



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA RETIREES ASSOCIATION

April 30, 2025

President

Julie Sweitzer
jsweitzer@comcast.net
952-938-4634

Dear President Cunningham and Provost Croson,

President-Elect

Diane Young
youngdianec@gmail.com
651-645-4590

The Board of Directors of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association feels it is imperative to express our support for the University's administration as it confronts the legal, ethical, and moral challenges created by the current federal leadership.

Past President

Eric Hockert
ehockert@umn.edu
651-528-8099

We applaud the University's continued efforts to achieve a student body, faculty and administration that reflect the social, economic, and racial make-up of our region.

Secretary

Laurie Coffin Koch
koch@umn.edu
612-281-8098

We strongly support the joint pursuit with other higher education institutions of legal means to protect research funding.

Treasurer

Kristy Frost-Griep
frost016@umn.edu
651-262-8670

We understand the difficulty of maintaining free speech standards on campus when language is now so carefully policed by federal agencies.

URVC Council Chair

Jerry Rinehart
g-rine@umn.edu
612-802-5627

At the same time, we recognize the above statements of support should not be necessary.

Our democracy is under attack. Institutions created to ensure a strong economy, a healthy population and environment, and vibrant political and social structures, are being challenged in ways not seen in modern history.

Board of Directors

John Bantle
Bradley G. Clary
Will Craig
Diane Gihl
Michael Hancher
Wendy Pradt Lougee
Russell Luepker
Kate Maple
Ron Matross
B. Jan McCulloch
Jan Morlock
Peggy Mann Rinehart
Barbara Shields

These are not normal times. The traditional ways of responding to institutional challenges will not work. While some may feel the Rutgers Resolution to Establish a Mutual Defense Compact goes too far or is not feasible, we think the University of Minnesota must respond with a strong signal of solidarity. There must be a powerful pooling of voices to preserve the principles of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and mission integrity upon which American education is based.

We applaud President Cunningham's March 25 blog post "[We Are Stronger As a Collective](#)" and wholeheartedly agree with the proverb she referenced: "Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable." In that spirit we urge you to join in the leadership required to protect the schools and country we love.

As retirees from all segments of the University of Minnesota, we have spent our lifetimes developing strategies to insure lively, accessible, unfettered and honest debate. We have supported and conducted essential research that has allowed us to battle many of society's ills. We have developed and protected our country's governmental, academic, artistic, medical, journalistic and political institutions. We cannot stand by as spectators while our collective contributions to this great University are threatened with erasure and the institution's future strength is seriously jeopardized.

Sincerely,

Members of the UMRA board:

Julie Sweitzer

Diane Young

Eric Hockert

Laurie Coffin Koch

Kristy Frost-Griep

Jerry Rinehart

John Bantle

Bradley Clary

Will Craig

Diane Gihl

Michael Hancher

Wendy Pradt Lougee

Russel Luepker

Kate Maple

Ron Matross

B. Jan McCulloch

Jan Morlock

Peggy Mann Rinehart

Barbara Shiels