

Annual Report from the UMRA Communications and Outreach Committee 2019-2020 Report by Jean Kinsey

Committee Members: Jean Kinsey, Chair; Kris Mortensen, John Anderson, Becky Anderson, Ginny Hanson, Will Craig, Claudia Parliament, Ron Matross, Jeanne Markell, Theresa Tichich, Cathy Gierke

In the academic year of 2019-2020, this committee met twice: 10/25/2019 and 3/6/2020.

The committee's central **mission** is to raise UMRA's visibility and to make UMRA a recognizable and respected organization within the University community.

Activities:

We initially invited Bev Moe (solicitor of sponsorship) and Eric Hockert (board member and Assistant Director of URVC) to meet with us. Both have played major roles in promoting the visibility of UMRA throughout the year. Eric has met with numerous U of M Department heads, making them aware of the benefits of UMRA to their retirees. Beth has increased sponsorship funds for the Newsletter and the Forums.

The **Newsletter and the Web site** continue to be the primary means of communication with our members.

The newsletter operation has been refined and is working well with 2 paid editors (newsletter editor, Kris Mortensen and production editor, Sadie Brendalen). The Newsletter format and production continues to be refined; the latest change is a new front- and back-page masthead that is consistent with the official U of M logo style.

It was strongly suggested that we add a "calendar" of UMRA events to the Newsletter so members can fill in their calendars for upcoming events.

At our March meeting we suggested that we work to have OHR send out our Newsletter to all retirees for the first 2 years of their retirement (8 Newsletters per year) with the option to unsubscribe. This is still a wish, not a reality.

We will continue to refine the usability of this Web site.

We recommend that we try to find and train 1-2 people to work with Cathy Gierke.

Other suggestions that would increase the visibility and benefits of UMRA include:

Add a hot link in the invitation letter the leads directly to the Newsletter on our Web site.

Call up new members listed in each months Newsletter and invite them to lunch and meet them and introduce them to others. The membership committee will take on this task.

Note to the UMRA President: At each Luncheon event, ask new members to stand up and be welcomed.

Develop a Newsletter Feature that might be called "Golden Gophers Making a Difference." It would be a feature story about some UMRA member engaging in some volunteer work that benefits the University. The goal is to inform the U about the value of retirees to the U.

Outreach activities – ongoing and newly suggested:

Will Craig is working on a relationship with the Alumni Association.

Will Craig also took on the task of Promoting our PRDGs and highlighting the Grant Recipients in the newsletters of their home departments. This has been largely achieved.

Kris will contact Encore to see if we can have a presence at their promotion event.