

Road Scholar Lifelong Learning Resource Network

Administrator Survey, 2017-2018

INTRO/METHODOLOGY

The Road Scholar Lifelong Learning Institute Resource Network conducted its second bi-annual Administrator Survey in the fall of 2017 and winter of 2018. The survey was completed by representatives from 63 LLIs across the United States. The reports have been prepared in two versions. A general version of the report including top-line quantitative results is available to everyone. A detailed version including open-comments is available to the 63 LLIs that completed the survey.

I. MEMBERSHIP AND MARKETING

Average Mailing List Size. Responding LLIs reported an average mailing list size (including active, lapsed, and prospective members) of 1,456. The largest mailing lists numbered 9,000; the smallest, 70. Twenty-seven respondents said they had mailing lists of 1,000 or more.

Average Membership. The survey asked, "Approximately how many TOTAL active 12-month members does your LLI have, i.e. individuals who have, in the last 12 months, paid a membership fee, paid a course enrollment fee, or made a financial donation to your organization?" The average number of members reported was 799. The largest number of members was 4,200; the smallest, 40. Fifteen respondents reported membership exceeding 1,000.

Average New Members. The survey asked, "Approximately how many NEW paid members does your LLI have, i.e. individuals who have, in the last 12 months, paid a membership fee, paid a course enrollment fee, or made a financial donation to your organization FOR THE FIRST TIME?" The average number of new members was 157. The largest number of new members reported was 1,000; the smallest, 6.

Average Age of All and New Members. Respondents were asked to estimate the distribution of both all and new members by age bands. That distribution is shown in the chart to the left.

The largest group of all members were 70-year-olds, representing 41% of all members. The largest group of new members were 60-year olds, representing 51% of all new members. More than two-thirds (69%) of all new members are under the age of 70.

Membership Tenure. The most common membership tenure is 3-5 years, representing 28% of all members. The distribution of members by tenure is shown in the chart to the left.

Marketing Effectiveness. Respondents were asked to rank three marketing methods for their effectiveness in attracting new members. Referrals from current members was reported as most effective, followed by free media.

Ranking of Marketing Methods	1st	2nd	3rd
Referrals from current members	49	5	1

Free media, i.e. articles or mentions in newspapers, on radio, or television, etc.	2	39	14
Paid media, i.e. paid advertising	4	11	40

Other Marketing (Respondents' Version Only). Survey respondents reported a significant variety of other marketing methods, including Physical Distribution of Flyers, Catalogs, etc., Outreach Events, and Social Media. Verbatim comments (lightly edited for clarity or to mask respondent using ***) are reported below:

Physical Distribution (10 mentions)

Outreach Events (8 comments)

Social Media (5 comments)

Concerns or Challenges Attracting New Members (Respondents' Version Only). We asked respondents in an open-ended question to list their biggest concerns or challenges regarding attracting new members to and retaining current members of their LLI.

Capacity/Resource Constraints (9 comments)

Quality Programming (7 comments)

Parking (5 comments)

Membership Fee Structure (Respondents' Version Only). We asked respondents to explain their membership/course fee structure in detail. It's safe to say that each organization has its own payment plan and can be grouped into the following categories:

Membership Fee Only (28 comments)

Membership + Course Fee (17 comments)

Course Fee (4 comments)

Membership Levels (3 comments)

II. GOVERNANCE/MANAGEMENT

Bylaws. Almost all—94.4%—of respondents said their LLI has written bylaws.

Standing Committees. The most frequently occurring standing committees are for Curriculum and Membership. The most common committees are listed in this chart:

Standing Committees	Percent
Curriculum	94.3%

Membership	60.4%
Special Events	56.6%
Hospitality/Social	54.7%
Executive/Steering	48.5%
Travel	41.5%
Public Relations	39.6%
Technology/Audio-Visual Services	34.0%
Long-Range Planning	28.3%
Bylaws	26.4%
Development/Fundraising	24.5%
Volunteer Development	22.6%
Scholarships	17.0%

Paid Staff. Just over 5% of LLIs report paid staff number six or more, while 18.5% have no paid staff.

Number of Paid Staff	Percent
6 or more	5.5%
4-5	13.0%
2-3	35.2%

1	27.8%
0	18.5%

Paid vs. Volunteer Positions. The most common paid staff position are Administrative Assistant and Executive Director. Slightly more than a third of LLIs responding have no Executive Director (or no position with the title of Executive Director).

Position	Paid	Volunteer	Not a Position
Administrative Assistant	61.5%	5.8%	32.7%
Board of Directors	0.0%	90.4%	9.6%
Classroom Scheduler/Coordinator	34.0%	45.3%	20.8%
Curriculum Coordinator	17.3%	67.3%	14.4%
Development Office/Fundraising Coordinator	7.6%	22.6%	69.8%
Executive Director	52.8%	11.3%	35.9%
Marketing/Communications Coordinator	15.7%	47.1%	37.3%
Travel Programs Coordinator	5.7%	47.2%	47.1%

Executive Director Responsibilities. “Liaison with host institution” and “day-to-day administration” top the list of executive director responsibilities. Executive Directors wear a huge variety of hats:

Executive Director Responsibilities	Percent
Liaison with host institution	80.8%

Day-to-day administration	76.9%
External relations	76.9%
Creating or managing budgets	65.4%
Managing volunteer staff	57.7%
Managing paid staff	53.9%
Scheduling	51.9%
Space acquisition	51.6%
Operations (e.g. mailing list maintenance, registration)	50.0%
Chairing board or executive committee meetings	48.1%
Strategy/policy development	47.7%
Publications/marketing	46.2%
PR/media	44.2%
Curriculum development	42.3%
Membership development	40.4%
Sourcing instructors	32.7%
Chairing membership meetings	30.8%
Fundraising	25.0%

Overseeing non-executive committee meetings	23.1%
Travel program management	19.2%

Relationship with Host Institution. Nearly 70% (69.8%) of respondents report their relationship as “Strong.” Our LLI is recognized as a valued and important member of our host institution’s community,” while 18.8% report the relationship as “Neutral.” Our host institution tolerates us but mostly practices benign neglect.” The relationship is described as “Weak. Our institution actively questions our purpose and we fear for our long-term viability” by 3.8% of respondents, and 7.5% reported that they have no host institution.

Volunteers. LLIs benefit greatly from the involvement of volunteers, and 57.4% report having the services of 26 or more volunteers.

Number of Volunteers	Percent
26 or more	57.4%
11-25	14.8%
6-10	7.4%
1-5	16.7%
0	3.7%

Course Registration Software. 83.2% of respondents said they use course registration software. The most common solution is to piggyback on the college registration system. Other software systems mentioned in open-ended comments included: AceWare, Augusoft-Lumens, Bookwhen, Campus CE, Destiny 1, Entrinsik Enrole, NEACT, ProClass, Wild Apricot, as well as home-grown solutions using Microsoft Office of Google forms.

III. SPACE

Locations. The plurality of responding LLIs offer classes in only one location, but many have multiple locations.

Program Sites	Percent
1	44.4%
2	9.3%
3	11.1%
4	9.3%
5	3.7%
6	0.0%
7	3.7%
8	3.7%
9	1.9%
10 or more	13.0%

Space Challenges (Respondent Version Only). In an open-ended format, respondents shared specific challenges, concerns, and solutions in the areas of classroom space and parking.

Classroom Space (15 comments)

Parking (7 comments)

IV. CURRICULUM/PARTNERSHIPS

Program Months. LLI's were asked during which months they offered courses.

Course Months	Percent
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January	59.2%
February	77.5%
March	91.8%
April	87.8%
May	73.5%
June	55.1%
July	42.9%
August	28.6%
September	85.7%
October	98.0%
November	95.9%
December	42.9%

Number of Course Offered. About a third of responding LLIs offered between 26 and 75 courses in the last 12 months.

Number of Courses	Percent
0-5	9.6%
6-10	3.8%

11-25	9.6%
26-50	19.2%
51-75	15.4%
76-100	11.5%
101-150	13.5%
151-200	3.8%
201 or more	13.5%

One-Session Courses or Presentations. Nearly half of responding LLIs offered more than 25 one-session classes or presentations in the last 12 months.

One-Session Classes or Presentations	Percent
0	5.8%
1-2	0.0%
3-5	3.9%
6-10	25.0%
11-25	17.3%
26 or more	48.1%

Most Innovative Program Concept (Respondent Version Only). In an open-ended question, survey respondents reported a great variety of innovative program concepts.

Distance Learning (Respondent Version Only). Eleven respondents reported present involvement with distance learning or an intention to get involved soon.

Partnerships (Respondent Version Only). Respondents reported course or curriculum partnership relations with arts organizations, retirement communities, are not-for-profits, museums and libraries.

Arts Organizations (7)

Retirement Communities (6)

Non Profits (5)

Museum (4)

Libraries (3)

Instructor Type. LLI report a great variety of instructor types, with “LLI members who are not active or retired college or university faculty” the most common type, occurring at 98.1% of responding LLIs.

Instructor Mix
LLI members who are not active or retired college or university faculty
Active college or university faculty teaching IN their academic field
Active college or university faculty teaching OUTSIDE their academic field
Retired college or university faculty teaching IN their academic field
Retired college or university faculty teaching OUTSIDE their academic field
Individuals from your community who are not LLI members (e.g. a yoga instructor who is not a member)

V. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Special Interest Groups. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) focused on book discussion, bridge, and current events are most popular, but 31% of respondents report having no SIGs at all.

Special Interest Group	Percent
Book Discussion	51.9%
Bridge	26.9%
Current Events	26.9%
Writing	23.1%
Film	21.5%
Dining Out	21.2%
Crafts (Woodworking, Pottery, Needlecrafts, etc.)	19.2%
Photography	19.2%
Travel	19.2%
Walking/Hiking	19.2%
Fine Arts (Painting, Sculpture, etc.)	17.3%

Foreign Language	17.3%
Mah Jongg	17.3%
Genealogy	15.4%
Computers/Technology	13.5%
History	13.5%
Gardening	11.5%
Healthy Living	9.6%
Investing	9.6%
Bicycling	3.8%
Dancing	3.8%

VI. TRAVEL

Types of Trips Taken. The survey asked: “For each of the following types of excursions or trips, please indicate how many of them your LLI or its travel committee has offered to its members over the last 12 months.”

Type of Trip	Frequency Last 12 Months				
	0	1	2	3-5	6 or more
Day trips or excursions	13.5%	11.5%	5.8%	25.0%	44.2%
Overnight drive- or bus-to trips within the United States or Canada	76.1%	10.9%	6.5%	6.5%	0.0%
Overnight trips within the United States or Canada requiring air transportation	80.0%	8.9%	8.9%	2.2%	0.0%
International trips outside the US or Canada	70.8%	8.3%	6.3%	10.4%	4.2%

Last 5+ Day Trip (Respondent Version Only). The survey asked respondents to describe their last trip of five days or more.

VII. CONFERENCES

The survey asked how likely respondents were to attend LLI conferences in a variety of formats. The chart displays those “very likely” or “somewhat likely to attend.”

Conference Format	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely
A national conference of LLIs featuring speakers, workshops and networking that you would fly to, lasting 3-4 days	17.0%	22.6%

A regional conference of LLIs featuring speakers, workshops and networking that you would drive to, lasting 2-3 days	34.6%	28.9%
A local conference of LLIs featuring a panel discussion, networking, and lunch that you would drive to, lasting 1 day	54.9%	27.5%
A webinar featuring a speaker or panel with the ability to ask questions, lasting 60 to 90 minutes	40.4%	26.9%

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Additional Comments (Respondent Version Only). The survey included a final open-ended option for respondents to “Please use the space below to write any additional comments you think would be helpful for other LLIs to know about your LLI.”