

OLLI at SOU CODE OF CONDUCT for OLLI Members, Instructors, and Volunteers

Approved by OLLI Council on 7/15/2013

Updated by the OLLI Council on 2/20/17, 9/24/19 and 6/16/26

Definitions

Member: Any person that is enrolled in the OLLI at SOU program for the current academic year.

Instructor: A person who has volunteered to teach or lead an OLLI at SOU course. Membership is not required.

Volunteer: Any person who assists with OLLI at SOU programs or facilities/grounds.

Staff. Employees of SOU that administer the OLLI program. The Administrative Director supervises the staff unit.

A. Background

Membership in the OLLI at SOU community entails respect for oneself and for all members of the community at all venues. OLLI members, instructors, volunteers, and staff agree that every member of the community is to be respected as an individual committed to the pursuit of knowledge, connection, and self-understanding. To misuse or abuse that mutual respect is to threaten the entire academic enterprise.

The OLLI Code of Conduct derives from SOU's Student Code of Conduct. The full university Student Code of Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities can be found at:

<https://dos.sou.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/71/2024/06/SAD.015-Student-Code-of-Conduct-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf>

This OLLI Code of Conduct and all of SOU's policies are designed to guide members, instructors, volunteers, and staff by providing descriptions of problematic behaviors and the responses that can be expected.

Civility is the hallmark of this community. Hostility in any form has no place in open and honest learning. These ideals operate within the sphere of freedom: both freedom of expression/speech and freedom from threats to safety, both physical and emotional.

Becoming a member of, an instructor for or volunteer with, OLLI implies acceptance of SOU's and OLLI's rules and policies, and compliance with them. These rules and policies have been crafted to balance freedom and responsibility, and to provide standards for the orderly operation of this educational community.

B. Principles

The following principles are expected from all OLLI members, instructors, volunteers, and staff:

- Mutual Respect
- Personal and Academic Integrity
- Civil Discourse
- Inclusivity and Diversity
- Safe and Welcoming Space

Mutual Respect

Leadership, staff, and volunteers work hard to provide members with exciting courses, events, and enriching experiences for OLLI members. Members are expected to treat others within the OLLI community respectfully. OLLI leadership's place is to support the community and foster the best learning environment. While constructive feedback is welcome, it should always be offered respectfully and through the appropriate channels.

Personal and Academic Integrity

The heart of OLLI is the pursuit of lifelong learning. Members are encouraged to participate in courses, lectures, and discussions, maintaining a spirit of curiosity and openness to new ideas. This includes showing interest in peer contributions and valuing the diverse experiences of fellow learners. Members and instructors shall not promote political parties or candidates; programs exploring facts and historical context are welcome. Offerings will not promote sectarian or religious viewpoints; programs exploring historical cultures and traditions are welcome.

Civil Discourse

All members are expected to engage in conversations with kindness and an open mind, appreciating the perspectives that different generations and backgrounds bring to the OLLI community. Disagreements should be handled with civility, ensuring that discussions remain constructive and focused on learning.

Common sense rules of Civil Discourse should be observed. These include tolerance and respect for diverse opinions. Instructors should not engage in, nor allow members to engage in, dismissive, hostile, or derogatory comments about other viewpoints and speakers.

Inclusivity and Diversity

OLLI celebrates diversity and strives to create an inclusive environment. All members must respect differences in age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and background. Discrimination, harassment, or exclusionary behavior will not be tolerated.

Safe and Welcoming Space

OLLI is committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for all. Reasonable accommodation will be made to ensure accessibility for everyone. An important element of a safe and welcoming space is one that is free from inappropriate actions. Inappropriate action is harmful to others and ourselves. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action.

Members are encouraged to report any concerns about safety, comfort, or accessibility to OLLI staff.

C. Enforcement and Consequences

The following processes should be followed if behavior is exhibited that is disruptive, hostile or an inappropriate action as mentioned above during an OLLI at SOU class or activity.

An OLLI member should contact the OLLI Administrative Director if a member's or an instructor's behavior is violating the Code of Conduct. The Administrative Director will address the problem. If the Administrative Director or the University finds the situation is more serious and/or cannot be resolved, the Administrative Director will elevate the situation to their supervisor(s) and SOU Campus Public Safety as appropriate.

Instructor Actions:

- If an instructor is not comfortable with any of the following actions, they should contact the Administrative Director for assistance.
- The first time the unacceptable behavior occurs, the instructor privately tells the member that the behavior interfered with others' enjoyment of the class and is not acceptable.
- If the unacceptable behavior occurs again, the instructor respectfully informs the person publicly in class that the behavior is not acceptable and asks the member to refrain from the behavior.
- If the member wants to continue with the class, the member must agree that the unacceptable behavior will not continue. If the behavior continues, the instructor decides whether the member can continue in the class and communicates that decision with the Administrative Director.

The Code is not all-inclusive. The Code should be read broadly, as it does not cover all possible situations and remedies.