Brainstorming – What do Osher members think?

Osher held a “brainstorming” session on November 14, 2011. Facilitated ably by Ron Kuramoto, the session’s goal was to explore several questions for the purpose of Osher improvement. Kuramoto divided the group into four smaller groups through the simple process of counting off. The smaller groups then discussed “their” question and recorded possible resolutions. These were then traded with each other group respectively, each group asked to further elucidate the previous group’s work. Finally each separate suggestion was “voted” on. Each member was allowed three votes and a “super vote”. The super vote was of an importance equal to the three (“if you only had one vote which is the most important thing?”) Each question’s responses have bullets indicating individual votes and asterisks indicating a super vote. If you have followed this so far take heart, the results follow and should be easy to comprehend.

1. How we can identify leaders and encourage people to step up to new roles?
   - Job/Committee descriptions- make interesting ad give contact person.
   - ••ID and nurture leadership skills
   - *Ask people to help
   - ••Use orientation, newsletters, and courses to find interested people
   - *Have term limits. (3-5 years)
   - •Have co-chairs for the committees
   - ••••*Approach those who are very active in taking classes.
   - •Ask presenter to join—and/or to suggest others to present.
   - •Ask and ask, and ask again. (don’t wait for volunteers)
   - •*Explain what’s in it for them- Win/win situation
   - •••**New member survey of talents/etc.—come back to Leadership and Development Committee.
   - •••Detailed descriptions of committee functions and positions plus time commitments
   - *Mentoring new members.

2. How can we increase membership and broaden the diversity of the group?
   - ** Ask friends to join
   - ••••••Portable, talking point handout that would be easy to give to others.
   - •Having classes in areas other than the East Side
   - *More publicity—targeted audiences
   - •UWM alumni newsletter-emails, magazines
   - •listing (current events) in “CUE” section of activities. (marketing Committee)
   - •Brochures in libraries—other public gathering places.
   - •*Liaisons with other retirement groups. (speakers groups)
   - •**Neighborhood Newsletters (example Riverwest)
   - ••••Ethnically diverse presenters
- Osher common interest group. –garden, knitting dine-behind the scenes, sports.
- More social/informal groups
- *More contact with other Osher Groups
- Invite book groups to give Potpourri presentations, etc.
- ••Have a session on UWM radio

3. How do we maintain membership?
- “buddy system” for transportation problems
- ••expanded geographical location for programs
- •newsletters more personalized
- *•••Create a “welcoming” environment
- ***•••Diversity of Diversity of topics for classes-input from membership
- Create a phone/driver bank by geographic areas
- Create a ‘bring-a-friend’ system
- More advertising of Osher in Libraries outer zip codes
- ••More info about Osher members demographics
- •••Need to replace retired staff
- Mention carpooling in class.
- ••••Get more course ideas from members via a suggestion box or handouts passed at the end of each course
- Presenters must use mic

4. What would be a better communication vehicle between the committees and interested members?
- •••••••Distribute each committees minutes to each/all committee heads (chairs) and/or email
- ***A general info- business meeting twice per year
- What can “our” committee do to help “another” committee?
- •A list of when committees meet. (is in newsletter)
- Increase communication between chairs at board or other.
- Need input mechanism from members to committees.
- Osher feedback page
- •••*Have a suggestion box outside office door
- •Post minutes on Osher website.
- Invite prominent speakers to general-info-business meetings. & have each committee give a report
- •••Increase use of Osher office as gathering.
- •••Keep website updating—and make it easier to use

Key:  • One Vote   *One Super Vote
What summary and conclusions can be drawn? What will we do with this information? Several things are already in place, and the first is presenting all this information to you, the reader and Osher member. As the brainstorming session ended it was suggested that all members have access to the compendium of information gathered. Here it is.

Your new newsletter editorial staff will quarry the information for future articles, surveys and other informational data sharing. Your input is always encouraged. Are there ways you can contribute? Do you have resources that would be useful in any of the identified areas? Let us know what you think of the process – the editorial staff is listed in the newsletter – we would love to hear from members. In the meantime the information has been shared with Osher committees, particularly the Leadership and Development Committee.

--Diana Hankes, Newsletter Editor