

Lifetime Learning Institute at SUNY New Paltz
Annual Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2021
Via Zoom Videoconference
10:00 AM

Present: 37 members

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM, following a social time.

Opening Remarks: Mary Hilley, President

Welcome to the Annual Meeting of LLI at SUNY New Paltz. Our path in 2020/2021 can be summed up as long, challenging, and rewarding. Our journey took us from “what are we going to do now” last spring, to delivering over 30 online courses, 17 trained classroom hosts, and two virtual brunches during the Fall/Spring Semesters.

We certainly ventured into uncharted territory in 2020 but in the end, we:

- Became adept with new technology: online registration, catalog, and class evaluations were introduced as Phase 1 of the database became operational.
- Adapted to a different way of learning. Hours were spent revamping our course plan for online execution along with holding zoom training sessions for presenters, classroom hosts, and participants.
- Expanded our skill sets. If we did not know how to do it, we figured it out - from building interactive evaluation forms to tailoring how we communicate to our members to persuading presenters to “just try it”.
- Provided classmate interaction. This addressed one of our goals – opportunity for classmates to chat before class. For some, this provided a lifeline to the outside world when they were isolated from friends and family. Many people got their vaccine appointments based on these pre-class conversations – and we had lots of laughs.
- Introduced virtual brunches. Zoom classes were working so we decided to reintroduce brunches. The two we have had to-date were well received and more are in the works. This was another opportunity to provide classmate interactions.

- Connected with other adult learning organizations in our region. Ten Lifelong Learning groups met on November 20th to discuss the challenges we are facing, share solutions, and determine if there are areas of potential collaboration. We hope this dialog continues.

This is a synopsis of 2020/2021 activities. It does not touch on the behind-the-scenes activity. The time and effort involved in essentially reworking many of our processes. I started off mentioning what we offered to our members – courses, brunches – the same as we offered in person – delivered on a different platform. Due to covid, our efforts had to be focused on adapting our processes and infrastructure to continue providing the essence of our program. Not an easy task. Not a completed task. A worthwhile work in progress.

We do have some vacancies on the council: three Members-at-Large positions, 2 members who are temporarily heading the Volunteer and Events committees and we may need a chair for the PR committee. These positions have purposely not been filled. We first need to determine our needs as we go forward.

We could not have accomplished all we did without the participation of our council (officers and standing committee teams), task force teams: technology and zoom training, registrar, presenters, classroom hosts. Many wore 2 or more hats. They pitched in and did what was needed, where it was needed, regardless of the task.

Our success was all about people stepping out of their comfort levels to ensure that the LLI program that started in 2007 would continue regardless of the platform. I tip my hat to you.

Introduction of Members of LLI Council and Chairs of Standing Committees:

Mary noted that the former President, Diane Fiscina, did not attend an annual meeting in 2020 because there was no meeting due to COVID. However, the organization thanks Diane for everything she contributed during her tenure.

Members-at-Large are still to be determined. Standing Committee chairs:

Curriculum: Marilou Abramshe

Catalog: Carole Heyl

Classroom Hosts: Helen Kane, Linda Lee Paquin

Membership: Marny Janson
Events: Margaret Armento-McDowell
Volunteers: Alma Sloan
Public Relations: Carole Heyl
Social Media: Phyllis Sturm
Registrar, Administrative Assistant and Tech: Jean Poirier

Treasurer's Report: Faith Nichols

In the last year, due to the COVID situation, virtually no funds were expended on usual activities. Similarly, revenue was far below prior years. 100 new members joined; income for the year was \$11,351.00 and expenditures totaled \$13,945.00, leaving a deficit of \$2,594.00. However, the reserve is \$27,000.00 which provided the organization sufficient funds to make up the difference comfortably.

Nominating Committee: Alma Sloan

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Alma stated that the only position to be filled this year was Vice-President, because Jessica Rothman will be moving into the position of President. The only nominee was Theo Pappas. A vote was held, and Theo Pappas was unanimously elected as the new Vice-President. Alma noted that she or Jessica may be contacted with suggestions for nominees for future positions. She then introduced the incoming President, Jessica Rothman. Jessica has been a teacher and past President, during which time she integrated LLI with the college.

Incoming President's Remarks: Jessica Rothman

Three years ago, as I ended my Presidency, I addressed all of LLI's spectacular volunteers at our annual reception, thanking them all and saying goodbye. Or so I thought. How much can change in a short time - as this past year has made abundantly clear.

Those who know me will understand that I refer often to my dear Uncle Will, Shakespeare that is, so I now quote Sonnet 98 - "April hath put a spirit of youth in everything". I hope we are all here today with that spirit!

Somehow it seems appropriate to be addressing the membership during Earth Week. We are encouraged to reduce, reuse, recycle. I believe that LLI can help us to do that in very personal ways.

First, we reduce isolation through our classes, which will continue online through the Fall 2021 semester, and hopefully move on to some in person venues for Spring 2022.

Next, we reuse the skills we acquired early in life to enhance our ability to continue our education.

We also recycle the vast experience and knowledge we have gained over our lifetimes and share them with fellow members.

There are a few more “RE” concepts which are apropos to the LLI experience. RENEW - Seeing our LLI friends via ZOOM helps us move beyond the feelings of being cut off from the “normal” world we knew.

REPURPOSE - LLI gives us something to look forward to.

REDIRECT - LLI gives us a healthy, fun, and rewarding way to focus our energies on positives.

RE-ENTER - When the time is right, LLI will give us an opportunity to come back to our community, spend quality time with friends, and continue to live our best lives.

The most important “RE” word for me this year has been RESILIENCE. We have overcome many seemingly insurmountable obstacles to be stronger than ever before.

the words “Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer...” I look forward to the glorious summer ahead and to helping LLI continue to be resilient and relevant to all of us.

Following the incoming President’s remarks, Jo Gangemi encouraged everyone to participate in a walking outing during Earth Week. Marilou Abramshe thanked Mary Hilley for all her hard work this year, and Phyllis Sturm presented a plaque to Mary for all her tireless efforts as President. Margaret McDowell noted that there will be a Spring brunch on May 20, 2021 conducted by Helen Brauwise, with the theme “Roaring Twenties (1820’s) in Ulster County”.

Ali asked why the heads of committees were not listed on the website. Jessica said she would bring this up at the next Council meeting. Alan Rothman congratulated Jessica, Judy Joffe thanked Mary for the Host training, Jessica thanked Mary and the Council for their work this past year and finally, Alma thanked Mary for the Host training.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Philips

Secretary