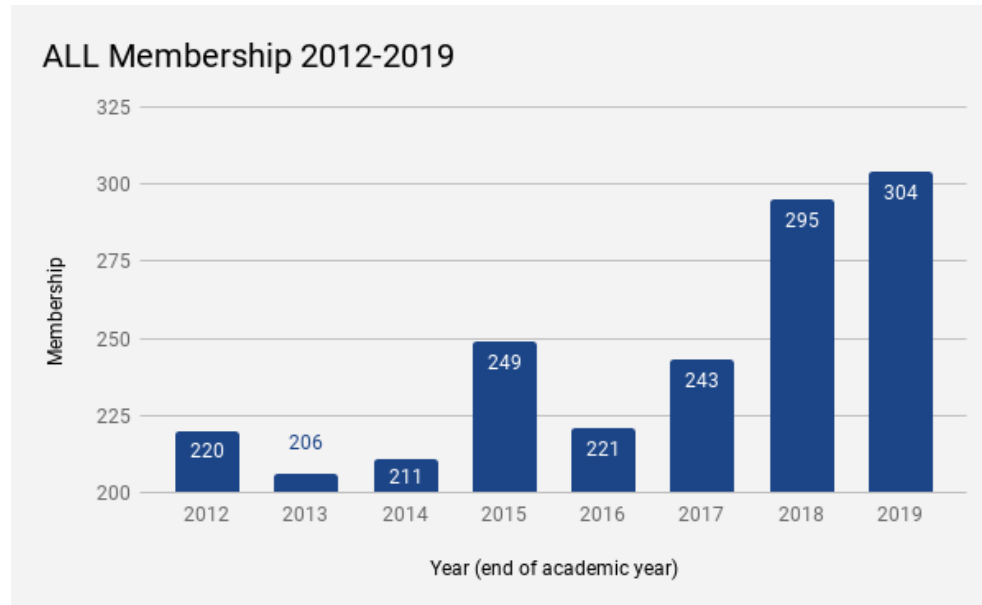


# Acadia Lifelong Learning (A.L.L.) Annual Report for 2018-2019

## 1. Membership Consolidation

ALL membership growth stabilized at 304 members this year after last year's growth. Consider yourself an ambassador for the A.L.L. program and encourage your friends to join next year. Share your ideas with the new ALL Advisory Board about how the program can expand and be more inclusive.



## 2. Unique A.L.L. Courses offered: Gardening for Sustainability - Submitted by Jesslyn Munro

This course would be of interest to anyone new to the idea of sustainable gardening in the Annapolis Valley. Topics covered were (1) Using Native Plants in your Garden, (2) Gardening For Wildlife, (3) Loving the Garden You Have and (4) Flowers and Herbs. It was a practical course as presenters shared their own hands-on expertise and experience. It would be appealing to anyone wanting to actively pursue sustainable gardening. Those taking the course could have follow-up contacts and a wealth of leads. It was hopeful and practical as it provided avenues for those concerned about climate change.

- If you have an topic or speaker suitable to give a course next year, please speak to an ALL Advisory Board member or complete a [Course Proposal form](#) online through the ALL website.

## 3. Lunchtime Learning Talks

Topics were far ranging with an average attendance of 47 people at each talk. Similarly suggest ideas for topics and potential speakers you want to an ALL Advisory member or complete a [Lunchtime Learning Series Proposal form](#) online through the ALL website.

## 4. A.L.L. Advisory Board

- Remaining Advisory Board members: Tony Berger, Helen Harper, Frank Lussing, Dale MacArthur, Stephen Slovenz and Howard Williams
- Departing Advisory Board members: Heather McNally, Alison Scott-Butler, and Susan Markham-Starr
- Many thanks go to every Advisory Board member for their dedication, support, and enthusiasm in bringing fresh ideas to this program over this past year of service.

## 5. Partnerships with Community programs

- **Performing Arts Series (PAS)**– Two Talks were arranged prior to PAS concert performances.
- **Just Us – National Theatre Live** – 4 pre-screening talks were given prior to King Lear, Antony & Cleopatra, The Tempest and Everybody’s Talking About Jamie.
- These educational talks both increased the understanding of the performance for the audience and encouraged attendance for the promoter, Just Us.

## 6. Science Discussion Group - Submitted by Howard Williams

Following a good idea over Christmas by Heather McNally, the Acadia Lifelong Learning organisation (ALL) developed a facilitated science discussion group that has, so far, met three times.

The first meeting discussed approaches to dealing with climate change; the second with issues relating to plant-based Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO); the third dealt with issues relating to the consumption of cheese and beef.

In the first two discussion groups there was unanimity of opinion, that is, dealing with climate change was recognised as the existential issue of our generation, and that development and consumption of GMO plants was in general seen as a benefit. This latter opinion surprised me and made me wonder whether ignorance of the details of the GMO process was a powerful driver of opposition.

The third meeting, dealing with the animal welfare and environmental issues relating to the production of milk, cheese and beef was also well attended and most, but not all, agreed that we are effectively hypocrites, wailing about the climate emergency but not helping, by refusing to buy farm products that are instrumental in exacerbating the climate emergency. I am largely vegetarian (transitioning), and may even go vegan and was reminded of the biblical story of the mote and beam in the eye. I can hardly complain that we as a community are not doing enough to reverse the climate emergency if I still support the beef and dairy industry. Are you?

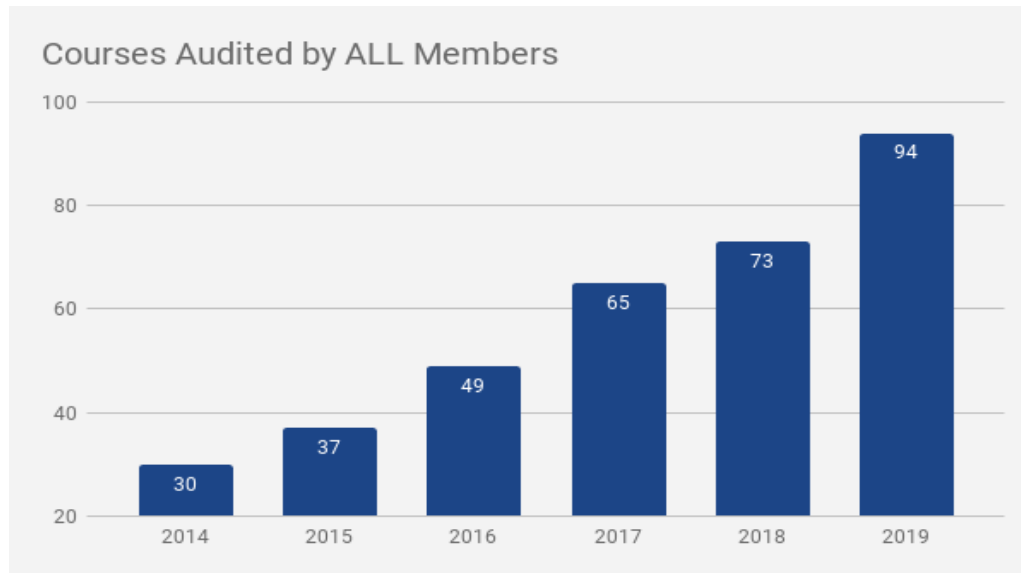
Topics for further meetings in the Fall are being solicited; we have at least two topics on the slate already, along with facilitators. Given that it is not the science, *per se* that is being argued over, but the ramifications of science, there is no reason why the discussion group need be limited to scientific topics. With that in mind, it is incumbent on members to think about potential topics in language, history and philosophy, for example. All that is needed to develop a topic into a discussion meeting is a plain English review article, a potential facilitator, and interest from members. Dream a little.

## 7. Auditing courses at Acadia - Submitted by Jill Davies

I retired in 2014 and my husband and I have been happily auditing credit courses ever since. We have pursued personal interests and have found plenty of well taught, engaging courses from which to choose. I often contact Profs by email after the paying students are registered to see if they have any remaining seats and have never been disappointed. Then I confirm my desires with ALL and shortly before classes start each term, I get my confirmation.

For those unfamiliar with course offerings, consult: <https://all.acadiu.ca/all-home.html>. We have audited courses in Spanish, Philosophy, Sociology, Economics and History and have been welcomed by faculty and students in all cases. Sometimes, we are the only ALL auditors in the class but once there were 5 of us. Our participation has varied by choice from buying texts, doing readings and assignments to others where we simply attend class, do some readings and participate in class discussions. When we cannot attend class, no one minds. We love auditing courses and think it is the biggest benefit of being an A.L.L member. If you have questions, feel free to email [jill.davies@acadiu.ca](mailto:jill.davies@acadiu.ca)

The large increase in enrolment of ALL members auditing Acadia University credit courses in the past few years is a testament to the desire of our membership for lifelong learning.



## 8. Reflections on ALL - Submitted by Graham Daborn

After almost 60 years of teaching and more than a decade of offering ALL courses, I have been asked to contribute a few reflections on the meaning and value of ALL, and how the transition from teaching to being a student feels. In many ways the latter is fantastic: the sessions are stimulating, the pressure is off me, and I have more time for other things. But, to be honest, I am probably not learning as much as when I was teaching. I have always believed that most teachers learn more than their students do throughout a course - at least the conscientious teachers do.

But teaching in ALL is quite different from teaching students in either school or university. In a school, the teacher usually knows much more than the students. In the ALL programme it seems more often the other way round. That puts a greater onus on the teacher, of course, to prepare more thoroughly: whereas I could prepare a one-hour lecture for university students in 3 to 6 hours, a two-hour lecture for ALL seems to take at least a week. (How much of that results from the slowing down of my mental faculties and my faulty memory, is anyone's guess!). The difference with ALL is that the participants have so much to contribute themselves — not only questions for explanation, but new information and perspectives that can challenge the teacher's views.

Someone once said: *"Education is wasted on the young..."*<sup>1</sup> I think part of the value of ALL lies in its potential to compensate for one of the more insidious but subtle effects of modern life — that everything tends to narrow down our scope of activity so that we become more proficient at the specialized tasks of our life, at the expense of stimulating the other areas of the brain. In time we may even be considered as 'experts'.<sup>2</sup> Much innovation, however, often comes from those who cross-disciplinary boundaries, or who haven't had enough time to become an 'expert': i.e. those who are generalists.

Long may we keep ALL together.

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<sup>1</sup> Michele Hanson: Tue 4 Dec 2007 00.17 GMT in *The Guardian*

<sup>2</sup> Definition of an expert: *"One who has learned more and more about less and less until he/she knows absolutely everything about absolutely nothing!"*