

DATE: July 6, 2024
TO: Organizational Continuity Committee Chair (OCC)
FROM: Jerry Rinehart, Chair URVC Leadership Council
RE: FY24 URVC Annual Report to UMRA

URVC Mission:

“The mission of the URVC is to connect volunteers with service opportunities within the University of Minnesota and surrounding community in fulfillment of the URVC’s core value, which is that volunteering is both a source of personal reward and a way of addressing the needs of others.” (URVC Bylaws)

Specifically, URVC seeks to:

- Provide opportunities for service that are rewarding to University volunteers
- Gather, assess, and deliver relevant information about opportunities for volunteer service within the University and the Twin Cities communities at large
- Act as a referral service to University units and community agencies seeking volunteers

Charge: The URVC Leadership Council provides overall direction and guidance for the Center and the volunteer staff who facilitate URVC’s efforts to meet its mission.

Officers

Chair: Jerry Rinehart
Vice Chair and Project Director: Deanne Magnusson
Secretary: Leslie Koidahl
Julie Sweitzer, UMRA President-Elect

Members:

Andrew Phelan
David Hunter MD
Michelle Trudeau-Spanjers
Terry Smith

Activities:

As required in the bylaws, the Leadership Council met every other month (eight times, September through July) via Zoom, with more than the required quorum (i.e. five or more of nine total) at each session. This year the URVC Leadership Council continued to assist in developing meaningful volunteer opportunities, reviewing volunteer project participation and outcomes, and assessing the effectiveness of URVC registration processes and database management. The Chair and Vice Chair met three times with our U Relations officer to discuss

URVC three-year goals, budget challenges, and impacts of potential restructuring within the U Relations office in connection with the new UM leadership.

Nominations and elections were conducted in May 2024, resulting two new members, Jeanne Jacobson and Lynn Slifer to serve three-year terms, and re-election of David Hunter and Jerry Rinehart to three-year terms. URVC Leadership Council now has nine members, consistent with its bylaws which require seven to nine members. This total includes the UMRA President-Elect, Diane Young, as stated in the bylaws.

Focus of activities and key outcomes/accomplishments this year:

The primary activity of the URVC is identifying and developing meaningful volunteer opportunities for retirees from the UM and in the greater community. This past year URVC facilitated the participation of 160 retirees in 72 projects (40 on campus and 32 in the broader community.) These efforts contributed 7476 hours of volunteer service to the University and surrounding community, with an estimated value of \$ 271,453 (based on nationally accepted valuation of volunteer service hours).

Seven of the 40 on campus projects were the outcome of the newly initiated Silver Gopher Service Core. These included work with the Admissions Office's "Sneak Preview" programs, and with the Orientation and Transfer Student Experience Office's "Welcome Week" and Convocation activities. In partnership with UMRA, URVC purchased and sold Silver Gopher Service Corps T Shirts to 45 participants in these activities. Income from the number of shirts slightly exceeded the cost of the shirts.

Challenges or problems faced/solved? Innovations?

Challenges:

We face an impending budget deficit due to increased engagement of Student Workers to assist in essential communications and marketing activities. Discussions with University Relations leadership have resulted in an increase in our annual allocation to cover FY 25, but a long-term solution has not been identified. "In kind" contributions for U Relations are being considered. We met twice with UM Foundation representative (Bob Burgett) to explore establishing a UMF account, perhaps through the University Relations department, to allow URVC to accept donations. With Burgett's retirement this summer, this idea will need to be further explored following UMF's potential restructuring.

Succession planning in every position is critical to ensure URVC maintains stable and effective. Backups in project development, communications, database management, and Council leadership must be developed.

Innovations:

The Post Doctoral Mentorship program was launched in partnership with the Asst. Vice Provost, Office of Graduate Student and Post-Doctoral initiatives. Eight post-doctoral students were matched with volunteers able to assist them in areas such as writing research funding proposals, English technical writing, professional presentations and career/job search strategies.

The *Silver Gopher Service Corps* has gained traction among UMRA members as evidenced by the strong response to postings of volunteer opportunities for UMRA members to work as a team/group on projects serving the U and the broader community. Projects of special interest have included:

- Assisting UM Admissions and Student Experience staff with recruitment and retention events;
- Partnering with Great River Greening on environment and habit restoration;
- And joining the “Every Meal” program in preparing weekend food packages for underserved youth

Suggestions for future chairs/leaders:

Establishing connections with new University administration leaders (e.g. in Community and Government Relations, in the Offices of the President and the Provost) will continue to be important to raising URVC’s visibility within the U. An important component of these efforts could be to establish contacts/liaisons with deans’ offices in collegiate units.

What could UMRA leadership do to enhance your committee’s work?

Continue to include/engage URVC leadership in conversations with Central Administration, OIT, UMF etc. Most importantly, be “champions” for the service mission of UMRA—helping identify service opportunities across the UM and encouraging membership participation.

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

Our development of volunteer opportunities within UM academic, health sciences, and service units raises UMRA’s visibility across the University. Identifying additional projects across the campus will further UMRA’s visibility and recognition as an important contributor to the Twin Cities campus success.

