

HELPFUL HINTS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING GROUP CHAIRS

SCHEDULE PROGRAM PLANNING MEETINGS PERIODICALLY

- These may be held as needed, often before upcoming terms. Program Associates will help with this process, finding a date and booking a room. Let them know if you would like staff to arrange Zoom or teleconferencing technology to enhance meeting participation across campuses.
- General planning meetings are helpful not only for selecting topics for courses, but also for attracting new volunteers and potential instructors.
- You are encouraged to advertise your upcoming meeting in a brief article in E-News. (Email advertisement at a week in advance of publication [in term] and two weeks in advance of publication [between terms] to ollienewseditor@gmail.com.)

THREE OR FOUR WEEKS BEFORE YOUR MEETING:

- Continue to develop an e-mail distribution list of people who may be interested in attending planning meetings (Program Associates already have e-mail distribution lists done, and you can add/edit names).
- These may include recent attendees, classmates, and friends.
- Be sure to include those who you think may have contacts or know of contacts for instructors.
- Also you may want to invite people enrolled in recent classes in your subject area.

Prepare an e-mail invitation:

- Try to create a sense of excitement about the meeting with an upbeat tone.
- Stress the fun factors—camaraderie with peers with similar interests, exciting exchange of ideas.
- Include the time and location for the meeting.
- Include an agenda (shows this meeting won't be a waste of time!).
- Request those who can't attend the meeting to provide suggestions via e-mail.

Materials that may be useful during the meeting:

- Copies of the agenda.
- Lists of past instructors.
- Lists of ideas from past "Idea Week" and other sources.
- Program Associates also prepare drafts of upcoming schedules and other useful handouts.

AT THE MEETING:

- Request someone to take notes of the meeting. Program Associates may or may not be present at all meetings or for the full duration of the meeting. They can help with this as needed.
- Have brief introductions.
- Follow the agenda.

- Invite all attendees to offer suggestions and opinions for future classes.
- Moderate the discussion so that people's ideas are heard, but don't cut off conversation too quickly. Sometimes the refinement of the idea under discussion can be very helpful.
- You'll probably need to remind people of the need for identifying instructors as ideas are discussed.
- About ½ hour before the end, look at the suggestions for future courses and ask members to choose ideas they believe can be developed for future terms.
- Ask attendees what they are willing or able to do: coordinate a particular class, make a contact, teach a class, etc.
- Remind people of due dates: Date to finalize course proposals, date for course descriptions to be submitted.

ABOUT A WEEK AFTER THE MEETING:

- Prepare notes from the meeting. Program Associates can help with this as needed.
- Be sure action items are included of activities people said they would do.
- Send the notes via e-mail to everyone on your original list, including those who couldn't attend the meeting (Program Associates can help with this as needed).

ON A CONTINUING AD HOC BASIS:

- Keep in touch when necessary with members who have volunteered to coordinate classes or make contacts.
- Notify Program Associates of all classes under development so that they can keep the term schedules up to date.
- Continue to invite other OLLI members to join your group.
- Act as a mentor to new group members who have volunteered to do a task.
- Feel free to seek help from the Program Committee co-chairs or Program Associates.

TWO OR THREE TIMES A YEAR:

- Attend meetings of the entire Program Committee, which is made up of all the Program Planning Group chairs.
- At these meetings share ideas, concerns, and needs of your group.
- Consider writing a brief E-News article to announce upcoming planning meetings or to advertise an upcoming class. The idea is to keep reminding OLLI members that we are all volunteers and need input and help with program from everyone.