This month is the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Lifetime Learning Institute (LLI) at SUNY New Paltz. Although in 2007 there were two other LLI’s in the Hudson Valley, one had a long waiting list and the other was on a campus that limited its membership. Under the leadership of Lyn Mayo, the founding president, the assistance of Helise Winters, the Dean of Extended Learning for SUNY New Paltz, and a core group of interested community members, LLI at SUNY New Paltz launched its first operating semester in September 2007 with 161 people taking classes. Membership today is 246 and still growing.

Open primarily to adults aged 55 and over, LLI’s mission is to “promote diverse and enriching learning experiences for older adults, provide opportunities for social interaction and to encourage individuals to use their knowledge and skills in creative ways.”

Although most of its members come from the New Paltz area, the Lifetime Learning Institute welcomes anyone who wishes to join, resulting in membership stretching up and down the Hudson Valley as far south as Peekskill, north to Saugerties, and as far west as Middletown.

LLI at SUNY New Paltz is strictly a volunteer, member-run organization, headed by a council elected by the membership at the annual meeting. The council, composed of elected officers, committee chairs, members-at-large and a liaison from SUNY New Paltz, meets ten times a year and is responsible for the affairs of the organization. Council meetings are open to interested members who may attend but do not have a vote.

Two sessions of courses are the mainstay of LLI – the fall session, which runs from September through November, and the spring session, which runs from March through May. On an average, 30-35 courses are offered each session, giving members a wide variety of interests to study. The courses run either four or eight weeks. Some of the more recent classes included Current Events Discussion, Fitness for Seniors, Uncorking the Mystique of Wine, The Beauty of Math – A Course you can Count on, Psychological Astrology, and Opera as Politics. Classes are held on the SUNY New Paltz campus on Wednesdays and in other locations on other days of the week.

Membership is required in order to take courses. Annual membership is $115, which does not include books, transportation, entrance fees, or special events fees. New (non-returning) members may join in the spring session for a one-time reduced fee of $75. Members may take as many as six courses per session.

Besides the regular classes, every six weeks a brunch is held for members (and guests) which offers a guest speaker and time for social interaction. Game Days are held periodically throughout the year for all who enjoy board games. Other events include day trips to places of interest and an intersession film series.
A catalog is published for each session and mailed to members and posted on the LLI at SUNY New Paltz website (https://www.newpaltz.edu/lifetime) as well as other pertinent information about the organization. A semiannual newsletter, LLI Matters, keeps members informed about upcoming events, messages from the current president, biographies of presenters and other items of interest to the membership. The newsletter is sent globally via email to our membership. Current and past issues are also posted at https://www.newpaltz.edu/lifetime/newsletter.html.

LLI participates in the SUNY New Paltz Foundation scholarship program by offering a scholarship each year to a non-traditional student attending SUNY New Paltz focusing on students who have returned to college after a hiatus or who have decided on a second career.

Through its association with SUNY New Paltz, LLI members enjoy certain benefits including select discounts at any Fine Arts presentation, discounted membership at the campus gym, and reduced parking fees. Presenters also have the assistance of the college IT department for audio and visual equipment support as well as use of “smart rooms” for their classes.

It takes many volunteers to make a successful organization. LLI has over 130 each year including presenters, classroom assistants, and liaisons from SUNY and off-campus sites; committee members who plan curriculum, work on membership, produce the catalog listing course offerings, and develop the newsletter; and volunteers who do mailings, plan affairs such as brunches, game day and the yearly Appreciation Luncheon. Each year the Luncheon is held in recognition of the contributions of the many who volunteered their efforts to assure a successful year at LLI.

For the past two years, LLI at New Paltz has hosted a Hudson Valley Mini Conference for the six lifetime learning institutes located in the Hudson Valley. The conferences are a way of offering the various Hudson Valley LLIs a chance to discuss the nature of their programs and practices and to share common problems, identify possible solutions and find ways to support one another.

Information about the Lifetime Learning Institute at SUNY New Paltz can be found on LLI’s website (https://www.newpaltz.edu/lifetime) or by contacting Marilou Abramshe at lifetime@newpaltz.edu.

Campus Retiree Program and Retiree Organization Contact Information

Editor’s Note:
There are approximately 20 SUNY campuses with a retiree organization or retiree program of some sort.

Go to http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Campus-Retiree-Program-&-Retiree-Org.-Contact-Info-(Fall-Winter-2017).pdf to view and print a list of contact persons for each program or organization.

The SUNY Retirees Service Corps is providing this information in the event that representatives of these programs want to network with their counterparts and as a resource for campuses or retirees interested in starting their own retiree program or organization.