

UMRA Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)
Monday, February 27, 2023
1:00 p.m.
Approved Minutes

In attendance (virtual): Board members: Frank Cerra, Will Craig, Kristy Frost-Griep, Cherie Hamilton, Eric Hockert, Laurie Koch, Russell Luepker, Kate Maple, Ron Matross, Jan McCulloch, Jan Morlock, Jerry Rinehart, Julie Sweitzer, Cathrine Wambach, Diane Young
Visitor: Kris Mortensen

Ron Matross opened the meeting just after 1:00 p.m. Kate moved and Jan McCulloch seconded approval of the January board minutes, with a unanimous vote in favor.

Bylaws Revision: Jerry presented the changes proposed for the bylaws to ensure effective integration with URVC. There are six critical changes:

1. Article III on Membership makes URVC council members eligible for UMRA.
2. Article IV adds the URVC chair as an officer.
3. Article IV says the UMRA treasurer will receive financial reports from URVC.
4. Article V increases the total board membership to 21 to include the URVC chair.
5. Article X expands nominating committee membership to 8.
6. Article X includes URVC chair on nominating committee.

Jerry thanked those who worked on the changes, including Will Craig, Bill Donohue, Deanne Magnuson, Erick Hockert, Andy Phalen, and Cathy Lee Gierke. Frank moved approval to present the revisions to the full membership at the May meeting, Jan McCulloch seconded, and all voted in favor. Frank questioned whether the departure of the VP for U Relations would affect the URVC funding. Jerry said he already has a meeting planned with Ann Aronson (chief marketing officer, University Relations) and another leader.

Finances: Kristy presented the financial report, noting that winter has been quiet. UMRA received \$920 in dues in January, and an additional \$500 in February (after this report), bringing the total to approximately \$13,000, still short of the budgeted \$15,000. Jan Morlock moved to accept the report and Will seconded, with a unanimous vote in favor.

Ron reported that Lynn Anderson had asked for a contribution of \$300 to the Age-Friendly University Day. UMRA participated last year with a vendor table but was not asked to contribute. The Executive Committee expressed consensus that UMRA should contribute for the good of the initiative. Cathrine thought it was good politics, Jan McCulloch thought it was good exposure, and others nodded in support. Russell recommended having membership signup, and Kate recommended a QR code so visitors could link to the UMRA website easily. Ron agreed.

Regents Update: Cathrine reported that over the last six months she perceived several themes including undergraduate degree progress, tuition costs (including significant actions to reduce actual costs for low- and middle-income families), campus safety committee reports, and

concerns over low enrollment at the coordinate campuses (less so Duluth.) Demographers report that the number of high school graduates is going down, and there is tough competition for students. Another topic is medical education and how to pay for it. The U has been buying up land for a new hospital, but the proposed Sanford merger brought the building proposal forward earlier than anticipated, in a possible conflict with bonding for the planned renovation of Fraser Hall for a chemistry building. Cathrine's final item was that the Joint Legislative committee reviews the candidates for Regents on Tuesday. She suggested members send emails to their legislators in support of favored candidates. Ron reported that Bill Donohue drafted a letter to membership about the Regent selection process and Ron will send it out soon.

Laurie asked if the undergrad enrollment is severe, and Cathrine said it was (except Duluth.) There are efforts to market the U as a whole, but it is hard to get out information on the true costs to families (the U is competitive with state university tuition.) She noted that the U takes in more transfer students than most colleges, and there are multiple efforts to improve their graduation rates. Jan McCulloch asked if the enrollment challenges are unique to Minnesota. Cathrine said all colleges are struggling, including private colleges, except flagship research institutions. Ron said the upcoming presentation on enrollment [April 18 UMRA workshop with Keri Risic, UMN director of undergraduate admissions] was timely, and MN loses students to the Dakotas but doesn't get many back. Tuition reciprocity with Wisconsin remains a challenge.

Day of Service: Will reminded members we have a signed partnership agreement with the UM Alumni Association, and last year UMRA recruited volunteers for Alumni Association Day of Service events (the 'day' is actually a month of events.) This year UMRA is going to promote one or two opportunities which URVC is developing. Jerry reviewed two possibilities which would allow UMRA members to work together in providing service. The first option is on April 1, when newly admitted students will be invited to campus and UMRA members could help with directions and escorting students in shifts of 2 to 3 hours. A second option is called Every Meal and involves packing backpacks with food for food insecure students. The date is TBD. Everyone was supportive. The final option(s) will be communicated to members by email.

Program: Eric had two categories of items to report. First, he thanked everyone involved in putting together the February 14 Jakob Tolar webinar on short notice. He also described the March new member welcome event planned for the half hour prior to the luncheon forum at Midland Hills. He will send invitations to each new member and Jan McCulloch is arranging hosts. Second, Jan Morlock is team lead for a small group (Cathy Lee, Kate, Diane, Will and Cherie) who are planning several all UMRA events. Jan reported that the Executive Committee indicated summer was most important time due to the lack of other UMRA events. The UM Arboretum, a picnic at Como or elsewhere and another boat trip are under consideration.

Eric then asked for input on whether to hold a holiday event in December. The last one was several years ago but was popular. There have been concerns about December being a busy month and avoiding religious overtones. Laurie said December is too busy, January is good except for the weather, and perhaps November could work. Will said he loves a December

event and wanted students to perform. Jan McCulloch said she is not opposed to December but that it is important to present the event as not religiously based. Cherie proposed early November or a New Year's event in early January. Kate said she was fiercely opposed to December and likes November, perhaps near Thanksgiving. Kris agreed but fears a November event would cannibalize the in-person luncheon forum. Plenty of members are around in January and the weather can be bad in November as well. Frank noted that any December event will have religious overtones. The last December holiday event was very well attended by around 125 members. Cathrine likes advertising it as a musical event, with a cocktail party ambiance. Kate wanted to avoid the "germiest" time, and Frank said the estimates of flu and COVID waves are not out yet. Jerry supported consideration of music, especially presented by students. Diane supported Kris' concern that a November event would reduce luncheon attendance.

Campus Club: Frank reported the club is working on the 501(c)3 status but has had no success negotiating with real estate over rent. Budget projections for next year, with the reduced subsidy, show a deficit roughly the same as the subsidy. Membership is up by about 200 people, however. Ron asked if there is any news on rates for next year, and Frank said he has not heard any such discussion. Jan Morlock said she heard one person question the Midland Hills location for March, but no one else had heard concerns.

Nominating Committee: Jan reported the nominating committee will present a slate of officers and four board members. She has two formal nominations so far and asked for more. There will be a nomination for John Bantle who was elected to a one-year post with the intention of a full term to follow, but the subsequent nomination did not occur. Cathrine asked for a list of members and Kris said the website as a pdf directory list from June 2022. Frank said the previous year's nomination committee intended to nominate John again when his term was up.

Email and OIT: Ron reported that after the OIT email proposal update he received a number of appreciative comments and a handful of people who asked why he hadn't advocated on behalf of all retirees. Ron said that UMRA members are especially interested in maintaining a connection with the UMN and we don't have any data on non-members use of email, etc. Kris asked if cost is a factor for OIT? Ron said cost is **the** driver. Google changed pricing which is now based on the number of people. Jerry said UMRA is not a union that negotiates rules that then apply to all. Eric noted the OIT proposal is not set in stone. Ron agreed, although he is pleased UMRA members' continued eligibility is written into the proposal now. Laurie asked if continued Gmail accounts could be a recruiting tool. Ron said perhaps but not until it is set in stone. Eric thinks it should be a recruiting tool, along with discounted parking rates, but all agreed we wait until it is formally decided.

Ron **adjourned** the meeting at approximately 2:26 p.m.