

## University of Minnesota Retirees Association

Toolkit for Liaison to

### University of Minnesota Alumni Association

Will Craig, June 2024

#### Partnership Agreement

In August 2020 UMRA signed a partnership agreement with the University of Minnesota Alumni Association (UMAA). The agreement is good for two years but can be renewed for successive 2-year periods with the written consent both parties. The agreement was renewed in 2022. It will need to be renewed in 2024.

Two items in that agreement required regular activity by UMRA, at least annual:

- A least one UMRA newsletter per year must mention the discounted UMAA membership rate for UMRA Members.
- UMAA membership brochures and signage must be presented at one or more UMRA events per year. Materials will be provided by UMAA. (This activity has been ignored so far)

UMRA agrees to post information about UMAA on its website. We are doing that in two places. Both need to be monitored on a regular basis to be certain they exist and that links to the UMAA website continue to work.

- Discounted membership to UMAA from UMRA's [Member Benefit](#) page. Text to read:  
**University of Minnesota Alumni Association:** UMRA members may join the University of Minnesota Alumni Association at the special rate available to current U of M employees. A single annual membership is \$35 (regularly \$50) and a joint annual membership is \$45 (regularly \$60.) Membership unlocks access to rewards such as a subscription to the award-winning quarterly magazine *Minnesota Alumni*. Join at [UMNAlumni.org/join](https://UMNAlumni.org/join), selecting the U of M EMPLOYEES membership option. 612-624-2323

**Active Connections.** The UMAA Liaison has responsibility for these 3 items.

[Gold Mind](#). This is UMAA's curated open online video collection of University and expert talks on a variety of topics. Dozens of UMRA presentations are listed there to give them (and UMRA) a wider exposure. It is the liaison's job to submit our videos. See details below.

[Day of Service](#). Full month of April. The Alumni Association wants to maximize UofM visibility in the community and has some projects that can need volunteers. Individuals can choose their own projects but need to report their volunteer hours to UMAA. It is not clear who at UMRA should take charge. In 2023 URVC developed and promoted projects for UMRA and URVC participation. In addition, I sent a note to all UMRA members encouraging them register their April volunteer hours with the Alumni Association OR sign-up for one of the many projects the Alumni Association had developed for this event. In 2024 I passed the responsibility to URVC and never heard how things went.

[U of M Days](#). Various events, but typically a Twins game with a co-branded hat or jersey. I am contacted when the event is scheduled, sign up for 20 tickets, and promote to our membership. We sell most of our seats. Some years we are assigned seats together, but 2024 we were scattered across a full section. Next year I'll try to coordinate this so our group sits together.

## Other Periodic and Potential Connections

Miscellaneous UMAA opportunities. The Alumni Association encourages member participation in a variety of events throughout the year. These include things like gathering at McNamara before football games ([Ski-U-Mania](#)), attending the annual Homecoming Parade, and mentoring students through their [Maroon and Gold Network](#). UMRA generally does not advertise events sponsored by our partners. These opportunities should be passed on to our Social Activities and URVC committees periodically.

UMAA Day at UMRA meeting. We are obliged to have UMAA brochures and signage at a UMRA event, but have not yet done so because of limited in-person meetings. Worth asking UMAA to sponsor a Forum.

UMRA Article in [Minnesota Alumni Magazine](#). This award-winning magazine is widely read. Open for articles that interest alumni. My “Still Making Change” article about the impact of UMRA’s PDGR program was published in the Winter 2021 edition of the magazine.

Collegiate Alumni Representatives. Each college (and campus) has its own alumni staff (some large, some not so much); some are co-funded with the Alumni Association, some are fully paid by their college. But UMAA works to coordinate their efforts overall. The meetings are probably monthly. In September 2019, Donohue and Rinehart attended to introduce the members to UMRA. Other opportunities may arise.

**Gold Mind.** This new opportunity opened in 2020 as UMRA and others were eliminating live face-to-face presentations and moving to Zoom and other electronic presentations which were easy to record. The Alumni Association created [Gold Mind](#) as a clearinghouse for distributing such presentations from a wide range of UofM colleges and organizations. Their only rule was that the presentations be of wide interest. UMRA added the stipulation that we get permission from the presenter for that wider distribution.

Gold Mind is a *public* YouTube channel, meaning people can search and find their video programs using Google or other search tools. UMRA recordings are accessible from the UMRA website, but our own recordings are on an *unlisted* channel; people need to visit our site to find one of these presentations. To handle the transformation, the Alumni Association downloads from UMRA’s website, then reposts on their Gold Mind site. UMRA gave them permission to do so. We were worried that others might grab our presentations and edit them, so created label our collection “You may not download or repost videos without the permission of UMRA.”

UMRA’s first presentation, *Japanese American WWII Relocation Camps*, was uploaded to Gold Mind in early 2020. Through June 2021, 28 videos were reposted to Gold Mind, while 11 were not. UMRA decides which to hold back. Through mid-May, UMRA recordings on Gold Mind had been viewed by several hundred different people, with videos about health, police, and family history being the most popular. Each Gold Mind listing is labeled, “Presented by the University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA).”

I use the following process for screening and submitting UMRA presentations to Gold Mind.

1. I review presentations, looking for those with broad appeal, qualifying candidates for Gold Mind. Sometimes I seek advice of others in making this decision.

2. I seek permission from the presenters of qualified programs. Sometimes that permission has been granted earlier. If not, I seek it, typically through the UMRA person who organized the session. I save records of permissions.
3. With permission of the presenter, I [submit content to Gold Mind](#), providing them with the URL of UMRA's YouTube recording.
4. UMAA will list our videos by date, source (UMRA), and topical area. I suggest topical area(s) from this list. I have suggested that UMAA add a *Travel* topic.
  - Arts & Culture - videos with some cultural or performance arts elements
  - Career - videos with some aspects around career
  - Diversity & Inclusion - videos that have a focus around a diverse topic or group
  - Entrepreneurship – videos that discuss business issues
  - Environment - videos that focus on the climate
  - Family - videos with some family elements or topics
  - Finance - videos that talk about finances
  - Health & Wellbeing - videos with elements of health & wellbeing
  - History - videos that refer to some history
  - How To - videos that showcase how to do something
5. Need to check that submissions have been uploaded and labeled properly.

### **Key UMAA Personnel**

The following individuals have been key contacts at the Alumni Association

Neal Bhatka ([bhakt058@umn.edu](mailto:bhakt058@umn.edu)), Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement. He is my main contact for Gold Mind and all other issues.

Marissa Smith ([marissas@umn.edu](mailto:marissas@umn.edu)) Associate Vice President of Engagement. Marissa was my previous main contact and is still available to us.

Steve Davis ([davis937@umn.edu](mailto:davis937@umn.edu)) Associate Vice President of Engagement. Steve is Marissa's colleague. Contact him if Marissa is not available.

- Steve was central to developing and renewing the partnership agreement.
- Steve analyzed the UMRA/UMAA membership overlap in 2019. His findings were:
  - 34% of the UMRA members were currently UMAA members (19% were Life Members) and 66% are not members.
  - 58% of UMRA members have been involved with the Alumni Association at some point. Of those who are not current Alumni Association members, 24% had been members in the past and 42% had never been a member.
  - Only 45% of UMRA members were actual alumni of the U of M

Kristina Knutson ([knut0689@umn.edu](mailto:knut0689@umn.edu)) Director of Regional Engagement. Responsible for *UofM Days*.

Kelly O'Hara Dyer ([ohara119@umn.edu](mailto:ohara119@umn.edu)) Editor, *Minnesota Alumni Magazine*. I worked with her in publishing my 2021 "Still Making Change" article.