

From: Senior Learners, Inc. SeniorLearnersInc@wildapricot.org
Subject: Transition of Senior Learners Courses Online
Date: March 22, 2020 at 7:36 AM
To: Robert Holloran robertwholloran@gmail.com



Dear Robert Holloran,

CF classrooms will not reopen for classes the remainder of Spring Term. So, **all of Senior Learners classroom-based courses are cancelled.** Like many other businesses and organizations, Senior Learners is rapidly transitioning its offerings online. Phil Davis did extensive testing of three online conferencing applications. Based on the results of his testing, we are deploying one of these applications for conducting our online courses. To join a class session you will download a free application on your computer, tablet, or smart phone. Last Friday, the Senior Learners Board used one of these applications to conduct a very productive meeting. During the meeting the Board agreed to the following approach for transitioning to online courses:

1. For the next three months, that is until June 30, all online courses will be **FREE**. During this period we will complete the infrastructure needed to support efficient operations and management of online courses.

2. Students who registered for cancelled courses have the option to:

a. **Receive** a full refund for the portion of the course(s) cancelled, **OR**

b. **Donate** their refund to a special account. Many of our instructors have not charged us for teaching their courses. But, some instructors depend on the course fees we pay them for an important income supplement. For example, some instructors only teach part-time at CF. As long as we offer our courses free, we will use funds from this special account to compensate these instructors at our usual rate of \$25/class hour.

OTHERWISE, if you do not request one of the above options, **no action is required** on your part. A credit will be automatically applied to your account. You can use it to pay for future Senior Learners courses.

3. Since travel to and from the College is not involved, our usual two-hour classes are not necessary for efficient use of students' and instructors' time. So, online class sessions will normally be scheduled to last one hour, but may be as short as 30 minutes. Our Course Management System was designed for at most three classes a weekday and one on weekends. This limitation will remain in place until this software can be modified.

4. Many of our students come early to classroom-based courses to talk with their friends and the instructor. So, we plan to open the online classrooms, that is, the conferencing sessions, 15 minutes before the scheduled start of classes. Also, we plan to end the conferencing sessions 15 minutes after scheduled end of the classes. Doing so will provide time for discussions with the instructors and among friends. We hope students and instructors alike will enjoy this opportunity for social engagement and a break from the social distancing forced on us all by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

5. Without the constraints of the building's schedule and with shorter courses, we eventually be able to schedule more courses a day. To provide an extensive and diverse catalog of online courses we are:

a. Separately reaching out to our existing cadre of instructors asking them to consider offering their planned Summer Term courses online for us.

b. Asking, with this email, our students to consider offering online courses.

c. Assisting instructors prepare effective presentations for online

courses. Dr. Evelyn Kelly, who has been teaching courses online for almost 20 years, will provide this assistance online.

d. Limiting access to the classes to scheduled date and time. They will not be recorded for viewing at a later time.

e. Creating a new website at SeniorLearners.Online for the online Catalog and Calendar of courses. You will also register for the online courses there.

f. Preparing several online courses ready for registration at SeniorLearners.Online. More courses will added to the catalog and calendar as they are proposed by instructors and approved by the Board. Be sure to check this web site for new courses of interest to you.

6. You must register for courses online at SeniorLearners.Online to receive the email with the links required to log in to the class sessions.

7 . At 10 AM next Tuesday, March 24, Phil Davis will provide instruction on using the conferencing application. Please register for this course online at SeniorLearners.Online.

CAUTION: Our capability to offer online courses depends on whether the Internet and conferencing systems can reliably handle the enormous increase in usage caused by social distancing across the US and Europe. We hope that all the effort to be able to start offering online courses will not be in vain.

In summary, the Board, along with several other volunteers, is working very hard to keep Senior Learners an important part of your life. We hope to help you remain connected with other seniors during this period of social distancing.

Please feel free to forward this email to anyone else you think might be able to provide interesting online courses for Senior Learners.

If you have questions or want to propose a course, please send an email to: info@SeniorLearners.org or call 352-239-8780.

Gwynn Pealer, Chair, Senior Learners, Inc.