

President’s Message

By Vickie Hite, President, OLLI-CSUF



This will be my final message to you. The new Board officers and trustees will be installed on May 9. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Board members for their support and confidence over the past year. I have been fortunate to work with a strong team, and OLLI has reaped

the benefits of our hard work. I also want to express my gratitude for everyone’s support as we navigated the peril of a possible relocation to a satisfactory conclusion. I have felt supported by the Board members, SOAR, the Task Force Advisory Group and the general membership. Using the diversity of strengths and talents our members possess, we were able to guide the University to an understanding that OLLI belongs at the Ruby Gerontology Center, and that we can support their needs without sacrificing our desire to remain in our home of 38 years. Thank you all.

OLLI is an amazing organization. Even as we dealt with the uncertainty of a relocation, we were able to increase our membership by 7% over the last two years. 6% more of our members renewed this year compared to 2024-25. This is a great show of loyalty and confidence in our organization. Our curriculum continues to grow with each semester, proof that our instructors have confidence in the longevity of our OLLI.

Last March was a record year for us on Titans Give Day, and we were so grateful. But OLLI members surprised us this year by 363 donors donating a record \$63,104. This is more proof of the confidence OLLI members have in our organization.

I have had a great experience over my two years as president of the board. I am going to digress a bit as I tell you about an article I recently read in

the OC Register. It was about what it means to thrive as a senior, by Helen Dennis. She wrote of Kerry Burnight, who authored “Joyspan: The Art and Science of Thriving in Life’s Second Half.” I believe our OLLI is a perfect example of Burnight’s four components for a feeling of wellbeing:

- To grow: Continue to learn, explore and expand what we know.
- To connect: Putting time into new and existing relationships.
- To adapt: Adjusting and adapting to changing and challenging situations.
- To give: Sharing of yourself.

All of these components represent how I think and feel about OLLI. Burnight writes that joy is a choice, and you must be willing to put in the work. Again, I believe that OLLI does that for me, and I hope you feel the same.

I want to wish Mike Stover a great year as our new president. I will work with him, as past president, to help make his plans come to fruition. We still have plenty to do, but we have the people, the attitude and the skills to complete the job.

Onward!

Senior Scams and How to Protect Yourself

By Tom La Casa, OLLI Tech Help Instructor/Coordinator

In today’s digital age, senior citizens are increasingly targeted by scammers through email, texts, and phone calls. These scams can lead to significant financial losses and emotional distress. However, by staying informed and vigilant, we seniors can protect ourselves from falling victim to these fraudulent schemes.

As technology evolves, so do the tactics scammers use to target vulnerable seniors. Sadly, seniors are often prime targets for fraud, due to their perceived wealth, trusting nature, and in some

Senior Scams and How...Continued on Page 2

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
Secretary	Renee Cabrera
Chris Shaw (tashawc01@gmail.com), Editor; Valerie Orleans Assistant Editor; William Clark, Keni Cox, Alice Gresto, Elaine Mitchell, Mary Sampson, Staff Writers Photography Coordinator: Jim Di Tota Desktop Publishing: Corina Pineda	

Senior Scam and How... Continued from Page 1

cases, limited understanding of modern technology. It's important to stay proactive and be vigilant to avoid falling victim to these scams.

Scammers will use email or text messages, often called phishing, to try to steal your passwords, account numbers or Social Security number. If they get that information, they could get access to your email, bank or other accounts. Or they could sell your personal information, which can result in devastating identity theft issues. Scammers launch thousands of phishing attacks every day — and sadly they're often successful.

You might get an unexpected email or text message that looks like it's from a company you know or trust (e.g. Microsoft, Apple), a bank, a credit card or a utility company. Phishing emails and text messages often tell a story to trick you into clicking on a link or opening an attachment. Be cautious of anything pushing you to act quickly or instilling a sense of fear, threat or urgency, like threatening to close closing your account or suspend service if you don't act now. Take your time.

“Scammers will use email or text messages, often called phishing, to try to steal your passwords, account numbers or Social Security number.”

Here are some common tactics used in phishing emails or text messages:

- They say that they've noticed some suspicious activity or log-in attempts.
- They claim there's a problem with your account or your payment information.
- They say you need to confirm some personal or financial information.
- They want you to click on a link to make a payment.

Never click any link unless you positively know the sender of the email or text and can verify its origin. While real companies might communicate with you by email, legitimate companies won't email or text with a link to update your payment information or ask you to provide personal information. When in doubt, contact the company using a known phone number or use the internet and go directly to the company's or institution's website that you know is correct.

We've all heard of people's email accounts being hijacked. Scammers use the account to send out emails making you think it's from a friend. If you receive an email or text from a friend and they are asking for something odd or unexpected, especially money or gift cards, take the time to verify they did indeed send the email or text.

So, how can we protect ourselves from phishing emails and/or texts?

1. Protect your computer by using security software that guards against viruses and malware.
2. Protect your devices by setting software to update automatically.
3. Elect to use multi-factor authentication, like CSUF website's Duo, or biometrics such as face recognition, when it's available.
4. Protect your data by backing it up to an external storage device.

By understanding the common tactics used by scammers and taking proactive steps to protect ourselves, we seniors can significantly reduce our risk of falling victim to email, text and phone scams. Staying vigilant, verifying information and using available resources are key to safeguarding our personal and financial information. Remember, it's always better to be cautious and double-check than to regret falling for a scam.

Debbie Maxwell, Vice President Membership

By Chris Shaw, Editor



Debbie Maxwell joined OLLI in 2016. She was initially elected to the Board of Trustees as Trustee at Large in 2019, but due to an unexpected resignation three months later Debbie was appointed by the Board to serve as Vice President

Membership until 2021. She was elected for a two-year term as Vice President Membership in 2023, and then when no nominee volunteered in 2025 she was appointed by the Board for an additional two-year term as Vice President Membership ending in May 2027. She also serves as Chair of the Membership Committee, Co-Chair of the Friendship/In Memoriam Committee and lead of New Member Orientation.

The Vice President Membership supervises the many volunteer teams that are involved in the hard work of putting the fall and spring membership and registration programs to life.

At the beginning of each semester, letters are sent out to OLLI members providing the information that they will need to renew their registrations for the upcoming term. Of the current 1,400+ membership, about 25% need assistance to register online, and a team of volunteers from our Registration and Technical Education Committees (TEC) assist them.

“Debbie was appointed by the Board to serve as Vice President Membership until 2021.”

Everyone who attends the Fall Open House and Spring Preview are first greeted by the Check-In Team at the registration table. The non-member guests, who usually number 150 or more, are given name tags and swag bags with directions and information about OLLI and the Ruby Gerontology Center. Then the Hosts Team takes over, providing

tours of the OLLI facilities and escorting guests to Mackey Auditorium and other locations. This team provides general advice and assistance to all visitors and also serves as ushers in seating visitors for the program in Mackey Auditorium.

The 90+ Team identifies those members who have become honorary OLLI members as they reach this “magic age” and invites them to participate in and be honored at a special event during the spring semester. Team members document 90+ members’ membership information, like what volunteering they might have done at OLLI over the years, and they request the members’ preferred flavor of the individual cake that they will receive at the event honoring 90+ members. If needed, they arrange transportation to the event.

The In Memoriam and Friendship Team gathers

“Team members document 90+ members’ membership information...”

information on ill or deceased members. Get well cards are sent to those who are sick or injured, or those having surgery. Sympathy cards are sent to the families of those who have passed. Notices are sent out to OLLI members on the passing with information on services held for these dear friends. OLLI members and the families of those who have lost a loved one over the year are invited to attend the In Memoriam event held each year in April.

The Information Table Team is present in the Ruby Gerontology Center courtyard during the first weeks of the fall and spring semesters to assist new members in finding classrooms, answering questions regarding OLLI procedures or just getting acquainted.

The Scholarship Committee is a group of unique individuals. Through a process of application and interviews, this dedicated group of volunteers recommends scholarships for those who need assistance with OLLI membership costs.

The Volunteer Recognition Team organizes and presents the Volunteer Recognition Reception each spring to acknowledge the hours of volunteer service that these members provide to OLLI.

OLLI’s Vice President Membership is involved with just about every aspect of dealing with OLLI membership. If you’d like to be a part of this dynamic group, please feel free to contact Debbie at debmaxwell53@gmail.com.

Think Yourself Younger: What Science Reveals About Mindset and Longevity

By William F. Clark, Staff Writer

It was raining in Hillsboro, the steady Oregon kind that invites reflection. My wife, Mary Ann, and I ducked into the Washington County Library's small "Friends" bookstore, more to stay dry than to shop. I picked up a used science magazine for two dollars. One headline caught my attention: "Think Yourself Younger."

At first, it sounded like wishful thinking. But the idea lingered.

The article referred to Dr. Becca Levy's work in "Breaking the Age Code." Her longitudinal studies at the Yale School of Public Health found that individuals who held more positive beliefs about aging lived on average 7.5 years longer than those who internalized negative age stereotypes.

Those seven and a half years were based not on sentiment, but real scientific data.

Levy's research shows that internalized age beliefs influence stress responses, cardiovascular health, memory performance and even recovery from illness. When we absorb the cultural message that aging equals decline, our bodies respond with greater physiological stress. Over time, chronic stress erodes resilience. When aging is viewed instead as a period of continued growth and contribution, stress responses soften and engagement increases.

"When we absorb the cultural message that aging equals decline, our bodies respond with greater physiological stress."

Over the past year, my wife and I have navigated one of those health challenges that many couples eventually face, the kind that interrupts routines and quietly tests resilience. There were appointments, uncertainty, recovery days and gradual rebuilding. It would have been easy to frame the experience as a turning point toward limitation.

Instead, something subtler happened.

Each day became an opportunity for small progress: A short walk, a return to familiar tasks, more energy than the week before. Improvement did not arrive dramatically. It came incrementally through patience and steady effort.

I noticed how much mindset mattered, not in a cheerful, deny-the-difficulty way, but in a disciplined way. We chose to interpret recovery as adaptation rather than decline.

At OLLI, I see the same pattern.

Members enroll in courses they have never taken before. They explore art history, public policy, science, literature and technology. They join discussion groups and exercise clubs. They build new friendships. No one denies that the years are passing. But there is a shared understanding that curiosity and contribution do not expire at a particular birthday.

That assumption changes things.

When we see ourselves as capable of learning, we

"I noticed how much mindset mattered, not in a cheerful, deny-the-difficulty way, but in a disciplined way."

tend to stay engaged. When we stay engaged, we remain connected. And connection to ideas and to one another seems to strengthen something essential within us.

Perhaps the real power of lifelong learning is not just intellectual stimulation. It is identity reinforcement. We are participants in a life that has actual meaning.

On that rainy afternoon, holding a two-dollar magazine, I realized something simple: the thoughts we rehearse about ourselves matter. If we keep thinking, "I'm too old for that," our world quietly narrows. But if we think, "I've never tried that before," it quietly widens.

Perhaps aging is not only a biological process but a personal one and the beliefs we practice each day can quietly shape our years ahead.

Thanks to Board Members for Serving OLLI

These members of OLLI’s Board of Trustees will complete their terms of office on May 14 and will be succeeded by new officers and trustees that were elected at the General Meeting and Election on April 16. Jim Di Tota and Robert Kovacev were elected to continue on the Board as VP Communications and VP External Relations, respectively.



Vickie Hite
President



Renee Cabrera
Secretary



Robert Kovacev
Vice President Administration



Jay Messner
Trustee at Large



Jim Di Tota
Vice President Communications



Fran Colwell
Trustee at Large



Bill Sampson
Vice President External Relations



Chris Milord
Trustee at Large



Paul Herrick
Vice President Technology



Chris Heaton
Trustee at Large

Titans Give Day: All in for OLLI!

By Fran Colwell,
Chair, Development/Philanthropy Committee

Another Titans Give Day has ended and the results have been tabulated! The words “thank you” do not adequately express how grateful we are for what the OLLI community has achieved during the record-breaking 24-hour March 11 marathon. Our goal this year was to reach \$65,000. Your generosity for the most important fundraiser of the year allowed OLLI to raise \$63,104 from 363 donors. And in the spirit of competition, a CSUF Titan Capital Management supporter generously donated an extra \$3,000 to make up the difference from the money OLLI would have won had we placed first in the PepsiCo dollar challenge. Our new record grand total is \$66,104.

The Board’s dollar-for-dollar match of \$8,030 was more than met. OLLI competed for PepsiCo university-wide matching funds at third in total dollars raised. OLLI Champion Jim Ertle did a super job of rallying supporters. The Hospitality Committee and OLLI Office staff provided great support. We also received a significant amount of matching funds throughout the day (and night) from the many Titans Give Day hourly challenges. Check out the OLLI webpage for the detailed results:

<https://titansgive.fullerton.edu/giving-day/108355/departments/108445>



Titans Give Day...Continued on Page 6

Cal State Fullerton also set a record. Our Titan community raised \$990,465 from 3,387 donors to support participating campus causes.

Your donation went directly to the OLLI Today and Tomorrow Fund. This is making an incredible impact on our classes, programs, accessibility, OLLI membership support and Aging Studies Program student support. The funds raised will supplement those of the ‘Listen Up’ campaign to install audio support equipment and kitchen improvements (a new gas range, ice maker, and water purification system) at the Ruby Gerontology Center. Additional funds will enhance student scholarship assistance. While membership fees cover a large portion of our expenses, your financial support on Titans Give Day and throughout the year ensures that we are responsive to member needs and remain sustainable. Thank you again!

Mary Kay Toumajian, Member of the OLLI-CSUF Collaborations Team

By Alice Gresto, Staff Writer



Mary Kay was born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the oldest of eight children. She earned her B.A. in Communications from California State University, Long Beach. She later earned her M.S. in Counseling, with a focus on Student Development in Higher Education. She started a long-running program, “Community Scholars,” for business students at CSULB. She then worked at Cerritos College for many years, where she helped students from several majors, specializing in those transferring to four-year colleges or universities.

Mary Kay enjoyed raising her three children and helping her husband start his own business. Somehow, she even found time for reading and gardening.

In 2019 Mary Kay read a quarter-page ad about OLLI at California State University, Fullerton in the L.A. Times and decided to check out what we had to offer. She saw that OLLI had a program that gave members an opportunity to volunteer to work with CSUF students. She immediately checked in with Sue Mullaly, head of OLLI’s Collaboration Team, where she was introduced to the Project Life Program.

Project Life is a 10-week program where OLLI members serve as mentors who meet with their CSUF student mentees for an hour each week and address a question that is predetermined by the program. The mentees are provided by Karen Wong, a CSUF sociology professor, from her “Aging Studies, 133” class. Mary Kay was one of the first mentors to sign up for the Project Life Program, and she is still meeting with students to this day.

“Mary Kay was one of the first mentors to sign up for the Project Life Program, and she is still meeting with students to this day.”

OLLI members interested in more information about OLLI-CSUF Collaboration can find Collaboration Team meeting dates and contact information in OLLI’s spring Blue Book on Page 64.





What's Happening at the Board

By Chris Shaw, Editor

The following are highlights from OLLI's Board of Trustees meeting on March 12, 2026:

- Following CSUF President Rochon's announcement that OLLI will remain in the Ruby Gerontology Center, the Advisory Task Force will to work on organizational structure, parking (one-year left on the contract), space sharing and cost recovery.

- Titans Give Day was a huge success with 363 donors donating \$63,104. Thanks to Fran Colwell (Chair of the Development/Philanthropy Committee), OLLI President Vickie Hite, the Communications Team, the Hospitality Team, OLLI office staff, Board of Trustees, University Advancement and all OLLI members who made this a success.

- President Hite reported that OLLI has 263 new members and membership is currently 1,347. Executive Director Daisy Thomas reported that the office staff called all members who did not renew, and most did not renew due to caregiving, traveling or relocation. The membership renewal rate is over 90%.

- Deputy Provost Sean Walker reported that CSUF's fall registration will begin around April 1 with the goal to enroll the same number of students as last year.

- OLLI Data Systems Engineer Rishitha Bathini presented an overview of the new OLLI website 5.0, which is designed to be more streamlined, easier to navigate and aligned with CSUF standards for

compliance with federal accessibility regulations for people with disabilities. Launch is scheduled for March 27.

- The budget for fiscal year 2026-2027 was approved.

- Amendments proposed by Fran Colwell and recommended by the Policies and Procedures Committee were approved to OLLI Membership Policy 5.2, Scholarship and Awards Policy 6.3 and Fundraising Policy 9.2.

- OLLI membership advertising was approved for the Answers Magazine, published by the Southern California Council on Aging. It is a free publication available in many doctors offices, senior centers, retirement communities and online.

- Purchase of a new gas range for the OLLI kitchen was approved.

- A self-supporting OLLI merchandise program was approved. An interest survey conducted of the Board and the general membership indicated the most popular items are tee shirts, sweatshirts and baseball caps or visors.

- Collaboration Chair Sue Mullaly reported the upcoming Collaboration events during March and April that need OLLI member volunteers.

- VP Communications Jim Di Tota said that work is needed to determine how event and trip flyers are produced and distributed to members in the Announcements & Events Newsletter, on the OLLI website etc. Once the new website is installed, the OLLI office staff will be able to address this issue.

Words of Wisdom

**“Leadership is not about
being in charge.**

**Leadership is about taking care
of those in your charge”**

- Anonymous



OLLI

at California State University, Fullerton

"A Continuing Learning Experience"

1979 - 2025: 46 Years of Excellence

Ruby Gerontology Center, Room 7

P.O. Box 6870

Fullerton, California 92834-6870

(657) 278-2446

**Address Service
Requested**

Nonprofit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 487 Fullerton, Calif

Dated Material

Do Not Delay Delivery



How to Get the ChroniCLE

Unless you elected not to receive emails from OLLI, you are currently receiving an email each month announcing the new ChroniCLE for the upcoming month with links to view or download the publications.

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 Sources of Information About OLLI

Website: <http://olli.fullerton.edu>

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.Facebook.com/OLLICalStateFullerton> and

Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/ollicsuf/>