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*Where Curiosity Never Retires*



March 20, 2020 OLLI NEWS

**A Note From The Chair**



A strong sense of community has always been an integral part of OLLI at AU, and these past two weeks have shown that in myriad new ways. 52% of our classes are now online thanks to the teamwork of our staff and the willingness of so many Study Group Leaders to regroup, learn a new technology, and forge onward. Mary Fran Miklitsch and Jesse Williams have mastered ZOOM and how to make it feasible for SGLS and members. Lesley Diaz and Niranjan Singh have communicated with SGLs and members, respectively, providing information and fielding questions.

Tony Long, as captain of the team, has developed the game plan, organized the offense and defense, and supported all throughout. My fellow Board of Directors colleagues have been at the ready to meet and problem-solve whenever needed. You, our loyal members, have been patient and understanding as we all navigate this new territory. I realized after my ZOOM classes that seeing the slides up close and being able to adjust the volume to suit my needs were even advantages over being in a classroom!

We are still learning, and I am confident that the inevitable bumps and glitches will diminish with practice. As soon as we can catch our breath, we will figure out how best to work around or reconfigure some of the end-of-semester events that we had scheduled. Some will inevitably be cancelled, but we will put our thinking caps on and try to find creative ways to accomplish some of the others.

In these weeks when we are not spending time together in person, we are, indeed, finding ways to come together as a community; for that I am deeply grateful.

Martha Cutts  
Chair, Board of Directors

## To My OLLI Colleagues

To Mary Fran, Jesse, Lesley, and Niranjana -

I can't imagine what the past couple of weeks would have been like without this team! In two weeks, with the help of the entire OLLI community, you have been able to turn on a dime to provide the online courses we are now offering. Throughout, you have maintained the high standards we expect at OLLI, all with a sense of humor. Yes, we really did switch the invitation lists for the "To Hell and Back" and "Sitting Quietly" classes. Other than that ironic blip, things are going remarkably well. I am proud to have you as my colleagues and thank you for all you do!

Tony

## OLLI Staff Working Remotely

Starting Monday, March 23, the OLLI staff will primarily be working remotely. Staff will be monitoring all Zoom classes and will always be accessible via e-mail. While we will have phones forwarded, we ask that you e-mail the office at [olli@american.edu](mailto:olli@american.edu) for all general matters.

## Spring Semester Remote Classes

Many of our remote spring classes using Zoom, e-mail, or conference calling still have space available. We encourage you to take a look [online](#) to see if there are any classes you'd like to register for, especially if some of your classes were cancelled for the semester. You will see the format of each class indicated in the title. Click [here](#) to view the start date for each remote class.

## Spring 2020 Refund Policy

- OLLI members who take 1, 2, or 3 courses remotely are entitled, if requested via e-mail to [oli@american.edu](mailto:oli@american.edu), to a 50% refund of tuition paid less a \$10 processing fee. (Please do not request this refund from your member portal.)
- Members who decide that online classes don't work for them will be entitled to a full refund of their paid tuition.
- The deadline for requesting a refund has been extended to **March 30**.
- If you'd like this refund to be considered a donation to OLLI, please email the OLLI office at [oli@american.edu](mailto:oli@american.edu).
- If you'd like the full tuition refunded to you, please click [here](#) to log on to your account to request a refund online.

## Distance Learning at OLLI: How did it go?

After my weekly swim workout: my wife asks me "How did it go?" I usually answer: "Well, I didn't drown." For the first session of Zoom delivery of my Introductory Oceanography, we managed to not only drown but did pretty well. The OLLI staff had spent considerable effort getting the SGLs prepared, sending us links to Zoom tutorials, and hosting hands-on training sessions. This paid off as there was minimal effort and worry on my part to get set up for the first class.

Assisted by my wife, Noëlle, also an OLLI member, we decided to do this class from an OLLI classroom so Jesse could be there to provide assistance if needed. My primary concern was the handling of questions from participants. With a rather large class, (68 listed on the roster), I was concerned about watching for participants requests, and managing the muting/un-muting, all while trying to keep my train of thought for the PowerPoint presentations. To address this, we set up my wife with a second computer and made her a co-host. She kept the "Participants" window open, tapped me on the shoulder when a request came in, and handled participant muting/un-muting. This left me free to concentrate on the content delivery.

Though we had a small glitch in getting the sign-in link out to the participants, we had over 80% of the roster signed in by the start of class. Both the content delivery and the questions seemed to go smoothly. The one adjustment I will make for the next class is to make the cursor larger so it is easier for the participants to see where I am pointing on the screen.

Overall, I feel the Zoom delivery was successful. Though I will miss the instant feedback one gets from the expressions on the faces of a live audience, the Zoom delivery is a suitable "social distancing" replacement.

Ken Hinga

SGL of *Introductory Oceanography*

## Board of Director Elections in the Time of COVID-19

*Through wind, rain, sleet, snow, and spreading virus, the OLLI Board of Directors election goes forward.*

After inviting recommendations from the OLLI membership, this year's Nominating Committee (Denise Liebowitz, Chair; John Aldock; Bob Kolodney; Sue Edson; and Elly Greene), has developed a list of four candidates to fill the four positions on the Board of Directors becoming vacant in June 2020. The Committee believes these candidates have amply demonstrated the skills, experience, background and energy needed for OLLI at AU leadership. The list, which the Board has approved, will appear on the ballot for the election that is scheduled for April. The Board-approved candidates are:



**John Barger**, an OLLI member since 2014, is currently the Coordinator of the Welcomer program and a member of the Membership and Outreach Committee. He previously served as Chair of the Nominating Committee for the 2019 Board elections and has served as SGR for multiple classes over the years. John's professional experience includes more than 35 years with the US State Department, specializing in the Middle East and transnational organized crime. He has served in Jerusalem, Cairo, Tel Aviv, and Managua, and as Chief of Civilian Observers with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), the peacekeeping force between Israel and Egypt based in the Sinai. Other foreign affairs experience includes a two-year detail to the Pentagon to work on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Before joining the State Department, John taught modern European history at Cedar Crest College. He has degrees from the University of Pennsylvania (graduate) and Emory University (undergraduate).



**Judy Havemann\*** has been a member of OLLI for six years during which she has coordinated study groups on international policy called the Scholars' World Series, chaired the lecture committee, and served as Board Vice Chair. She is a retired 30-year editor and reporter for The Washington Post, a former deputy editor of the Wilson Quarterly, and is retired from the National Endowment for the Humanities. A former foreign reporter for The Post, she has edited Virginia, Maryland, and national news, and directed newsroom recruiting and hiring. She retired as the food editor and is an adjunct professor at the University of Maryland.



**Dave Hensler** has been an OLLI member for five years, is currently serving on the Finance Committee and the Investment Subcommittee, and was recently asked to join the Lecture Committee. Dave assisted OLLI in getting a substantial increase in its annual payment from the AU Endowment and in improving the investment return on the Friends of OLLI Fund. In Dave's view, the Board's principal responsibilities should be to continue the good work that OLLI's recent leadership has done in strengthening the OLLI staff, rationalizing the budget process, and increasing the classroom space available to OLLI, as well as to prepare OLLI to meet the unexpected challenges that will inevitably occur. Dave is currently on the Board of Directors of the Duke Ellington Fund and is a Trustee of the Foundation of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Dave is also the outside General Counsel, on a pro bono basis, for the largest Native American scholarship fund. Dave is a Senior Counsel at Hogan Lovells US LLP.



**John Thorner\*** began his first Board term as a participant in the Strategic Planning process. Concurrently, he worked to align the strategic plan with a financial plan. As part of that plan, he formulated an investment policy for the Friends of OLLI Fund, and now chairs OLLI's Investment Subcommittee. Additionally, John chairs OLLI's Membership and Outreach Committee with an eye to growing membership consistent with the strategic and financial plans. In his early career, John worked as a reporter, government lawyer, and association lobbyist. Later, he began leading associations, including those representing dentists, anesthesiologists, and physicists.

**\*Current Board Member standing for a second three-year term**

**The OLLI Annual Meeting** will take place on **Friday, April 3** and will be conducted online with candidates giving brief remarks to introduce themselves. Stay tuned for further information about how to remotely participate in the Annual Meeting. Online balloting will begin at this time and election results will be announced on **April 20**.

Members interested in being placed on the ballot as at-large candidates can do so by filing a self-nomination petition supported by the signatures of 10 OLLI members. Candidates meeting the 10-member signature requirement will automatically appear on the ballot. The deadline for submitting at-large petitions is **Monday, March 30**. As part of the petition, candidates should provide a photo (a smartphone photo will be fine) and a brief bio of no more than 100 words. Interested candidates should contact the OLLI office for the petition form and other details.

### **OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MISSION**

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at American University is an association of, by, and for the people in the Washington, DC area who wish to continue to study and learn. OLLI at AU is dedicated to the proposition that learning is a lifelong process and that *curiosity never retires*.

**Website** [www.oli-dc.org](http://www.oli-dc.org) | **Phone** 202-895-4860 | **E-mail** [oli@american.edu](mailto:oli@american.edu)

**Study Group Location** 4801 Massachusetts Ave. NW

**Mailing Address** 4400 Massachusetts Ave NW | Washington, DC 20016

Tony Long, *Executive Director* | Mary Fran Miklitsch, *Deputy Executive Director*

Lesley Diaz, *Academic Programs Coordinator*

Jesse Williams, *Operations Coordinator*

Niranjan Singh, *Administrative Coordinator*

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