

## **UMRA Planning Retreat September 18, 2018**

The 2018 UMRA Planning Retreat was held at Midland Hills Country Club on September 9, 2018. Following introductions of participants, the opening session of the retreat included review of the following items/issues:

- “UMRA Synopsis”—current data and info on the organization
- Membership Profile
- Financial Status
- Progress on key issues and challenges identified in the 2016 UMRA retreat.

Participants then were divided into three discussion groups to identify challenges and opportunities for UMRA in three areas: Advocacy, Accessibility, and Communication. The following summarizes the key issues raised by each group.

**Advocacy**, facilitated by Bill Donohue. Recommendation: UMRA should seek to have input in the search for a new University president. Retreat participants were encouraged to suggest individuals for the search committee, and UMRA will seek to have a role in the search and final recommendations. The group also discussed the selection of new regents and what role, if any, would be appropriate for our organization. The group suggested UMRA leadership communicate directly with the appropriate administrators to pursue these ends. Other topics considered: working with the Foundation to develop support for the Professional Development Grants for Retirees program; working with the U’s Center on Aging to support their work for our population; promoting UMRA across the University, and possibly developing opinion pieces on such topics as legislative appropriations, regent selection, etc.

**Accessibility**, facilitated by Peggy Mann Rinehart. Recommendation: UMRA should pursue establishing regional meetings across the metro area to allow retirees to engage with each other without enduring trips to campus. These meetings could include live streaming or podcasts of UMRA speaker events, or could develop into social clubs. Other topics considered: focusing some workshops on issues of death and dying; exploring ride-sharing services; engaging Center for Aging graduate students in UMRA’s programs; providing assistance for members coming to meetings from the parking garage; recording and posting speaker presentations for remote access online.

**Communication**, facilitated by Claudia Parliament. Recommendation: Continue improving the UMRA website but move cautiously in creating content for Facebook, Twitter or other social media channels. Other topics considered: collecting

information on how colleges and department engage their retirees; developing “best practice” awards for units doing exceptional work with their retirees; increasing outreach regarding UMRA as a resource to the University community.

The Board and I are especially interested in your reactions and preferences regarding the suggestions and ideas raised in these discussions. Please let us know what you think. Your input will provide an important foundation for the work of the Board in the coming year.

—Jerry Rinehart, UMRA president, 2018–19