



Washington University  
in St. Louis

## Curriculum Committee Overview

**Overview.** The Curriculum Committee assures that, for each term, there is a broad-based offering of courses at OLLI and well-prepared facilitators to lead them. The committee is a group of OLLI members who serve as advisors to support the Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Committee members engage other OLLI volunteers and prospective volunteers to cultivate course proposals.

**Composition.** The committee currently consists of a Chair, a Secretary, and Interest Group Chairs from the nine OLLI curricula areas:

Art & Architecture	Entertainment Arts	Religion & Philosophy
Contemporary Issues	History & Biography	Social Studies
Creative Writing & Storytelling	Literature & Fiction	STEMM

At-large members may also be appointed at the discretion of the Director. It is standard for the past Curriculum Committee Chair to serve as an at-large member for at least one year following their term as Chair.

**Meetings.** The Curriculum Committee meets quarterly to review upcoming courses, discuss pending proposals, solve problems, and identify opportunities to improve OLLI's offerings. Committee discussion should focus on the content of upcoming courses and the background of facilitators, any shortfalls in course offerings, and opportunities for courses to promote interaction between the interest areas. As needed, the committee, in cooperation with the OLLI Director, will identify courses or facilitators that need redirection and develop a plan for discussing the situation with the facilitator.

**Scope of responsibility.** Ultimately, OLLI curriculum decisions are the responsibility of the OLLI Director with oversight from the Associate Dean of University College. The committee provides counsel on content of interest to OLLI members and multiplies the Director's efforts through engaging new and existing volunteer facilitators.

**Terms.** Committee membership is a renewable annual commitment reflecting the OLLI business year (July 1 – June 30). There are no term limits. It is most standard for an interest group chair

to serve three or four years before stepping aside from a given role and, as willing, taking on a different OLLI volunteer leadership position.

**Minutes.** Minutes of the meetings are recorded by the Committee Secretary and distributed by the OLLI Director.

**The Role of the Curriculum Committee Chair** is to work with the OLLI Director to support the committee. Duties of the Curriculum Committee Chair include:

- Convening four committee meetings each year
- Serving as a member of the OLLI Executive Committee
- Encouraging Interest Group Chairs to meet regularly with their constituents
- Working with the OLLI Director to identify, vet, and support Interest Group Chairs
- Working with the OLLI Director to plan two Facilitator Workshops each year
- Reviewing all course evaluations each term
- Offering support and consultation to facilitators who are struggling
- Serving as a spokesperson for the Committee and a resource regarding OLLI courses and enrollment at local OLLI meetings as well as events sponsored by Osher national

The term of the Chair is typically two years, but may be renewed for a second term at the mutual agreement of the volunteer and the OLLI Director.

**The role of the Interest Group Chairs** is to cultivate and support facilitators with an interest related to the given area. Interest groups will vary in tone and how they meet, but they should touch base quarterly, ideally in advance of the Curriculum Committee meeting. Group meetings should provide a forum for OLLI members who share similar interests to exchange ideas about potential courses or events and to identify and support appropriate facilitators to lead the courses. Formal minutes of the interest groups are not required, but summary records of meetings are helpful both to inform the Interest Group Chair's report to the full committee and to create a historical record of the Group's activities, discussion, and membership.

Interest groups will generally meet without the participation of OLLI staff, but OLLI staff support the groups by reserving meeting space or creating Zoom links upon request. Additionally, the OLLI Director will refer prospective interest group members to the appropriate chair.

The Interest Group Chair should keep a current list of group members and be prepared to recommend a successor before they step down from service.

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