

Dear OLLI Members,

We are all waking up to a new world, and each day is bringing new challenges. The well-being of our members is our primary concern, and we are striving to do our very best to keep our membership connected and engaged, even if we cannot be together in person.

Here are the topics this letter will cover:

- Update on Spring 2
- Update on OLLI Office Operations
- Next Steps
- Broader Context
- Future Planning
- Membership Directory and Your Ideas

Update on Spring 2

Last Friday, Yavapai College sent out a message canceling all in person classes and activities for this week, and to plan for credit classes to go online starting March 23. At the moment, Yavapai College plans to make decisions in two-week increments about whether to bring credit classes back into the classroom, or leave them online, potentially for the rest of the semester.

Our Governing Council met to discuss the current situation. Our OLLI membership representing the most vulnerable population is foremost in our minds. Based on the Yavapai College's announcements, the best advice available from the CDC, and for the welfare of our members, we have decided to cancel all in person classes for our entire Spring 2 session, which was scheduled to begin on March 30 and end on May 8. Please keep reading - although classes may not meet in person, we have other ideas!

We have also cancelled a number of other events, including the annual Facilitator Luncheon (3/24), the upcoming Social Committee tour of YEI (3/26) and Reading to Children at the FEC (4/22 & 4/23.) We have also

cancelled our Arts and Crafts Fair planned for 5/2. We anticipate that all of these events will be rescheduled in the future.

We would like to ask for your patience as we figure out how to handle the financial aspects of cancelling all of our in person classes for Spring 2, including refunding class fees and dealing with membership expiration dates, we will be back to you shortly about our plans.

Update on OLLI Office Operations

Yavapai College has requested that all non-essential staff transition to remote work for the foreseeable future, so the physical OLLI office has now been closed. The best way to reach us is via email.

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You can leave us a voicemail, but email will most often get a quicker response.

Next Steps

We are developing a three pronged approach to this challenging time:

1. Utilize social media and the telephone to stay connected
2. Develop online offerings
3. Shift classes to later sessions

First, we know how important social connections are within OLLI. We are looking to set up an OLLI Facebook group, finalize and make available the membership directory (more on that in a moment), and explore other options like calling trees so we can check in with each other.

Second, we will be talking with our fabulous OLLI facilitators to explore which Spring 2 classes might be able to be offered online, through web meetings like Zoom, a written blog, or other creative ideas we haven't even thought of yet! We know some classes won't translate well online, and

some members might not be able to access online materials, but we believe it is worth exploring the possibilities. We are also working with OLLIs across the country to share content. That may mean that we share links to free lectures, websites, articles or other online material, and then explore ways we can share our thoughts – through a Zoom meeting (that would work with a computer, tablet, smart phone, or just a dial in conference call) or online blog perhaps.

Finally, particularly for those classes that would not be able to be offered online, we will be working with our facilitators to shift those classes over to the Summer or Fall sessions.

Broader Context

None of us know exactly what the future holds, but it seems clear that this pandemic may disrupt the course of our lives. As one of 124 OLLI's across the country, we strive to provide satisfying educational opportunities, but we also seek to promote friendships and genuine connection among our members. Rather than let that mission lapse during this time when so many seniors are likely to face increasing isolation, we have instead chosen to redouble our efforts to keep our members engaged during this period.

That's why, even if you are someone who is skeptical of technology or remote learning, we highly encourage you to consider giving these new systems a try with us. It's not outlandish to think that people may be stuck in their homes for months, so it will be more important than ever that people have opportunities to connect remotely. We will do our best to continue providing ways to engage in interesting material, and each other, during this time period.

Future Planning

At the moment, we have our hands full with immediate issues, but here are a few other quick thoughts:

- Due to so much being in flux, it is likely that we will delay the finalization of our Summer Session plans. This will mean that we

likely won't produce a pretty, shiny schedule, but might rely on photo copies, and online access, to share our schedule. We may also move back the start of the Summer Session (originally set for June 4.)

- The field trip to see "Come From Away" has not yet been cancelled. ASU Gammage told us yesterday that it is still scheduled to go on, and we have already purchased the tickets.
- We hope to proceed with "in-person" classes for our summer session, but will need to wait to make that determination for some time. If in-person meetings are still discouraged at that point, we will plan to utilize the remote learning methods that we pioneered this term.

Membership Directory and Your Ideas

For current OLLI members, we are preparing a list of everyone's name and email address. This will be posted in EDU20, with a password required. We believe this will provide a way for OLLI members to connect with each other. Our policy will be that these email addresses may only be used for person to person contact, no spam. If you do not wish to participate, please email me by Friday, March 20, to opt out. patricia.berlowe@yc.edu.

We have created a link to allow you to offer your thoughts and ideas going forward – we would love to hear from you! [LINK](#)

We will be increasing the frequency of announcements, as we work through our plans for the next couple of months.

Thank you for taking the time to read this far, and for your continued support and patience during this time. We'll get through this, together!

Sincerely,

Tricia Berlowe, OLLI Administrator, and
Michael Gunn, Governing Council Chair