

PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE



**Report to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
at George Mason University
Board of Directors**

From

**The OLLI Planning Committee
September, 2009**

*The truth of the matter is, we always know the right thing to do.
The hard part is doing it.*

(Norman Schwarzkopf)

Acknowledgments

This report to the OLLI Board of Directors (BOD) is the result of the Planning Committee's work of a year-and-a-half, interviewing longtime members, reviewing various elements of OLLI and gathering information about other OLLIs. This report intends to: 1) summarize the current situation; 2) recommend short term adjustments, improvements and innovations, and 3) encourage strategic thinking about critical issues.

This report is organized in the following order:

- Section #1 – Membership
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- Section #4 – Finances
- Section #5 – Organization
- Appendices:
 - Affiliation Agreement with George Mason University
 - History of Changes
 - Features Not to be Compromised

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PATHWAYS IN A NUTSHELL

Executive Summary



The founders of our Learning in Retirement Institute (LRI) worked for almost seven years to prepare for its start up in 1991. In the 18 years since then, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason has earned a reputation as “having established a standard by which all other OLLIs are measured.” Still, there are adjustments, improvements and innovations to be made and these future achievements can be built on past successes.

This report is the result of the efforts of a year-and-a-half of work by the OLLI Planning Committee. The committee offers this report to 1) summarize the current situation; 2) recommend short term adjustments, improvements and innovations, and 3) encourage strategic thinking about critical issues. Recommendations in five categories are not prioritized; however, key items have been selected for inclusion in this executive summary.

Membership

OLLI is a **volunteer-driven** organization. We have grown from approximately 100 members in one location in 1991 to over 870 at three locations in 2009. **Selected recommendations:**

- Align all policies and practices to ensure that “**ONE OLLI**” must be more than a slogan for Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun.
- Commit to providing the resources necessary for expanding and integrating activities aimed at recruiting more members to our Reston and Loudoun programs and facilities.
- Increase **member involvement** in all aspects of OLLI.

Program

OLLI’s vast and varied program has earned us a national reputation. To maintain that quality of program, consisting of over 350 offerings of new courses and events every year, more members must become involved with their preparation. **Selected recommendations:**

- Share program offerings via technology (video and audio links) between Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun.
- Offer types of courses that appeal to the membership. In addition, program planning, development and preparation must be responsive to attracting a new generation of semi-retired and retired seniors with different expectations and interests for lifelong learning

Facilities

OLLI long ago outgrew its Tallwood facilities: classroom, office and socializing spaces, parking places and bathrooms. Members often express needs for more convenient parking spaces, wishes for more socializing space and fewer notices of being relegated to a Wait List because of lack of classroom space. We need to work closely with Mason administration regarding the plans for eventual conversion of the Tallwood property for development of faculty housing. The university has made a verbal commitment to provide OLLI with classroom and office space if and when the Tallwood facility is no longer available. We must strategically plan to either make the most of the space provided to us by the university, or make other arrangements. **Selected recommendations:**

- Plan for a **permanent facility** that meets the classroom/parking/office space requirements of a growing number of members and staff.
- Seek **additional classroom space in Reston** by working with Robert Simon, founder of Reston, and the Reston Association. Reston has outgrown its space in the Washington Plaza Baptist Church on Lake Anne.
- Discuss OLLI's needs for space in **Loudoun** as Mason pursues a permanent full campus, with the goal of obtaining dedicated space, adequate for a projected increase of members and appropriately located within or near the campus.

Finance

Currently, OLLI has **three major revenue sources**: annual dues from members, earnings from the Osher Foundation Endowment and voluntary donations from members to the Friends of OLLI fund. **Selected recommendations:**

- Raise the annual membership fee gradually as costs inevitably rise. There should be a concerted effort by the Board of Directors to inform and educate the membership about the rationale for increased revenue and expenditures
- Increase revenues from internal sources by planning and implementing projects such as the Silent Auctions which were conducted in 2008 and 2009.
- Increase revenues from outside sources such as grant proposals to foundations and agencies; major items for raffle to OLLI members and Mason faculty; personal connections used to influence people or businesses for matching gifts; advertising.

Organization

The Board of Directors is facing some difficult challenges. **Selected recommendations:**

- Reduce number of Directors. The Executive Director is now our COO taking care of administrative duties that used to be the responsibility of the BOD. The BOD is finally able to concentrate on policy issues.
- Restructure committees by reviewing responsibilities and rewriting descriptions to meet the current needs of OLLI in all three sites. Standing committees should function for all three sites, and some committees may need "regional" coordinators. Subcommittees should have clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- Consider periodic "enlightened self-evaluation" by the BOD.

*This very remarkable man
Commends a most practical plan:
You can do what you want
If you don't think you can't,
So don't think you can't think you can.
(Charles Inge)*

SECTION #1

MEMBERSHIP

*Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever.*
(Gandhi)

CURRENT SITUATION:

Beginning in 1991, with an enrollment of 105 in one room on the Mason campus, LRI/OLLI has grown to 872 members in 2009 at three locations: Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun. In 1994 Mason let LRI occupy the Tallwood property, temporarily, just off the main campus. In 1999, 35 LRI members from Reston wanted to duplicate the classes that they had been attending at Tallwood and established a branch in Reston using rented space in a local church. Reston's membership today is almost 200 or 24% of OLLI's total membership. In 2006 Mason requested that OLLI provide a program at its new Loudoun campus which began with 8 courses in spring 2007. As of March 2009 Loudoun has 102 members.

A New Member Survey accompanies every membership application. A survey has been distributed to the general membership. These surveys seek to discover an individual's background, talents and interests so that personalized recruiting can be used in requesting involvement of those talents to meet OLLI's needs.

One of the greatest deficits in the modern life of seniors is a **Spirit of Community**. The dearth of year-round socializing space at Tallwood and Reston is regretted by many members and remains a problem.

The demographics cited in Fairfax County's 2006 "*Anticipating the Future*" report (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aboutfairfax), together with a report by The Brookings Institution issued in 2007, indicate that the northern Virginia area, beginning in 2011, is about to experience a "senior tsunami." Depending on the current economic climate and its impact on those projections, every aspect of OLLI's operation, especially its program and facilities, could be affected.

Two of the fastest growing senior populations in the United States are in Prince William County and Loudoun County Virginia. The boomers in these counties, along with Fairfax County, are likely to be better educated and healthier than those of a previous generation. And there are likely to be more professional women and minorities among them. The nation's economic climate that affects our region presents another situation that could include retired seniors who work part-time, and wish to pursue intellectual stimulation through OLLI's programs during their leisure. Together, all of these possibilities suggest continued, as well as increased growth, in OLLI's programs and activities along with related cost implications on facilities and resources.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Short Term

- Align all policies and practices to ensure that “**ONE OLLI**” must be more than a slogan for Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun.
- Integrate and expand programs, activities and social activities in order to achieve the goal of “**ONE OLLI**” In addition to encouraging members to take classes at the various sites, other actions that focus on inclusiveness might include scheduled luncheons, picnics, special events, clubs and discussion groups, open to all members, at all three sites. With miles of heavily trafficked roads separating the sites, carpooling should be encouraged.
- Keep the communication of ‘**ONE OLLI**’ before all members by making space available to both Reston and Loudoun in OLLI’s publications including the E-News. This has been implemented in the recent Program catalog where class schedules are published together.
- Explore innovative approaches for encouraging participation of Loudoun-only members in courses, special events, and social activities with the goal of increasing the value of membership for all members.
- Hold Board of Directors meetings at Reston and Loudoun once a year. If we are going to be ‘**ONE OLLI**’ inclusiveness in its operation is important with a membership as large and separated as ours.
- Strengthen Reston and Loudoun membership by marketing OLLI programs more strenuously in these areas (notices on local church/temple bulletin boards and libraries; blurbs in printed and email newsletters from district Supervisors as well as those distributed in subdivisions; presentations made to AAUW, League of Women Voters, and government and private sector seniors about to retire; articles in local newspapers and the *Beacon*; one-time classes at retirement centers, etc.) These actions may require the establishment of a **PR Committee**. Not to be overlooked is member word-of-mouth information about OLLI which has been the most effective recruiting tool at our disposal. In that regard, the BOD might explore the validity of providing incentives to members who successfully recruit one or more new members, especially in Reston and Loudoun.
- Increase **member involvement**. Currently volunteer participation is at about 22% which is fine for a church/temple or museum, but insufficient for a **member-driven organization** such as OLLI. Active members should use the information gleaned from the surveys for personalized recruiting.
- Make all members aware of how OLLI compares and contrasts with other OLLIs and lifelong learning institutes. This can be accomplished through periodic articles in the OLLI E-News and by encouraging members to seek out and visit other OLLIs when they travel.

- Establish procedures for monitoring trends in membership and levels of participation, as well as for determining practical means of attracting prospective members to our various sites. Periodic surveys of the membership are essential for assessing the pulse of OLLI.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Strategic:

- Monitor the demographics of the senior population in Northern Virginia and make appropriate adjustments in our program, facilities and operations to meet evolving needs.
- Support the members' expressed needs for socializing. The social aspects of OLLI are second in importance to the program.
- Commit to providing the resources necessary for expanding and integrating activities aimed at recruiting more members to our Reston and Loudoun programs and facilities.
- Study ways to attract more members from minority and other under-served ethnic groups.

SECTION #2

PROGRAM

Make it a practice to keep on the lookout for novel and interesting ideas that others have used successfully. Your idea has to be original only in its adaptation to the problem you are working on.

(Thomas Edison)

CURRENT SITUATION:

OLLI's program is its raison d'être. The program is the main attraction for gaining members and is the reason members keep renewing. The program will be what attracts the pre-seniors in up-coming generations; it is the immensity, variety and excellence of the program that has earned OLLI-Mason a first-rate local and national reputation.

OLLI offers four terms of classes, special events, and clubs. These activities are conducted over 26 weeks a year at three locations: Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun. For an annual fee of \$350 members can select an unlimited number of activities from the 373 listings planned and prepared every year and listed in seasonal catalogs.

OLLI's unpaid instructors, lecturers and presenters come from three sources. The first are OLLI members who have expertise and/or experience in a subject area. These talented peers, who willingly volunteer their time, provide over 40% of OLLI's courses, activities and events.

The second source represents Mason faculty who have enthusiastically volunteered their time and expertise. In 2008 Mason shared 57 faculty and staff from 24 departments who lectured and taught a broad range of subjects. As a "thank you" OLLI, through 'Friends of OLLI' funds, annually awards monies to Mason's various academic departments that, in turn, disburse the donations to worthy students in the form of scholarships.

The third source of volunteer lecturers and presenters come from the Washington metropolitan area's unusually rich pool of resources. These include employees or retirees from the U.S. Park Service, foreign embassies, state department and other governmental agencies; experts from 'think tanks', newspaper editors, TV personalities, as well as representatives from local governments, business and the political establishment. This group comprises over 25 % of the annual presentations which is far-and-away more than any other local OLLI provides for its members.

OLLI's immense, challenging and varied program is planned and developed by a volunteer cadre of members with support from the staff. Many other OLLIs and LRIs employ program coordinators and none have as vast a program as ours. The quality and richness of our program, with its variety of activities and events, is unparalleled and is recognized by the Osher Foundation and other Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes and LRIs as one of the cutting-edge programs in the nation.

In recent years, OLLI has obtained audiovisual equipment to enhance the program in every classroom via laptop computers, LCD projectors, CD/DVD players, and high quality PA speakers. Microphones have been obtained for use by instructors, speakers, and the coordinators and liaisons who make introductions and announcements. This equipment has increased the variety of classroom presentations that can be made, and has added value and enjoyment to the learning experience for all OLLI members. It has also added significantly to the need for staff support and money for repair, maintenance, and replacement.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Short Term:

- Increase the number of members who plan and prepare courses for the program. Since OLLI is a member-driven organization and the program is the primary focus for all members, it is imperative that more members, especially from Reston and Loudoun, participate in program planning, topic selection, and preparation.
- Involve BOD members in the program. Those BOD members who are not otherwise occupied chairing a committee, should be encouraged to participate in a Program Resource Group.
- Survey members regularly to encourage feedback and direction. Analyze recent surveys and provide information to the Program Committee chair and chairs of Resource groups. Use the survey's results to discover, from each member, experiences, talents, interests and avocations that can be tapped for use in OLLI by personal recruiting. With this helpful information, personal contact is likely to result in more willing participation in program development and implementation.
- Share program offerings via technology (video and audio links) between Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun. Consultation with OLLI tech support could provide information about what is possible, requirements and costs. Since Mason has an established reputation in IT someone on their staff should be able to help establish technological connections between OLLI sites. Friends of OLLI monies might be tapped to defray the costs of these connections.
- Integrate the program between the three sites with the realization that distances and traffic congestion might preclude Mason faculty and Washington metro area experts from being available as unpaid presenters. Consistent with the goal of achieving **'ONE OLLI'** it is essential that members from Reston and Loudoun participate directly in a Program Resource Group. Such participation will ensure that the needs and wants of their respective members are met: e.g. planning a repeat of a course given at another site or initiating a subject or event of particular interest to local members.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Strategic:

- Offer types of courses that appeal to the membership. In addition, program planning, development and preparation must be responsive to attracting a new generation of semi-retired and retired seniors with different expectations and interests for lifelong learning.
- Explore major program changes that could occur through the use of various types of technology to determine whether or not the methods of teaching might need to be changed: use of webcasts vs. on-site teaching; use of DVDs or other means of communicating via the web through distance learning. Other variations, considering facilities limitations, could include the time of courses – day and evening, expanded weekdays (Monday through Friday), expansion of teaching from 26 weeks a year to perhaps 45 or more weeks and, of course, the related financial implications.
- Consider financing an expanded program between the three campuses and commit to providing the financial support necessary for the establishment of audio/video links between Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun.
- Consider and explore the feasibility and cost implications of providing transportation between the three sites versus individually driven transportation or carpooling.

SECTION #3

FACILITIES

*Be willing to make decisions. That's the most important quality in a good leader.
Don't fall victim to what I call the "ready-aim-aim-aim-aim syndrome."*

You must be willing to fire.

(George S. Patton)

*Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious,
than to be able to decide.*

(Napoleon Bonaparte)

CURRENT SITUATION:

For five years after the start of classes in one room at Mason, LRI members had to search and find a series of other places to hold classes around Fairfax County. In 1994 Mason assigned LRI to the seven-acre **Tallwood House site**, just off the main campus, consisting of the two-story house, an attached building that might have been a two-car garage and a 70-foot long one-story masonry building. Twelve years later the Tallwood House was determined to be so unsafe that it was demolished in 2006. Two doublewide trailers were added to meet classroom needs of the growing membership: one has space for 65 members, the other can hold 35. Off-campus sites are rented for mega-classes that can accommodate upwards of 85 attendees which is the capacity of the largest classroom at Tallwood: being able to have classes for more than 100 members precludes being wait listed – a fate that is not favored by members. **Classroom space** is insufficient to accommodate the growing membership that attends classes at Tallwood.

At Tallwood four staff members huddle in cramped and inadequate **office space** that had once been barely sufficient for a staff of two. The original office space designated for the program coordinator that was located in the garage-size building with two bathrooms, was so damaged by termites that a new space was formed by enclosing one end of a trailer for the program coordinator and that now serves as the office of the Executive Director.

Socializing at Tallwood is all but impossible for more than 20 people at a time in the coffee room/kitchen. Areas for socializing out-of-doors are insufficient, limited and weather-dependent.

Parking has always been a problem at Tallwood where there are only 35 spaces (8 unpaved) on the property: 72 more spaces in the adjacent parking lot are rented from the Fairfax Pool and can be used by OLLI when the lot is not being used by pool members. We have access to a total of 107 spaces, but there is a daily need for at least 175 parking spaces for members, staff and presenters. The overflow parking must locate across Roberts Road in a residential neighborhood that is both unsafe passage and unneighborly.

In sum, OLLI's increasing membership has long since outgrown the classroom, parking and all other spaces at Tallwood. OLLI must rely on Mason to provide facilities for our main operation = the headquarters of OLLI-Mason. Presently, Mason is fully occupied with its own building projects, the UBRC is no longer a viable option for our relocation by Mason, and the downturn in the economy indicates that it will be a long time before we are removed from Tallwood.

Since 1999 **Reston** has held **classes in a rented space** at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church and infrequently at other sites near Lake Anne that provide free parking. These are all shared, low-tech facilities. With the increase in membership in the Reston area and a proposed expansion of its program, there is a need for larger, technologically equipped spaces. Because Mason does not have a presence in the Reston area, finding adequate rental spaces has been a problem.

In 2006 Mason requested that OLLI establish a program at the University's building in **Loudoun** County with its high-tech equipment and free parking. Because there had not been a ready-made audience in place requesting the start-up of OLLI's program, finding and attracting a new pool of members within the Loudoun area has taken time, effort and resources. The single feature that they do not need now is a facility. Mason's plan is to integrate with a proposed development at which time we will depend on Mason to move our OLLI-at-Loudoun operation with it.

Ten percent (10%) of OLLI's annual budget goes to **rentals**: pool parking lot next to Tallwood, \$14,000; Tallwood's off-site Church of the Good Shepherd and other short-term rentals, \$7,500; Reston's Washington Plaza Baptist Church, \$11,750. This represents inadequate facilities at each site.

OLLI-Mason is composed of **three sites** that are sufficiently **distant from one another** to discourage travel to classes or other activities: Tallwood to Reston = 14.5 miles; Tallwood to Loudoun = 19 miles; Reston to Loudoun = 8+ miles. Those are as-the-crow-flies miles and should not deter any of our members, but traffic congestion and related time implications make OLLI members reluctant to schedule classes at more than one site per day. There is no transportation, either public or Mason-provided, between any of the three OLLI sites.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Short Term:

- Provide adequate space for **socializing** at Tallwood. The pressing need of a complete new full-service headquarters facility at Tallwood is unlikely to be met by Mason in the foreseeable future, but meanwhile, the need for a modest facility can be fulfilled by OLLI. A 20-foot by 34-foot sunroom can be built onto the end of TA-2 with the end wall removed. This would allow that small classroom to become part of the new **dedicated social area** and accommodate the growing library. This addition will provide OLLI with 1,000 square feet of "living space" for conversations, relaxation, lunches and reading.

- Obtain and install another large **doublewide trailer** (like TA-3) that can be divided into **discussion rooms**. The classroom portion of TA-2 would become part of the social area.
- Reconfigure the **parking lot** at Tallwood for the sake of safety, with the entrance and exit moved from the south portion, where exiting cars are likely to become hood ornaments, to the north next to the entrance to the pool lot. By paving or graveling a limited amount of the grounds in front of Stallwood we could eke out another 12 or more parking spaces.
- Seek **additional classroom space in Reston** by working with Robert Simon, founder of Reston, and the Reston Association. Reston has outgrown its space in the Washington Plaza Baptist Church on Lake Anne. Nearby areas have been used for special classes and discussion groups. There has been a plan for the 1950s buildings around Lake Anne to be renovated. Liaison and the Reston Coordinator will be invaluable in keeping an eye on this development in Reston.
- Discuss OLLI's needs for space in **Loudoun** as Mason pursues a permanent full campus, with the goal of obtaining dedicated space, adequate for a projected increase of members and appropriately located within or near the campus.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Strategic:

- Plan for a **permanent facility** that meets the classroom/parking/office space requirements of a growing number of members and staff. This facility and space must also be able to accommodate an influx of presenters from the Mason faculty with ease as well as others from the Washington metro area. The future needs of OLLI should be drawn up in a detailed plan, so that when a possible move is on the horizon we will know what we need and what cannot be compromised without losing what we have accomplished since 1984.
- Plan for a building of 8,000 square feet of **classroom spaces** of varying sizes should be able to accommodate small discussion groups, larger lecture type classes with high-tech capabilities, and have one room for mega-classes. At least 1,500 square feet of indoor space should be dedicated for **socializing**. With the expected increase in membership and activities anticipated for the next generation. OLLI would require 500 safe, accessible (unshared) parking spaces on the property.
- Monitor any progress made by Mason to remove us from our current site and relocate us elsewhere. While Mason controls our relocation we must be assured that we (1) are able to retain our independence of operation (2) acquire sufficient classroom space and (3) have adjacent free and safe parking.
- Review and decide on the proposal for expanding the **social area** at Tallwood, and for purchasing another doublewide trailer for **classroom space**. It will need to determine how to fund these additions. Because of the importance of this matter the BOD must set a timetable for its decision and for subsequent actions related to their implementation.

SECTION #4

FINANCES

Never retreat. Never explain. Get it done and let them howl.
(Benjamin Jowett)

CURRENT SITUATION:

The budget for LRI's first year of operation in 1991 was \$10,000 for 105 members in one room with a desk at Mason. In **2009 the budget is \$334,875** for 872 members at three locations: Tallwood, Reston and Loudoun. There is a separate budget of \$17,375 for operations in Loudoun.

Currently, OLLI has **three major revenue sources**: annual dues from members, interest from the Osher Foundation Endowment and voluntary donations from members to the Friends of OLLI fund. The centrally controlled multi-location budget structure is based on balanced income from Tallwood and Reston. Loudoun, with its increasing membership, is expected to pay its own costs soon. The Finance Committee and the Executive Director monitor the budget. Like most non-profit organizations OLLI's finances are audited annually.

The Bernard Osher Foundation gave OLLI a \$100,000 grant in each of two successive years (2004, 2005). This was followed by an Endowment of \$1,000,000 which, as stipulated by the Osher Foundation, is to be held and managed by the George Mason University Foundation. Funds from annual fees and interest from the Endowment are used for **regular operating expenses**. Major expenses include: payroll; other administrative costs; rental expenses; other facilities costs. **Staff and payroll expenses** are carried entirely by OLLI and comprise 55% of OLLI's annual budget.

Rentals of the pool parking lot next to Tallwood, the Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS) for mega-classes near Tallwood, and the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Reston, together amount to 10% of the budget.

Mason faculty and all other presenters who contribute to the program are not paid.

A 'Rainy-Day' fund of \$50,000 is reserved in the general budget for contingencies that are determined by the BOD. Friends of OLLI (FOLLI) is a development program that solicits voluntary contributions from members, non-members, businesses, foundations, non-profits, and other organizations. FOLLI donations are used for scholarships for Mason students in academic departments that have shared their faculty with our program, for capital expenditures and other needs to enhance the OLLI facilities and program.

Mason maintains and repairs the Tallwood buildings and grounds and pays for all utilities at an estimated cost to them of about \$55,000 annually. OLLI pays Mason \$1 a year in rent to occupy Tallwood. Mason pays for nothing in Reston, but pays for all maintenance and utilities its Loudoun site.

Since our LRI/OLLI's start-up in 1991 with an annual fee of \$200 there have been five increases of from \$10 to \$70: 1998 to \$220; 2001 to \$260; 2003 to \$270; 2005 to \$280; 2007 to \$350. The latest increase was largely the result of the creation of a full-time position of Executive Director. This position was originally funded with the second, and last, Osher grant of \$100,000. So necessary was the position, with the increasing membership, the expanding program and the addition of Loudoun to the organization, that the cost of an ED had to be integrated into OLLI's tight budget.

DID YOU KNOW . . . Most members have little or no knowledge of how our OLLI's operation contrasts with other similar institutes. Indeed, many have little appreciation for how much OLLI-Mason provides in the way of its program and special events, for the cost. Most other LRI/OLLIs are integrated into a university structure that carries the expenses of the ED as well as other staff members and the facilities. Such an arrangement allows these LRIs to charge a lower annual fee.

While all LRI/OLLIs have an annual fee, our research has shown that when dues are less than \$400 a year there is usually an extra charge for each course taken. In addition, there is likely to be a limit on the number of classes a member can take. Most other OLLIs offer three terms and from six to 40 courses per term as opposed to our four terms and 80+ courses from which our members have unlimited choices.

In 2007, before the \$70 increase in annual fee was established by the BOD, the treasurer calculated what we would be paying **if our organization duplicated the fees of another LRI** in the Washington metro area that has access to the same rich resources for its program as we have. First of all, they have a total of 63 classes per year from which to choose, compared with our 373. Using their annual fee and adding their fee-per-course charge to the average number of classes that our members take per term, he calculated that each of our members would be paying \$775 a year! The prospect of our \$350 annual fee for unlimited classes selected from an enormous catalog of choices suddenly looks like a gift to our members.

OLLI's budget is austere, and is prepared knowledgeably and maintained with a tight hand by the Finance Committee, the Development Committee and the Executive Director. The budget assumptions for 2010 indicate a need for a gentle increase based on a lower than expected payout from the Endowment caused by the economic downturn, as well as an increase in rental fees, raises in payroll expenses plus merit increases.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Short Term:

- **Raise the annual membership fee gradually** as costs inevitably rise. There should be a concerted effort by the Board of Directors to inform and educate the membership about the rationale for increased revenue and expenditures.
- Consider alternative dues structures if it is determined that they would result in (1) increased satisfaction and retention of current members, and/or (2) increased attractiveness for recruitment of new members. The impact of alternatives on meeting budget requirements should be carefully weighed against potential gains.
- Integrate the budget for OLLI to include revenues and expenditures in all locations.
- Consider a Capital Campaign to meet the anticipated expenses of another doublewide trailer to replace the classrooms that were lost during the demolition of Tallwood House. In addition, costs for converting TA-2 into a social room complex must be factored as well. The cost of \$125,000 was stated by Mason but that was for a new trailer. It is entirely possible that we can find a used doublewide, the size of TA-3, that is no longer needed by the public school system.
- Consider a Capital Campaign to acquire funds for the 20' x 34' Sunroom to be connected to the south end of TA-2 for a dedicated area for Socializing. The funds could come from a variety of sources: OLLI members, matching funds from members' employers, and possibly the missing 3rd Osher grant. The cost of \$125,000 has been stated from three sources with the knowledge that the entire construction would be able to be removed and placed elsewhere when the time comes.
- Create an **Innovation Fund** for the funding of those projects that we need to provide for ourselves while we are waiting for Mason to locate a permanent home for OLLI headquarters.
- Increase revenues from internal projects by planning and implementing such as the Silent Auctions which were conducted in 2008 and 2009.
- Increase revenues from outside sources: grant proposals to foundations and agencies; major items for raffle to OLLI members and Mason faculty; personal connections used to influence people or businesses for matching gifts; advertising.
- Consider establishing a credit line, given the possibility that the BOD may authorize a building program for which considerable funds would be needed.

SECTION #5

ORGANIZATION

There is no idea as powerful as one whose time has come.
(Victor Hugo)

CURRENT SITUATION:

Fifteen citizens of Fairfax County spent almost seven years planning and implementing the first lifelong learning institute in Northern Virginia. A Certificate of Incorporation was issued, an IRS Letter of Determination for 501 (c)(3) status was obtained, an Affiliation Agreement between LRI and Mason was completed, an NTEE Designation in the category 'Gerontology' was granted, and contracts with various rental facilities have been negotiated. Bylaws were written which describe and define the framework of the organization. (Many of the 118 other OLLIs do not have even bylaws.)

Since its beginning in 1984 LRI/OLLI has had an **independent** internal organization which active members consider an invaluable feature. However, we are totally **dependent** on Mason for the facilities at two of our three sites as well as for the management of our philanthropic benefits from Osher.

Since 1991 governance of LRI/OLLI has been provided by a **Board of Directors**. For years all 18 members of this BOD were needed to do most of the work necessary to serve the growing membership, followed by the expanding membership and program in Reston. With no Executive Director for those years, the members of the BOD did it all.

In 2005 OLLI hired an **Executive Director**. The additional task of building a program from scratch in Loudoun made the work at all three sites even more complicated for both the ED and the BOD. By 2008 the BOD began getting the hang of having a COO to relieve it of its habitual micromanaging.

The BOD could not operate smoothly without a **competent staff**. The staff is headed by the Executive Director (ED) who is responsible for the day-to-day management of OLLI. As chief administrator the ED receives assistance for overall coordination of program and financial aspects from: (1) Administrator/Registrar, (2) Program Associate, (3) Finance Associate, (4) Site Assistant, Tallwood, (5) Site Assistant, Lake Anne Reston, (6) Site Assistant, Loudoun, and (7) Program Assistant, Loudoun.

OLLI's committees serve as the perfect example of a **member-driven organization**. Committees are where plans are initiated, ideas are thrashed out, opinions voiced, conclusions worked out for implementation, and recommendations, regarding policy issues, made for presentation to the BOD. Members serve as volunteers to fulfill the mission of OLLI in standing committees, subcommittees and ad hoc committees.

Presently the following are Standing Committees: Audiovisual Support, Communications, Development, Finance, Landscaping, Membership, Planning, Program, and Program Review. Subcommittees: Resource Groups, Office Volunteers, Liaisons, Hospitality. The President appoints University Liaison and Nominating Com. chair.

The Planning Committee recognizes that it is to OLLI's advantage to remain affiliated with Mason (see *Affiliation with George Mason University* on page 18). The Osher Foundation requires such an arrangement. Mason's faculty members participate in greater numbers every year which significantly contributes to the quality of OLLI's Program. For several years a University Liaison, together with the President and the Executive Director, has been appointed to "maintain good and effective working relationships between OLLI and George Mason University."

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – Short Term:

- Reduce number of Directors. The Executive Director is now our COO taking care of administrative duties that used to be the responsibility of the BOD. The BOD is finally able to concentrate on policy issues.
- Conduct a session of the Board of Director for "enlightened self-evaluation". (cf. The Nonprofit Leadership Team by Fisher Howe, pp. 89 – 95)
- Re-examine the University Liaison function to determine whether the Liaison's present approach and protocol is consistent with OLLI's growing expectations. If the BOD finds the Liaison function no longer adequate to fulfill future needs, as outlined in this Report, the position should be revised and strengthened to become more responsive to OLLI's current and future needs.
- Restructure committees by reviewing responsibilities and rewriting descriptions to meet the current needs of OLLI in all three sites. Standing committees should function for all three sites, and some committees may need "regional" coordinators. Subcommittees should have clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- Analyze the existing committee structure and implement necessary changes:
 - Reinstate the Facilities committee and others as appropriate.
 - Consider subordinating some existing committees (i.e. Landscaping).
 - Organize the Hospitality committee so that it has duties appropriate for each of three locations.
 - Add a Public Relations committee.
 - Delineate the responsibilities of the Membership Committee and possibly divide into subcommittees for membership Satisfaction and Membership Recruitment.
- Consider appointment of co-chairs for some committees. This would spread the work and relieve some of the stress of individual responsibility. The work would be covered, should ill health or vacation take someone away from the work schedule temporarily.
- Establish an Advisory Council for developing closer relationships with the community – business, civic, educational, governmental and religious groups. Having representatives from each of these entities would spread the knowledge of OLLI, would enable OLLI to obtain advice and support if needed, would make our program more relevant and viable to the community. The efficacy of having an Advisory Council is currently being researched by the Planning Committee.

LRI/OLLI – A HISTORY OF CHANGES

*The further back you can look
The further forward you can see.*
(Winston Churchill)

The initial idea for the first organization of its kind in Northern Virginia took time to be accepted and was followed by a series of changes that have ultimately led to the building of one of the strongest Lifelong Learning institutes in the United States.

- 1984** Program concept of a Learning in Retirement Institute (LRI), affiliated with a university, was presented to George Mason University but was not accepted at the time.
- 1990** Steering Committee composed of 15 founding activists, plus a legal advisor.
- 1990** Mason established the Institute as an affiliate of the University.
- 1991** LRI incorporated as a 501(c)(3) and obtained National Taxonomy of Exempt Organizations (NTEE) designation in Gerontology (not continuing Education).
- 1991** First named Kathryn Brooks Learning in Retirement Institute at George Mason University.
- 1991** Board of Directors elected and Bylaws written.
- 1991** One month later the name was amended by the Board of Directors to Learning in Retirement Institute at George Mason University, and approved by the State Corporation Commission in October 1991.
- 1991** Classes began in one room of Mason's Commerce II Building, with 100 members able to choose from 14 classes for annual dues of \$200. Half-year memberships were tried and discontinued.
- 1991** The administrator's office, in the classroom with a donated computer at a donated desk, alternated space in the lobby among Mason students.
- 1991** A second classroom was found for classes scheduled early in the day, so as not to conflict with Mason students.
- 1993** Resolution passed in Virginia General Assembly: "That . . . Commonwealth's institutions of higher education be encouraged to support the establishment of Learning in Retirement institutes and organizations."
- 1993** Administrator received state-of-the-art computer donated by IBM.
- 1993** Free classroom space provided in scattered locations: City Hall, Alcohol and Substance Abuse (ASAP), Gold's Gym Building, and Juvenile Justice Courthouse of Fairfax County.
- 1993** 172 members had choice of 36 classes for \$200 annual fee.
- 1994** Two LRI members provided computer expertise to faculty and staff at Mason. This was long before Mason became a state and area leader in IT.
- 1994** Tallwood Annex (built in 1922) became home of LRI with 5-year lease. Pool parking lot was used.
- 1994** 199 members had choice among 51 classes and special events for \$200 annual dues.

- 1995-1999** Two modular classrooms (doublewide trailers) purchased: TA-3 bought with \$25,000 one-time donation from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.
- 1996** 300 members, 75 classes and special events, \$200 annual dues.
- 1996** Two Mason scholarships awarded in names of Kathryn Brooks and Abe Spero.
- 1997-1998** Membership reached 425 which was “near capacity” and capped at 420. To control the capacity load it was suggested to limit number of classes to five that each member could take. Caps discontinued; limits never exercised.
- 1997** Pool parking lot, previously free, was rented for \$8,000 per year.
- 1997** 33 of 48 LRI members from the Reston area pressed for classes in Reston.
- 1998** \$220 annual dues.
- 1999** Reston became an LRI site. With no Mason presence in the area, classes were conducted in rented space in a church on Lake Anne Plaza.
- 2000** Reston hired part-time administrative assistant.
- 2000** Pool parking lot rent raised to \$8,500.
- 2000** In two locations: 617 members had 171 classes to choose from during three days a week, for \$220 annual fee.
- 2001** Pool parking lot rent raised to \$10,000.
- 2001-2002** Group from Arlington lobbied to establish an LRI at the Mason’s Arlington campus. LRI served as consultant and ALRI established itself as an independent entity, although affiliated with Mason.
- 2001** 650 members, 188 classes and special events, \$260 annual fee.
- 2002** Database created to track enrollment, attendance, membership trends, etc.
- 2002** First audited financial statements.
- 2003** 640 members, 191 classes and special events, \$270 annual fee.
- 2003** A third scholarship awarded to Mason in name of Shirley Fox.
- 2004** OLLIWOOD Gardens began.
- 2004** Christ Lutheran Church (Fairfax) rented as off-site classroom for mega-classes.
- 2004** Osher Foundation grant #1, \$100,000. Changed name to Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University – OLLI-GMU. Purchased: new AV equipment, 2 new roofs on trailers; new office furniture.
- 2005** Tallwood Annex, determined unsafe for classes, was closed. Termite-damaged bathroom wing renovated and two more bathrooms added with Osher funds.
- 2005** Osher Foundation grant #2, \$100,000. Executive Director hired; 4 part-time staff reconfigured; one additional part-time position added.
- 2005** 670 members, 242 classes and special events expanded to four days with Fridays designated for more activities, \$280 annual dues.
- 2005** OLLI-News: weekly. Hardcopies still available in black-and-white in classrooms.
- 2006** Tallwood House (sometimes called Tallwood Annex) demolished.
- 2006** Osher Foundation awarded endowment, \$1,000,000; and bridge loan of \$50,000.
- 2006** Friends of OLLI raised over \$25,000: 4 scholarships to Mason, AV upgrades.
- 2006** Mason accepted initial proposal from Sunrise Senior Living, Inc. to build UBRC on West Campus and indicated that OLLI will be removed from Tallwood and embedded in the university-based retirement community building.
- 2007** Mason requested OLLI’s program be initiated at Mason site in Loudoun. Spring term: 8 courses, 118 registered students paid \$35 for one course and \$100 for three or more for total income of \$5,170. Part-time administrative assistant hired.

- 2007** Church of the Good Shepherd (Fairfax) rented for off-site mega-classes.
- 2007** Executive Director's position moved to OLLI budget together with 7 part-time staff positions. Payroll is almost 50% of OLLI budget.
- 2007** 757 members, 250 classes and special events at 3 sites, \$350 annual fee.
- 2007** First Membership Survey captured valuable information with 53% responses.
- 2007** Second Affiliation Agreement between George Mason University and OLLI.
- 2007** Rentals for facilities total 28% of budget: Pool parking rent raised to \$14,000 per year for three years; rent for two churches = \$17,500.
- 2007** Sunrise/Greystone, prospective builders of UBRC, faced problems with SEC.
- 2007** TA-3 needed major repair.
- 2007** Friends of OLLI raised almost \$19,000 for 4 scholarships to Mason students, defibrillators, reupholstering half classroom chairs, head-set microphones, Fall for the Book, registration system (partial).
- 2008** Sunrise/Greystone filing for bankruptcy made prospects of OLLI at UBRC nil.
- 2008** Friends of OLLI raised \$30,000 for 8 more gravel parking spaces, telephone system, 4 scholarships to Mason students in departments that sent faculty to instruct at OLLI, AV upgrades, online registration system, etc.
- 2008** Mason replaced soiled carpets and painted throughout Tallwood
- 2008** Silent Auction (first annual) brought in \$3,741 for Friends of OLLI.
- 2009** 869 members; introductory trial rate available for registration; reduced annual rate available for Loudoun-only members, \$350 annual fee for full membership.
- 2009** Five year contract with Washington Plaza Baptist Church (Reston) renewed at initial annual rental rate of \$11,750.
- 2009** Silent Auction (second annual) brought in \$6,880 for Friends of OLLI.
- 2009** Loudoun has its first representative on the Board of Directors

FEATURES NOT TO BE COMPROMISED

*Our life must have an aim,
but we must also ensure that
the direction we take is a good one.*
(Yehudi Menuhin)

- OLLI must remain affiliated with Mason. We are dependent on Mason for facilities and are required by Osher to be affiliated with a university.
- OLLI must have a permanent headquarters consisting of offices, classrooms, and socializing spaces that can be enlarged to accommodate staff, increases in membership and expansions in program.
- OLLI's permanent headquarters must stay close enough to the main Mason campus to attract faculty as free participators in our program.
- OLLI must have contiguous classrooms at headquarters, Reston and Loudoun. Dispersed classrooms would diminish opportunities for socializing, so important in developing and maintaining a Spirit of Community.
- OLLI must have adequate indoor, year-round space for frequent socializing, between classes as well as for special events. Comfortable sitting down spaces for conversations and noshes. Stand up spaces will do for chats.
- All classrooms should have up-to-date technological facilities for the use of instructors and for clubs.
- OLLI must have sufficient classroom space for members to get all choices of unlimited classes - (No Wait List. No limit on courses.)
- OLLI needs rooms to hold meetings without interruption and rooms for discussion groups that do not require AV equipment.
- OLLI must have sufficient, safe, convenient, unshared parking for all members attending activities.
- OLLI must have adequate bathroom facilities so that elderly members do not have to wait in long lines out-of-doors.