More Than Merely PC:
Creating More Inclusive Lifelong Learning Programs

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Shades of Diversity

- Regional
- Cultural
- Race/ethnicity
- Generational
- Educational attainment
- Socio-economic status
- Sexual preference
- Physical ability
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- And more ...
Why “inclusivity”?

• Diversity = difference
  – “We” and “They”
  – “Majority” and “Minority”

• Inclusivity = “an intention to include people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized”

• Inclusivity embraces difference, and includes everyone.
Inclusivity is About Everyone ...

• Being respected and empowered;
• Feeling safe and comfortable;
• Being supported and affirmed;
• Belonging;
• Having contributions valued
Diversity
... is the desired end state

Inclusivity
... is the attitude that will help get you there
Benefits of Being a Diverse and Inclusive OLLI

• More Interesting Offerings
• Attracting Members and Instructors from a Different Pool of Your “Mainstream” Source
• Helping your Host University achieve a Diverse/Inclusive Campus
• Greater Potential for Funding and Resources
• More Opportunity to Develop an Intergenerational Program
• More Opportunity to Educate Members on “Divisive” Issues
How to Begin? What Efforts Can We Make?

- Know Your Members—Who are Your members? Where are They from? What are Their Backgrounds?

- Know the Community Where Your Program is Located—Research is a Key

- Ensure that Your Leadership Team Reflects the Community

- Inform and Educate Members of Your Leadership Team (Board, Committees, Staff, Volunteers) on Diversity and Inclusiveness

- Create a Welcoming Environment by Stating a Message of Inclusiveness at Every Opportunity Including Printed Materials and Website

- Make a Connection with Community Groups in Your Serving Area
What Resources Do We Need?

- “Where There is a Will, There is a Way”
- “Rome wasn’t Built in One Day”
- “You Build it, They Will Come”
- A Group of Committed Volunteers Who is Willing to Spearhead the Effort
- Set aside a Budget if Funding Permits for Outreach Activities and Materials
In the beginning (2007) ...

Objections

- “We’re not ready”
- “Change must come from the top”
- “We’ll need a big budget”
- “Let’s not change who we are to accommodate...”
- “We’ll alienate our current minority members”
- “We are already open to all”
What We Did

• Narrowed our focus
  – Target: Hispanics, African-Americans

• Organized interested members

• Located, cultivated experts that helped us understand how to cultivate an inclusive attitude

• We located and developed internal & external champions
We worked on multiple fronts

Courses

• World Cultures
• Ybor City Below the Surface
• Characters of Ybor City
• Passport to Cuba

Also, practical courses: computer training, languages, memoir writing attract a diverse crowd

International students & OLLI members in World Cultures course at end-of-term party
Multiple Fronts ... Lecturers

Roy Kaplan, *The Myth of Post-Racial America*

James Tokley
*American Christianity in a Time of Slavery*

Ernest Hooper
*The President, My Grandmother and Her Gifts of Wisdom*

Noel Smith,
*Cuba & Cuban American Visual Art*
Multiple Fronts

- Developed locations convenient to these communities
- Incorporated different faces into our materials
  - Brochure, website, advertising, Facebook
- Purchased advertising in minority media
- Recruited African-Americans and Hispanics to OLLI committees, leadership

Centro Asturiano
Learn to live with some discomfort

From *both* sides:

- Naysayers (here’s where you’ll hear about PC)
- Complaints about slow progress

Understand it will take years of sustained effort
Before: our demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLLI-USF</th>
<th>Hillsborough County, FL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2007 Member Survey</strong></td>
<td><strong>2010 Census Data</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hispanic - 3%</td>
<td>• Hispanic - 32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• African-American -1%*</td>
<td>• African American - 15.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>*estimated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Of 1,036 members</td>
<td>Of 935,018 adults 18+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2012: our demographics

OLLI-USF

2012 Member Survey
- Hispanic - 3.5%
- African-American - 3%
Of 1,297+ members

Hillsborough County, FL

2010 Census Data
- Hispanic - 32.8%
- African American - 15.3%
Of 935,018 adults 18+
Nation’s First Lifelong Learning Program That Integrates LGBT Program into Its Offerings

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at University of Massachusetts Boston
http://www.umb.edu/ollii
“OLLI at UMass Boston values the diversity of our participants, staff, volunteers, and the university community. We strive to model and promote a welcoming environment by embracing our aging community including differences in race, socioeconomic status, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, and other forms of uniqueness.”
Stonewall LGBT Group
at OLLI UMass Boston
Why Providing Lifelong Learning Opportunities for LGBT Older Adults are Needed?

- Between 1.75 to 4 Million Americans Ages 60 and Over are LGBT Older Adults (Administration on Aging, 2011)

- Over 400 Lifelong Learning Programs in the U.S.—Only a Few Programs Address the Needs of LGBT Older Adults

- LGBT Older Adults are More Likely to Experience Social Isolation than their Straight peers—They are Twice as Likely to Live Alone, twice as Likely to be Single, and 3-4 Times Less Likely to Have Children

- Many LGBT Older Adults are not Comfortable to Attend Programs that may be Unwelcoming to LGBT Folks
Sample of Courses with LGBT Contents

► Lesbians And Psychology: Goodbye to Abnormal

► LGBT Reflections on Life and Aging: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual and Transgender Elders Tell Our Stories

► Relationships: LGBTs and Their Families

► Native American Two-Spirit Poetry and Short Fictions

► Let’s Talk about Three Elephants in the Room: Ageism, Ableism and Heterosexism

► Aging Mothers/Older Daughters: New Challenges/New Dynamics
Sample of Presentations with LGBT Contents

► Gay Men Coming Out Stories

► When Parents and Families Learn That a Child is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender

► Mother-Talk: Conversations with Mothers of Lesbian Daughters and FTM Transgender Children

► A Fresh Look at the Transsexual/Transgender Phenomenon

► LGBT Grandparents: A Panel Discussion by Grandparents

► Gender Variant: The Process of Family Struggle and Acceptance

► From John into Janice: My True Story
Stonewall Members with Students of the LGBT Club
Gay Instructor Who Teaches Courses
“Neglected Opera Gems” and “Silent Films Greats”
Transgender Instructor Who Teaches an Acting Class and Directs Plays
Straight & LGBT Members Enjoyed Each Other’s Company at an OLLI Social Event
Openly Gay OLLI Treasurer on the Board of Directors
Openly Bi-sexual, Chair of the OLLI Curriculum Committee,
Dressed Ambiguously at the Queer Student Poetry Slams—Gender Identity
LGBT Instructors Being Recognized at the OLLI Annual Membership Meeting
Straight & LGBT Members Acted Out in a Play at OLLI New Year Party
OLLI Members Participated in the Annual LGBT Senior Pride T Dance
LGBT Folks Enjoying the Same Class as Straight Folks—Can You Tell Which Ones Are LGBT?
“...by not explicitly saying, ‘You are welcome here,’
... we assume we are not welcome.”
Principles of Inclusivity

1. Acknowledge individuals have unique and particular needs in the learning environment.
2. Respect each individual’s right to express and present themselves relative to their religion, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender-identity, physical and mental ability.
3. Promote inclusivity by reasonably adjusting procedures, activities and physical environments.
4. Focus on the capability of the individual without assumptions or labels.
5. Be inclusive in all forms of communication.
6. Serve all with sensitivity, respect, and fairness.

Adapted from the University of Waterloo’s Principles of Inclusivity