About the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Oregon

The UO lifelong learning program began in Eugene, Oregon, in 1993 as Learning in Retirement. Ten years later, a sister site was opened in Bend, and in 2008, the Portland site was established at the UO White Stag Block, located in historic Old Town.

In 2004, the UO lifelong learning program was selected to receive grant funding from the Bernard Osher Foundation. With this funding, the program joined a national network of Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes.

All of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, or OLLIs, are based in universities or colleges. Program design and curriculum is determined locally to meet members’ needs and interests. There are many variations on the theme, but OLLI programs share certain characteristics:

- Programs celebrate the joy of learning without required tests or grades.
- Members are instrumental in planning and executing curriculum.
- OLLIs are supported financially through a combination of membership and participation fees, donations, and some form of funding from the Osher Foundation.

OLLI-UO offers year-round programming through lectures, short courses, study and discussion groups, and field trips and tours. Classes are led by current and retired faculty from UO and other colleges and universities, independent scholars, community experts, and members.

Programs are planned on a quarterly basis and are publicized through the monthly newsletter, The Oregon Sage, website calendars, weekly e-minders, and classroom fliers.

Members of OLLI-UO pay a single membership fee that covers their participation in the majority of program offerings. Membership fees are: $130 per person, $110 per person for household memberships (may be roommates, partners or couples), and $75 for a six-month membership.

Membership benefits include:

- Access to UO Libraries on the main campus and in Portland at the White Stag Block.
- A standing invitation to participate in programs offered at all other OLLI-UO sites.

About the Bernard Osher Foundation

Bernard Osher, a successful businessman, community leader, and philanthropist, founded the Bernard Osher Foundation in 1977. The Foundation seeks to improve quality of life for residents of California’s San Francisco and Alameda Counties and the State of Maine through post-secondary student scholarships and arts, cultural, and educational grants. It also supports selected programs in integrative medicine in the United States and Sweden as well as a national network of lifelong learning institutes on 119 campuses from Maine to Hawaii. The Honorable Barbro Osher, consul general of Sweden in San Francisco, serves as chairman of the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

UO Osher Funding Overview

- The University of Oregon was the first university in the Northwest to receive funding from the Bernard Osher Foundation.

Starting in 2004, the Foundation contributed three $100,000 grants over a three-year period to enhance and expand our program. As our membership passed 600 members, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Oregon became eligible for a $1 million endowment in 2008. Interest earnings from the endowment became available in the 2011-2012 academic year.

OLLI National Network

- At present, the Osher Foundation supports 119 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes in all fifty states, and the National Resource Center for the Osher Institutes at the University of Southern Maine.

The National Resource Center publishes an annual academic journal, The LLI Review: The Annual Journal of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, to provide a national forum to share research, strategies in education, and ideas about curriculum. The Journal is a peer-reviewed publication presenting original research in the growing field of lifelong learning for older adults and engaging commentary related to learning among mature adults. Michael Brady, PhD, professor and senior research fellow at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Southern Maine edits the Journal, which publishes work by members of the Osher Institute national network, gerontologists, and educators working in the field of older adult education.

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