Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI): A Program of the Gerontology Institute

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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston

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**Summary**

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UMass Boston is the largest lifelong learning program in Massachusetts. It was established in 1999 as a learning community to enrich the intellectual, social, and cultural lives of adults aged 50 and older.

One of our objectives is to build a sense of community – a social connection among members. In addition to our courses, we offer this opportunity through several social events a year: a holiday party, a Boston harbor cruise, museum trips, attendance at theater events, overnight trips, and international trips.

OLLI has helped the university to secure over $4 million endowments from the Osher Foundation and state matching funds. Part of the funding is used to provide scholarships to at least 10 undergraduate students each year.

**Results/Impacts**

- Over 60 retired and current UMass Boston faculty volunteers to teach courses and seminars
- Over 1,000 OLLI members who come from 80 cities and towns in Massachusetts
- Over 100 courses and 80 brown bag seminars and a dozen or more cultural events offered each year
- Class locations at UMass Boston, Plymouth’s Cordage Park, and Hingham Public Library
- Alliance with Stonewall Communities, a Boston-based nonprofit serving gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered seniors

**Approaches and Methods**

- Recruit and engage current faculty and staff in community service through teaching
- Reconnect retired faculty and staff in providing meaningful services to the university
- Provide teaching opportunities to graduate students with stipends
- Have OLLI students act as goodwill ambassadors for the university

**Next Steps**

- To improve the quality and diversity of our offerings and activities
- To expand our community partners in promoting lifelong learning for older adults
- To increase our intergenerational programs and provide opportunities for more engagement between younger students and OLLI students

**Learn More**

To learn more about our program, please contact us:

- Email: ollireg@gmail.com
- Tel: 617.287.7312
- Website: www.oll.umb.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary/Abstract</th>
<th>Approaches and Methods</th>
<th>Results/Impact</th>
<th>Conclusion/Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<th>Goals and Objectives</th>
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