UND Community: Climate and Culture

Lifelong Learning Focus Group

Monday, June 27 at 9:00 am

Archives Coffee House

12 Participants

1. **What activities and events do you regularly take part in? Are any sponsored by UND?**
   1. I am involved in exercise and swimming classes- due to health and arthritis. I also enjoy the aspect. This is offed at YMCA and Choice. I used to do be able to take these at UND.
   2. I used to be able to audit UND classes free of charge. The deterrent for me is the parking. It got too expensive and some of the classes I want to take are too far to walk with mobility issues. This is a real issue- the ability to get on campus.
   3. I enjoy the social aspect of being able to gather and learn from each other.
   4. I have found a real void with Covid and being at home. It is just very isolating. I miss the social aspect and the learning elements.
   5. I loved anything that Kim Porter taught (history). I cannot think of an OLLI class I didn’t enjoy. The community you build and getting to know each other better.
   6. We did day trips and even multiday trips that went to many places. I have wonderful memories. It didn’t matter what trip we went on- we always had fun and learned something. Everyone got along and everyone looked out for each other.
   7. It was creating a sense of community amongst the group. If a professor or instructor had a passion for something I would see if they would be willing to talk about it. So many of them were thrilled to help share their knowledge.
2. **Are there any current UND events that brings you to campus?**
   1. Things at the Museum. The last few years less so with Covid. The museum had a group called the Cultural Enrichment Group. It changed names, but it offered a variety of things. If you had an exhibit they would present and talk to the group. We did trips and every year there was a longer trip. It really helped build community and things like this appeal to me.
   2. For quite a few years we took “Road Scholar” trips. It used to be called Elder Hostile. These would range to national and international trips. You got to know your group well, but not usually as sustainable in terms of community building as people went their own way after the trip was done.
   3. I check the music department website and they have amazing programs and people they bring in. We call ourselves the ‘Granny Groupies’ and we love what they offer. At times we are the only people there. This information needs to get out more. Dr. Drago contacts me about these. We need to help get that word out.
   4. There are several areas that I would be interested in, especially Biology lectures if I knew about them, since that is my field of study.
   5. There was an initiative started to get the information out about free classes and other community classes. Somebody with the Mayor’s Office said they would help with this. If the community could make this kind of information available, it would be helpful.
   6. The wonderful thing about lifelong learners is that they are so interested in what the UND faculty and instructors teach them. They are very engaged in the lectures and conversation.
   7. It is individual faculty that recognize the value in this. They make sure that you are aware of the things happening in the community. We need people help faculty in spreading the word
3. **What types of activities and events would you like to see more of on campus for the local community? What time of day should they be offered?** 
   1. Before dark because of the walking and parking. Also, not at 8:00 am in the morning. You have a community here that is ambulatory, but some less than others. Incorporate use of some technology such as zoom to help us connect. This was used for the writers’ conference and worked for me because I can see easier and hear better. Perhaps more hybrid events.
   2. Going into community and the retirement homes to help provide classes, arts and others learning options for people that cannot make it easily to UND campus
   3. Is there a building that surrounded by disability parking that could be used for this? Mobility is a problem so we could use something like this.
   4. When we have meetings at the tech accelerator it works well. Convenient for getting in and out and parking is not an issue.
   5. I work in Gamble, and the parking in the back is wonderful, sidewalks and the ADA accessibility would be ideal
   6. Topics that interested the group: Weather Wednesday, History, Geography, Arts, Health/research, ‘Cryptic title’ – so you have to come to Franklin Club, Tours and events, Technology classes – zoom, cell phones, apps, Writing group, Youtube playlist, Time and place to come to coffee, Birding, Astronomy
4. **What about cost of these programs? OLLI tried to keep it affordable. Is this something people would be willing to pay for if the classes fit what they were wanting to learn?** 
   1. If the university would dedicate a person, cover the salary, most people would pay the cost of the class. So many people have benefited from these, but the cost must be low enough for those living off Social Security or offer a scholarship for people that cannot afford it.
   2. What my income is each month may depend on medical costs and we should not have to make these choices between learning and social engagement and our health.
   3. Don’t have programs in January or February- because the insurance does not kick in until later. Also, even if people move away for the winter they can still participate.
   4. Free parking is now offered after 4:30 and the weekends. This has been good for music events. I am not sure that people know this or that UND signage indicates this.
   5. Parking: thinking about barriers to campus, can you expand on this:
      1. The new parking system you must download is so difficult. I have not figured it out yet, but this will now be universal. We are going to have to learn this system. We will need to teach people the basic tech to be current on the university systems.
      2. If people made a commitment to carpool, we could use one vehicle which helps with parking, etc.
   6. We are all used to UND but if we want to appeal to those that don’t have that association, or never been to campus, we need to remember they may be very intimated. Campus is not welcoming, due to parking, signage on buildings and wayfinding signs, etc.
   7. We need to offer some of these classes in the community. If we are going to appeal to a wide variety of people in the community then we need to be in the community
   8. Our ‘community’ should also be the entire state of North Dakota. Out west UND is not as prevalent. What about establishing a ‘Speakers Bureau’- every professor should have a few topics they can discuss that would be appealing to community groups in the state.
      1. I think that we did a while ago. I think that NDSU might do this.
      2. This depends on what support faculty get in their department. We have heard a commitment to lifelong learning. It takes time to modify our culture.
   9. It is so important for so many reasons. If this was to get going and was more accessible to people, the community will embrace UND. If you ever want to study the Osher Lifelong Learning institute, there are 122 of them in the US and you can read up on it and how they work with their universities and what they provide. There are other programs that they offer as well and the benefit to the community. Tufts University has a great model: <https://universitycollege.tufts.edu/lifelong-learning> .
   10. Carnegie Mellon also has a good model: <https://www.cmu.edu/osher/>
   11. The leadership of UND- this is the first administration I have seen that attended arts and music events- it is nice to see that they are supporting these things
   12. How about welcoming new people to the community? The opportunities to meet new people and connect them with individuals that can get them, and their families acclimated to Grand Forks and North Dakota.
   13. Is the Mayor’s Office still working on the “vibrancy initiative”? If so, perhaps they could put some resources into this, or help partner on this initiative.
   14. How can we get these events in the city and at UND in one place? Also how do we get that word out to the community? Not as many people get the newspaper anymore- this is where technology comes into play again.
   15. There is the newsletter from the Arts group as well, it seems like a natural connection to help coordinate the calendar.
   16. Is the Senior Center offering anything? They offer trips that are very popular, and we have book discussions. They have a printed newsletter; it is also online. You must be a member to get this, which is around $35/year.
5. **What are other physical places this group would like to see classes held, if not on campus?** 
   1. We wanted to meet at the Grand Forks Library, but we were not allowed to meet since we were not an ‘official book club’ we must be a part of the programs that the library offers. They must be open to the public. The East Grand Forks Public Library is easier for events
   2. Few churches that help with things like this- University Lutheran is where the Franklin Club meets. The Franklin Club pays the church a very small amount to meet there
   3. The Senior Center- but I think these programs are open just to the seniors that are members.
   4. Membership fees has become an issue. Also needing to leave things open to those that want to join.
   5. WDAY has made a commitment to public events. Contact them and see if willing to have once a week advertisement for this. A lot of people would see it then.
   6. The OllE Program received $1 million endowment- what happened to this? The previous president and provost moved this endowment to ‘older than average’ student scholarships.
   7. We just need a place to meet. If at UND must help in solving parking - the university was so aggressive in enforcing parking and a lot of people just gave up on it. It is expensive and it is not welcoming. People did not want to go to campus. Anytime there is something on campus that I want to see I reconsider because of parking. Not a welcoming campus.
   8. I think that UND forgot what this group can bring the university and how far that goodwill can go.
   9. YouTube is such a treasure trove of topics. I can see where a group may meet, and a YouTube video would be shown and then a discussion around this. A lot of things available there.