

UMRA Board of Directors
Minutes Meeting of Tuesday, 24 January 2017

Members present: Carl Adams, Shirley Barber, Steve Benson, Roger Clemence, Judy Leahy Grimes, Jean Kinsey, Jean Markell, Dave Naumann, Kathy O'Brien, Chip Peterson, Donna Peterson

Members absent: Martha Feda, Cherie Hamilton, John Howe, Sheri Goldsmith May, Jerry Rinehart, Gloria Williams

Other Participants: Ginny Hanson, Jan Hogan, Dale Swanson, Adam Yust, Ben Zimmerman

D. Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

1. Welcome

Done.

2. Approve agenda

Approved as proposed.

3. Approve November minutes

Approved, with one correction: The last sentence in item 14, Communications/Newsletter, should read: "Anderson suggested that the Communications Committee review distribution lists and amend as appropriate."

4. Treasurer's Report (Carl Adams)

Adams distributed a one-page report of UMRA financial activity from 11/13/16 to 1/23/17. It contains no surprises, and UMRA appears to be heading toward another year of exemplary solvency.

5. University of Minnesota Alumni Association, Adam Yust

Markell introduced UMAA staff member Adam Yust, who distributed several handouts, including summaries of the University's capital request and its budget request. He explained that UMAA is attempting to re-strengthen its advocacy capacity, as reflected partly in his new position focused on mobilizing UMAA membership to reach out to the community and especially to legislators through such strategies as letter writing and phone banks. The UMAA effort that used to be called the "Legislative Action Network" has been relabeled "U of M Advocates." The hope is to build long-term relations with legislators, especially by creating more opportunities for high-quality conversations with them. UMAA tracked 1,000 contacts by alumni with legislators in 2015 and 10,000 in 2016. In recent years legislators have faced no political consequences for voting against University requests; effective advocacy can change that perception. Adams suggested that advocacy can be most effective if it includes interests in the wider community that benefit from the University; Yust agreed and said that also is part of the strategy.

D. Peterson asked how UMRA can plug into these efforts. Yust replied that meetings (i.e., away from the capitol setting) are a high priority (e.g., small groups at coffee houses), as well as having voices for the University raised at legislators' constituent meetings. Continued engagement with legislators outside the period of legislative sessions could also be very helpful. UMRA could help UMAA identify UMRA members who have strong relations with legislators. O'Brien opined that it will be important to prime people to respond effectively to questions and comments on front-page U of M news (e.g., football scandals). **Follow-up:** Markell will work with Yust to develop ideas for ways UMRA and its members can engage with UMAA efforts.

6. Follow-up to Board Retreat – coffee offered in Campus Club Bar (Jean Kinsey)

Cherie Hamilton made the contact with the Campus Club to begin trying out coffee hours prior to the monthly luncheon meetings. The first experiment will be in February, and after further March and April trials the Board will assess the results and decide whether to continue in the fall. This year's costs will be sufficiently modest not to affect UMRA's budget materially. Naumann suggested that the Board try to finish its meetings by 11:00 so that its members can mingle with others who drop in for the coffee hour. Hogan suggested asking some former Board members to serve as hosts, as they would be able to arrive by the beginning.

7. MOU update (Donna Peterson)

Peterson reviewed briefly the history of the effort to codify UMRA's relationship to the University through a Memorandum of Understanding. Gregg Brown (General Counsel's office) helped enormously to simplify the draft. The main hang-up in getting the MOU signed now seems to be UMRA's desire to use Human Resources' email list to invite recent retirees into membership and to send them the newsletter electronically for a period of time after their retirement. HR is taking the position that privacy concerns impede sharing the list with UMRA even for the one mailing it has traditionally been able to send. Retired General Counsel Bill Donohue has volunteered to carry the ball for UMRA and is optimistic that it will be possible to get around the privacy concerns. Once that issue is resolved, Peterson believes it will not take long to get the MOU signed.

8. Communications Task Force (Jean Kinsey)

The creation of this task force is another follow-up to the summer retreat. Kinsey chairs the task force; other members are John Anderson, Kirstine Bitten (currently sidelined by health issues), Lynda Ellis, Cathy Lee Gierke, Ginny Hanson, and Dave Naumann. Kinsey distributed a two-page progress report. Objectives: recruit UMRA members, increase UMRA's profile in the U community, strengthen the U's knowledge of UMRA and its potential to support the U's programs and reputation, and develop a strategy for improved communication with UMRA members and potential members.

The initial focus will be on communication with members, especially important because Dave Naumann and Ginny Hanson will be leaving their respective jobs as webmaster and newsletter editor at the end of this academic year. The task force will seek to find support for Ginny's editing and layout of the newsletter over the next five months. In the longer run, the task force hopes to develop an electronic newsletter format in the form of an email to members with links to content on the website. Personnel needed include a managing editor of the newsletter, a technical editor of newsletter content (maybe the same person, maybe different), a cadre of

content writers, and one or more web programmers. The task force also recommends creation of an ongoing UMRA Communications Committee.

Given the urgency of revising the newsletter delivery, the task force will defer for now discussion of communication with potential members and the wider University community (including the Administration).

Naumann noted that the switch to an electronic newsletter format will require someone with technical and administrative skills, or perhaps two people with different skill sets. It might prove necessary to pay for some of the needed hours. Although the electronic newsletter will largely replace the current version, it will be necessary to continue mailing out a paper version to members who do not have email access.

9. Nominations Committee – Jean Kinsey

As immediate past president, Kinsey automatically chairs this committee, which also (per the bylaws) is to include one other Board member and three members at large. Craig Swan and Virgil Larson have agreed to serve if asked by the Board, and Kinsey is awaiting replies from two other candidates. The committee will need to come up with nominees for president-elect, secretary, and four Board positions. Given that the Bylaws require Board approval of the Nominating Committee, the Board authorized D. Peterson to vote to authorize a poll by email once her other two choices have also agreed to serve.

10. Benefits Committee Report (Dale Swanson)

Given what is happening in Congress and the national administration, retirees not on Medicare should prepare themselves for possibly big changes next year. Changes for those on Medicare are also possible but less likely to be profound.

11. Web Page update (Dave Naumann)

Included as part of the discussion reported above under item 8.

12. CARES Committee (Shirley Barber)

This afternoon's workshop, on use of opioids for pain management, is the first of a two-part series. The February workshop, with a staff member from the Center for Spirituality and Healing, will deal with pain management through non-pharmaceutical strategies, including (but not necessarily limited to) mindfulness techniques.

13. Campus Club (Kathy O'Brien)

O'Brien is beginning to discuss parking issues with Parking and Transport.

14. Program Committee (Chip Peterson)

Peterson distributed a two-page handout listing speakers and workshops for 2016–17 and 2017–18. All luncheon speakers have now been lined up for the remainder of this academic year and for September and February of next year. The Workshops Subcommittee is close to filling in the rest of this year's workshop slots.

15. Membership Committee (John Anderson/Virgil Larson)

Neither Anderson nor Larson was present, but the Board briefly discussed their written report. UMRA membership has more than recovered from its slow start this year and now exceeds the figure for the same point last year.

16. **Communications/Newsletter (Ginny Hanson & Julie Medbery)**

Hanson announced that any further additions to the February newsletter must be submitted by noon tomorrow (January 24). That issue is ready except for any additions plus last-minute proofreading. Medbery will be taking the lead on the editing tasks for the March newsletter. Hanson expressed concern that the February luncheon filled up before the paper newspaper had even reached members, but Grimes noted that the Campus Club eventually expanded a bit the capacity for the event and that it proved possible to accommodate all who wished to attend.

17. **Research Grants (Jan Hogan)**

The committee has received an unusually large number of applications—21 in all. Thanks to a carryover of \$14,000 from this year, it will probably prove possible to fund most of the projects.

18. **Luncheon Committee: (Ben Zimmerman)**

Zimmerman's report to D. Peterson had not reached her in time for this meeting. He noted that he had been able to fill two vacancies and the committee is back to full strength.

19. **Representative to UM Alumni Association: (Jeanne Markell)**

Included in item 5 above.

20. **URVC (John Anderson)**

21. **History/Archive Committee (Gloria Williams)**

22. **Representative to Board of Regents: (John Adams)**

23. **Representative to SCFA: (Ted Litman)**

24. **Representative to (& member of) Senate Subcommittee on Retirement Plans: (Jerry Rinehart)**

25. **Representative to P&A Senate: (Kay Thomas)**

26. **Representative to Civil Service Senate: (Nancy Fulton)**

No reports.

Respectfully submitted by Chip Peterson (substituting for Sheri Goldsmith May)