

# COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:

*The OLLI Citizen Scientist Program benefits its members and real-world research*

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) Citizen Scientist Albert Himoe found an academic home in the lab of Stephanie Ceman, a professor of cell and developmental biology and affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology.

Together, they are studying a gene that causes Fragile X Syndrome (FXS), the most common cause of inherited cognitive impairment.

Among other tasks in the lab, Himoe isolates DNA that contains a special gene that provides the body with instructions to make a protein that is vital for a healthy, functional brain.

The four-day process has yielded about a milligram of DNA, which weighs as much as a paperclip. It's enough DNA to keep the lab's FXS experiments going for nearly three weeks.

For Himoe, this program is the perfect way for him to put his chemistry degree to work while contributing to transformative research.

"It is so marvelous that we can entrust Albert with important tasks in our lab," Ceman said. "He enjoys being a part of our lab's intellectual environment while we benefit from his knowledge and experiences."

## OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLLI) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

### HOW TO JOIN:

Anyone 50 years or older can join OLLI and be a part of the OLLI Citizen Scientist program.

### To find out more

or express interest in the program, contact  
OLLI DIRECTOR Christine Catanzarite at  
217-244-9141 or [catanzar@illinois.edu](mailto:catanzar@illinois.edu).

### OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

1800 OAK STREET  
SUITE 108  
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

Phone: (217) 244-9141

Fax: (217) 244-7897

Email: [olli@illinois.edu](mailto:olli@illinois.edu)

Website: [olli.illinois.edu](http://olli.illinois.edu)

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE



## The OLLI Citizen Scientist Program

### LIFELONG LEARNERS AID SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS





# What is the OLLI Citizen Scientist Program?

With their unique knowledge and skills, **OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLLI)** Citizen Scientists contribute to cutting-edge research at the University of Illinois.

Based on their personal interests, Citizen Scientists are matched with researchers from a variety of disciplines at the Institute for Genomic Biology, as well as the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology.

Citizen Scientists typically volunteer for several hours each week, oftentimes being delegated their own task to manage for the lab.

No experience is required. Past participants have included teachers, bankers, scientists, and many others.

"This program allows our members to explore new areas and make important contributions even after their own careers may be behind them," OLLI Director Christine Catanzarite said. "That's a valuable lesson about the importance of lifelong learning."

*The Citizen Scientist Program was conceived by Institute for Genomic Biology Director Gene Robinson, Beckman Institute Director Art Kramer, and former OLLI Director Kathleen Holden in 2009.*

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLLI)

## What is OLLI?

As members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), Citizen Scientists also have the opportunity to participate in OLLI's courses, lectures, and other activities for people 50 years of age or older.

OLLI at Illinois offers about 40 courses each semester to more than 1,000 members. Courses, often taught by distinguished faculty and local experts, cover a broad range of topics, from art and music to ethics and philosophy to science and medicine.

Past courses include the New Science of Genomic Biology, taught by IGB Director Gene Robinson and several other IGB faculty members regarding how genetics can help us understand evolution, improve health, and solve important societal problems.

OLLI at Illinois is supported by the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Office of the Provost at Illinois, and generous donations from OLLI members and the community. It is one of 17 OLLI programs across the U.S. with over 130,000 members nationwide.

## TOP 5 REASONS TO BECOME A Citizen Scientist

**1 AID PROGRESSIVE RESEARCH.** The IGB conducts groundbreaking studies that can help solve formidable problems related to health, energy, agriculture and the environment. You can help.

**2 FIND YOUR NICHE.** Pursue your personal interests as a citizen scientist. Like technology? Work with state-of-the-art equipment in our innovative, open-concept labs. Like gardening? Help engineer plants to grow in harsher conditions.

**3 MAKE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS.** Put your life experiences, knowledge and skills to work to aid real-world research endeavors and help shape the next generation of researchers.

**4 SOCIALIZE WITH OTHERS.** As a Citizen Scientist, you'll have the opportunity to interact with fellow intellectuals and develop lasting relationships within your lab group.

**5 ACQUIRE NEW SKILLS.** Learn about the scientific process as you master lab equipment and techniques. From cloning DNA to recording how plants are affected by climate change, citizen scientists are exposed to a variety of new tasks and challenges.

