

President's Message

By Vickie Hite, President, OLLI-CSUF



This message is being written in early October for publication in November, which makes this an interesting challenge.

At this time, I am unable to provide our membership with meaningful updates on one of the most anxiety-producing concerns in recent history. As an organization, we are still in negotiations with the university regarding its proposal to relocate OLLI from the Ruby Gerontology Center. We have not yet received the information we need from the university to make informed decisions.

So, I would like to focus on gratitude and appreciation, as we often do in November. I am deeply grateful to the members of our OLLI Board of Trustees who continue to help me navigate this process with the university. Their years of wisdom and experience — both within the Board and across our membership — are invaluable as we engage in these important discussions.

I also want to express my appreciation to our membership, who continue to step up and support OLLI and the Board in achieving the results necessary to preserve and strengthen OLLI at CSUF. Throughout the years, our organization has faced many challenges and has always emerged stronger. From our transition from CLE to OLLI, to the proposed relocation to College Park West in 2013, and most recently, the COVID-19 shutdown — each challenge has been met with positive action, strong leadership and the incredible dedication of our volunteers.

Together, we will once again demonstrate our resilience and commitment to the future of OLLI.

Around Thanksgiving, most of us start to review

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OLLI Board of Trustees Openings: How to Submit Your Application

By Chris Shaw, Editor

This is your chance to become part of managing OLLI. Each year approximately half of the officers and Trustees at Large on the Board of Trustees finish their two-year terms of office (one-year for the president), and new members are elected to replace them at the General Meeting and Election in April 2026.

All OLLI members are encouraged to apply for any of the following Board of Trustees positions (President requires past experience on the Board):

- **President** - OLLI's President presides over meetings of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and other meetings, implements decisions at those meetings and keeps OLLI's membership informed.
- **Vice President Administration** - Acts for the president in the president's absence. Responsible for supervising personnel, office support, parking, OLLI Trolley and archivist/historian operations.
- **Vice President Communications** - Responsible for supervising internal media, including the ChroniCLE, Blue Book, newsletters and other email announcements, website, social media, Shapiro display, event & member photographs and Digital Image Archive.
- **Vice President External Relations** - OLLI's liaison to CSUF is responsible for supervising research studies, grants, awards, speakers bureau, OLLI-CSUF Collaboration, long term planning, external publicity & relationships and membership recruitment operations.
- **Vice President Technology** - OLLI's liaison to CSUF IT and responsible for supervising audiovisual and classroom support operations.
- **Secretary** - Prepares and distributes the minutes of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and other Board meetings, reports

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Board positions up for election to the Board, solicits applications for the election and maintains the list of committees.

- **Trustees at Large (four positions)** - Learn how OLLI functions and Board officers' areas of responsibilities, back up officers, serve on various committees and represent OLLI members' interests on the Board.

Download and complete a short and confidential application form, available at <http://olli.fullerton.edu/resources/pdfs/NominationApplication.pdf>, and email it to OLLI Secretary Renee Cabrera at rmcabrer@csu.fullerton.edu, or complete an application in the OLLI office.

All applications must be received no later than November 15, 2025.

All applications that are received will be considered by the Nomination and Election Committee for nomination. Applicants will receive further notification from the Committee. Any applicants who are not nominated by the Committee may submit a petition to the Committee to be added

President Vickie Hite
VP Administration Robert Kovacev
VP Programs Sue Batie/MaryLouise Hlavac
VP Communication Jim Di Tota
VP Membership Debbie Maxwell
VP External Relations Bill Sampson
VP Facilities Anthony Gonzalez
VP Hospitality Lisa Sewell
VP Technology Paul Herrick
Treasurer Ann Sparks
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the things we are grateful for — our families, our health and our community. This is also a good time to consider any last-minute giving for year-end tax-deductible donations. If you feel that OLLI has added to your life, it would be a good time to make a gift to our great organization.



What Does a Trustee Do On the Board of Trustees?

By Chris Shaw, Editor

There are 11 elected officers on the OLLI Board of Trustees, including the president, eight vice presidents, a treasurer and a secretary. Their responsibilities are fairly obvious from their titles, but the Board also includes nine elected “trustees at large” whose responsibilities are not self-evident and are largely unknown by OLLI members. The most common question I get about OLLI’s Board positions is “What does a trustee do?”

The Board is very eager to get more applications from OLLI members who are new to the Board, including those who are new to OLLI. In fact, OLLI’s Nomination & Election Policy states: “With due deference to long-time members, OLLI encourages a continuing reservoir of vitality. Experience on the Board is best ensured by considering new and recently retired members after they have become acquainted with OLLI.”

Importantly, any OLLI member may apply to be a nominee for trustee at large (or any of the

open Board positions, except president) simply by submitting an application from the OLLI website, or getting it from the OLLI office, completing the form and emailing it to Renee Cabrera, OLLI Secretary, at rmcabrer@csu.fullerton.edu.

OLLI at Cal State University, Fullerton was founded on the idea of community seniors banding together, volunteering their time and contributing their skills and knowledge developed over a lifetime, to provide a low-cost, no-tuition, perpetual college of lifelong learning for seniors. There are numerous opportunities for OLLI members to contribute their time and talent, from teaching courses to support services to managing the organization.

It is this last function, managing OLLI, that the Board of Trustees fulfills.

Trustees need no prior experience of any kind, making that position the easiest entry onto the Board. To apply for some officer positions, like treasurer, it's helpful to have accounting or other similar experience in your pre-retirement life. For vice president positions, it's helpful to have experience on committees that are supervised by that officer. All candidates for officer positions benefit from experience on the Board as a trustee.

Trustees learn by experience: learning how the OLLI organization functions and how the various officers manage their areas of responsibility. Specifically, OLLI's Bylaws direct the Board to promote the training of trustees at large for greater future responsibilities by assigning them to work with and assist officers on the Board. In this way, the trustee may become a potential candidate for an VP position in a future election. Trustees may also be asked to join operational analysis and planning committees.

Perhaps the trustee's most important job is to represent the interests of all OLLI members in Board meeting discussions and decisions on issues that determine OLLI's direction and how its resources are used to serve OLLI's members in the best way. The title "Trustee at Large" means each trustee represents all of the OLLI membership, as opposed to any one person or group.

The Board of Trustees is the decision-making body of OLLI. As such, it is vital that it be regularly refreshed with new members joining in the process of discussing and deciding the myriad of issues faced by the Board. New trustees are the principal source

of new perspectives and ideas for the Board, often representing the interests and needs of incoming, younger generation members.

Approximately half of the nine trustees' two-year terms of office end each year. OLLI members Eileen Gomez, Diana Guerin, Debra Kegel, Judi Marsh and Britt Wachsmen are currently in their first year as trustees at large. Trustees at Large Jay Messner, Fran Colwell, Chris Milord and Chris Heaton are currently in their second year and will be replaced at the end of their terms of office in 2026 by other OLLI members, who will be elected by the general OLLI membership at the General Meeting/Election in April.

We send a big "thank you" to all the above trustees who have volunteered to help lead OLLI into its best future.

Help the Board refresh itself and help lead OLLI by applying for a position on OLLI's Board of Trustees no later than November 15. The Nomination and Election Committee is now accepting applications for nomination for next April's election (see "Board of Trustees Openings" in this ChroniCLE).

When Language Sounded Like Music: Marjorie Mota Decided to Sing Along!

By William Clark, Staff Writer

A Childhood Spark

For Marjorie Mota (pictured), the love of languages began in the most ordinary of places: a backyard swing set in a small San Diego County town. She and her brother, both fascinated by the Spanish they constantly heard around them, decided that if the language sounded like music, they too should learn to sing along. One afternoon, her brother leapt from his swing, beat his chest like Tarzan, and declared in his made-up "Spanish": "Blitis-kin bladis-kin!" Marjorie, at just three years old, followed suit.

That playful moment planted a seed. Years later, her brother lived in Mexico City and Marjorie, at sixteen, spent a formative year in Chile as an



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exchange student. Both became fluent Spanish speakers, turning their childhood curiosity into a lifelong pursuit.

Languages in Retirement

When she joined OLLI, Marjorie's passion for languages found a new home. She was drawn initially by a German class motivated to discover her heritage by genealogy research trips to Germany. "I wanted to be polite, and I wanted to be able to ask questions there about my family members," she explained. Fifteen years later, she still attends German language courses at OLLI, enchanted by the folk songs, customs and culture embedded in each lesson.

Along the way, she also stepped into teaching OLLI courses. After substituting for the instructor of "Advanced Spanish," she gradually took on more

***"Whoever prepares the lesson,
she says, "is the one who
learns the most."***

responsibility, eventually helping shape what is now "Spanish 4" into a vibrant, peer-led classroom where members teach one another grammar, history and culture. "Whoever prepares the lesson," she says, "is the one who learns the most."

Connection Through Family

Languages, for Marjorie, have always been about connection. In 1971, she married Modesto Mota, a Mexican-American man whose mother lived with them. Her mother-in-law, the matriarch of a large family, spoke mostly Spanish and quickly embraced Marjorie with affection, calling her "Mija," my little daughter. Marjorie returned the affection by calling her "Granmá," a Spanglish nickname that stuck. The bond they formed was rooted as much in love as in language.

Challenges and Windows into Other Cultures

Speaking German proved far more challenging than either French or Spanish, but Marjorie embraced the humbling lessons of persistence. What keeps her inspired is not just vocabulary and grammar, but the way languages open windows into human thought. "The ability to convey complex ideas is huge," she says. "When we look at grammar from long-

vanished groups, it is like hugging the contours of a society's beliefs. It gives us clues about how people once thought."

She also delights in proverbs, collecting favorites that carry wisdom across generations:

- "En boca cerrada no entran moscas" — In a closed mouth, no flies enter.
- "Díme con quien andas y te diré quien eres" — Tell me who you run with, and I will tell you who you are.
- "Él que no llega a viejo, es porque se muere antes" — He who does not arrive at old age is because he dies before.

A Lifelong Comfort Zone

Spanish, Marjorie points out, is the fourth most spoken language in the world, with over 558 million speakers. Living in California, "there is a huge comfort zone in knowing a language like Spanish," she reflects. It allows her to travel, connect and continue learning with confidence.

A Word to Fellow OLLI Members

For anyone at OLLI who wonders if it is too late to start learning a new language, Marjorie has reassuring advice: it is never too late. "Adults do just fine," she says, noting that while OLLI classes meet only once a week, members still make impressive progress. "There are plenty of rewards for mature learners," she emphasizes, not only in vocabulary gained, but in friendships made, cultures discovered and the joy of lifelong learning.

Marjorie Mota's story reminds us that language is more than words. It is music, memory, family, culture and connection. And for OLLI members, it is a lifelong gift waiting to be opened.

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New Member Orientation & Welcoming Social 2025

Photos by Jim Di Tota

**We need
your help.**



**Welcome
New Members!**



**You can
volunteer.**



Meet William F. Clark

ChroniCLE's New Staff Writer

By William Clark, Staff Writer

A lifelong Californian, William F. Clark values the wealth of educational opportunities his home state provides. He holds an A.A. in Political Science from Cerritos College, a B.A. in Political Science with an emphasis in Public Administration and Research Methods from CSU Fullerton and an M.A. in Behavioral Science with an emphasis on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution from CSU Dominguez Hills.



William devoted more than 36 years to local government, assisting residents and businesses with licensing, taxation and zoning matters. His career included serving as Revenue Supervisor for the City of Norwalk, President of the Norwalk City Employees Association and President of the statewide California

Municipal Revenue and Tax Association.

A strong believer in democracy and civic engagement, William has participated in numerous political campaigns. He also champions financial literacy, encouraging Americans to secure their futures through steady, long-term investing, guided by the Wall Street adage, "Time in the market always beats timing the market."

Since retiring in 2009, William has traveled to 53 countries and 43 states. He enjoys ocean sports, studying behavioral finance and economics, cooking, mid-century modern architecture and creating abstract art. Most of all, he and Mary Ann treasure their daily walks in local parks with their two rescue dogs, Bonnie and Clyde.

"I am excited to join the staff of the ChroniCLE," William said. "Writing allows me to share the experiences, heroism and hard work of members of the OLLI community, all of whom support the beauty and promise of Cal State Fullerton."

Crickets Musical Comedy

By OLLI Member Betty Redmon

*Saturday, January 31 – 2:00 p.m.
RGC, Mackey Auditorium*



OLLI proudly presents the premier staged reading of the new musical, "Crickets," the culminating event of the month-long OLLI Experience, free to the public and members alike.

A swinging singles apartment complex in 1977 provides the backdrop for lyrical songs, a car crash, escaped toads, pretense and a love-hate relationship between a Navy Vietnam vet, who lives by discipline and logic, and an impetuous, undisciplined model, who lives life as a game to cover her hurt. Their antipathy grows as each fights his/her own battles: (He) PTSD and a scientific career; (She) custody of her 7-year-old son and a budding fashion career. Their drama plays out with witty banter, unlikely scenarios and humorous supporting characters.

The script has been long in the making. In 1977, after receiving her master's degree from CSUF in theatre arts, emphasis playwriting, Betty found a job in cancer research (life does take funny turns). This began her 29-year career as an administrator at USC, first at the Medical School in Pathology and then as Executive Director of the USC Emeriti Center. A very old "theatre-bug bite" began to itch during COVID. Betty pulled out a story

concept she'd written around 1980 and developed it first into a screenplay, then into a stage play and finally into a musical. The script has been workshopped in a scripting class at The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and a playwriting class at South Coast Rep, along with OLLI's "Writing with Feedback" class. "Crickets" boasts nine original songs, with keyboard accompaniment composed by OLLI member, Lisa Nicolay. This public reading features an all-OLLI cast drawn primarily from members of the OLLI Crescendo Chorale and OLLI's "Drama, Improv & Storytelling" class.

Invite your theater friends for a light-hearted musical afternoon and come celebrate the fact that we're never too old.

OLLI will be also developing our own campaign to support the upcoming production of a musical created by one of our own members.

Every donation, great or small, helps these causes and demonstrates our support for OLLI and CSUF students. Please contact the OLLI Office if you have any questions about October crowdfunding.

Thanks in advance for your help!

OLLI Members' Awesome Response to Address Students' Basic Needs

By Debbie Kegel, OLLI-CSUF Basic Needs Initiative Coordinator

Since January 2024, OLLI-CSUF Basic Needs Initiative has collected donations for CSUF students. Its goal is to make it easier for OLLI members to help students improve their well-being and, in turn, their academic performance. Members contribute non-perishable food, as well as lightly used professional and business casual clothes, hygiene products and school supplies for pre-kindergarten children. In addition to supporting students, your contributions also help raise awareness among CSUF leadership of OLLI and its commitment to student success.

During the 2024/25 academic year, your generous donations exceeded my wildest expectation, including:

- Nearly a ton (1,979 pounds) of food was donated to The Pantry though our regular and holiday collection of non-perishable goods, as well as fresh produce during our Reverse Farmers Markets.
- More than 1,000 items of lightly used clothing primarily to Tuffy's Career Closet as well as an Earth Day campaign for Titan Well.
- More than 1,000 full-sized hygiene items for Basic Needs Services.
- More than 150 items for the Children's Center through our regular collection and holiday collection.

As the number of new students increases, so do their needs. To our new retirees (and existing members): think about making donations of office-appropriate attire for Tuffy's Career Closet. If you are cleaning out your kitchen cupboard, consider donating food past its "best by" dates for the Pantry (you can find guidance at Second Harvest Food Bank at <https://tinyurl.com/47x4zpmj>). If your grandchildren are growing out of their books, toys or craft supplies, CSUF's Children's Center is happy to give them a new home!

The OLLI Basic Needs Initiative makes it easy for you; just drop your contributions in the collection bin in the Shapiro Lobby. We'll take care of delivery.

Your generosity is truly awesome. Your donations make a difference to our students. Thank you.



"Lisa Sewell (left) & Debbie Kegel collect donated items to Basic Needs at last year's Holiday Luncheon."

Magic of Holiday Spirit Coming Wednesday, December 10, 2025

By Elaine Mitchell, Staff Writer and Hospitality Committee Member

OLLI's premier social event, the Holiday Luncheon, is fast approaching. The annual affair will be at the Alta Vista Country Club on Wednesday, December 10. The Hospitality Committee has arranged for a staff-served specialty luncheon of Caesar Salad, Chicken with Apple Chutney, Rice Pilaf and Seasonal Vegetables, all topped off with New York-style Cheesecake with Berry Puree. The reservation price is again \$45, and registrations will be accepted starting November 3.

The Magic of Holiday Spirit marks this season, and the Hospitality Committee enjoys presenting a fun event but with something special. The "Magic" for some folks might be the holiday ambiance, delicious food, the entertainment, sitting and visiting with friends, showing-off their favorite holiday wear (even if it is an "ugly sweater"), or the drawings for amazing gift baskets created just for this occasion.

Here's a little more about the baskets: each year, they seem more spectacular! They are themed to appeal to many different tastes; several supported with gift cards and certificates from area venues who appreciate OLLI and OLLI members for their contributions to our community. Each attendee

Magic of Holiday Spirit... Continued on Page 8

receives their drawing tickets at check-in and will choose the basket or baskets that they hope to win.

If the “Magic” for you includes opportunities to give back, Hospitality suggests the CSUF students and families who are in need. You can bring the donation of your choice to the event or deposit them in the designated box in the Shapiro lobby at the RGC. It is also recommended that before you donate, please check their lists of what helps them the most, also posted in the lobby area. This is especially true of the Children’s Center; they can only accept toys that can be sanitized or washed repeatedly. They also are limited in storage space, so gift cards for Amazon, IKEA or Target, for example, are especially appreciated.

The Hospitality Committee hopes you will come share the “Magic;” there are fun surprises you are sure to enjoy. Wait until you see the centerpieces!

Watch for the posters and flyers at the RGC for more information. This is the event to mark the success of OLLI’s 45th Anniversary and the promise of the beginning of the USA’s 250th Anniversary Celebration.

OLLI in the NEWS:

OLLI’s Possible Relocation from the Ruby Gerontology Center

An article in the Fullerton Observer on September 28 reported on anxiety among members of OLLI at Cal State Fullerton that the University is considering moving OLLI from the Ruby Gerontology Center to another facility on campus.

As OLLI’s President Vickie Hite has indicated, she and OLLI’s Board of Trustees are working with University officials to determine our options.

You can read the full article on the Fullerton Observers’ website at

<https://fullertonobserver.com/2025/09/28/california-state-university-fullerton-considers-relocation-of-olli-sparking-concerns-among-members/>.

Membership Scholarship Application

By Debbie Maxwell, Chair, Scholarship Committee

Scholarships for OLLI membership are available for those having financial hardships. Applications can be requested through the OLLI office by phone or sending an email to olli-info@fullerton.edu. Completed applications must be returned to the OLLI office no later than Friday, December 5, 2025 for the spring 2026 semester. Each applicant will be contacted to set up an interview with the committee shortly after the application due date.

Next ChroniCLE: January Issue

As usual, the ChroniCLE is skipping December. The next issue of the ChroniCLE will be a combined December/January issue, and it will be distributed on December 20.





What's Happening at the Board

By Chris Shaw, Editor

The following are highlights from OLLI's Board of Trustees meeting on September 11, 2025:

- President Hite reported the current OLLI membership total is 1,145, including 161 new members and 984 renewing members.
- Executive Director Daisy Thomas is working with CSUF's representatives to the OLLI Board, Sharon Ting and Dr. Walker, to meet with CSUF's ASC and Philanthropic departments to resolve financial issues.
- The Nomination and Election Committee members for the 2026 Board elections were appointed: Debbie Maxwell (Chair), Mike Stover, Jay Messner, Judi Marsh, Jill Patterson and Ken Luke.
- Board positions up for the 2026 election are: President, VP Administration, VP Communications, VP External Relations, VP Technology, Secretary and four Trustees at Large.
- Fran Colwell, Development/Philanthropy Committee Chair, announced, and the Board approved, three fundraising campaigns for 2025-2026: Flash Crowd Funding in October 2025 for the Basic Needs Program and "Crickets" musical production; Year End Appeal in December; and Titans Give Day in coordination with CSUF in March 2026.
- A joint meeting of the Hospitality, Membership, Musical Performances and Programs Committees was held to discuss and

plan social events for the new academic year.

- Sue Mullaly, OLLI-CSUF Collaboration Committee Chair, reported that the Committee had their annual Steering Committee Meeting with CSUF associate deans in early summer. ASI students are participating for the first time, and formerly incarcerated and STEM students are continuing to participate. International Programs provided 11 students as part of the conversation program. A meeting is planned with the Children's Center. And Kathy Schuster is working with students on creating a career strategies program, assisting in liaisons and resources.

- Jim Di Tota, VP Communications, thanked Ginger Barnhart and Melinda Wiltsie for their extraordinary years of service producing the OLLI newsletters. Diana Guerin is now responsible for the Announcements and Events Newsletter. The Class Information and Updates Newsletter is no longer published and the Open to the Public Newsletter is being reevaluated.

Quote For The Day

*— "Do good, live in the
most positive and joyful way
possible every day." —*

— Roy T. Bennett



OLLI

at California State University, Fullerton

"A Continuing Learning Experience"

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You can also access the most recent ChroniCLEs through links on the OLLI website.

If you are receiving the ChroniCLE in the mail, but no longer want it mailed to your home, send an email to olli-info@fullerton.edu with **your name and address** stating: "Do **not** send me a ChroniCLE in the mail." If you ever need the printed version, copies are always available in the OLLI office.

Other OLLI Information Sources

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