

## President’s Message

*By Vickie Hite, President, OLLI-CSUF*



As you know, the University, in collaboration with OLLI’s Advisory Task Force, has agreed that the Ruby Gerontology Center will remain OLLI’s home on campus for the foreseeable future. I am deeply grateful to the members of our team

— Mike Stover, Ray Young,

Susan Snell and Giulio Ongaro — for their thoughtful work and dedication.

Mike Stover brought invaluable historical knowledge of OLLI and strong negotiating skills as a past president. Ray Young contributed his experience as a CSUF emeritus with expertise in classroom space planning. Susan Snell offered important insight into parking concerns and longstanding relationships within the University. Giulio Ongaro, a newer OLLI member, added the perspective of many years of academic leadership as a dean and associate dean at several universities.

I also want to thank the many OLLI members who supported the team behind the scenes. Our community includes remarkable expertise — from attorneys to civil engineers and property managers — and their guidance was invaluable. We are fortunate to have such talent and commitment within OLLI.

This month we will also see the results of our latest Titans Give Day campaign. I’m confident our members supported OLLI with the same enthusiasm as last year. Many thanks to Fran Colwell and his terrific team for their leadership.

On Thursday, April 16, we will celebrate our volunteers with a luncheon. Please join us as we recognize the many people who make OLLI thrive. Our instructors, coordinators, tech support and behind-the-scenes volunteers make it possible to offer

more than 100 classes and numerous social events. Special thanks go to our Hospitality, Membership, Programs, Facilities and Trolley teams, as well as those supporting the Basic Needs program and our collaboration with CSUF students. OLLI truly succeeds because of the dedication of our volunteers. If you have not yet found your niche, I encourage you to consider joining this remarkable group.

Following the luncheon, we will hold our annual General Meeting and Election to confirm the new slate of Board officers and trustees at large and share updates on OLLI’s progress and plans for the future. The Hospitality team will conclude the afternoon with ice cream and brownies — because whenever OLLI gathers, there is always good company and something sweet.

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### General Meeting/Election And Ice Cream Social Thursday April 16 · 1:30-3:00 p.m.

The OLLI Board of Trustees invites all OLLI members to attend the annual General Meeting/Election. Join us for a brief presentation on the status of OLLI and the outlook for future semesters and to meet and vote to elect 10 new officers and trustees to the Board.

After the election in Mackey Auditorium, we will enjoy our traditional Ice Cream Social in the Shapiro Wing, and you will have an opportunity to meet the nominees.

Short biographies and pictures of the six officer nominees and four trustee nominees follow in this ChroniCLE.



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
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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	

*General Meeting... Continued from Page 1*

## General Meeting/Election of Board members

### Mike Stover, Nominee President

*By Elaine Mitchell, Staff Writer*



Mike Stover uses his excellent organizational and leadership qualities in service to OLLI and its challenges. He joined in 2009 and has served on many committees. He has served on the Board of Trustees as President for three one-year terms, Vice President Administration,

Vice President External Relations and Trustee at Large. He has also served as Chair, Policies and Procedures Committee; Chair, Development and Philanthropy Committee; Chair, 35th Anniversary Committee; Chair, 40th Anniversary Committee; and Chair, Parking Mitigation. And, all the while, he has been instructor/coordinator of some of the most popular OLLI courses, like his current “American Magazine,” “Transitions in Retirement Essentials,” “American Presidency,” and moderator for “News: Up Close and Personal” and “Happy Hour.”

Mike is currently serving on the Board as Immediate Past President and is Chair of the

President’s Advisory Committee, Co-Chair of the Long-Term Plan Committee and a member of the OLLI Advisory Task Force.

A career in government as Lakewood Assistant City Manager for 22 years, Deputy Executive Director, Municipal Redevelopment Agency, and Association of Water Agencies Joint Water Quality-Communications Committee Co-Chair has allowed Mike to offer excellent skills for OLLI’s benefit.

Of course, Mike volunteers in his own community too. He is a member of the Chino Hills Planning Commission. His past volunteer service includes the Chino Hills Public Works Commission; Boy Scouts Volunteer of the Year Committee Chair; and the Pi Alpha Alpha Chapter President, Long Beach State University.

### Jim Di Tota, Nominee Vice President Administration

*By Chris Shaw, Editor*



Jim Di Tota was born in Cleveland, Ohio and graduated from Miami University in Ohio. He later earned a M.B.A. He was first employed by Anaconda, a copper and brass manufacturing company sold later to ARCO, in sales and marketing. Over the years he worked in Atlanta, Dallas and Northern California, ending up in Southern California in 1984 where he worked until his retirement in 2018.

Shortly after he retired, Jim heard about OLLI from his neighbor, Margie Sepulveda. Jim liked the social element OLLI offered — interacting with other retirees instead of just sitting at home. He started with “Ceramics” and added “Spanish” a year later. He also enjoys Jim Monroe’s “Boundaries of Science” and Susan Hanna and Rick Hearn’s “Science for You.” He also joined the “Poker” group.

Jim is OLLI’s Photography Coordinator and manages OLLI’s Digital Image Archive, preserving OLLI’s graphic history. He also volunteers as coordinator for “Ceramics” and the “Phocus Photography Club.”

Jim previously served on the Board of Trustees as Trustee at Large and is currently serving as Vice President Communications.

## **Larry C. Holmes, Nominee Vice President Communications**

*By Valerie Orleans, Assistant Editor*



Larry Holmes and his wife have taken multiple classes over the years covering many different subjects. In fact, the variety of programs is one of the reasons why they decided to join OLLI.

Larry found OLLI to be a welcoming and instructive place to meet others, study new areas of interest and ... drive the OLLI Trolley for several years. "My time as a trolley driver was the best," he said. "I would greet the riders and ask about their classes. It wasn't unusual for this to turn into a group discussion lasting all the way to their drop-off points. For some, 'trolley time' was a way to connect with their peers."

Today, Larry and his wife primarily attend classes focusing on technology and health.

"We actually learned how to navigate Google in the early days when our grandkids thought there was no hope for us," he recalled. "Serving as a volunteer is a great opportunity to give back and help promote the goals of OLLI. Our world is changing rapidly, creating new challenges for retirees and seniors. OLLI is at the forefront of meeting the needs of its members, providing a user-friendly place for seniors seeking the benefits of education and community connection."

## **Robert Kovacev, Nominee Vice President External Relations**

*By Chris Shaw, Editor*



Robert Kovacev was born in New York City and grew up in Los Angeles. He graduated from CSULA with degrees in engineering and physics and an M.B.A. Robert earned a doctorate in business administration with an emphasis in entrepreneurship

from the University of Phoenix School of Advanced Studies.

Robert has extensive career experience. As a technologist, he was a physicist on the Apollo program and a Senior Engineering Manager on the

"Star Wars" National Missile Defense program. In his academic career, he was a faculty member at CSUF's School of Business and Economics for 38 years, teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in marketing, finance and entrepreneurship. As a member of OLLI's Collaboration Committee, he has continued the work that he did as a faculty member at CSUF, teaching and guiding teams as they consulted with their business-owner clients through the CSUF Entrepreneurship Program.

At OLLI, Robert (known as Bob) and his wife, Sharon, attend a broad range of classes and particularly appreciate the physical, mental and creative challenges of dance and choral performance.

Bob is Co-Chair of OLLI's Long-Term Planning and Co-Lead of the Speakers Bureau, and he currently serves on the Board of Trustees as Vice President Administration. Prior to that, he served a highly productive and creative term as Vice President

## **Danny Torres, Nominee Vice President Technology**

*By William F. Clark, Staff Writer*



Danny Torres is a long-time Fullerton resident and technology professional with more than 40 years of experience supporting and teaching technology across a wide range of platforms, including Windows, macOS, iPadOS, iOS and Linux.

His professional journey includes roles as a Support Engineer and Knowledge Manager at Quest Software and Dell Software, along with work as a Social Media Expert at Dell. Throughout his career, he has relied on effective communication skills, calm problem-solving, and a practical approach to helping others feel comfortable with technology.

Danny attended California State University, Fullerton, and earned an A.A. degree in Computer Science from Fullerton College. He is committed to helping others build digital confidence and believes technology should support learning rather than create barriers.

Danny hopes to help strengthen OLLI's technology environment by improving classroom reliability, simplifying workflows and supporting instructors,

*General Meeting and Election... Continued on Page 4*

volunteers and members as they continue to learn and grow together. His professional background and teaching experience make him well-prepared to help guide OLLI's technological efforts in the years ahead.

## Debbie Kegel, Nominee Secretary

By Alice Gresto, Staff Writer



Debbie Kegel was born in Los Angeles, California. She graduated from CSUF in 1979 with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. She graduated from UCLA School of Law in 1982. Debbie practiced financial services for 25+ years. Upon retiring, she returned to CSUF, earning a Master's in Gerontology in 2011.

While working on her master's degree, she was given an assignment to visit and assess a community non-profit program serving seniors. She chose OLLI. It was there that she met Barbara Talento. She assured Barbara that after she finished her master's she would return. She certainly did!

***“When Debbie returned to OLLI, she became a super volunteer.”***

In the meantime, she joined CalOptima, the Medi-Cal plan for Orange County as part of a team that focused on bringing up new programs for seniors and people with disabilities. This included working with community leaders on grants and programs addressing homelessness. She retired 10 years later as Director, Strategic Development. When Debbie returned to OLLI, she became a super volunteer. She volunteers as a Blue Book section editor and on the Collaboration Committee, working on the CSUF Basic Needs Initiative and on behalf of the CSUF Children's Center. She coordinated the crowd sourcing campaign for Tuffy's Career Closet and the Notes of Appreciation campaign for our annual Volunteer Recognition. She is currently serving on the Board of Trustees as a Trustee at Large.

## Jim Appel, Nominee Trustee at Large

By Keni Cox, Staff Writer



California born and bred, Jim Appel attended UCLA. He earned his law degree at Lewis and Clark College in Oregon. He reports that the rumors are true: the California Bar Exam is considerably more difficult than Oregon's equivalent. Jim attributes his success to experience and luck.

Jim Appel is not an OLLI newbie. Ask him about the Stand Up Comedy class! Nor is he unfamiliar with the complexities and politics of leadership. He worked 28 years as a trial attorney for the Orange County Public Defender's Office. Today, he is working with Mike Stover and others as they work to fairly resolve the issues involving CSUF's proposal to move OLLI to another location.

Like so many others, Jim is a cheerleader for OLLI and its gifts of friendship and learning. His current "course load" includes "Strategy of Poker," "Cribbage Club," "Mah-Jong Game Strategy," "Eclectics" and "Urban Walks and Hikes."

"OLLI," Jim wrote, "creates new interests and skills and creates a sense of community. It creates purpose ... for that I am forever grateful and will use this position [Trustee at Large] to give back to OLLI what OLLI has given to me."

## Timothy Holmes, Nominee Trustee at Large

By Elaine Mitchell, Staff Writer



Timothy is a true local native. He was born in Fullerton at St. Jude Hospital, attended Raymond Elementary and graduated from Fullerton Union High School. His early work experience included, of course, Disneyland. He is the youngest of six children, but he felt like an only child; he is nine years younger than the fifth.

After school, Timothy stayed with the Walt Disney Company for a few years. Though he was recognized as a skilled communicator and leader, he needed to try other avenues. He was eager to explore and

develop all his potential and was courageous enough to explore different careers and move across country to experience new environments. These challenges expanded his knowledge and talents.

Eventually, he returned to Disney, where he worked for more than 20 years, Timothy was able to further develop and be recognized for his expert skills in organizational leadership, change management and inclusive communication. Timothy says he learned, “to listen deeply, adapt to evolving needs and foster a sense of belonging across diverse groups.”

***“He said, I have an unusual blend of emotional intelligence and systems thinking, and I use it in ways that quietly shape the communities around me.”***

### **Bozena Morton, Nominee Trustee at Large**

*By Mary Sampson, Staff Writer*



Bozena Morton is from Poland and attended the university in Wroclaw. After starting her professional career teaching English as a Foreign Language, she spent more than a decade as Director of Grants Development

and Management at a large Los Angeles County community college. She has vast experience teaching grantsmanship courses and working with institutions and non-government organizations in other countries. She enjoys international collaboration — connecting with people. She still freelances as a grant developer. She spent a year (2023-2024) on the Orange County Grand Jury, where she learned a great deal about Orange County.

Bozena has been an OLLI member for six or seven years. She discovered OLLI when a friend and co-worker of her husband’s told them about OLLI. She provided Blue Books and told them of our many classes. Bozena has sampled a number of classes ranging from meditation, genealogy, art history and photography. Her primary interest, though, is the Spanish language classes.

Ken Luke, who is in her Spanish class, approached her about volunteering as a trustee. Her reaction was “Why me?” When she learned

what the responsibilities were and what sort of time commitment there was, it seemed like a good fit for her. She likes OLLI and what it represents. She believes a position as a trustee offers potential

***“She enjoys international collaboration — connecting with people. .”***

### **Eileen T. Walsh, Nominee Trustee at Large**

*By Alice Gresto, Staff Writer*



As the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at CSUF, Eileen reports that she had the opportunity of attending OLLI Board meetings. She joined OLLI based on the positive impression those visits made upon her. Now that she has retired, she notes

that she has the time and motivation to contribute to OLLI.

For the past 30 years she has served on several non-profit 501(c) boards. She also served as an elected Trustee of the Laguna Beach Unified School District and the CapoS Laguna Regional Occupational Program.

Her 20-year career as a manager and executive with the County of Orange gave her extensive knowledge of local government. In her 25 years at CSUF as professor, administrator and Chair of the Academic Senate, she brings with her a background that could serve us well in the OLLI community.

***“Now that she has retired, she notes that she has the time and motivation to contribute to OLLI”***

*OLLI's Sweethearts 90+ Members Celebration  
and Bingo: February 13, 2026 Photos by Jim Di Tota*



**Agela Friedman**



**John Pantle**



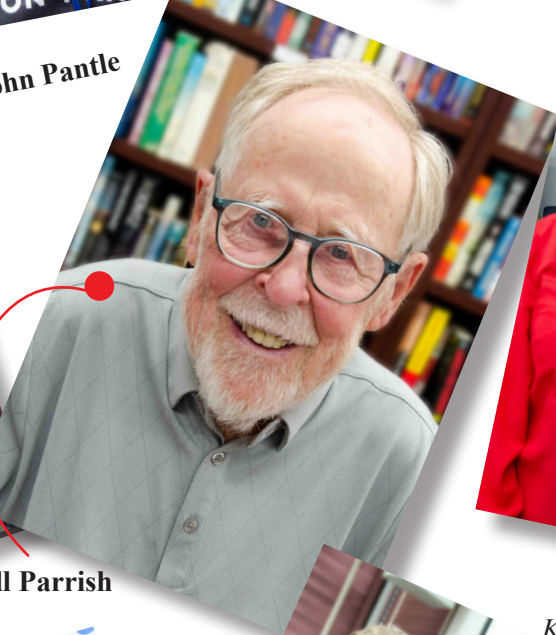
**Claire Curran**



**Char Oliva**



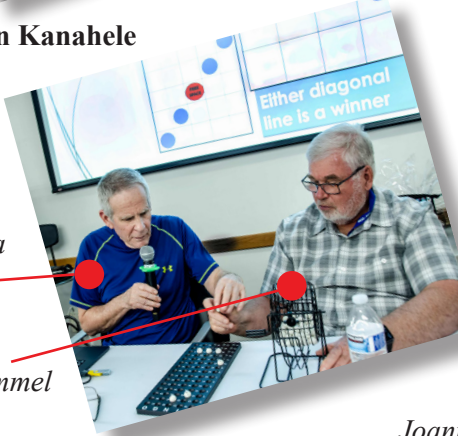
**Ann Kanahale**



**Bill Parrish**



**Kathey Schuster & Claire Curran**



**Tom La Casa**

**Mark Hammel**



**Joanne Hardy**



# New OLLI Website Offers Greater Access for OLLI Members

By Daisy Thomas, OLLI Executive Director

On Tuesday, February 25, 2025, both Rishitha Bathini, OLLI Data Systems Engineer, and I received the news that the State of California mandated CSUF to upgrade all campus department websites, including our OLLI-CSUF website from version 4.7 to version 5.0 in CMS (Content Management System) in order to provide greater accessibility for those with visual impairments and ensure that all web content follows a logical reading order.

The new website is going live the week before April 1.

In addition, CSUF required that the “OLLI Webmaster” would have to be a campus staff employee. We thank Coby for all his years of voluntary service to the OLLI website as the former OLLI Webmaster. He graciously took on a new responsibility as our Web Content Manager. In this role, he continues to lead OLLI’s dedicated volunteer Website Team (Loralee Page-Ortez, Ginger Barnhart, Diana Guerin and Melinda Wiltsie) in uploading and publishing updated content for all OLLI members. The OLLI Distance Learning Team (Trent Volkmann and Devansh Rawat), led by Bob Newcomb, will also be responsible for updating content.

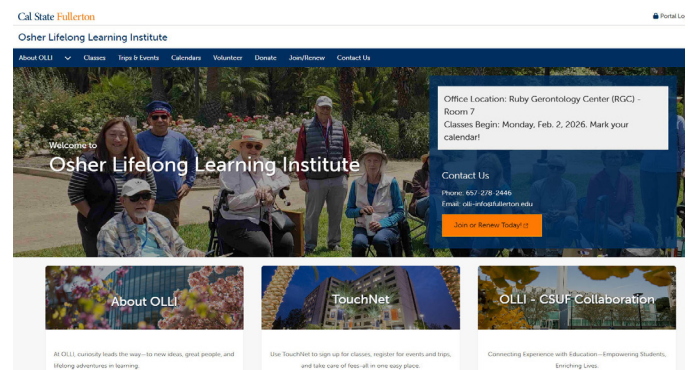
Once Rishitha Bathini was designated as the new OLLI Webmaster, she went to work immediately on the new web design and rebuild, consulting frequently with Jonni Taylor from Campus IT Development and Application Support. It took several months to develop and organize the vast amount of information utilized by OLLI members on a daily basis. Fortunately, Rishitha previously gained a lot of experience as an OLLI graduate student worker, interacting directly with OLLI members and meeting their IT and customer service needs. She was the perfect professional for this huge IT undertaking.

During this timeframe, it was imperative that Rishitha maintain full creative control of all website

development; she did so without any input from others and me, for the sole purpose of finishing this massive IT project on time.

The look and feel of the new OLLI website is cleaner and more modern; it is easy to navigate. High resolution pictures of our beloved OLLI members fill the pages. The tabs on top of the website remain the same; however, the flow of information is much more intuitive. For example, all course information, from class descriptions to Zoom links are centralized.

While it may take some time to get used to the new OLLI website, I am confident that the hard work done by the entire website team, including Jim Di Tota, our Vice President Communications, will benefit all OLLI members and the public for years to come.



## Celebrate Our OLLI Volunteers During National Volunteer Month With Notes of Appreciation April 13–25

By Debbie Kegel, Notes of Appreciation Coordinator

OLLI shines because of its volunteers — and National Volunteer Month is the perfect time to thank the people who make our community thrive. From teaching and coordinating classes to providing technical support, planning events, serving on committees, connecting with CSUF students and faculty and working behind the scenes, OLLI volunteers give their time, talent and heart every day.

You can help us celebrate them by writing a Note of Appreciation to a volunteer who has made a difference in

*Celebrate Our OLLI Volunteers... Continued on Page 8*



## Notes of Appreciation

your OLLI experience. Notes may recognize instructors, coordinators, committee members or any volunteer whose efforts you value.

Use the Notes of Appreciation form available in the Shapiro Lobby beginning April 13, the form linked to this article or any format you prefer. Please include the volunteer's first and last name, the related class or activity and your name to help us deliver your Note of Appreciation.

Drop completed notes in the collection box in the Shapiro Lobby from April 13 through April 25. Join us in celebrating the volunteers who make OLLI such a vibrant and welcoming community!

[Click here](#) for a printable copy of the Notes of Appreciation Form.

## Cheers to Volunteers Luncheon Coming April 16

Please join us to toast our volunteers with lunch in the RGC courtyard. The Cheers to Volunteers Luncheon will be served from 11:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Members can sign-up on Touch Net. Look for updated information in the OLLI Website, the Shapiro Lobby and the weekly OLLI



## Correction:

In the article “Toni Hoffman and the Snappy Tappers” in the February issue of the ChroniCLE, Connie Kohn’s age was mistakenly given as 90. Connie is actually 99 years of age, which makes her participation with the Snappy Tappers all the more impressive.

## Sports Talk Attends CSUF Softball

By Carl Richards, Sports Talk Coordinator

Twenty-One members of OLLI’s “Sports Talk” class took a short field trip on February 6 to lend our support to the CSUF women’s softball team. They cheered the Titans to 3-1 win over visiting Portland State University.



## Urban Walks & Hikes

Members of OLLI’s “Urban Walks and Hikes” class enjoy spring foliage while hiking the South Ridge Trail in Chino Hills State Park. Instructor/Coordinator Steven Schuster plans to continue classes in the summer session and fall semester, retitled as “Urban Hikes.”



## In Memoriam Coming

Friday April 24 • 3:30-5:00 p.m. • Shapiro  
ABCD

In Memoriam is an annual event for friends and families to celebrate the lives of the members we have lost. A reception of light refreshments will be served for those who join us to share in tribute, conversation and fellowship. All members and bereaved families are invited to attend. he continues to lead OLLI's dedicated volunteer



## What's Happening at the Board

By Chris Shaw, Editor

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

- The Advisory Task Force plans to submit proposals for possible relocation of OLLI by April. OLLI's President Vickie Hite thanked the committee for its work and the OLLI membership for their support.
- A new version of the OLLI website, to be in compliance with current CSUF IT standards and very user-friendly, is coming by April.
- The Nomination and Election Committee nominated the following members for the Board election in April: Mike Stover for President; Jim Di Tota for VP Administration; Larry Holmes for VP Communications; Bob Kovacev for VP External Relations; Danny Torres for VP Technology; Debbie Kegel for Secretary; and Jim Appel, Timothy Holmes, Bozena Morton and Eileen Walsh for Trustees at Large.

- The Policies and Procedures Committee obtained approval to change the title of Policy 5.2 from Scholarship Policy to OLLI Membership Grant Policy. Additional changes to Policy 5.2, Policy 6.3 (Scholarship and Awards) and Policy 9.2 (Fundraising), that were proposed by Development/Philanthropy Committee Chair Fran Colwell, were described and will be voted on at the next Board meeting. Chair Joanne Hardy and Debbie Kegel are also working on cleaning up the general consistency, clarity and punctuation of the OLLI Policies document.

- Secretary Ann Sparks reported that OLLI's expenses under its fiscal 2026-27 budget will continue to be substantially more than its income, based on the \$300 annual membership fee. The deficit will be covered by donations from members, etc. and investment income from the Osher Foundation endowments.

- Current membership is 1,400, which is 35 more members than last year at this time.

- Executive Director Daisy Thomas thanked Eileen Walsh for recruiting four CSUF student interns to work in the OLLI office with the OLLI Board of Trustees.

*Words of Wisdom*

**To look at the positive side of  
everything and best to look for  
the good in people.**

**There's always a spark of  
goodness in anybody .**

**- Joyce Findley  
90 years old**



## OLLI

at California State University, Fullerton

*"A Continuing Learning Experience"*

1979 - 2025: 46 Years of Excellence

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### **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](mailto: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/>