

Position Guide: UMRA Secretary June 2023

Duties per the Operations Manual:

- Serves on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee.
- Takes minutes at all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, as well as the annual meeting of the membership in May and any additional Association meetings.
- Prepares minutes and sends them to the President for circulation to the Executive Committee and /or Board. In recent years the Secretary has sent draft minutes to those in attendance for any corrections, and the president has shared the final draft version with the next meeting's agenda materials.
- If requested, brings paper copies to Board meetings for those who do not use email.
- Posts approved minutes on UMRA website (sends them to webmaster)
- At the end of the year (usually September), submits minutes, new versions of Bylaws and Operating Manual, and other documents generated or maintained by the secretary to the chair of the Organizational Continuity Committee for inclusion in UMRA's annual submission of materials for the University Archives.
- Other responsibilities as requested by the president or Executive Committee; e.g., provides reminders for when to name the nominating committee; keeps track of terms served on the board and committees and presents the information in easy-to-read form (spreadsheet).

Activities

Term: The position is re-elected annually, so it goes essentially year-to-year and most occupants of the position will probably want to serve at least two years, if possible. The Secretary is a full member of the Executive Committee and Board, not "just" the person recording what goes on in meetings (which doesn't always happen in other organizations).

Time commitment: On average you will probably spend three or four hours a month writing up two sets of minutes: Board and Executive Committee. (In May there's a third set, for the annual Association meeting.) Attendance at meetings of both bodies consumes another four hours or so. Other tasks, including email communication, probably take another two to four hours a month. So perhaps the total workload comes to about twelve to fourteen hours per month from September through May.

Meetings: The Executive Committee usually meets on the third Monday, and the board meets on the fourth Monday. Meetings have recently been via Zoom and held at 1:00 p.m. The annual Association meeting takes place as part of the May luncheon.

Writing up and revising the minutes afterward: If possible, draft minutes within a few days after a meeting, then send them to all attendees requesting with any corrections. After incorporating

these, send the corrected version back to the President for inclusion among the attachments to the following month's emailing to the Executive Committee/Board for approval at the meeting. Further revisions (usually minor) may follow the meeting, with any approval subject to those corrections.

Getting minutes to the UMRA Website: After the Executive Committee and Board have given their final approval to each set of minutes, send the Executive Committee and Board minutes—and, in May, the Association minutes—to the webmaster for posting on the website. Note on each set “Approved.”

Covering for secretary absences: Although officers are expected to attend all Executive Committee, Board, and Annual meetings when feasible, absences because of travel, illness, or unavoidable conflicts sometimes occur. As soon as you know you will need to miss a meeting, notify the President and seek someone who can fill in for you. Among the more promising candidates might be a past Secretary.

Organizational Continuity Committee/History: Each year the committee gathers UMRA materials store in the University Archives. The chair of that committee receives those documents from the webmaster. So, by early fall the secretary is responsible for passing on the following for the year just concluding to the webmaster:

Executive Committee minutes (sent monthly)
Board minutes (sent monthly)
Association minutes (sent annually)
Updated version of this position guide (sent annually)

How To Suggestions from Prior Secretaries:

Chip Peterson: I tried taking minutes on my laptop once, but I found it the necessary cursor movement awkward (for example, going back up to record a late arrival after the meeting had begun). After that experiment I always took notes by hand. To make it easier, however, after Jean (Kinsey, that year's UMRA president) sent out the agenda I prepared a sheet in the format I would ultimately use for the minutes, estimated how much discussion there was likely to be on each item, spaced accordingly after each heading, and ran off the result to use for taking notes during the meeting. Because of all the blank space I left for each item, often the worksheet came to four or five pages. I used only one side when I printed so that would be able to turn it over and continue on the back if it turned out I had underestimated how much discussion a particular item would generate. The black print in the following example shows what that sheet looked like when I arrived for the meeting; the red print adds annotations for this guide.

Lynn Anderson: I took notes on the agenda and attachments provided for each meeting and wrote up the minutes on the computer, usually that same day. Minutes must contain “Minutes submitted by . . .” and either “Approval Pending” or “Approved.” I found it helpful early on (as I was learning everyone's names) to have a list of Board members with a check box for “attended” and circulated that during the meeting.

Julie Sweitzer: I simplified previous formatting by removing numbers from each agenda topic. I took notes by hand and tried to type them up in narrative form the next day while my memory was fresh. I would copy the last month's minutes so that the heading and formatting were already in the document, change the date and delete the content (although approving the minutes often used the same content, just different names moving approval.) I would reread them the following day and always found corrections to make. Then I sent them to attendees for review when their memories were fresh. Usually there were a few edits (remember, edits should only be corrections regarding what actually happened, not additional information someone wants to add.) Any edits usually arrived within a week, so I would make the corrections in the draft and sent it to the president. It is worth checking the agenda materials to make sure the president distributed the revised version. Once approved at the next meeting, I would change 'draft' to 'approved' in the heading and send them to the webmaster for posting.