

UMRA UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

FEBRUARY 2016

Provost Hanson to discuss the University's Strategic Plan at February luncheon meeting

UMRA welcomes, as our February luncheon speaker, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Karen Hanson. Since Dr. Hanson took her position on the Twin Cities campus in 2012, UMRA leaders have been interested in her perspectives on how the University and its retirees can be mutually supportive of one another.



Coming to her position here was a homecoming for her. She received her bachelor of arts, *summa cum laude*, in philosophy and mathematics from the University of Minnesota in

1970. Following graduation, she went on to earn both her master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy from Harvard University, completing the doctorate in 1980.

Prior to returning to Minnesota, Dr. Hanson served as provost at the Bloomington campus of Indiana University and executive vice president of that university from July 2007 to January 2012. In February of 2012 she came back to Minnesota as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

Provost Hanson's research interests are in the philosophy of mind, ethics and aesthetics, and American philosophy. She has published many articles and essays in these areas and is

the author of the book *The Self Imagined: Philosophical Reflections on the Social Character of Psyche* and a co-editor of the book *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*.

Active in the work of her profession, she was twice elected to the executive committee of the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association (APA) and to the APA National Board of Officers. She served as chair of the APA Board, 2004–05. From 1993 to 1997, she served as the APA delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and as a member of the ACLS Executive Committee.

Dr. Hanson has been an associate editor of the *Journal of Social Philosophy*, a member of the editorial board of *American Philosophical Quarterly*, and a trustee for the American Society for Aesthetics. Her current editorial board memberships include *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* and *Cognito*. She is an officer of the John Dewey Foundation board and member of the Peirce Edition Project advisory board.

During her tenure here, Dr. Hanson has played a central role in the development of the Strategic Plan for the University. That plan has received the attention and response from UMRA's Past President John Adams. Adams's response to Provost Hanson has concentrated on ways that retirees could aid the University in achieving many of the goals of the plan. He will introduce Provost Hanson at the February luncheon.

— Hal Miller, Past President and Program Committee member

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, February 23, 2016
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

**Karen Hanson, Senior Vice
President and Provost, U of M**

"The University's Strategic Plan"

Location

Conference Room ABC,
Campus Club, Fourth Floor,
Coffman Memorial Union

Menu

Persian Spiced Roast Chicken with
Cardamom Rice and Squash

For vegetarian or gluten-free
options, please request when
making your reservations.

Reservations ARE Required

Deadline: Thursday, February 18
Prepayment of **\$16** per person;
annual prepayers **must** also make
reservations.

To reserve your place(s), send
your check, payable to UMRA, to
UMRA Reservations,
c/o Judy Leahy Grimes,
1937 Palace Ave., St. Paul, MN
55105-1728

Or, contact her before the dead-
line at 651-698-4387; e-mail:
Jleahy4654@aol.com.

Please honor the reservation
deadline date; if cancellations are
necessary, please call by Feb. 18.

Parking

All U ramps and the East River
Road Garage with UMRA's dis-
count coupon — \$6 for the day.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Life by the Numbers—

Every morning when I step on and off the bathroom scale, I think about how much of life is managed by numbers. How many things do we count, record, and manage, or not, because we attach numbers to them? It has been said “if we can measure it, we can manage it.” This management philosophy promulgated by W. E. Deming has led us to record a lot of the numbers of our lives. It feeds our curiosity about the relationship between one event and another, and it enhances our sense of self-control. How many of us have a Fitbit, a kitchen scale, and bookkeeping software? These counters help us generate data on our lives. Whether they make us happier or allow us to manage our activities better is questionable, but they do give us the ability to gather a lot of numbers about our lives.

Everyone from philosophers, mathematicians, and scientists to musicians and poets use numbers as a way to talk about life, as a way to order thoughts and express ideas. Numerology is an old, old concept. A wikipedia entry states, “St. Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354–430) wrote, ‘Numbers are the Universal language offered by the deity to humans as confirmation of the truth.’ Pythagoras, too, believed that everything had numerical relationships, and it was up to the mind to seek and investigate the secrets of these relationships or have them revealed by divine grace.” (See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoras>)

What secrets do our numbers reveal? What is the relationship between our numbers and our attitudes and behavior? I submit that the most revealing information about one’s values is the numbers in their checkbook and the list of purchases on their credit card statements. We spend our money on those things we value the most. For some it is travel, for others it is music, and for others it may be cars or clothes or continuing education. Related to our spending is the numerical measure of our financial wealth, income, investment, charity donations, and the minimum required distribution from retirement accounts. Then come tax rates and tax deductions, and the final tax bill.

If you listen to the news, you are bombarded with economic numbers such as interest rates, inflation rates, GNP, and the price of oil, to say nothing about the percentage points by which one leading presidential hopeful

is ahead of another. And then there is men’s favorite number—gas mileage (MPG). This brings us to MPH, miles to destination, tire pressure, and so on. Sports fans spout game scores (Gophers are up 28 to 7) or the number of games won (Vikings are 7 in 12).

There are numbers germane to our physical health—our height, weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, heart rate, etc. The calories we eat in snacks and over the whole day, and the number of steps we take, the number of hours we sleep, and the glasses of wine we drink. How many yellow pills should I take? Numbers are used to manage our health care.

Because Minnesotans are obsessed with the weather, there is always talk about temperature and wind chill, rainfall and snow depth. Then there are the vacation days, the shopping days until Christmas, and calendar days, clock hours, and life expectancy. At what age should I retire? Why does time go so fast?

The mathematically inclined talk about prime numbers. They know the Greek letter and the number for Pi, and the meaning of a derivative, a percentage, a tangent, a log scale, and a correlation. These may not matter much to most of us in everyday life, but they underlie many of the inventions we enjoy every day. We use kilowatts of electricity, megabits per second of bandwidth, and gigabytes of data storage.

When we sing or dance or play a musical instrument, there are the beats per minute, the notes per measure, and the time to hold a note. We may use these numbers without thinking about it, but they control the activity. Poets consider mathematical word patterns or qualitative metres such as the iambic pentameter to define the rhythm of poetry. Sonnets have 14 lines.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote perhaps the most memorable sonnet in the English language in 1850. Its first line is “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.” Even in the ethereal world of poetry, counting is important. Incidentally, I count at least 10 ways she loved, in her 14-line sonnet.

Numbers—love them or hate them, they define our activities, they measure our values, and they manage our health. Consciously or not, we live by the numbers, the most illusive of which is our perception of time.

— Jean Kinsey, UMRA President
jkinsey@umn.edu

February 23 workshop focuses on factors in preparing advance health care directives

Continuing the Living Well in Later Life workshop series, Marlene Stum, Ph.D., Family Social Science professor will present and lead a discussion on advance care directives.

Professor Stum's background is in Family Economics and Gerontology, and her work focuses on later life decisions facing families (inheritance, long-term care, end-of-life). She has 27 years of education and policy work in advance care planning, including having authored a user-friendly health care directive toolkit widely used in Minnesota since 1999.

Health Care Directives: Are You Really Prepared?

Join us for this workshop on strategies for communicating end-of-life wishes and preferences. Professor Stum finds that most family members have not talked about their preferences, named a health care agent, nor put their wishes in writing. Others who may have attempted the subject may need to revisit the accuracy and quality of a completed health care directive. Learn about current resources available to help jumpstart needed family and health care provider conversations and advance planning.

The workshop will begin at 1:30 p.m., February 23, in the Campus Club ABC following the luncheon program that day. All are welcome to attend.

—Earl Nolting, Program subcommittee

An overflow crowd came to learn about antibiotic resistance and a new treatment for superbugs



At January's meeting Dr. Alex Khorut spoke about Microbiota Therapeutics, a new way to treat diseases caused by loss or alteration of essential microorganisms critical to the development and maintenance of the immune system. The treatment involves replacement of the non-functioning microbiota with microorganisms manufactured from healthy donors and has been successful in restoring health to the microbial communities of the digestive system. If you were not able to attend, more information is available at www.microbiota-therapeutics.umn.edu.

UMRA Care Guides—

A service now available to UMRA members

Are you facing a difficult decision about health care, especially long term care? The Center on Aging at the U of M has initiated a program to assist you, and several UMRA members have been trained there as Care Guides.

The guides will offer a way to think through the issues involved. They will not provide advice per se; rather, they can help you clarify goals, ensure that you know about the full range of potential options, and refer you to resources. All the work will be confidential.

To speak with an UMRA Care Guide, call the Center on Aging, 612- 624-1185. After hours, please leave a message.

Nominating Committee invites participation

At its January meeting, the UMRA board named the membership of the 2016 Nominating Committee to select officers and board members. In accordance with UMRA's bylaws, the members of that committee represent:

Board members—

Donna Peterson, currently the President-elect

Hal Miller, Immediate Past President

Other UMRA members—

John S. Anderson, Earl Nolting, Julie Medbery

The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying a slate of candidates for election at the May business meeting of the association.

The positions that will be open are:

President-elect—This person will serve one year as president-elect (2016–17), then become president for 2017–18.

Secretary—This is a one-year term and can be re-elected.

Treasurer—Also a one-year term, also re-electable.

Three Board members—each to serve three-year terms.

The Nominating Committee is eager to receive suggestions for persons to consider for these important positions. If you are willing to help us fill these needs, we would appreciate hearing from you. If you are interested in serving in one of these roles, we would welcome your contacting one of the Nominating Committee members by e-mail.

Hal Miller, Chair (miller@umn.edu); Donna Peterson (dcp@usfamily.net), John S. Anderson (ander049@umn.edu), Earl Nolting (enolting@umn.edu), Julie Medbery (jmedbery@comcast.net).

Thank you for your help.

— Hal Miller, chair, Nominating Committee.

Volunteer opportunities for tutoring

Don't allow your skills to lie fallow! One of the most valuable gifts you can deliver is the tutoring so greatly needed by children, teens, and immigrants. The University Retirees Volunteer Center can facilitate your connection with programs for all ages and in all parts of the Twin Cities.

Tutoring Organizations

- 1) Minnesota Literacy Council: Programs for teaching, assistance and tutoring in community and in-school locations. New volunteer orientation 2/16/16. Pre-service training.
- 2) Minnesota Reading Corps: Education award compensation may be gifted to a child or grandchild.
- 3) Volunteers of America seeks tutors to assist children struggling with homework and reading. Requires weekly commitment of 3 or more hours. Travel is compensated.

Tutoring in St. Paul

- 1) The Public Schools seek volunteer tutors to assist students one-on-one or in small groups. Flexible day, evening, or weekend hours.
- 2) Neighborhood House/Wellstone Center has after-school tutoring as well as classes for immigrants.
- 3) St. Paul Public Schools Foundation places tutors at a variety of community organizations (e.g., Common Bond Communities) as well as schools and libraries.
- 4) Partners-In-English (URVC's own project): An English conversation group primarily based on assisting international students and their families at the University. Wednesday afternoon meetings at the St. Anthony Library.

Tutoring in Minneapolis

- 1) MPLS Public Schools: ACT Test Proctors; English Language Learner Tutoring; Elementary schools. Specific projects: Franklin Middle School (math and science aids); Anwatin Middle School (History Day Projects); Edison H.S. (Special Ed. and music class); Washburn H.S. (Writing Center); Wellstone H.S. (ESL).
- 2) Adult Basic Ed.: Northside Campus (Computer Basics and ESL); Southside Campus (Basic Math; Microsoft Word and Advanced Computer, and ESL). Job interview practice.
- 3) International Education Center (downtown MPLS): English usage; citizenship preparation; math. In-class assistants, small group tutors, and one-on-one.

YOU ARE NEEDED !

Contact The University Retiree Volunteer Center to facilitate your tutoring options: URVC@UMN.EDU

Concert features international collaboration

On March 4 and 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ted Mann Concert Hall, the University of Minnesota's School of Music is embarking on an international collaboration with faculty and students from the Conservatory of Music in Detmold, Germany, to present Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental Saint Matthew Passion. The program is under the direction of Mark Russell Smith, artistic director of Orchestral Studies and Kathy Romey, director of Choral Activities.

In addition to these two performances, the School of Music will send 40 students and two faculty members to perform the Saint Matthew Passion in Detmold, Germany.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for U of M students to study and perform a masterwork rarely presented by academic institutions for audiences at home and abroad.

To purchase tickets for this performance, call 612-624-2345 or go to <http://z.umn.edu/stmatthewpassion>.

For those who are interested in a calendar of upcoming events, the College of Liberal Arts produces a *You Are Invited* brochure each semester, and many of the events included are free. For more information on the CLA events go to <http://cla.umn.edu/you-are-invited>.

Research says make walking a social activity

Do you have a hard time adhering to a daily exercise routine? Consider joining an outdoor walking group. You'll be less likely to quit and may see a dramatic improvement in your overall health—including cognitive well-being, says a British review.

Researchers analyzed 42 studies involving more than 1,800 people (average age: 58). They found that people who walked outdoors in groups significantly improved their blood pressure, resting heart rate, cholesterol, body fat, and weight. Walkers also saw improvements in lung power, overall physical function, and mental health. Group walking particularly benefited people with medical conditions like Parkinson's disease, obesity, diabetes, arthritis, fibromyalgia, dementia, and mental health issues.

The researchers point out that even people who walked the shortest distances saw wide-ranging benefits. And while the merits of regular walking have been long known, this review highlights the benefits of group-walking dynamics. Participating in an outdoor walking group helps instill camaraderie and incentive among members, providing a social outlet and making them less likely to drop out.

This study was published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. The article was published by the *Health After 50 Newsletter*, <http://www.healthafter50.com/customer-service/>

Make a difference for your fellow UMRA members; join the activities of UMRA Cares

The UMRA Cares committee is a wonderfully vibrant group, and they do so much for our organization's members — sending cards and notes when illness strikes, comforting the bereaved, planning workshops, and now initiating Care Guides, too. They could use our help.

Here are some ways in which you can assist their efforts, and ensure that this important work continues to underpin the essence that has become the heart of UMRA.

Join the committee and find out about all the things they do—from the inside. Take on a few tasks that interest you.

Share what you are reading: write an article for “From the Bookshelf.” If you like to read, the Cares Committee invites you to write a short summary for the Newsletter’s “Bookshelf” article. Reviews of good, well-written books on any subject are welcome. Send your recommendations and reviews to umracares@umn.edu.

Help **plan workshop programs**.

Volunteer to learn how to be a **Care Guide**.

For more information, or to see where you might fit in to support this active and ambitious team effort, talk with Earl Nolting, 651-633-4333, enolting@umn.edu.

Thank you for taking action. You'll be glad you did.

— Ginny Hanson, UMRA Newsletter editor

In Remembrance

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of losses to our UMRA community. Since the Newsletter was published last month, we have received news of the following. Our condolences to the friends and families of:

John W. McConnell M.D., Family Practice faculty, died December 10, 2015. He had been a member of UMRA since 1995.

Florence A. Caldwell died December 31, 2015. She and her husband, Elwood, have been members of UMRA since 1989. Elwood continues his UMRA membership.

UMRA Cares Committee is here for support

For assistance and support in the event of the death or serious illness of an UMRA member or family member, please e-mail us at umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403, and leave a message for UMRA Cares.

Also, if you learn of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge, please contact the UMRA Cares Committee.

UMRA Photo Club members learn together

The UMRA Photo Club is made up of photographers of all abilities. Most of us are struggling amateurs who like to take pictures and want to get better. We benefit from the kind help we get from one another.

This month we will meet on Friday, February 25, from 1 to 3 p.m., in our usual spot at the St. Anthony Branch of the Hennepin County Library. The library is in a shopping center at the intersection of New Brighton and St. Anthony Boulevards.

For a little social hour before, come at noon for lunch at the Great Dragon Buffet across the parking lot from the library. Come for fun, food, and fotos. Contact Sheri Goldsmith at gold009@gmail.com to be added to the Photo Club mailing list.

UMRA Book Club welcomes new members

The UMRA Book Club has been meeting since March of 2011. We meet at 2 p.m. on the third Friday of every month except December at the 1666 Coffman Building, which is on Larpenteur Avenue near the St. Paul campus.

Our book for January was *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World* by Michael Pollan. Next readings are:

- Feb. 19—*The Road to Character* by David Brooks;
- March 18—*Fortune Smiles* by Adam Johnson;
- April 15—*Wartime Lies* by Louis Begley.

We read both fiction and nonfiction books as chosen for each month by a member who then acts as discussion leader. New members are welcome. Contact Pat Tollefson, p-toll@umn.edu, for more information.

Mark your calendars for UMRA's spring luncheon meetings; plan to attend to hear:

- March 22—Lori Sturdevant, editorial writer and columnist for *Minneapolis Star Tribune*
- April 26—Massoud Amin, professor and director of the University of Minnesota Technology Leadership Institute
- May 24—Peter Moe, director of Operations and Research, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

“Food for Thought”
Old age ain't no place for sissies.
(This quote, originally from Bette Davis)

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

First Class Mail
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN.
Permit No. 90155

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 _____

Website: <https://umra.umn.edu>
UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to new members who have recently joined UMRA. Greet them at luncheon meetings, and help introduce them to other members.

Marilynn R. Erickson, Restorative Sci-MDRCBB,
Civil Service
890 Monterey Dr., Shoreview, MN 55126-5872
651-787-0706; erick034@umn.edu

Nan Heffken, Neuroscience, Civil Service
10087 Pleasure Creek Circle, Blaine, MN 55434
763-786-8887; n-heff@umn.edu

Do you have friends who are retiring soon?

Be sure to talk to them about joining UMRA. Check with Membership Committee Chair John Anderson, ander049@umn.edu, if you want an UMRA brochure to show them.

UMRA can send one mailing to each list of new retirees, but in the busy weeks following retirement, this opportunity can be overlooked. So, talk to your friends, and invite them to attend a luncheon with you. Seeing former co-workers and colleagues at UMRA meetings is a wonderful way to stay in touch and maintain valuable friendships.

Thank you to the Center for Spirituality and Healing for sponsoring UMRA's February Newsletter. Check out the programs CSH offers to UMRA members at a discount, including the MBSR class below.



Center for Spirituality & Healing
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

MINDFULNESS helps you discover your unlimited potential. It's not something you have to get or acquire, but something that is already within you — a deep, internal resource waiting to be discovered or uncovered. In our 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction class, you will learn how mindfulness, meditation, and gentle movement can reduce stress and improve your wellbeing.

Special 10% discount on class for UMRA members

Learn more and register z.umn.edu/MBSR

Contact us mindprg@umn.edu
612-626-5361