Ups, Downs, Sideways

It’s been a year since we went into pandemic lockdown. We had uncertainty before us and only the guidance of our first steps to lead us into new dynamics. Our mission at OLLI became “to stay connected, stay engaged, stay safe, and be well”. Now, we are Zooming into classes with many old and new members discovering the silver linings that have come with learning, exploration, and a commitment from an OLLI community to be positive and succeed. We miss those that we have lost to a virus that we do not understand. Yet, we do understand that in the ups, downs, and sideways turns of this past year, our new normal is simply our mission. We can see a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Let’s see what it shines on.

In the meantime,

... we have Advisory Board members in new positions with a few words to share.

I have always believed that one of the greatest perks of teaching is that teachers never stop learning. We learn from the students, from other teachers, and from our research - pushing our brains, questioning ourselves, and developing new ideas.

OLLI has provided these opportunities and so much more. I am an OLLI student who can’t wait for the catalog to arrive so I can choose new experiences. I am an OLLI instructor who loves the discussions with friends and the excitement of teaching. And now, I am an OLLI board member who has a better understanding of all it takes to make this amazing program run effectively and efficiently.

Thank you to all who contribute to the Wonderful World of OLLI!

Leanne von Mittenwald
Advisory Board, Chair

I have not taught an OLLI class but value the presentations of all whose classes I have attended for about four years. My favorites are the classes on movies, El Paso history, music, and law enforcement. I moved here as a rigid conservative but have attended several classes to learn other perspectives and raise my insight into social/political issues that I had not fully appreciated or thought about.

OLLI has been good for me. Serving on OLLI’s Board is a way of giving back.

Karen Fraser
Advisory Board, Vice-chair

OLLI is a second opportunity to enjoy the university learning experience with friends and new acquaintances all over again.

Tito Martinez
Advisory Board, Finance
Getting to know you …

A CONVERSATION WITH MONICA GOMEZ

I’ve known Monica Gomez for many years. Monica has made her mark in the community as a quiet pillar of inspiration, commitment, and caring… with an uncanny sense of humor and some occasional humming. It comes as no surprise that, in our committee meetings and in her classes, she makes us laugh. Yet, the serious and creative sides of Monica are what make her unique, respected and more than a pleasure to know.

Lynn Provenzano

You are a master of many talents. Many of us remember you from your days in television. However today, we know you as a radio host and fundraiser, musician, author, tai chi instructor, wellness teacher, professional development coach, and an active member of the community. What do you do in your spare time?

Monica: I’m editing my poetry to publish a series of books starting with *Prayer Flags 2019-2020* then *Aging in Eden 2017-2018* and working backwards, two years per book. Hope to have the first book out later this year.

Of all of your talents and endeavors, which are you most passionate about?

Monica: Words. We all have a responsibility to realize the power of our words to shape our own lives and the world.

Tell us about your book, *Expressercize* and the idea behind it?

Monica: *Expressercize: Write Answers* is a creative writing workbook that evolved over years of designing and presenting workshops for diverse populations. The 100-plus exercises explore universal life issues, such as managing stress, understanding creativity and the relevance of art, writing to express the unconscious and guide conscious growth. To eliminate barriers to comprehension, the book uses clear, accessible language with definitions of key words and phrases. It can be used by individuals or as a teacher’s guide.

You are an OLLI instructor, an OLLI member, and a volunteer in OLLI’s Marketing Committee. How did you find your way into OLLI?

Monica: A few years ago, through the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation, I designed a series of six workshops titled *Wellness from Within* to address coping with major life challenges by maintaining overall mental, physical and emotional health. The Foundation and OLLI teamed up to allow me to present the workshop series to OLLI students just in time for the pandemic to drive us all onto Zoom. I consider myself so blessed to have become part of the OLLI program at this point in time! Had it not been for the amazing efforts of the OLLI staff to make Zoom classes a reality, I would have been unable to continue teaching. Engaging with people over worthwhile topics keeps me balanced and fulfilled, so I’m profoundly grateful to OLLI and the RGCF for finding a way to keep us all connected!
A CONVERSATION WITH PATTY TISCARENO
RGCF Executive Director

There are many aspects to your career, one of which is music. How has music carried you through your life choices?

Patty: My 50-year career has been largely left brain focused in the analytical worlds of banking and non-profit management. Having been blessed with the gift of voice from a very early age, singing has always been the compliment or even the escape from that left hemisphere. There are so many skills I have honed from having had the benefit of being on stage. I attribute confidence in public speaking to having been a performer. I have a deeper appreciation of cultural differences because of having delved into various musical styles. The creativity and self-discipline of being in a music ensemble have helped me develop work campaigns, recruit board members and inspire a staff toward working collectively as a team.

I had the opportunity in 2019 to be the Professional in Residence for a UTEP English Department grant with a purpose to inspire students toward a Humanities degree. I shared with that audience that the skillset musicians and right-brain thinkers can bring to an employer are imperative for success in the workplace - adaptability, perseverance, memory and concentration, and communication. I believe my career would have taken a very different path without the inclusion of music in my everyday world.

What brought you to the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation?

Patty: Like so many of us, luck and divine intervention brought me to the Foundation. I was recruited out of the world of banking into non-profit by a client from the El Paso Cancer Treatment Center. When, in 1996, the EPCTC was sold, I was chosen by the board to transition those sale proceeds into a cancer foundation. Since that time, we have positively impacted the community with over $15 million dollars in support for helping people with, through and beyond a cancer diagnosis.
A CONVERSATION WITH PATTY TISCARENO (continued)

How do you view your role in the community?

Patty: The Rio Grande Cancer Foundation belongs to the community. We are a public charity, and the programs and services we provide cannot exist without the support of our partners and patrons in El Paso County. Cancer does not recognize race, color, creed, beliefs, or financial status; it doesn’t discriminate. In order for RGCF to give our patrons the best support possible, we’ve forged strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies and other charities.

How has RGCF weathered the pandemic and its reach to patrons and the community at large?

Patty: Like so many of our local non-profits, RGCF has been adversely affected by the pandemic, largely because the population we serve has been one of the most vulnerable. The inability to serve people in person with classes, products and support group is something we continue to explore and overcome. We are hopeful and await a return to a time when we can widely reopen our doors.

OLLI is grateful for RGCF’s partnership and support. What would you like OLLI members to know about RGCF?

Patty: RGCF is so appreciative of the support from our OLLI friends. Your professional platform, fabulous instructors and easy access to online learning has helped us continue to reach an audience which might otherwise be neglected. As I approach retirement at the end of this year, it is with excitement about another chapter of life. One which will include OLLI and all it has to offer!

OLLI- UTEP FACEBOOK

Do you follow any social media? Check out OLLI’s Facebook page. You just might find something that interests you, catch photos of some old friends, or find a few memorable moments hidden among the posts.

SUMMER 2021 CATALOG

Summer 2021 courses will continue online with new courses. The catalog is in production now and will launch in early May.

✦ Registration: May 10th through May 28th online or via mail.
✦ Summer 6-week session: June 7th - July 16th.
✦ The full summer catalog will only be available online. Go to www.utep.edu.oll
✦ Watch for registration forms in the mail.

The summer catalog cover features OLLI member Beatriz Molinar’s Mi Magnolia
Taking on New Roles

Behind the Advisory Board Member

Leanne von Mittenwald, Chair

Leanne Weidner von Mittenwald was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. The oldest of four, she found her love of teaching at an early age - writing, performing, and directing plays with her siblings and cousins. She graduated from Coronado in 1971, received a Drama degree from UT-Austin in 1975 and a degree from Scuola Montessoriani in Bergamo, Italy in 1977. For over thirty-five years, she taught children of all ages in all subjects, making sure that Speech, Drama, and Film was an integral part of the curriculum. After retiring in 2013, she joined the OLLI program as a student, then an instructor, and later as a board member. She hopes to continue teaching and learning from the students, faculty and staff who add their abundance of knowledge to every OLLI experience!

Karen Fraser, Vice-chair

Karen was born in Lincoln, Nebraska and moved to Illinois for grade school, high school, nursing school and college. She is a Retired Registered Nurse with a BS (for Nursing) from Millikin University, Decatur, IL and a MA in Health Services Administration, University of IL Springfield. She worked in clinical nursing, as a floor nurse for about eight years and then transferred into hospital education, nursing informatics for 17 years before retirement, as a clinical systems analyst, Information Technology, Huntsville Hospital Systems, Huntsville, Alabama. She moved to El Paso in September 2012 to be near her daughter, son-in-law and three grandchildren, and continued to work remotely for Huntsville Hospital for another year to finalize a 10-year project converting physician personal order sets to fewer physician-collaborative medical and surgical departmental order sets. The dry Southwest environment was a struggle for Karen to accept. Yet she sees now that El Paso has its own beauty and enjoys nurturing the flowers she has added to her own landscaping. Her daughter and son-in-law are in the music department at UTEP so she has attended a number of their concert offerings. She likes theater, both musical and other, reading fiction, and while more confined to home right now, cooking and baking. This past year she joined the Board of the El Paso Society for Musicians of the Future (EPSMF) and has met several very talented young persons. Karen has enjoyed working with and for others. OLLI allows her to continue with that goal.

Tito Martinez, Finance

Tito is a homegrown native El Pasoan and UTEP alumni. He attended several colleges and universities. After starting his career in Colorado, he returned home to work with the Council of Governments and the school district. As a new Board Member, he brings administrative and financial experience that will, hopefully, enhance the OLLI Program.
If you have seen one OLLI, you have seen one OLLI.

Each of the 124 OLLIs across the nation is unique with its own advisory board, structure, committees, and relationship with its university. The National Resource Center gives amazing support to the OLLI network and facilitates the Basecamp platform to communicate with each other. OLLI directors participate in this open communication forum to share ideas, share resources, and support each other in the same and/or unique challenges in these interesting times. This is how courses and lectures have been shared among OLLIs. Many of you have enjoyed these offers. Anyone registered in a current OLLI term can participate in the shared courses and lectures. Watch for announcements regarding these opportunities.

Again. Special thanks to...

Steve Thaxton. Kevin Connaughton, and Stacy Hart Rivera.

YOUR GIFTS COUNT

OLLI @ UTEP is funded by an endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation along with annual membership and registration fees. Individual donations and support for fundraisers are keys to the growth and sustainability of a quality program. Donations are tax deductible. Please consider including a donation when you register each term.

Heartfelt thanks to OLLI members who have generously given financial support.

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

You’ve been busy!

Roles have changed. Your skills, time, and caring are even more valuable to our OLLI community.

Your accomplishments are appreciated and commended:

- “Stay Connected” Phone Calls
- Phone Marathons for CV-19 Vaccine Opportunities
- Class Hosts
- Class Attendance Takers
- Impromptu Technical Support in Classes
- Discussion Group/Club Facilitators
- Volunteer Instructors
- Board & Committee Members
- Catalog Distribution
- Testimonials
- Media and Social Media Contacts
- Curriculum Development

Thanks! You make the difference in the success of our OLLI program!
Chair Report  *Leanne von Mittenwald*

2020 was a most unusual year for all of us. 2021 has been an experience in the power of positive thinking and group dynamics as we continue to find ways to make OLLI as relevant and as meaningful to the community we serve.

Each board member and committee member bring new ideas and enthusiasm for the ideas of others to share, discuss, and implement. We work together to recruit new members and encourage current members to participate as students, instructors, volunteers, and committee members. We welcome your participation and communication on any and all issues as we move through this year together.

Please make sure you read the reports of the board chairs to get a glimpse of what they do to ensure that our OLLI program remains a vital part of the community.

Advisory Board members:

Karen Fraser, vice-chair/volunteers; Marianela Milner, secretary; Tito Martinez, finance chair; Mary Harris, membership chair; Shari Schwartz, publicity chair, Mark Pumphrey, marketing chair; Carolyn Awalt, speakers bureau; Janet Dand, past chair/advisor; Sonya-Villa Saenz, EU advisor; Lynn Provenzano, executive director/interim curriculum chair.

Vice Chair/Volunteer Associate Chair Report  *Karen Fraser*

“During the past four and one half (4 ½) months, I have had the privilege of working with a dedicated group of sixty (60) volunteers. We have accomplished much, as acknowledged in our thank you to them in this OLLI newsletter, and want to continue all of those efforts including “staying connected” calls to all members before the Summer 2021 session begins.

New volunteer members are always needed for calling other members, hosting classes, taking class attendance, and helping provide technical support as needed. We welcome your support and hope you will join our admirable volunteer team. 915-472-3410.”

Finance Chair Report  *Tito Martinez*

The Finance Committee met to assess the financial status of the OLLI Program. It was decided that more and new grants would be solicited, and we will undertake a major campaign to attract more students. The success of both initiatives will allow a greater number of course offerings and other program projects. Budgets for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 are under review.

*The OLLI Finance Committee: Tito Martinez, Sonya Villa-Saenz, Lynn Provenzano*

Publicity Chair Report  *Shari Schwartz*

The publicity committee continued to promote the spring classes through all media outlets including radio, television, public service announcements, and catalog distribution. The UTEP Communications department had a story about the two spring sessions of OLLI classes. *Coronado Living* magazine printed a special story for the second session.
Curriculum Chair Report  
Lynn Provenzano

The focus of the curriculum committee has been on pulling the Summer Program together. Thanks to the efforts of each of the committee members and several other OLLI members! An amazing number of contacts and resources were pooled together to put a variety of interesting courses and lectures together. Summer 2021 will feature thirty-five opportunities to tap into weekly Zoom classrooms. You will see some of your favorite instructors and some returning friends of OLLI. Each of the lecture series has a broad scope of informative talks. Courses will have different lengths so you can fit more into your summer schedules. The Curriculum Committee meets monthly. The Fall 2021 term is next on the agenda.

Note: The Speakers Bureau has been integrated into the Curriculum Committee.

The OLLI Curriculum Committee:
Lynn Provenzano, Carolyn Awalt, Ruth Bassett, Janet Dand, Servando Hernandez, Suzanne Hunter, Marie Livingston, Leanne von Mittenwald, Ian Wilson

Membership Chair Report  
Mary Harris

“We initially met December 2019 twice and once a month since then. We have successfully distributed hundreds of OLLI Spring catalogs to various outlets in all areas of El Paso and Southern New Mexico. In addition, members have reached out online to Senior Resident outlets and various community organizations. Successful efforts resulted in exposure to on-air radio announcements and a multitude of community publications. We have done this on our own in collaboration with the Publicity and Marketing entities of OLLI@UTEP.”

The OLLI Membership Committee: Mary Harris, Karen Fraser, Waynene Spradlin, Sue Sobin, Oscar Estrada, Betty Kennedy, Jaime Ackerman, Janet Pendygraft.

Events Chair Report  
Leanne von Mittenwald

It has been over a year since we have been able to gather together in the OLLI lounge for our monthly celebrations and events. We miss those gatherings and hope that very soon we will be able to relax and enjoy the company of our OLLI friends! We have plans for another Cinemark Private Screening event as well as more online Zoom events and will let you know the details as soon as possible. In the meantime, if you have any ideas for OLLI events, please let us know.

Marketing Chair Report  
Mark Pumphrey

The OLLI Marketing Committee is engaging Greg Thompson, UTEP Theatre Department and OLLI instructor, as well as UTEP students to conduct video interviews with three OLLI instructors and four OLLI students. These short videos will be used for the marketing of OLLI to prospective students and instructors, and generally to the public. The committee will also be promoting “Each One Reach One” by training all interested OLLI members in an “introduction” on how to join OLLI to non-members one-on-one. The committee is also creating a database of groups for which we will identify speakers from the OLLI membership to schedule formal presentations at meetings of the groups included in the database. The committee meets monthly and new marketing ideas are welcome: send to mpumphrey@att.net.

The OLLI Marketing Committee: Mark Pumphrey, Monica Gomez, Leanne von Mittenwald, Lynn Provenzano
Liaisons: Shari Schwartz (publicity), Karen Fraser (volunteers), Mary Harris (membership)
Executive Director Report  Lynn Provenzano

OLLI staff continues to work remotely with a few hours each week on campus to pick up mail and address necessary administrative functions. Our work-study students continue to only work remotely. Over the past few months, staff has worked closely with EUBC (Extended University Business Center) to onboard paid instructors into the UTEP system as employees and to gain recognition of the OLLI population with regard to the UTEP Covid-19 vaccination program. Daily priorities have centered around course registrations for the Spring Term, class (Zoom) facilitation, support, and follow-up with attendance. The team has had to stay in sync with campus guidelines regarding Covid-testing and, most recently, deal with the network outage. The Summer 2021 catalog production is in progress with the EU marketing team. The Summer program will continue online to support the safety and well-being of OLLI students.

OLLI Administrative Staff: Lily Duenas, Administrative Assistant
Kristian Mancillas, work study intern; German Juarez, work study intern

EU Advisor Report  Sonya Villa-Saenz

The transition of the OLLI Program to Extended University has provided a means to understand the program needs and resources to continue to grow the library of courses to its members. Through the course offerings, the program engages the UTEP community through social interaction, and enriches the university’s research by OLLI members participating in the Golden Age Program. OLLI’s instructors challenge members to understand the cultural forces of today, to interact socially and intellectually with one another, and to live empowered lives within our region which attributes to UTEP’s success.

In the last 3 years there is one overarching constant I have observed…OLLI would not be possible without the generous support of members who give their time to these standing committees: advisory, curriculum, membership, and marketing. Thank you for allowing OLLI to be a part of UTEP!

Thanks ...  
...to all who donated to the UTEP FOOD PANTRY. UTEP students appreciate you.  
...to all who donated to the ADOPT A TEACHER drive. The teachers are very grateful.  
...to all who donated to PIE THE PROFESSOR. Students will receive much needed scholarships.

NEWS and UPDATES

17.6% of OLLI Members Receive Covid-19 Vaccines at UTEP

UTEP invited OLLI members to participate in the Covid-19 vaccination program. OLLI volunteers were able to reach 120 local members (17.6% of the OLLI membership) who still needed vaccines in February and March. Many OLLI members have been able to get appointments elsewhere over the last few months. UTEP has been a helpful support for OLLI members still waiting.

UTEP Network Outage

UTEP experienced campus wide network issues that affected access to email and other campus systems. The outage was reported on March 5th and the Information Resources team has worked continuously on restoring all systems. Faculty, staff, and students have been gaining access to programs as they have been recovered. OLLI gained access to email and some administrative functions. The OLLI catalog can be viewed on the UTEP website. Access to the registration programs is still pending.
FAQ

Many questions arise during an OLLI term. Here are the most frequently asked questions that arise in email or in OLLI classes.

Q: Why are the Zoom links not included with my class reminders?
A: Zoom links are security sensitive and vary per class. The Master Calendar was developed to keep Zoom limited and secure to registered OLLI students. The current software system that OLLI uses to send class reminders does not give us the flexibility to give active Zoom hyperlinks.

Q: When will we be face-to-face again?
A: Uncertain. UTEP is planning on transitioning back to face-to-face slowly through the summer. However, the guidelines for being on campus will depend on the number of Covid-19 cases in our region, CDC guidelines, and hospitalizations. We do not know what classroom space will be available for OLLI. OLLI plans to stay online for the summer and work toward being hybrid in the fall.

Q: Will OLLI members be able to get the Covid-19 vaccine through UTEP?
A: We are working on this. OLLI has reached out to UTEP in an effort to be included in the Covid-19 vaccination program. UTEP is working with CDC and state guidelines and is reliant on the number of vaccines distributed to the university. Thanks to the support of our Provost, we were able to get 120 members vaccinated (that's 17.6% of our local OLLI membership). We will continue to ask for updates from UTEP and reach out to OLLI members who are still seeking vaccinations if an opportunity arises.

Q: Why can’t I have all of the Physical Fitness with Golden Age classes that I signed up for?
A: This program has been specifically designed for OLLI members. One of the requirements of a Golden Age Fitness program is a capacity limit in order to safely manage people in classes. This applied when classes were face-to-face and now on Zoom. Consequently, there is a limit of 24 people per class. The class became so popular that the waitlists were becoming long. A third class was added to accommodate more OLLI students and reduce the waitlists. Unfortunately, many people took advantage of this and registered for all 3 courses which defeated the purpose of adding classes. Moving forward, unless a member pays for the Gap classes, Physical Fitness with Golden Age courses will be limited to one course per student. It is also imperative that registered students attend to get the maximum benefit of the program. Two consecutive unexcused absences will result in removal from the course so the next person on a waitlist can benefit from the program. Indemnification forms must be on file with Golden Age Fitness as well.

Q: How do I register for the clubs?
A: There is no need to register for clubs. Clubs are open to ALL OLLI members. Simply log into Zoom using the club link. This is a membership benefit.

Q: I call (915) 747-6280 during working hours and no one answers. Why?
A: The office staff is still working remotely. Your call will be forwarded to staff email. If there is no message, it will not be returned. In the recent network outage, all emails and phone calls were not available. Check the OLLI weekly bulletin for the alternate Google voice number and updates regarding messaging.

Remember to smile! It makes for a better day.

Each One, Reach One!

It’s working! Let’s continue to grow our OLLI. New members are always welcome. Our numbers are growing. Yet, Fall Renewals are just around the corner. OLLI needs your assistance to sustain our memberships, course registrations, and programming.