

MARCH 2005

Carl Elliot will speak in March on the ethical complexities of American drugs

The presence of pharmaceuticals and other drugs in our lives has never been more apparent. Just as impressive is our deft use of language to conceal or obscure the specific chemical composition and properties of a particular compound by the use of simple, invented words like: Aleve, Botox, Celebrex,

Fen-Phen, Imodium, Rythmol, Syntroid, Vioxx and Viagra, to mention just a few.



no Elliott

There can be no doubt that the availability of a panoply of pharmaceuticals is one of modern medicine's most powerful

resources for treating disease, life-threatening injuries, and disabilities; controlling pain; and increasing longevity. The cost of creating that vast pharmacopoeia, however, has risen to the level that requires public policy consideration, as indicated by the controversy over the reimportation of prescription drugs and recent legislation adding coverage for such drugs to Medicare. Such coverage has an estimated ten-year cost lying between \$400 and \$700 billion.

While the use of physician-prescribed drugs receives wide acceptance and support, matters are less clear when drugs are used to enhance performance. Thus, it becomes pervasive:

Some students seek to improve academic performance, some musicians to enhance public performance, some Olympians to better existing event records, and some tour-de-France cyclists to gain a competitive edge. Then, there is the recent major league baseball story, in which the alleged use of steroids has spilled from the sports pages onto the news and business pages.

Are there—should there be—ethical guidelines for making, marketing, and using drugs? What principles should guide the individual who is trying to pick an ethical path through this thicket of modern medical technology?

Professor Carl Elliott of the Center for Bioethics will join us on March 22 to consider these matters. Dr. Elliott holds a B.Sc. degree from Davidson College, an M.D. from the Medical University, and a Ph.D. from Glasgow University. His remarks derive from his book, *Better Than Well: American Medicine Meets the American Dream*. We look forward to his perspective on this perplexing issue.

Changes in luncheon meeting parking arrangements

As those who attended the February luncheon learned, we've changed the way that UMRA and the Campus Club cover parking costs for our monthly gatherings. We will continue to provide two hours of free parking in either the East River Road or Weisman ramps, but problems have arisen with the stamp system. So, members will bring their tickets to the luncheon check-in as usual, but, instead of a validation stamp, they will be handed a \$5 bill to cover two hours of parking. Any of us who stay longer will need to pay the overage, as before. As Ann Holt explains, it's a low-tech solution to what had become a mid-tech problem. If only all seemingly intractable issues in this complicated world of ours could be resolved with similar ease!

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MARCH
LUNCHEON MEETING

Featured Speaker

Carl Elliot, professor,
University of Minnesota,
Center for Bioethics

**"American Medicine meets the
American Dream"**

**Tuesday
March 22, 2005
11:30 a.m.**

Location

Conference Room ABC
Campus Club, Fourth Floor,
Coffman Memorial Union,
East Bank Campus, U of M

Cost

\$12 per person (tax included)

**Reservation Deadline
Thursday, March 17**

To reserve your place(s),
send a check, payable to the
University of Minnesota Retirees
Association, to David Wark at
1313 5th St., SE, Mpls, MN,
55414; call 612-379-3854; or
e-mail him at wark@umn.edu.

Reservations requested after
March 17 will be placed
on a waiting list.

Cancellations must be received
by noon Wednesday, March 16.

Free Parking

For two hours of free parking in
the East River Road or Weisman
Museum garages, bring your
ticket in for reimbursement.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In an organization such as UMRA, there needs to be regular and open communication between association officers and members. Transparency, after all, should be a basic quality of any University group.

Ease and openness of communication, however, is not easily accomplished, given UMRA's various constituencies, the infrequency of association meetings, and the many demands on retirees' time and energy. Yet, it's important that we continue to make the effort because more open communication encourages a stronger sense of identification with UMRA and promotes more regular participation in association activities. That, in turn, strengthens UMRA's ability to represent its members' interests more effectively and speak out more confidently in the University's behalf.

It's with these concerns in mind that the Board seeks to keep you up to date on association activities via our monthly newsletter; communicates with you through our members' listserv; and invites feedback on what we're up to, how we're going about it, and how we might do things better. Recently, we've taken the additional step of making the UMRA By-Laws readily available on the Web. Just go to the UMRA Web site, click on "About Us," and look for By-Laws. If working the Web is not your thing, you can get a copy of the By-Laws by calling our secretary, Dave Wark.

As an article in this Newsletter indicates, one of the Board's most recent and most important undertakings has been to investigate the existing regents policy on the rights and interests of faculty emeriti, its level of awareness within the University community, and the steadiness of its implementation. The article raises the question, as well, of whether similar, appropriate policy statements should be devised for P&A and civil service retirees. Read it with care.

The Board continues to pursue such familiar concerns as tracking health care benefits for retirees and exploring new and achievable ways of expanding UMRA's mission. While we want to avoid programmatic overreaching for all the obvious reasons, assuring that the association stays relevant to retirees' concerns is fundamental to our survival. Give us your thoughts; contact me or any member of the Board.

Cordially,

John Howe, President

Raising UMRA's profile in the University community will help all

As long as UMRA had been around—that is, since the 1970s—it has too often been either overlooked or misunderstood by prospective members, governance groups, and administrators alike. In recent months, the Board has taken a number of initiatives to remedy that situation by arranging meetings with the Faculty Consultative Committee, the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs, and the executive boards of the Civil Service Committee and the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators.

In each instance, we've been warmly received and have taken the opportunity to enlighten University colleagues about what UMRA is and does, to invite suggestions about what else we might do to promote our members' and the University's well-being, and to ask for help in getting the word out about UMRA more effectively to our constituencies. Increasing UMRA's visibility and strengthening its place in the University community is an ongoing process, but we're taking positive steps in that direction. Along the way, we're forging long-term working relationships with important campus groups.

That's not all. The Board has also begun a series of contacts with college deans' offices and will soon be asking for their assistance in communicating with soon-to-be retirees. In addition, we're in touch with folks in University Relations about ways that we can use the University's numerous electronic and print communication systems to spread UMRA's message. Anyone who has additional ideas or is interested in helping out in this important task, should get in touch with members of the Board.

U Libraries eager to serve retirees

Retirees retain access to services, collections, and privileges at University Libraries. You can borrow and recall materials, request things through interlibrary loan, and seek reference assistance either in person or online. Similarly, you can access databases, indexes, full-text, and other digital resources from your office or home, and have materials delivered between libraries or to your on-campus address. For most library services, you will need a valid UCard, which can be obtained at the UCard Office; you will need to know your Internet ID and e-mail password. Your department can answer questions about your UCard standing or e-mail account.

The Library's home page is www.lib.umn.edu, or for help with services, call the reference desk at a campus library. —Peggy Johnson, 612-624-2312, m-john@umn.edu

Board revisits the rights and privileges of faculty, P&A, and staff retirees

On April 16, 1998, the University Senate passed a resolution titled “Faculty Retirees’ Bill of Rights.” Noting that there were then no University policies dealing with the “status, rights, privileges and services” of faculty retirees aside from pension and health plans, this resolution observed that many emeriti wished to retain a connection with the University by volunteering or contracting their services, continuing their research, or working with students. It affirmed that such continuing ties brought substantial benefits to retirees and University alike, and urged that policies be developed for such activities.

The resolution specified the rights and privileges of retired faculty that the University should guarantee, as well as the services and benefits that home departments should be encouraged to provide. The full text of the Senate Resolution is available via the Senate Web site at www1.umn.edu/usenate/scfa/billofrights, or by calling the Senate office at 612-625-9369.

Following the Senate action, the Board of Regents, on July 14, 2000, approved “Policy on Faculty Emeriti,” superceding an earlier and much briefer policy statement of January 9, 1969. The Regents’ 2000 policy defined the term “faculty emeritus,” explained to whom it should be awarded, and outlined the privileges and services provided by the University and its academic units to which faculty emeriti can lay claim. Copies of the Regents policy are available at www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/FacultyEmeriti.pdf, or by calling the Regents office. At about the same time, a set of administrative procedures for the “Regents Policy on Faculty Emeriti” were also adopted.

Several years later, in the fall of 2004, the Senate and the administration approved a new conflict resolution process for faculty, academic professionals and administrators, civil service

staff, and student workers. The “General Rules For Formal Processes” devised for the conflict resolution program describe recourse available, and not available, to retirees as well as to regular University employees. This text is accessible at www1.umn.edu/ugo/cr_policy.pdf.

Concerned that these important documents and the information they contain regarding the rights and privileges of retired faculty may have slipped from the attention of faculty and administrators, the UMRA Board is mounting an effort to make them more widely known within the University community and to inquire about their implementation. This news item and a similar piece on the association’s Web site are initial parts of that effort. We will also be communicating with college deans’ offices. A working group of Board and other association members is directing this effort. Its membership will be announced shortly. Anyone who has information about the documents at issue, or personal experience relevant to their content, is invited to contact one of UMRA’s Board members.

Attention to the existing Senate resolution and Regents policy concerning faculty rights has also raised the question of whether comparable and appropriate policies should also be created for civil service and P&A retirees. Recent conversations with the executive boards of the Civil Service Committee and the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators, indicate support for the idea among those constituencies. Given the fact that P&A and civil service representatives will soon join the University Senate, it may be an appropriate time for such consideration. The new UMRA working group will make recommendations concerning the association’s position on this question as well. Once again, the Board welcomes comments and advice.

UMRA seeks improvements in benefits for pre-1963 faculty retirees

During recent years, UMRA has actively sought relief, through the Supplemental Benefits Plan, for faculty colleagues whose retirement programs reach back prior to 1963, before retirement benefits were significantly increased. As best we know, around 350 faculty colleagues and/or spouses continue to be substantially disadvantaged by this disparity.

In consultation with UMRA, the Office of Human Resources has recommended and the University has provided incremental improvements in most years. Those improvements have been based on a complex calculation involving service point values and retirement income caps (the sum of social security, University retirement benefits, and amounts provided by the

Supplemental Benefits Plan). UMRA has recommended additional improvement under that formula for 2005. Even so, the retirement income of colleagues caught in the pre-1963 bind, lags significantly behind that of younger retirees.

In response to the problem, the Board has created a working group, assigned the task of developing a more comprehensive strategy for addressing the retirement income discrepancy. More information will be forthcoming as the work of that group develops. Anyone with relevant information or suggestions, should contact John Howe.

E-mail security reminder

The February newsletter carried the urgent announcement that everyone using the University's e-mail system must alter his/her e-mail software protocols before July 5, or have their accounts cancelled. The change is necessary to provide greater security for e-mail user names and passwords in an increasingly open, and increasingly vulnerable computer environment.

Check the story in your February UMRA Newsletter for more specifics about the changeover and how to get help in accomplishing it. If your copy of that newsletter has disappeared, you can call one up on the UMRA Web site. Go to www.umn.edu/umra, click on "Newsletter," and then on "February 2005."

Help keep UMRA listserv up to date

Although not all UMRA members have active e-mail accounts at the University or via one of the numerous commercial providers, a growing number of us do. It's important that we keep our e-mail addresses for the UMRA listserv up to date, because it provides one important channel of communication within the association. If you use e-mail actively but have not received a message from UMRA in recent weeks, please let us know by contacting us at umra@umn.edu. Also, if you change your e-mail provider and address, please notify us as well.

Maroon and Gold Day at Capitol

In cooperation with the University Legislative Network and the Alumni Association, the Retirees Volunteer Center was instrumental in turning out UMRA members and other University retirees for a rally at the Capitol on February 23rd in support of the University's biennial request. Participants boarded buses at Coffman Union for the short trip to St. Paul, where President Bruininks addressed the group in the Capitol Rotunda. Attendees then broke into small groups to carry the University's message to individual legislators.

As a percentage of total spending, state support for the University has declined by half over the past 30 years, while tuition has increased dramatically across the University. Past success in building a great teaching and research university and in expanding access to qualified students threatens to be squandered if the trend continues. Who better to speak of the University's importance to the people of Minnesota and make the case for reversing the alarming slide in state support for University programs than retirees who have contributed so meaningfully to the University?

The results of this and other lobbying efforts won't become clear for several more weeks, but Maroon and Gold Day offered another example of the ways that UMRA and the Volunteer Center are working together on the University's behalf.

University of Minnesota
McNamara Alumni Center
Room 264, Suite 250
200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2002

 **UMRA**
Retirees Association
University of Minnesota

**Have you changed your
address, e-mail, or phone?**

1. Print new information below.
2. Cut out this form **and address label**.
3. Mail both to the address above.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State _____
Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____
Other Info _____

First Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mpls., MN.
Permit No. 155