

30th Anniversary Congratulations to PLATO
from Jeff Russell, Vice Provost for Lifelong Learning and
Dean of the Division of Continuing Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Hi, I'm Jeff Russell, the Vice Provost for Lifelong Learning.

I want to congratulate PLATO for 30 years of serving seniors. This has been a very exciting development and been a strong alignment between our mission – the Division of Continuing Studies, serving students of all ages, and the work of PLATO. When you think of the history of how this started as a grassroots effort and then worked with the OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute and has continued to develop a thousand members strong, it's just remarkable and extraordinary the advances that have been made.

One of the things that is really unique about this program is that the instruction and the courses come from within. Whether it's arts, sciences, social sciences – you determine the curriculum – you teach one another, you have lively discussions and debate. So it's really a community-based, locally-owned program, and that's very, very exciting.

So we want to thank you for your contributions and congratulate you for your 30 years.

Now, as we look forward, your partnership has been very important. We've shared space, we've collaborated on different programs, and importantly, we've worked collectively to try to help provide scholarships for returning adults, and especially for students in our signature Odyssey Program.

It's really important to try to help these students that are in financial need and in times of transition where education is a really important piece to help them grow and change. And your partnership, your investment in these people is really making a difference.

So we're really excited about your progress and we're excited to be partnering with you, and we look forward to the next 30 years! Thank you.