

Annual Report 2025: Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) Program

Prepared by John Bantle, PDGR Committee Chairman

Charge of the Committee: to solicit, review and fund applications for PDGR awards.

Committee members: John Bantle (Chair, Minneapolis Campus), Jan Hogan-Schiltgen (Minneapolis Campus), Barb Nemecek (Minneapolis Campus), Pieranna Garavaso (Morris Campus), Nancy Carpenter (Morris Campus), Paul Ranelli (Duluth Campus), Kate Maple (Minneapolis Campus), Michael Potegal (Minneapolis Campus) and Will Craig (Minneapolis Campus).

Activities: the Committee meets each February to review the submitted applications and select those to be funded. Ad hoc meetings are sometimes scheduled to discuss ways of encouraging new applications, methods for raising funds and other issues.

Focus of activities: For the 2025 grant year, the PDGR Committee reviewed four applications and recommended that all four be funded. Awards ranging from \$1,599 to \$5,000. None of the awardees was a first time applicant and all were from the Twin Cities Campus. A list of awardees and brief summaries of their projects are listed below. More information can be obtained from the [2025 PDGR Abstracts Page](#).

1. Katherine Fennelly, PhD; Emeritus Professor of Public Policy, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, *The Erasure of Women Artists in the Hungarian Holocaust* (\$5,000).
Professor Fennelly proposed to conduct a literature review pertaining to the lost art of Hungarian Jewish women, report on the "erasure" of female Hungarian artists, and write a case study of her great aunt, Boriska Noti Kalnay.
2. Wayne Potratz, Emeritus Professor, Art Department, *Support for Participation in Two National Art Conferences* (\$1,599).
Professor Potratz received funding to travel to and make a presentation at the National Conference on Contemporary Cast Iron Art and Practice, Sloss Furnaces, National Historic Landmark, Birmingham, AL, April 2-5, 2025
3. Mark Bohnhorst, J.D.; Senior Associate General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel; *More New Thinking about Presidential Elections* (\$5,000).
Mr. Bohnhorst's received a second award to support his program of research and publication concerning election systems and the rebuilding of American democracy and the rule of law. Some of the funds will be used to travel to Denver to attend a symposium at the University of Denver.
4. Madelon Sprengnether, PhD; Regents Professor Emeritus, department of English, College of Liberal Arts; *Ventriloquizing Shakespeare in Poetry and Life* (\$1,746).
5. Professor Sprengnether received funding to travel to Boston and make a presentation at a seminar on "Shakespeare's Other Selves: Cultivating the Creative Life".

Challenges: The Committee has identified two major issues as follows: 1) attracting applications from new retirees and 2) raising funds. To attract applicants, a decision was made to increase the maximum amount which can be awarded to an applicant to \$7,500. It was also decided to limit awards to three for any individual.

Suggestion for future chair: Nancy Carpenter, Morris Campus.

What could UMRA leadership do to enhance the PDGR Committee's work?: The PDGR Committee could use help making contact with new retirees and with fund raising.