

UMRA Program Committee Report 2023-24

DATE: June 13, 2024

TO: Cathy Lee Gierke, OCC Co-Chair,
Julia Wallace, UMRA Archivist

FROM: Julie Sweitzer, President-elect and Program Chair 2023-24

RE: Annual Report 2023-24, Program Committee

Title and duties of the officer

Schedule, program and host all web-based and in person Forums, Workshops and special activities

Key activities/accomplishments

We are pleased to have held 6 in person luncheon Forums, 10 regular webinars (8 workshops, 2 forums), one in person meeting with Regent Mary Davenport about the presidential search, one special webinar with the four newest Regents, and 3 special activities (Como picnic and a boat cruise in the summer, January 'welcome the light' midafternoon event at Midlands.) Speakers and additional info on the attached doc (downloaded schedule). The attendance increased considerably over the year. Fall forums averaged around 90 registrants, and winter and spring were around 120, up to 139, both in person and online. A couple of workshops were noticeably lower, with topics on children's mental health and one by recipients' of UMRA's professional development grants. Members seem to respond to workshops on health topics related to their lives and to entertaining speakers or timely topics for Forums.

This was the first year at Midland Hills Country Club and it was very well received. A few members with mobility limitations were able to attend, and many guests appreciated being able to drop off at the building entry. We held the May annual meeting at Campus Club. It had an in person record registration of 139 (speaker was Mark Seeley, a repeat favorite) and the food was very good. Unfortunately the prices they have quoted for fall 2024 would require a charge of over \$60 assuming attendance of at least 100 people (more if the number was under 100.).

Policy changes related to your position/activities over the year. Why?

No actual policy changes. We did see increasing costs for luncheons and raised the member fee to \$32 for fall 2024. This may be too little. The ongoing question is how much to subsidize the luncheons, if at all. If prices go up more, some have suggested considering breakfasts or other formats. Previous explorations suggest it is not much cheaper if you serve beverages and any light food so we may need to adjust member expectations.

Challenges/problems faced/solved? Innovations?

The Host Team was in its second year and operated smoothly with each member having designated responsibilities. The new location was an innovation (see above) but not a

challenge. Many members appreciated being dropped off at the door rather than trekking through Coffman Union.

Procedural or operational changes made over the year and/or suggestions for change in these areas.

The biggest change is in place for fall 2024. Virgil Larson has run the webinars (10 or more per year) as well as tech support for in person Forums (with Cathy Lee Gierke.) This year he said he wanted to stop doing the webinars, which was understandable given the time commitment every month. John Anderson has been backup and ably replaced Virgil for the May webinar, but he is not as knowledgeable and did not want to take over. We spent significant effort asking people with related skills, writing articles and making announcements asking for volunteers. None stepped forward. I checked with OLLI and URVC about using students, and there are daytime availability issues as well as (sometimes) uneven quality. I then checked with OIT (Eric started with Bernie Gulachek) who were very responsive. Chris Wilson of OIT met with Julie, Virgil and Kris Mortenson (producer of webinars, another role that needs replacing). We were satisfied they can do the work. The cost will be \$156 per 90 minutes for webinar (with 15-25 minutes of prep and 5 to 15 minutes of debrief), and \$206 for the first session because of setup costs.

What could UMRA be doing that would help you?

Frequent communications appear to be the most important in getting registrations, and Kris and team do a great job on that.

Suggestions for what you and/or your organization could do that would help UMRA move forward?

First, a followup on recommendations from the 2022-23 Annual Report:

1. Create a program of speakers that provides a balance of topics that are of broad interest to our members and that will attract greater attendance.
 - a. Ongoing goal
2. Continue to support the Special Social Events efforts for next summer and identify a lead person.
 - a. Jan Morlock has served as lead.
3. Decide on whether to hold a holiday event and the timing - December or January.
 - a. Held a winter “welcome the light” event in January 2024 at Midland Hills.
4. Identify a new Producer for online events.
 - a. Still need a new producer to replace Kris Mortenson, but we did identify a new tech lead in UM’s webinar support division.
5. Decide venues for in-person events beyond this coming year - Campus Club, Midland Hills, other.

- a. Midland Hills remains the first choice. In addition to the reasons for the initial move (access and parking) the cost for Campus Club in 2024 will be around \$60 per person.
6. Decide venue for May 2024 Annual meeting – Campus Club, Midland Hills.
 - a. The May 2024 annual meeting was held at Campus Club. The food was very good and there was some appreciation of the familiar location, but the future costs are too high.

This Committee runs the core functions of UMRA so it is critical to UMRA's future. Program choices are probably the most critical element to attracting registrants and hopefully engaging volunteers. The Host Team had to replace many of its members for 2024-25, starting with Diane Young moving to Program Chair, but has done so by targeted asks. We still need to replace Kris as producer for webinars (another one of our overtaxed volunteers), but it is possible we could reduce the duties of that role now that we have new tech support and perhaps that will make it easier to find a volunteer. Jan Morlock has agreed to continue to lead the Special Events subcommittee.

Program Committee Members 2023-24:

Name

Dale Blyth
Bradley Clary
Bill Donohue
Cherie Hamilton
Eric Hockert (President FY24)
Mary Jo Kane
Wendy Lougee
Ron Matross (Past President-FY23)
Jan Morlock (Past President-FY22)
Paul Schanfield
Barb Shiels
Julie Sweitzer

Host Team

Diane Gihl
Char Greenwald
Nancy Helmich
B. Jan McCulloch
Diane Young (Leader)

Production Team

John Anderson
Cathy Lee Gierke
Virgil Larson (webinar technical host)

Kris Mortenson (Producer)

Web Q and A Moderators

Mary Jo Kane

Mary Koppel

Wendy Lougee

Jeanne Markell

Julie Sweitzer

Special Activities Committee:

Will Craig

Kristy Frost-Griep

Cathy Lee Gierke

Cherie Hamilton

Kate Maple

Jan McCullough

Jan Morlock (leader)

Diane Young

Month	Event	Date	Speaker, Title, Affiliation	Topic	Arranged by:	Program Host/ Introducer	Confirmed for the date?	Newsletter announcement and follow up article: by	Moderator's name for Q&A	Contact Info	Notes	Registered
August 2023	River cruise	8/29/23	Mississippi River Cruise Paradise Cruises		Jan Morlock		Yes		Not needed		Jan Morlock is leading the planning team (5/5/23)	Filled studio
September 2023	Workshop Zoom	9/19/2023 11am	Meredith E. Adams, MD MS Associate Professor Chief, Division of Otology & Neurotology Department of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery	Hearing and Aging and Over-The Counter Hearing Aids	Frank Cerra	Frank Cerra with Eric Hockert as backup	Yes (9/6/22)		Mary Koppel	Dr. Meredith Adams <meadams@umn.edu> Teri Wolner <wolne006@umn.edu> (admin)	A previous topic a few years ago. Recent news on OTC hearing aids may make this quite relevant. Originally listed Liz Anderson as candidate speaker Center for Applied and Translational Sensory Science (CATSS) in CLA. Frank Cerra confirmed Dr. Adams (9/6/22)	120?
September 2023	Forum In-person	9/26/23	Jill Hasday Professor, Distinguished McKnight University Professor	Major Supreme Court Decisions of the Last Year: reproductive health, university affirmative action, student loan forgiveness, Christian web designer and LGBTQ discrimination, among others	Barbara Shiels	Barbara Shiels	Yes (11/18/22)		Not needed		The Supreme Court decision reversing Roe v Wade is the seminal decision of the Court's last term and is of great interest nationally. I recently watched a webinar where Professor Hasday was one of the speakers and I found her to be very engaging. She is widely recognized for her scholarship, has won teaching awards and is the editor in chief of the Law School's Constitutional Commentary journal. Potential alternate is former head of Planned Parenthood - Frank to send name to Barbara. Eric sent email to	95
	Special Webinar	Oct 4	New Regents	Introduce and new issues	Julie	Julie	yes		Julie Sweitzer			

October 2023	Workshop Zoom	10/19/2023 11am THURSDAY	Katie Kolodge Health & Wellness Consultant Office of Human Resources	UMN Health Insurance Update	Ron Matross	Ron Matross			Julie Sweitzer	kolodge@umn.edu	May require more than one hour. What's New in Retiree Health Insurance This has been a traditional subject for an October workshop.	126 participants
October	Special Session in person	Friday Oct 20	Regents Mayeron and Davenport	Leadership and Presidential Search	Julie	Julie	yes		Julie Sweitzer			18 regsted, 10 attend
October 2023	Forum In-person	10/24/2023	Lisa Van Drasek, University Librarian, and Kimberly Edson, Head of Reader Services for the Rochester Public Library, member, Minnesota Library Association Committee on Intellectual Freedom	The Alarming Trend in the U.S. to Ban Books	Barbara Shiels	Barbara Shiels	Yes (5/5/23)		Not needed		Barbara Shiels will find speaker for October 2023 Forum (4/3/23) Wendy Lougee confirmed to Barbara that Lisa and Maggie are willing to speak at the October 24, 2023 Forum(4/7/23) Barbara Shiels sent reminder note to Lisa and Maggie (5/5/23) Lisa and Maggie reconfirmed to Barbara, yes (5/5/23)	92
November 2023	Workshop Zoom	11/21/23	John Bantle, UMRA PDGR chair will recruit 3 grant recipients	Keeping Active in Retirement: Professional Development Research Grants		John Bantle	yes		Mary Koppel		Presenters available. We need programming on how to deal with caretaking, choosing assisted living places and similar issues. - Ron Matross Senior housing, outstate, Twin Cities, Elder Voices rolling out an app	30 or 40??
Summer event 1	Como Picnic	June 17	Como Pavilion									
Summer	Cruise	August 27	Jonathan Paddleford on Harriet Island, St.									
September	Workshop	Sept 17	Dr. Jon Halberg, Mill City Clinic	Art and Medicine	Ron		yes		Julie will host	through Ron		
September	Forum	18-Sep	Mark Bohnhorst	Presidential Turmoil: the	Julie		yes			markb913@h		
October 2024	Workshop	Oct 15	UMN HR usually Katie Kollodge	Health Insurance Update		Eric will host						
October 2024	Forum	Oct 16	new president?		Julie requested	Julie host						
November	Workshop	Nov 12	Robyn Birkeland, study interventionist and	The Importance of Social	Dale Blyth	Julie Host, Dale			Julie will host			

November	Forum	Nov 19	Kathryn Pearson, UMN Political Science	2024 election results	Julie	Julie host	yes					Will not be there for	
December	Holiday												
Alternatives and Backups													These are backups in
At-a-moments-notice speakers													We should identify
	Forum		UMRA Program Committee members?		Eric Hockert	Eric Hockert							
	Workshop		UMRA Program Committee members?		Eric Hockert	Eric Hockert							

- NOTES**
- Kathryn Pearson (Political Science) - invite in even numbered years for November after each election.
 - Katie Kolodge (HR) - invite every year for October review of health care plan updates.
 - But it also sparked recollection of a comment made to me some months ago by a long-time UMRA member who lamented the disappearance (from the list of upcoming forums) of speakers who draw attendance because of their ability to entertain and/or inspire, i.e. fun forums.
I think the menu of forums through November 2023 is excellent. In 2024-25, I hope the mix can be spiced with a few programs like these we've had in the past. - Kris
- 2017/01 Climatologist Mark Seeley
 - 2017/05 Julie Schumacher, author, Dear Committee Members
 - 2017/11 Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Steve Sack
 - 2018/09 Bill Doherty, "Bridging the Red-Blue Divide"
 - 2019/01 PBS NewsHour special correspondent Fred de Sam Lazaro