A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“Hello” from the Chair:

I hope each of you had a wonderful summer and are now enjoying your fall classes. It certainly was a season for change. The offices and lounge underwent a complete remodel and all look lovely. We must remember to thank UTEP for paying for our refurbished home. In addition to our remodel, we also gained a new lounge area in our former “supply room”! The OLLI Book Discussion Group has already enjoyed meeting in there, and I hope members and other special interest groups will follow suit! It’s almost like meeting in someone’s living room!

On that note, I would like to thank Lynn, Crystal, and the volunteers who helped the remodel become a reality. It required lots of time and effort to box up all the supplies, clean and tidy the office after the arrival of the new furniture, and replace all the supplies to their new home. The work could not have happened without the efforts of all of you who took part.

By now, I know most of you are aware that our ED is full time. We just cannot manage all the changes that OLLI is undergoing with part time staff. We hope to grow our membership and having a capable leader like Lynn to guide us will be important to our future. Unfortunately, Crystal Brown left us this month to take a new position with UTEP. We wish her well, but she will be sorely missed! Her position is also being expanded to full time and we hope to have someone hired in October. In the meantime, our OLLI volunteers are again stepping up to help out in the office. If anyone would like to join the list of volunteers, helping in the office or in any other way, please contact Lynn or myself.

I wish all of you a healthy and happy fall season at OLLI. The Board is planning an annual membership meeting before the end of the year, so look out for more news!

Janet Dand

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

Benjamin Franklin
GREETINGS FROM THE DEAN OF UTEP’S EXTENDED UNIVERSITY

Dear OLLI members,

I’d like to formally welcome you to the Extended University family. Extended University is UTEP’s hub for online and other nontraditional academic programs, professional training and education, and community enrichment. Our purpose is to increase access to UTEP’s outstanding educational opportunities for all who seek them out, and OLLI is a perfect partner to do just this. We are excited to work with a new population of what some call "non-traditional students" who are eager to learn, engage with the campus, and give back to their community. We look forward to a long, productive, and happy relationship. Welcome!

Dr. Beth Brunk-Chavez, Dean of Extended University of UTEP

SEVEN QUESTIONS FOR DEAN BRUNK-CHAVEZ OF THE EXTENDED UNIVERSITY AT UTEP

Please tell us about the EU (Extended University), P3 and other programs under the EU umbrella.

EU is not a traditional academic college like you (OLLI) were in with Liberal Arts. One of the great things that we do is understand how the University operates and I think we contribute to how to make learning a bit easier for a lot of students. EU is not very old; it was established in 2012. The first dean of EU called it the front porch to the university (UTEP), a welcoming place to all populations—the kindergartener who wants to learn how to make slime, the high school student who wants to study to take the SAT, the college student who wants to take a Zumba class, the adult who wants to take a wine class or learn a foreign language, the bank business employee whose employer wants its employees to learn how to use Excel.

We also have an English Language Institute that brings in people from all over the world to learn English.

UTEP Connect is another program in which UTEP students can take all of their courses online. These are all academic, for credit programs. Our goal with this program is to offer an education to students who can’t come to campus. They don’t have to live in El Paso to be in this program—they might live in Waco or wherever. Our Center for Instructional Design works with these online professors to design their curriculum.

I have been Dean of EU since 2015, and I love this work with EU; I love being able to work across the university. I really enjoy having all of these university connections now.

When we interviewed Dr. Natalicio, she said that she thought that OLLI would be a good fit with EU. Do you agree, and why so?

I agree that it’s a good fit—you are already outward-facing, a front porch to the university, bringing new people to the campus, who may or may not already have an affiliation to UTEP. And, of course, you provide education to your members, though not for credit.

In what ways does OLLI differ from EU?

We’re actually very similar; perhaps it’s the demographics, the population we serve, that sets us apart.
How can OLLI benefit EU?
EU can benefit by expanding our opportunities and the work that we do. OLLI might make EU more visible, perhaps by an OLLI member telling a nephew, daughter-in-law, or someone who wants to go back to school, say, about EU’s many programs. Or an OLLI member telling a grandson about EU’s summer camps for children and youths. Sharing our resources and knowledge of what we’re good at will be of benefit to OLLI and EU.

How can leaving the College of Liberal Arts and moving to EU be of benefit to OLLI?
I think being in, and this goes back to Dr. Natalicio’s comment (about EU being a good fit for OLLI), a group with similar organizations, not traditional, is a plus, and benefits OLLI. If you’re in a traditional college such as Liberal Arts they put you under a traditional lens. But here at EU, we like to ask “What do you do? Great, let’s do it!”

What are EU’s expectations of OLLI?
I would say that I don’t know if I have expectations yet, as OLLI gets acclimated and settles into EU. Our expectations now are to get you settled, acclimated to the changes in registration and doing things correctly according to university policy. Over time we’ll set those expectations together.

The Osher Foundation has expectations that OLLI’s grow over the years, and OLLI@UTEP’S growth has remained stable with slow growth. How can EU help our OLLI grow?
I think honestly, getting some of these processes streamlined, and over time that ease of access will settle down. That ease of access might bring more people in. EU getting involved with groups such as the UTEP Alumni Association, the Heritage Foundation, city of El Paso’s RSVP, for example, can benefit OLLI’s visibility. In the College of Liberal Arts, you weren’t so visible, and now EU can increase some of that visibility. And I’m hopeful that as people learn that OLLI is now part of EU some of those people will want to learn more about OLLI and want to do some programming together. In other words, I think that EU can increase OLLI’s visibility. I just went to an academic conference for Writing Program Administrators, and the theme was “More Seats at the Table.” We talked a lot about how to bring more people of differing abilities including those who may have hearing, sight, and mobility challenges to the conversations. I see a lot of people focusing on those challenges, and I think that may be something that OLLI can work on in addition to the already engaging educational opportunities.

“Sharing our resources and knowledge of what we’re good at will be of benefit to OLLI and EU.”

Top row from left: Janet Dand, OLLI board chair, Nicole Grant, newsletter editor, and Lynn Provenzano, Executive Director, meet with Extended University Dean Beth Brunk-Chavez (seated)
FAREWELL LIZ AND HELLO LEANNE

Meet Leanne von Mittenwald, our new Social Chair. She is a popular instructor here at OLLI and her classes on films are well-attended and have a regular loyal following. Leanne has over 30 years of experience teaching theatrical arts and education. Her approachable and encouraging attitude compels her students to let go and explore their inner child. Leanne is a published playwright, has directed over 30 plays, and has a true passion for teaching and learning. She is teaching two classes this fall term: ‘Tennessee Williams: A Playwright of Films,’ and ‘John Grisham: Master of the Legal Thriller Film.’

Leanne hit the ground running by holding a whole week of Welcome Back parties which were hugely successful with happy crowds and delicious goodies prepared by OLLI members. And there’s much more to come this autumn and winter!

And a fond farewell to Liz Highsmith, who has been our wonderful, warm and friendly Social chair for four years. We have thoroughly enjoyed wonderful hospitality, Liz-style. We had a chance to sit down with Liz for a chat about her recollections of OLLI over the years. Here’s what she had to say:

“Being on the OLLI Board for 4 years, I had the opportunity to learn more about our program and participated in moving OLLI forward. Some of my fondest memories were creating an OLLI brochure that was designed to inform members and recruit new members. Another fond memory were the parties. We always had lots of good dishes brought by many members. The parties were a great time to get together, make new friends and catch up with other friends. Some other things I enjoyed were walking on campus and being in different buildings for our classes - always a fun adventure. However, Miner’s Hall is much more convenient for being together with all our OLLI members.

In my 19 years as a member of OLLI, I have seen many changes by our new Directors, Chairs and Board members. They each have brought in their own ideas for the well-being of OLLI. I have made many dear friends. We still travel with several to this day. OLLI continues to offer a diversity of good classes that keep us interested. There are just too many to list as favorites.

Tai Chi has been one of my favorite ventures for 17 years and I still enjoy it. However last year I signed up for a beginner’s guitar class. Somewhere along the way learning chords and techniques, it became my passion. As I learn something new it gets more encouraging. It is a slow process but rewarding and fulfilling. We are grateful to Dr. Robert Jacobs for his infinite patience and taking his time to teach us how to play. I realize I won’t be on the Grand Old Opry next year, but I am enthusiastic and having lots of fun.

Tom and I have been fortunate to travel abroad. Some of our Ollii members have traveled much more and we continue to learn from them. I love seeing the architect in so many fabulous buildings and places. The rich history, culture, people and food is what we enjoy. Train hopping across Europe was an adventure on one of our trips. France and China were some of our more memorable trips. Budapest, Prague and Paris are still some of my favorite cities.

I realize now how much I enjoyed being on the board and the teamwork among our board members to help each other. And I want to mention that when I asked Leanne to replace me, I knew I had the right person!”
BRING A FRIEND TO OLLI

We’re kicking off a membership drive by having Bring a Friend to OLLI days. On Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 5th and 6th, please bring a friend to attend your classes with you. Or, just stop by for a cup of coffee and a chat.

WELCOME BACK PARTIES A HIT

The Welcome Back to OLLI event on September 17-19 was a great success. Our table was full of goodies donated by our members and the lounge was full of happy OLLI members enjoying themselves. Thanks to all who shared snacks and thanks to those who helped wherever it was needed! Our next event will be a Halloween theme - be sure to join us October 30-31.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OLLI SOCIAL EVENTS

October 30 & 31: Calling goblins and ghosts for Halloween parties. Please feel free to bring goodies to share, and costumes encouraged.

November 5 & 6: Bring a Friend to OLLI Days. Speaker Bill Key joins OLLI on Wednesday, November 6th from 12PM – 1PM in the OLLI lounge to present “The Question that Possibly Saved 200,000 Lives”

Veteran’s Day, November 11: Join us in honoring our OLLI veterans. If you are a veteran and have not done so, please bring a picture to share. We put pictures up in our lounge, and love having those old ones when you were young!

December 5: OLLI Annual Membership event. Join us for appetizers at the Centennial Museum of Art Discovery Gallery from 11AM – 1PM. The annual membership meeting brings us all together to celebrate OLLI and share OLLI updates and news.

LUNCH ‘N BOOKS CALLING ALL BOOKWORMS

Calling all of you book lovers out there! For the newcomers to OLLI and the “old timers”, we do have a “drop in” book group at OLLI. We meet the second Thursday of every month, and choose books (based upon attendee suggestions) for four months out into the future, alternating between fiction and non-fiction.

The books for the fall semester are:


November 14th – Circe by Madeline Miller, a fiction book. “A bold and subversive retelling of the goddess’s story.”

December 12th – A Woman of No Importance by Sofia Purnell, a non-fiction book. Subtitled: The untold story of the American spy who helped win World War II.

Come join us in the Club Room, the little meeting room just to the right of the entrance to the OLLI offices.

Karen Evans
OLLI BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPENINGS

Would you like to assist OLLI in planning for our new future? The Board of Directors has several openings: Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, and Membership Coordinator. The Board meets the first Wednesday of the month. If you are interested, please contact the OLLI office for more information. Join the team planning for the future of OLLI!

CITY REPRESENTATIVE SAM MORGAN WRITES ABOUT OLLI

In his newsletter to his district, City Council Representative Morgan, representing Northeast El Paso, had this to say about OLLI in the Teaching and Learning About El Paso section of his newsletter to constituents:

“Last Friday I spoke at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute ‘What Makes El Paso Tick?’ Class at UTEP. It was great to interact with the OLLI community members from all over the city and share information about all that is taking place in the city. Myself and Mayor Pro Tem Claudia Ordaz-Perez enjoyed our time with the OLLI community and the chance to talk about our role in the city. Nice to get the word out about OLLI in Northeast El Paso.”

WELCOME TO THE CLUB ROOM!

Want to find a quiet space while you’re at OLLI?

Check out the newly refurbished storage room, now known as the Club Room.

This is a delightful addition to all of the other wonderful renovations that have taken place over the summer.

Welcome to the newly refurbished Club Room! (formerly the store room)

Formerly the store room, this delightful new space will be great for small classes, meetings, and special interest groups. Members are free to relax and enjoy the Club Room when it is not in scheduled use. Please, no drinks or food allowed. Enjoy!

FHAR AT UTEP NEEDS YOU

It’s the beginning of a new school year for UTEP students, and for some that is a most challenging time financially. Please consider helping those students by donating gift cards to FHAR (Foster, Homeless, Adopted Resource), a terrific resource center here at UTEP. FHAR assists students who have graduated out of foster care, or find themselves homeless or in need of an emergency financial boost. Gift cards in small denominations ($10-$20) from Walmart, Walgreens, Target CVS, Dollar stores, as well as from the UTEP bookstore and fast food places will help these students immensely. Last spring OLLI members donated around $500 to this worthy cause. Cards may be dropped at the OLLI office.
WATCH FOR THE SPRING CATALOG

The proposals are in and the curriculum committee has reviewed a course line-up for the Spring 2020 Sessions that brings another semester of fascinating topics and engaging activities to OLLI members.

Catalogs will be distributed in December.

OLLI IN ACTION PHOTO ALBUM

We are on campus, at OLLI, in the classroom, and around the world!

Look who stopped by to chat with Jim Richardson and Rich Dand at the UTEP Campus & Community Expo ---- Dr. Heather Wilson, new UTEP president!

Janet Dand, Chair of the Board of Directors, at the hugely successful OLLI: Visions art show last spring at the UTEP Student Union.

SHARE YOUR PICTURES!

OLLI is a wonderful place for memories – the old ones and the ones we are creating!
UTEP Occupational Therapy students talking to interested OLLI members in the lounge for their research project “Aging in Place”.

Sarah Trillanes enjoys the new computers in our newly refurbished lounge.

Beautiful flowers greet returning members at the Welcome Back parties.

Fresh baked rolls from Kjell Hansen! Thank you, Kjell. They are always delicious!

Straw hat fanciers: John Walker (left) and Julian Horwitz. What will they don in winter?

Steve Ledesma sketching in last year’s Drawing is Learning class.

Dr. Bob Jacobs shares his guitar expertise with the guitar group.
Members of Neal Locke’s Celtic Spirituality class bring their special mementos to the labyrinth at First Presbyterian Church where Neal is pastor.

Armchair Traveler goes to China!

Tom Prokopchuk tells us about his trip to China with wife Marianela Milner. Tom told us he got special treatment by the Chinese because they thought he was Russian!

Marianela Milner pours lychee tea for the Armchair Travelers.

Kathleen Key offers special treats at the Armchair Traveler class.

REMEMBER!
EACH ONE ... REACH ONE
Bring a new member to OLLI and share the benefits. Let’s grow the OLLI community!