



Showing their new colors are, from left, OLLI at RIT members Gisela Balents, Alex Marcus, Ed Salem, Ana Moreno and Kathy Hayes.

Tradition of lifelong learning continues with new name

RIT's program for people over 50 receives national recognition, prestigious grant

The name has changed but the mission of the organization remains the same – to offer a diverse repertoire of intellectually stimulating classes for individuals age 50 and older.

The RIT Athenaeum has been awarded a grant from The Bernard Osher Foundation and been renamed The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT (OLLI at RIT).

“This is another exciting milestone for our organization,” says RIT Vice President for Government and Community Relations Deborah Standardi. “The news couldn’t come at a better time since The Athenaeum, now OLLI at RIT, commemorates its 20th birthday in the 2006-2007 calendar year. We will have much to celebrate.”

OLLI at RIT, located at 150 Research Blvd., Henrietta, joins a network that includes more than 90 Osher institutes in 39 states and is one of two in New York state. The grant of \$100,000 will help expand the organization, which now boasts 375 members.



“We appreciate the Osher Foundation’s confidence in RIT and their invitation to a roster of lifelong learning programs on prestigious campuses such as Tufts, Rutgers, Northwestern and Carnegie Mellon,” says RIT President Albert J. Simone. “In New York state, the foundation has awarded grants only to New York University and RIT.”

Bonnie Salem, OLLI at RIT council chair, says that Osher grants have been awarded to universities with existing lifelong learning programs and to those in start-up programs as well. “We’re ahead of the game because we’ve been doing this for 20 years, so we have a history, we have pride, and we have members who have remained committed,” Salem says.

OLLI at RIT offers a fall, winter and spring series of classes, which are developed and conducted by members in a variety of fields – from arts, literature and sciences, to history and government. Topics include investing, collecting, contemporary events, memoir writing, Harry Potter, local history,

movies, books and theater.

OLLI also offers members the chance to develop friendships through a variety of social activities, travel, brown-bag lunch hours, coffee breaks, and volunteer opportunities. Full-time members have access to such campus amenities as dining, library and bookstore facilities. The fitness center, swimming pool and the new state-of-the-art field house are available for use at a nominal quarterly fee. OLLI members qualify for student rates for programs held on campus.

“Our members can teach, learn and remain active in their retirement years,” says Julie Blowers, OLLI at RIT program director. “Since Osher began in 2001, they have set a goal with each of the higher education institutions who have received grants – challenging us to increase our membership size to 500. We have no doubt we’ll meet their challenge at RIT.”

Marcia Morphy

For more information about upcoming classes and membership at OLLI at RIT, call 585- 292-8989 or visit www.rit.edu/osher