed their support with an event to support the **UTEP Food Pantry** and a committee to create an OLLI cookbook.
- ❖ The **Walkercise** groups are still clocking steps, averaging 2 miles on Tuesday and Friday mornings. That's an average of 24 miles or 60,000 steps on campus in the fall term.
- ❖ **Parking accessibility** with an SB7 Green Parking tag for remote lots was expanded to all green remote lots along Sun Bowl Drive providing **walking convenience** to Memorial Gym.
- ❖ Fall launched two **new clubs**: Junk Journaling and Mahjong.
- ❖ **OLLI Volunteers** have continued to be the backbone of administrative and classroom support. *Thank you!*
- ❖ **Work-study student, Sharlyn Guevara** celebrated a one-year anniversary with our OLLI in November. OLLI welcomed our second **work-study student, Juan Vasquez-Delgado**, this November as well.
- ❖ OLLI volunteers collected more than 100 new names and addresses for persons who showed interest at fairs and expos. This helps us to make our 4700 **catalog distribution** list more lucrative. 800 catalogs were distributed locally by OLLI volunteers.
- ❖ This is the fourth year OLLI participated in the **El Paso Giving Day** (October 2025). Plans are already in place for **UTEP's Raise Your Pick** (April 2026) fundraising campaign.
- ❖ The contagious enthusiasm of the **UTEP Women's Volleyball Team** (and OLLI fans) has rolled into neighborly relationships in Memorial Gym. The girls are having a good year! Go Miners!
- ❖ OLLI collaborates with the **Mu Kappa** chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG) Society International. DKG promotes the professional & personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. Mu Kappa members donate food supplies monthly to the UTEP Food Pantry (teachers supporting students) coupled with OLLI members' consistent donations to help **reduce food insecurity among UTEP students**.
- ❖ **Steve Thaxton, Executive Director of the Osher National Resource Center** (NRC), visited our OLLI for the first time and left with a positive impression of our caring community of members, curriculum and campus.

Curiosity and Learning Never Get Old!
OLLI | OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

OUR VISION

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Texas at El Paso aspires to be a premier membership organization for adults over the age of fifty (50) in an aging demographic through continuing education and social integration - with an expanded reach - to positively enhance mature adult lives in the El Paso Border Region.

OUR MISSION

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) provides opportunities under the umbrella of the University of Texas at El Paso to enhance the enjoyment, meaning, and direction of all adults over the age of fifty (50); to stay connected; and to support their good health and wellness in an aging community through diverse course offerings in continuing education, social activities, volunteerism, intergenerational experiences, and any other special services.

Notes from the Coordination Council Members

HELEN SCHMID, Council Chair, Membership and Community Advocacy Chair



“The-other day while I was driving down Mesa Street, I thought what would my afternoons be like if I hadn’t heard of OLLI. 9 years ago, someone mentioned it to me and I decided to register. That first year I enrolled in one class to check it out. Since that first semester, I have spent my afternoons in classes. I have learned so much in so many subjects. Never knew learning was so much fun. The best part of OLLI for me has been the wonderful people I have met and befriended. I am truly blessed. I chose to be more involved by serving on the council the last three years.

You know- the more you give, the more you receive. I am very proud of the OLLI program. It takes a lot of work to keep it going...Thanks to everyone that gives of their time and cares about OLLI. You are appreciated. Enjoy your holidays, take care, be safe and see you at registration “

Fall Membership Committee: Susie Bissell-Currey, Beth Ford, Mary Harris, Susan Sobin, Devon Wall, Michael Faulkner, and Helen Schmid (chair)

Ad hoc participants: Maggie Jackson, Elizabeth Farrelly, Manuel Dieguez, Sylvia Price, Ben Avalos and Karen Fraser.

RAMONA (MONA) MARSLENDER, Secretary



“Now that I am recording secretary for the OLLI Coordination Council, I have discovered that there is a lot to learn. All of the council members speak at once and it seems like they are speaking a foreign language. There are lots of moving parts to putting OLLI activities, classes and catalog together. It is great when it all comes together! Thanks for your support and warm welcome. I promise to do my best.”

JOHN SCHMID, Finance Chair



“Once I became Financial Oversight member of our OLLI council, I learned that the most important aspect of our OLLI program’s success is our members. Each of you make our OLLI program successful by participating in classes, clubs, and your financial gifts. It is essential that our membership increases each year for the survival of our OLLI program. Please continue inviting your friends to join and participate. Financially, we are in the black, and we need to keep it that way.”

MELANIE THOMAS, Technology Chair



“I’ve been an OLLI volunteer for a year now and has really enjoyed helping out and meeting new people. From tours to Junk Journalling, hosting classes on Zoom, and dancing, I have found a great way to spend retirement. May 2026 will bring more fun and travel as I will be welcoming a grandbaby into the family! In my spare time, I help church seniors get to doctor appointments, sing in the choir, and lunch with my Red Hat ladies' group. All of my activities go to prove that retirement can be fun and far from boring!”

ELIZABETH (BETH) FORD, Committee Liaison



“I have enjoyed greater involvement with OLLI leadership. Spending one afternoon a week volunteering in the office, I have met members I had not known previously.”

Beth supports OLLI committees as part of the brainstorming in projects and activities, especially with the Marketing and Curriculum Committees.

KAREN FRASER, Volunteer Coordination, Ex-officio Advisor



“As I reflect on the past few months with OLLI, I am especially proud of all of the volunteers who have helped maintain the OLLI office, work on special projects, communicate with others in our community and quietly do small things that enrich us. We have accomplished much. So, thank you, volunteers for your continued support.

“I am leaving OLLI leadership but hope to see you in class.

“With warm regards.”

Karen Fraser

Fall Volunteer Committee Members: Liz Highsmith, Irene Medina, Andy Mendoza, Don Smelser, Donna Jerman, Leanne von Mittenwald (ad hoc), and Karen Fraser (chair)

SONYA VILLA-SAENZ, Extended University Advisor



“It’s a new academic year and OLLI has come a long way to keep OLLI healthy so members can stay engaged and enjoy the program. OLLI is part of the Extended University family, so let’s continue to work together to meet our goals. We love OLLI!”

You can make a difference!

The OLLI Coordination Council was formerly known as the OLLI Advisory Board. The name changed to further address the many needs of this institute, offer oversight, support the OLLI mission, and to kindle relationships within UTEP and the community. This volunteerism is vital to our OLLI.

Be a special part of OLLI’s successes. Become a council or committee member.

Contact Helen Schmid. herschmid@utep.edu

Highlights | OLLI COORDINATION COUNCIL

LYNN PROVENZANO, Executive Director, Marketing & Curriculum Chairs...and notes



We'll be settling into new routines now that we've settled into Memorial Gym with some solid months behind us. We've developed positive relationships with our neighbors, Extended University's P3 Team, the UTEP Food Pantry and the UTEP Girls Volleyball Team.

The curriculum for Spring 2026 is reflected in the upcoming catalog, and we are already brainstorming for Summer 2026 along with searching for volunteer instructors and new engaging topics.

Our most valuable marketing is through our OLLI members and the ongoing *Each One Reach One* campaign. Our membership growth has been fueled by member referrals. *Thank you!* Next, in our marketing efforts, is the OLLI catalog. This is one of our biggest expenses. Yet, it continues to be a marketing tool that our OLLI members love, share and promote. OLLI exposure at fairs, expos, and campus tabling have been successful in gaining recognition for OLLI in the community. Thanks to Helen Schmid and Karen Fraser and their teams of volunteers that have made these events successful with interpersonal interactions.

On a financial note... We ended the 2024-2025 academic year in the best financial standing that we have had in the last five years. It's been a long and challenging journey controlling expenses, relying on volunteers, fundraising, and seeking creative ways to offset the rising costs of printing, postage and more. Memberships and registrations are most important in our OLLI's sustainability, and we need to fulfill our endowment obligations of 500 or more members with 5% growth year over year. The additional financial support that comes from individual donations keep us thriving and supports growth. Landing last year in good standing afforded us the opportunity to bring another work study student on board. Be sure to welcome Juan Vasquez-Delgado to the OLLI Team and say thank you to Sharlyn Guevara, who has proven herself to be a valuable work-study student and team member. We need to stay on solid standing. Let's stay the course and continue to build successes together.

Marketing Committee: Mary Ann Snider, Monica Gomez, Beth Ford and Lynn Provenzano (chair)

Curriculum Committee: Marie Livingston, Ruth Bassett, Leanne von Mittenwald, Linda Shubeck, Bob Warach, and Lynn Provenzano (chair)

Highlights | ON THE PLATE

Here is a quick look at what was on the office plate for Fall.

The OLLI staff and volunteers have been steadily working to keep OLLI strong, efficient and visible in the community.

Ongoing

- Membership Growth: 552 and more
- Fall Registrations and Attendance
- Member Inquiries and Services
- Course and Instructor Communications
- Class Hosting and Troubleshooting
- Aceware Trainings and Data Entry
- Compliance/Administrative Responsibilities
- Administrative and Security Trainings
- Zoom Oversight
- Ambassador Speaking Engagements
- Spring/Summer Curriculum/Catalog Development

Special Projects

- UTEP Research Project Coordination
- UTEP Intergenerational Coordination
- El Paso Giving Day
- UTEP Homecoming 2025!
- Fall Master Calendar Updates
- Spring Course/Lecture Proposals
- Instructor/Guest Speaker Recruitment
- OLLI/UTEP Collaborative Projects
- Aging to Perfection Expo
- OLLI Annual Holiday Luncheon

UPDATES:

Master Calendars of classes and links have updated passcodes. Contact the OLLI office at the main number: 915-747-6280

Classrooms in Memorial Gym

Our office/lounge in Memorial Gym affords us the opportunity to hold most classes in the same building.



Tap into clubs and special interest groups.

Join OLLI members in the Daily Stretch and catch a few moments in the Virtual Lounge.

Stay connected and meet with old and new friends.

Membership has its benefits!

Receive weekly bulletins to stay connected and share your photos and stories.

Get invited to special events.

Be eligible to register for OLLI's unique courses. (Registration fees apply.)



Order through the OLLI office:
 ddieguez@utep.edu 915-747-6280
 Credit or Debit Cards



Do you need a gift for someone special?

Give the Gift of OLLI

Gift an OLLI Membership introducing your someone special to the Spring and Summer semesters.

Your gift will be mailed with a holiday certificate, your special message, the OLLI catalog, and an OLLI pen.

Annual Membership is \$55 and is good until August 31, 2026.

