

June 2021

From: Kristine Mortensen, news editor
Re: UMRA Newsletter 2020–21 annual report
To: UMRA Board of Directors and Archives

Summary

2020–21 was an unusually active year for the UMRA news editor. UMRA's regular, in-person monthly luncheon meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the University of Minnesota Campus Club came to a halt following our February 2020 forum, due to the health and safety restrictions necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic. We launched our first all-member webinar via Zoom in May, continued virtual monthly webinars throughout the summer, and, in September 2020, began offering three monthly all-member webinars via Zoom on the second, third, and fourth Tuesdays of the month. The newsletter and news content posted on the website by the news editor were vital to communicating these events to UMRA members, and to providing the links for registering when required.

Additionally, 2020 marked the debut of a new look and name for our monthly newsletter, now the *UMRA News*. Production and distribution of the headline edition *eNews* via the UMRA Listserv continued, with the news editor responsible for editorial content and the production editor responsible for production and distribution for both. The newsletter also remains the primary source of all news content posted on the UMRA website, and the news editor is responsible for posting all this content (plus some additional event announcements).

Beginning in May 2020, the news editor assumed responsibility for producing UMRA's all-member Zoom webinars. Those duties are now shared with UMRA member Virgil Larson, who has also ably assumed the role of technical director for UMRA's all-member Zoom events (services initially provided by the U of M Office of Information Technology).

Sponsorship of the *UMRA News* and forums remained strong thanks largely to the determined efforts of Bev Moe, UMRA's discount and sponsorship manager.

Redesigned *UMRA News* debuted in September 2020

With the go-ahead from UMRA's Communications and Outreach Committee, the newsletter design was updated for the first time in nearly 15 years. Highlights of the new design for the preprinted, four-color, front-and-back-page "shell," created by U of M Printing Services, include the UMRA wordmark and, in the banner across the top of page one, images of Northrop's iconic pillars (a nod to our previous newsletter design) and Coffman Memorial Union (a reference to UMRA's on-campus home).

Many people joined me in contributing to this creative effort, in particular Graphic Designer Sysouk Khambounmy and Communications Consultant Jeff Whiteside at Printing Services; longtime (2004–2019) UMRA Newsletter Editor Ginny Hanson; our Production Editor Sadie Brendalen; and UMRA Communications & Outreach Committee Chair Jean Kinsey.

The redesigned *UMRA News* debuted in September 2020. Instead of the usual 8 pages, the issue was expanded to 12 pages to accommodate extra content related to the year's extraordinary events, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the killing of George Floyd.

The monthly copy deadline for contributors to the newsletter was moved up from the 20th to the 7th day of the month preceding the issue, due to the change in programming from one forum and one workshop

on the fourth Tuesday of the month to three membership-wide programs per month: UMRA A.M., Living Well Workshop, and UMRA Forum on the second, third, and fourth Tuesdays of the month, respectively.

Sponsorship support for the *UMRA News* and our monthly forums remained strong, thanks to the diligent efforts of Bev Moe, UMRA's sponsor and discount manager.

The newsletter was printed in black and white and distributed to 252 addressees (including individuals and couples) via USPS and 37 University VIPs via Campus Mail (as of May 2021).

A four-color PDF of the newsletter, nearly identical to the print edition, is posted on the UMRA website.

UMRA eNews

Launched in September 2017, the *UMRA eNews* is what I think of as the “headline edition” of the UMRA newsletter. Content for the *UMRA eNews* is content that is repurposed from the print/PDF newsletter; it is linked to content posted on the UMRA website, which is also repurposed from the newsletter. The *UMRA eNews* also includes a link to the PDF version of the newsletter that is posted on the website.

The link to the PDF consistently received the most clicks from readers opening the *UMRA eNews* until May 2021, when the link to an article about the May workshop (featuring noted U of M hand surgeon Ann Van Heest, MD) received the highest number of clicks ever recorded for any link in the *eNews*—106, followed by 71 clicks for the PDF. This is consistent with the robust attendance for the workshop webinars hosted by UMRA over the past year.

UMRA Zoom webinars

UMRA “pivoted” from in-person to virtual programming with the presentation of its first Zoom webinar on May 19, 2020, with (then) Minnesota Commissioner for Management and Budget Myron Frans—who returned as the guest speaker for our February 2021 forum as the U of M's senior VP of finance and operations.

The UMRA Zoom production team initially consisted of myself, UMRA President Frank Cerra and Past President Bill Donohue, with the U's Office of Information Technology providing mentoring and technical support.

In January 2021, UMRA Data Base Manager Virgil Larson assumed responsibility for the technical support, assisted by UMRA members John Anderson, Cathy Lee Gierke, and Eric Hockert.

With three Zoom webinars per month, plus practice sessions for each event, this was an ambitious undertaking for all involved! But I think it fair to say that UMRA's membership-wide virtual programming, along with the virtual programming provided by UMRA's special interest groups, were instrumental to maintaining the vibrancy of the Retirees Association since our last, in-person monthly luncheon in February 2020.

A list of the steps in the production process I developed appears below. Because the pre- and post-event communication is intricately linked to the work I do to produce the *UMRA News* and *eNews* and to post news content on the UMRA website, I expect this work will continue to be part of the news editor's “portfolio” of responsibilities for the foreseeable future. As previously noted, responsibility for the production steps outlined by the box has been assumed by Virgil Larson.

Producing a Zoom webinar for UMRA

Pre-event communication

1. Schedule the webinar
2. Create a z-link for registering
3. Create the invitation and registration page
 - a. Add UMRA wordmark for “branding”
 - b. Write description and speaker bios based on information published in the UMRA News; add speaker photos
 - c. Select Registration required
 - d. Select Send reminder email one week, one day, one hour before event
 - e. Select Enable Practice Session
 - f. Select Automatically record webinar (to the cloud)
 - g. De-select Allow anonymous questions
 - h. Invite Panelists
4. Write and send 1-3 REGISTRATION REMINDER email(s) via UMRA ListServ one week before the month’s events
5. Field questions from UMRA members about registration
6. Create opening/closing slides
 - a. Acquire and add sponsor slide to the UMRA slide deck when there is a sponsor for the event

Pre-event production

1. Schedule practice session
2. Recruit designated attendee (for debrief)
3. Draft running order and send to all panelists in advance of practice session
4. Draft opening/closing script for event host
5. Request slide deck from guest speaker
6. Write and email practice session instructions to all panelists
7. Convene practice session

Event production

1. Convene final warm-up 30 minutes prior to webinar
2. Troubleshoot before and during event, via chat, email, and text, as needed
3. Convene post-event debrief with panelists and designated attendee
4. Trim and post video, with brief written intro, on YouTube (Cathy Lee Gierke)

Post-event communication

1. Post slides on the website
2. Post video on the website (first edited and posted to You Tube by Cathy)
3. Edit and post event summary article on the website; include links to video and slides
4. Log event attendance
5. Offer slides to UMAA for Gold Mind (Will Craig)

Please see the following pages for data on the *UMRA News* and Zoom webinars.

UMRA News and forum sponsorship
 Distribution and sponsorship, 2020–21

Issue	Sponsor(s)	Job #	Distribution	USPS	VIPs	
9-2020 12 pages	UMF forum + ¼ page Bookstores ¼ page Bakken CSH ½ page	\$500 250 <u>500</u> \$1,250	222		117	39
10-2020 10 pages	Bookstores ½ page PPP forum + ½ page	\$500 <u>750</u> \$1,250	372		115	39
11-2020 8 pages	UMF forum + ¼ page	\$500	507		114	37
1-2021 10 pages	Bakken CSH ½ page	\$500		Singles 80 <u>Couples 35</u> Total 150	115	
2-2021 8 pages	—		907	Singles 83 <u>Couples 35</u> Total 153	118	37
3-2021 10 pages	UMF forum + ¼ page	\$500	998		119	37
4-2021 12 pages	PPP forum + ½ page	\$750	116 7		237*	37
5-2021 10 pages	UMF forum + ¼ page	<u>\$500</u>	129 2		252	37
	TOTAL	\$5,250				

* Beginning in April, the default distribution of the newsletter to new members for the first year of membership was changed from online only to USPS + online.

UMRA Zoom webinars: Attendee Report, 2020–21 | See next page for sort by Total Users

Date	Event		Registered	Unique Viewers	Total Users
5.19.2020	Forum	Myron Frans	(not really) 534	130	151
6.16.2020	Forum	Jon Christianson	109	81	96
7.07.2020	Workshop	Ted Bowman	98	70	86
7.21.2020	Forum	Medaria Arradondo	166	125	151
8.18.2020	Forum	Rachel Croson	105	62	86
9.08.2020	A.M.	Henning Schroeder	81	60	73
9.15.2020	Workshop	Jenny Blaine	88	64	70
9.29.2020	Forum	Josie Johnson	149	122	150
10.13.2020	A.M.	Kirsten Delegaard	66	50	68
10.20.2020	Workshop	OHR	141	104	134
10.27.2020	Forum	Kaz Nelson	70	50	61
11.10.2020	A.M.	Timothy Schacker	106	83	99
11.17.2020	Workshop	Mark + Lucy Rose Fischer	89	70	85
11.24.2020	Forum	Kathryn Pearson	158	129	152
1.12.2021	A.M.	Age-friendly university	67	49	59
1.19.2021	Workshop	Lisa Lemler	68	51	66
1.26.2021	Forum	Brad Holschuh	96	73	88
2.09.2021	A.M.	Greg Hestness	79	70	79
2.16.2021	Workshop	Peter Watson			
2.23.2021	Forum	Myron Frans	84	51	61
3.02.2021	Workshop	Peter Watson-rescheduled	118	94	111
3.09.2021	A.M.	BioMADE	39	27	36
3.16.2021	Workshop	Erik Moore – Treasure or trash	98	74	86
3.23.2021	Forum	Tim Johnson – Supreme Court	99	73	86
4.20.2021	Workshop	Sharon Stiteler, National Park Ranger – [crows]	90	69	78
5.03.2021	Workshop	Ann Van Heest, hand health	122	94	108
5.11.2021	A.M.	Stephen Befort – labor arbitration, police misconduct	57	42	53
5.25.2021	Annual Meeting + Forum	Annual Meeting + Forum with Regent Chair Kendall Powell	132	94	108
6.08.2021	A.M.	John Gordon, ACLU – voter suppression	76	50	58

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In conclusion

Looking ahead, I expect 2021–22 will be another dynamic year as UMRA transitions back to in-person, all-member meetings, or some hybrid model, including both virtual and in-person programming.