

# **History of the Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL)**

The ALL story began when a group of Oregon State University (OSU) retired faculty and staff met in the summer of 2001 to create an OSU Retirement Association (OSURA). One of the proposed objectives was to promote ongoing intellectual stimulation and growth for OSU retirees based on the worldwide “Learning in Retirement” model. This concept was spun off as a separate organization from OSURA and made available to all mature adults in the community, and thus was the Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL) born.

Planning and support for ALL was provided by the OSU Department of Continuing Education (DCE) with collaboration from OSURA, the OSU Foundation, OSU President’s Office and the OSU Alumni Association. Ultimately ALL was to be self-governing and self-sufficient.

To get started, DCE recruited an Advisory Board and a Curriculum Committee with good leadership skills and dedication to the concept. These individuals established goals and a timetable, which resulted in rapid development of structure for the infant organization. Everyone worked diligently to develop operating policies, hire a part time Program Coordinator, establish publicity and membership committees, create a budget, develop curriculum, find presenters, and produce a curriculum of 14 classes for the first ALL term in Spring of 2002. 41 members joined and paid a \$25 membership fee.

By the Fall of the 2002-2003 year ALL was ready to go with the format that continues to be used today. Five subject strands (Arts, Humanities, Issues and Ideas, Science and World Cultures) offer approximately 150 classes, tours, and field trips annually (10 per strand, 50 per term). Two-hour classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and afternoons, and Wednesday mornings for a \$100 annual membership fee. Over 800 volunteer presenters have offered more than 1000 classes in the nine years since ALL began.

In the early years special recognition goes to the small but select Curriculum Committee. They were the backbone of ALL in the unknown territory of a new organization. They recruited presenters from the community, the university and the community college - anywhere they could find them - to present classes on interesting topics, without remuneration. The Committee also acted as hosts for the presentations, which meant handling all aspects of the presentation, from recruitment to setting up chairs and running audio-visual requirements. As membership grew, the curriculum committee also increased to about 25 members.

Early presenters used overhead projectors, tape recorders, and slide machines. In the 2009-2010 year, as technology exploded and computers and power point presentations became quite common, a Facilities committee took over responsibility for all classroom tasks - room arrangement, audio-visual and electronic tasks. New electronic equipment was purchased which enhanced the professionalism of the presentations. The Curriculum Committee hosts were then freed to just be hosts. About that same time, an ALL Webmaster created an ALL website ([www-ALL-osuaa.org](http://www-ALL-osuaa.org)) which improved the limited linkage to the OSUAA website.

A Schedule of Classes (SOC) is produced and distributed before each term to ALL members and to specified locations around the community. The SOC has evolved over time and is edited and published by an ALL member as an attractive and informational marketing piece. The SOC can also be found on the web site.

Early classes were held in the OSU Foundation Building, the Majestic Theatre, and Stoneybrook Lodge. In 2004 ALL found a home by renting the large meeting room of the First Congregational Church. Thus began an excellent partnership for ALL, which still accommodates very nicely the current, ALL membership of 300 plus persons from all around the community.

In its early years ALL maintained a loose affiliation with the

OSU Alumni Association, which provided banking and accounting services and insurance. During the 2005-2007 period it seemed that more clarification was needed regarding ALL's relationship to OSU.

A permanent link to the university was achieved through a merger, which made ALL a program of the OSU Alumni Association.

Most, but not all, members are retired and take advantage of this opportunity to expand and update their knowledge in the areas that ALL offers. The presenters are often OSU faculty, retired faculty, or members of the community who also appreciate the opportunity to share their knowledge with the larger Corvallis community. It has proven to be a mutually advantageous experience.

In addition to the intellectual challenges offered, ALL includes opportunities for socializing among its members through socials three times a quarter after class, a Newcomers luncheon in the fall, and a dinner each term sponsored by the World Cultures strand, which offers the food and culture of the country currently being studied. Finally, in June a Recognition Dinner celebrates the achievements of the year and those members who helped to make the organization work.

The part time Program Coordinator's role evolved into an Administrative Assistant with increased hours and responsibilities. Able skills of the persons in this role have kept the organization and members on track and on time for a smoothly run, highly effective program sponsored by the Oregon State University Alumni Association. ALL extends the university's commitment to education to the wider community of Corvallis.