THE OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
AT
TOWSON UNIVERSITY

HANDBOOK
OF
STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Approved and accepted
By Coordinating Council:
March 2017
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University is to offer opportunities for continued learning and programs and activities for social and cultural enrichment to persons 50 years of age and older. Learning is a lifelong process and is enhanced in a congenial atmosphere with others who share a love of learning. The Institute uses the expertise and talents of its members to plan and implement its program.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to any individual age 50 or older and to his or her spouse regardless of age. Classes are open to all without regard to race, creed, color, sexual orientation, national origin, educational background or disability.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE Osher Lifelong Learning Institute to Towson University

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute is overseen by Towson University's Center for Professional Studies (CPS), part of the Division of Innovation and Applied Research (DIAR). The Institute’s Director reports to the Executive Director of the Center for Professional Studies, who serves as the liaison between the University and the Osher Institute and as an advocate for its program. Although day-to-day activities are planned and implemented by Osher staff and members, final authority on all Osher matters lies with the Executive Director of CPS.

The Institute is funded by membership and tuition fees, donations, and through an endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation. Towson University provides the Institute with classroom and office space at 7400 York Road, although special meetings may be held at other University facilities or other nearby locations. Members may use the University library, bookstore and dining facilities.

Since the Institute is part of Towson University and not an independent entity, any liability incurred by the Institute is a liability of the University. The Institute uses the University’s financial services department for deposits of all income and payment of all expenses. All Institute expenses are paid from the Osher budget.

The position of Director is indispensable to the success of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University. In addition to providing an outstanding curriculum and working effectively with the administration of the University, the Director creates a strong committee structure that is vital to the planning and implementation of the program. The Osher Coordinating Council protects the academic strength and viability of the program. Accordingly, it is essential that the Coordinating Council be involved in the selection process for a new Director. At the time a search committee is formed, the Council will elect two members from its ranks to assist the University in establishing criteria, reviewing credentials, interviewing candidates and offering opinion on a final decision. At the discretion of the search committee, the Council as a group will also be available to meet with candidates applying for the position of Director.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute may partner with Towson University and other cultural and educational institutions to sponsor special programs. It may also enter into partnerships with local senior centers and retirement communities to offer Osher courses for their members or residents.
GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University

The Osher Institute is self-governing, with all policy decisions subject to the final approval of the Executive Director of the Center for Professional Studies. Osher’s program and day-to-day activities are planned and implemented by its Director, staff and members as represented through a Coordinating Council and committees.

OSHER COORDINATING COUNCIL

Mission: The Osher Coordinating Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Director by discussing, planning, coordinating and evaluating the policies and activities of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University. The Director will share an annual review of the budget, the status of various funds and reports to the national Osher organization with the Coordinating Council.

The Year: The Council will follow the fiscal year July 1 – June 30 for its activities.

Meetings: The Council will meet at least once every two months. Meetings, to the extent possible, will be held in the months of July, September, November, January, March and May.

A majority of the members of the Council will be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at each Council meeting. Robert’s Rules of Order, Latest Edition, will be used to govern proceedings.

Composition of Coordinating Council:
- Council Chair
- Vice-Chair (Council Chair-Elect)
- Secretary
- Chair of Each Standing Committee
- Immediate Past Council Chair
- Six At-Large Members
- Ex Officio members:
  - Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
  - Assistant Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
  - Office Manager

Council members are expected to attend all Council meetings or to notify the Chair when unable to attend. For purposes of voting, each Council member will have one vote with this exception: The Director, Assistant Director and Office Manager are non-voting members.

At-Large Members: Selection Process and Duties

The Coordinating Council will elect six at-large members to serve one three-year term on a staggered basis, with two of the terms expiring each election year. The Council will publicize and solicit nominations from the Osher membership each March; elections will take place at the May Coordinating Council meeting. At-large terms will begin on July 1. Those Osher members seeking at-large membership on the Council must have been an Osher member for at least 2 years, must have taken classes in 3 of the past 4 semesters prior to being nominated, and must have skills and talents commensurate with the responsibilities and tasks at hand. They are expected to participate in all Council deliberations and bring program observations and issues to Council meetings. At-large members have full voting privileges.

The Chair of the Council will be in charge of the voting process. Voting will be conducted by written ballot, and the top vote-getters will be chosen. In case of a tie, a run-off vote will be conducted. An at-
large member will not be eligible for reelection immediately after his/her three-year term is ended, but will be eligible after a period of one year.

If an at-large member resigns from the Council or is unable to complete his/her term for any reason, the Council Chair, in consultation with the Osher Director and with the approval of the Council, will appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term. Partial terms do not count toward term limits.

**Officers of the Council**

- Council Chair
- Vice Chair (Council Chair-Elect)
- Secretary

The Vice Chair of the Coordinating Council will be elected by the Council in November of the second year of the Chair’s term by general consensus or formal vote. Office terms begin immediately. The Vice Chair automatically becomes Chair at the end of the term of the Council Chair or, if at any time, the Council Chair is unable to perform his/her duties. A candidate for the position of Council Vice Chair shall be a current or former member of the Coordinating Council. The new Secretary will be chosen by the Council in March of the year that the current Secretary’s 3 year term ends.

**Responsibilities of Council Officers**

- **Council Chair**
  - Schedules and conducts Coordinating Council meetings.
  - Prepares agendas for Council meetings.
  - Sends notice of meetings to Council members.
  - Performs any other tasks deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the Council.

- **Vice Chair (Council Chair-Elect)**
  - Assumes responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence.

- **Secretary**
  - Records minutes of all Coordinating Council meetings and distributes them to all Council members

**COMMITTEES**

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University is served by the following standing committees:

- Curriculum
- Membership/Outreach
- Classroom Facilities/Safety
- A/V Computer Technical Services
- Social/Hospitality
- Planning and Development
- Day Trips
- Mailings
- Fundraising
- Book Exchange
- Art Exhibition
The Coordinating Council may establish other committees as needed to carry out the operation of the organization and will determine whether or not the committee chair serves on the Council. The Council will also determine when it may be appropriate to dissolve a committee.

**Composition of Committees:** The number of persons on each committee will be left to the discretion of the committee chair.

**Responsibilities of Committees:** Committees will perform those duties laid out in the “Committee Responsibilities” section of this document. That list is to be reviewed by the committee and/or by the Coordinating Council from time to time; changes and additions will be made as needed.

**Committee Chairs:** Committee chairs will be appointed by the Director in consultation with the Coordinating Council chair for a term of three years. Appointments are renewable.

**Responsibilities of Committee Chairs:** Committee chairs will select committee members from among those Osher members who have indicated an interest in serving on a particular committee, or they may be asked to serve by the committee chair. The Director will provide committee chairs with the names of individuals who have expressed an interest in serving on a committee. Committee chairs will contact each person on the list whether or not space on a committee is currently available. Committee chairs will provide the Director and Council chair with a list of committee members and will update this list as necessary.

The Director in consultation with the Committee Chair and the Council Chair will appoint a Vice-chair of each standing committee, who will be trained/mentored by the chair. The Vice-chair will accede to the position of chair at the end of the chair’s term. Chairs or vice-chairs will conduct committee meetings. Sub-committees will be created as necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the committee; subcommittee members may be chosen from the membership at large. Committee chairs will report regularly to the Council on the work of the committee, decisions made and recommendations for new or future activities, policies or programs.

**REPORTS TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP**

The Director and Council chair will plan and call a Town Meeting of the membership at least annually. To encourage attendance, meetings will be scheduled on two different class days. Each meeting will follow the same agenda. Notices publicizing the meetings will be posted in the Osher suite at least two weeks prior to the meetings; announcements of the meetings will be made to Osher members via the listserv and classroom announcements. Written Town Meeting agendas will be made available to members. Agendas will include a Director’s Report, a discussion of goals for the coming months and an open forum for comments and suggestions from members.

A list of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute committees, current committee members and the responsibilities of each committee will be available in the hospitality area at 7400 York Road.

**STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Director**

The Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University oversees all aspects of the Osher program. This includes but is not limited to supervising the Osher staff, planning Osher curriculum content, preparing the Osher budget and overseeing the finances of the organization. The Director serves as the liaison between the Osher organization and Towson University and reports to the Executive Director of the Center.
for Professional Studies. The Osher Director will attend Osher Coordinating Council meetings regularly and Osher committee meetings as necessary.

Assistant Director
The Assistant Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University assists the Director as necessary. This includes but is not limited to marketing the Osher program, planning/implementing Osher's spring and fall Previews of Classes and maintaining/analyzing Osher membership records and databases. The Assistant Director maintains a listserv, communicates with the Osher membership electronically and coordinates the mass mailing of Osher letters/materials.

Office Manager
The Osher Office Manager assists the Director as necessary and performs all duties consistent with the proper functioning of the Osher office. This includes but is not limited to serving as a first point of contact between current and prospective members and the Osher organization, registering members for classes and recording and handling all Osher accounts receivable and payable.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Curriculum Committee
- Brainstorms to come up with ideas for courses,
- Chair recruits faculty members and receives course proposals for each semester,
- Evaluates course proposals and makes final decisions on what courses are to be offered., Chair prepares all material for Spring and Fall catalogs and submits to University Design Center.,
- Chair proofs catalogs and submits to University Print Shop when final copy is approved. Chair reads all course evaluations and tabulates results for discussion by committee members,
- Discusses results of evaluations based on tabulations and uses results as a tool for planning.

Membership/Outreach Committee
- Works toward enhancing the membership base of the Osher program,
- Actively pursues the annual renewal of members,
- Advises on the recruitment of new members through targeted campaigns and the distribution of publicity material in the wider community,
- Welcomes new members and supports the integration of all members into the Osher community,
- Devises and executes strategies to meet the above objectives as appropriate in light of membership data provided by the Osher staff,
- Helps assess the needs and satisfaction of the members of the Osher community,
- Periodically evaluates the success of the Committee.

Classroom Facilities/Safety Committee
- Makes certain A/V equipment is available to meet the needs of Osher teachers,
- Sets up classrooms; this includes A/V equipment and chairs,
- Assists teachers with A/V equipment and ensures that a committee member is assigned to each Osher class,
Makes daily announcements to class attendees before classes start; these announcements will be posted on an Osher bulletin board. 
Manages crowd control in the event of an emergency. 
Meets Towson University responsibilities for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). 
Coordinates Osher-sponsored CPR cadre training. 
Meets annually with Osher committee chairs and leaders of special interest groups to discuss safety issues. 
Monitors facility emergency response and building safety issues.

A/V Computer Technical Services Committee
Troubleshoots when difficult problems arise with any of the A/V or computer equipment. 
Advises and assists in the purchase of equipment. 
Serves on the Classroom Facilities Committee.

Social/Hospitality Committee
Plans, purchases and oversees the provision of refreshments during classes, at the Spring and Fall, Previews and special Osher events in order to promote community and sociability. 
Collects money and maintains records of income and expenses related to the daily refreshments and other miscellaneous items as approved by the Director. 
Plans luncheons at nearby restaurants, negotiates menu selections and costs, provides Osher members with sign-up sheets and oversees the collection of money and payment to the restaurant.

Planning and Development Committee
Meets regularly to discuss and address issues that affect Osher's future. 
Brings longer-range planning issues to the Osher Coordinating Council for consideration. 
Updates the Osher Handbook of Governance and Structure.

Note: The Planning and Development Committee will be chaired by the previous Osher Coordinating Council Chair.

Day Trips Committee
Develops day trips to provide learning opportunities that enrich or extend Osher’s curriculum offerings. 
Works with the Osher staff for clerical assistance and financial accounting.

Mailings Committee
Prepares for mailing all Osher bulk mail communications to its members. This includes renewal letters, spring and fall catalogs and any other mailing.

Fundraising
Ensure future financial security of Osher. 
Develop a culture of charitable giving. 
Increase the number of members who give. 
Encourage 100% participation by the Council annually. 
Educate the members regarding the 6 funds.

Book Exchange
Establishes and publishes guidelines for Book Exchange and criteria for book donations to be included in the Book Exchange. Guidelines and criteria will be reviewed and edited as needed.
Receives donated books for Book Exchange,

Evaluates donated books on an ongoing basis according to established guidelines and criteria,

Displays and maintains collection on Book Exchange bookshelves in Osher conference room to ensure that books are kept in good order and current.

Art Exhibition
Is responsible for designing and planning the displays of Osher member artwork within the Osher classrooms each semester,
Helps recruit artists among the Osher membership
Places and hangs the artwork,
May also plan and host any receptions associated with the exhibitions.

REVISIONS TO THE MANUAL OF STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

This manual will be reviewed every two years in December by the Osher Planning and Development Committee. Changes will be made as needed with the approval of the Council and the Osher Director.