

(Approved) UMRA Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 26, 2021 11:00 a.m.
Zoom call-in

Present: John Bantle, Frank Cerra, Bill Donohue, Vern Cardwell, Gary Engstrand, Cathy Lee Gierke, Greg Hestness, Eric Hockert, Jean Kinsey, Jan McCulloch, Jan Morlock, Kris Mortensen, Claudia Parliament, Chip Peterson, Donna Peterson, Jerry Rinehart, Gloria Williams

1. Anecdotes

No one had any.

2. Review/approval of March Board Minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. EC Draft Minutes

In response to a question from Eric, Frank clarified the language about support for volunteers: The Executive Committee was discussing support for UMRA volunteers (editors, webmasters, etc.). The discussion did not pertain to the University Volunteer Retirement Center.

4. Treasurer's Report

Greg reviewed the two financial reports he had provided to the Board, one for the month of March and one for the third quarter of the fiscal year. For March, revenues were \$880 and expenses were \$2,239 (newsletter and annual insurance premium), for a net loss of \$1,359. For the quarter, revenues totaled \$4,535 (membership and sponsorship) and expenses totaled \$4,404 (newsletter, insurance), for a net gain of \$131.

Greg reported that after both he and his predecessor, Carl Adams, had written to the IRS about changing UMRA's fiscal year, he finally received a response in March explaining how to make the change. He will see that it gets done.

The financial reports were approved unanimously.

5. Voting at Annual Meeting

Frank observed that the UMRA annual meeting is next month (May 25 at noon); they are getting the polling to work. Virgil has solved many of the problems and they will do a trial run later in the week. After the trial run proves successful, he will send an email to the membership to give them a preview of the voting that will take place at the annual meeting. Bill commented that Virgil has done a marvelous job and he urged that any message go to the membership at least 10 days before the meeting.

6. Summer Programming

Jan Morlock reported that the Program Committee is looking at one all-member event each month. June would be a traditional webinar event; they have asked John Gordon (scheduled originally for October) if he could move to June 12 (*now confirmed for Tuesday, June 8, 9:00 a.m.*). July would use the meeting format to stimulate more interaction, with a brief presentation followed by breakout rooms; the topic would be companion animal/human interaction. If that cannot work out, they have other options. (*Now confirmed is a workshop and wine tasting, Tuesday, July 20, 4:30 p.m.*) August would be an in-person, outdoor, sheltered event, primarily social (with a trivia event), and they are looking at the Como Pavilion. (*The summer social is now confirmed for Tuesday, August 17, 11:30 a.m. at the Como Lakeside Pavilion.*) Current MDH guidelines call for 50 or fewer at an outdoor event; that could change by August.

The plan is for a survey of members in July to measure their comfort level about UMRA members getting together; Ron Matross will lead that effort.

Gary said that the Campus Club is now allowed to have up to 100 people at an indoor event, which seems at variance with a limit of 50 at an outdoor event. Bill responded that the 50-person limit is what he learned 3-4 weeks ago and it may be that the guideline has changed.

On the topic of companion animals, Jan McCulloch related that she recently had to put down her dog and learned that there are home veterinary services to put an animal down; she suggested information about those services be made available.

Bill asked if UMRA should allow those who are not vaccinated attend an August event. Frank responded that UMRA can suggest they not attend, and can say it prefers that they not do so, but it cannot ask if people have been vaccinated. There is a national argument about whether vaccination status is HIPPA-protected. Bill said UMRA could prohibit them from coming; Frank agreed but said UMRA cannot ask. Chip said the prohibition should be self-enforcing.

Donna offered her personal opinion that people may do things in August that they would not do in April. She will go places where there is social distancing but

would not go to an event with 50-100 people, and if the UMRA event is primarily social, she would not attend. UMRA should strongly urge people not to attend if they have not been vaccinated.

Jan Morlock said it is clear that there are contingencies but they will need to reserve the venue if they want it in August. She said she would like the Board's permission to spend money to make a reservation but she does not know how much would be required. She knows that they would be required to pay for food and an additional \$100 for extra staffing. Frank suggested that Jan find out what she needs to do, pick a date, and the Executive Committee could approve action at its next meeting (or by email if necessary).

7. UMRA Response to Campus Club

Frank reported that the Campus Club materials had been sent and that Ann Holt had advised that UMRA need not have representatives to attend the Club board meeting. She plans to bring all the responses they have received to a committee she will establish to make recommendations to the Club board. Frank was asked to serve on the committee and he agreed to do so.

Bill asked if there is any possibility the University will continue its subsidy. Frank said he knows only that the subsidy will go to the end of the current fiscal year. Ann reports that the Club is making a very strong case, and someone must pay for the 4th floor of Coffman Union (the location of the Club) and the funding needs to come from inside the University. Ann is optimistic, Frank said; he thinks the chances are 50/50.

8. Committee Reports

8a. Program: Jan reported earlier.

8b. Workshops: Ron was unable to attend the meeting.

8c. PDGR: John (Bantle) reported that they added two new committee members, one each from Duluth and Morris. John Adams has resigned and also suggested term limits.

The PDGR Committee discussed mentorship and allowing someone to apply for a larger grant if it included mentoring students.

The crowdfunding raised about \$6,100, and that amount has not changed in some time, so they need to look elsewhere for funds. They thought about seeking support from corporations but decided against doing so without Board and University approval.

Frank said that he also received an email from John Adams about creating a committee on committees to help find committee members and considering term limits; he will put them on the agenda for the Executive Committee and the Board in May.

As for going to the private sector for financial support, Frank said he worries about that and that UMRA certainly should not do so without the University's knowledge. Chip said the University would not let UMRA do so. Kris agreed that the University orchestrates fund-raising but pointed out that UMRA has friends in the University of Minnesota Foundation who could advise UMRA. Bill said he believed that UMRA should explore how to engage in fundraising and pointed out that UMRA is separate from the University; UMRA does not want to offend the University—but it has cut UMRA's funding for grants. Claudia observed that as long as "University of Minnesota" is in the name, UMRA will be seen as connected to the University. Bill responded that he would not want UMRA to mess around with the University's sources, but UMRA is separate and can do what it wishes; he agreed with Kris about seeking Foundation advice.

Jean asked whether the University is also no longer *administering* the PDGR grants, in addition to not funding them. John said the University did administer the grants this year and he has not heard that it will stop doing so. The PDGR Committee hopes to recover the institutional funding and does not want to go out fund-raising and upset the University. Jean responded that UMRA is indeed a separate organization—but if the University is administering the grants, then UMRA is part of the University. "Good luck with Target," she commented.

Jerry pointed out that *the Provost's office* pulled out of funding, not the Foundation. The latter relationship is still in place and it is a good approach to work with it to try to build funds.

Donna said that foundations have become much more focused in terms of what they will give money for; if UMRA asks for funding, it must be focused on who it asks. If a foundation focuses on seniors and retirees, UMRA would probably not be competing with the University. Jerry said he has asked the Foundation for a list of the names of such organizations and they found that UMRA doesn't qualify for their grants. Nonetheless the Foundation is the best answer for UMRA.

Frank said the question being asked is if UMRA can ask for general funds to support research or does it have to ask for funds for specific research. In his experience, foundations do not give money to disperse for research. He agreed that UMRA should consult with the Foundation and observed that if UMRA managed to generate a revenue stream, the chances of receiving money from the Provost in the future would be zero. So talk to the Provost about the long term, John asked? Absolutely, Frank said.

John said he would have a proposal for review at the next Board meeting. It's written; once the Committee reviews it, he will send it to Frank.

Kris commented that the crowdfunding campaign had a mixed response, but "you have to ask more than once." The annual meeting is coming; members could be asked to consider a gift to the PDGR funds. If members contributed, that would also provide ammunition for seeking more funds because UMRA could say that x% of its members are contributing.

There could also be a tie to JOIE, Jerry suggested, to help raise the image of research, especially if people who receive PDGR grants also write something for JOIE.

John suggested including a link to contribute to the PDGR fund in every newsletter.

Jan McCulloch returned to the subject of mentorship and suggested a mentorship for editorship. Many young scholars and students have no idea how editorship works. Frank said that could be a suggestion to the new JOIE editor. Jan raises the issue of how to write articles for journals—the other side of the coin.

8d. Communications and Outreach: Jean reported that she is trying to set up a Committee meeting, likely to happen in mid-May. One main item on the agenda will be development of recommendations and policy on financial support to UMRA member volunteers (webmaster, editorships, Zoom managers). UMRA pays some expenses but typically volunteers are volunteers. She said she hopes to have a proposal for the May Board meeting.

8e. Social Activity and Travel: Cherie was unable to attend the meeting.

8f. Membership: John Anderson was unable to attend the meeting.

8g. BOR Liaison: Jerry said the Board of Regents will meet in May. He commented that he has been writing elaborate notes of the meetings but at the same time BRIEF is providing extended summaries, which may be enough. Frank suggested Jerry write telescoped reports and refer readers to BRIEF for more detail.

8h. URVC: Eric reported that there has been a change in the project manager, with Deanne Magnuson now in the position. Her role is to identify new volunteer projects, especially inside the University. They welcome suggestions for new projects, and if Board members have any, they should let him or Deanne know.

In terms of the question of mentorships, Jonathan Ravdin and Deanne Magnusson have put together a retired faculty mentorship program. Cathy initiated it and it is now coming to fruition. He thanked Cathy for her contribution.

The University's system-wide strategic plan calls for paying more attention to research for undergraduates. The mentorship program is in cooperation with the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). The problem has been that undergraduates can't identify faculty members with whom they could do research; this mentorship program provides an opportunity for retired faculty to help address this need.

John noted that this program is separate from PGDR but is complementary.

8i. Organizational Continuity: Chip said he simply wished to underscore the message about preparing documents. He has noticed that many documents do not conform to the policy on documents format. It is not a rigid policy but they want to be sure that every document has a date and context. The question one can ask is "would this document make sense if found on your desk years from now?"

Jerry reported that he, Chip, and Cathy are formatting policies on the web and a number of them are in different formats. The UMRA Secretary is to identify policy documents in meetings that are to be put in policy format. He encouraged Board members to look at the policies. Chip added that there are many documents that are not policy that they will look at later to decide if they are guidelines on how UMRA does things.

Gloria suggested including the fiscal year even if a document has a date.

Frank thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting at noon.

-- Gary Engstrand