

Age-Friendly University
(AFU)
Annual Report
July 2024-June 2025 (FY25)

Executive Summary

The AFU Council includes representatives from UMN groups with activities related to aging and serves as a coordinating group. UMRA has a position on this Council and participates in one of their key programs – the Age Friendly University Day held in June each year. The Council has been a good friend to UMRA and supported UMRA’s efforts in early 2024 to modify the U’s decision to terminate UMN emails for non-emeriti UMRA members.

Recommendations

1. UMRA continue to provide a representative to the AFU Council. Eric Hockert is currently serving in this role.
2. UMRA continue to participate in the AFU Day (June 2026) in coordination with the UMRA Membership and Communications Committee.
3. UMRA leadership consider additional ways to engage with the Council in areas of mutual benefit related to an aging population of UMN retirees.
4. Identify if there are opportunities to provide volunteer services to the AFU Council member departments. The UMRA AFU representative (currently Eric Hockert) to connect with URVC and the Council leadership (Rajean Moone) to continue a dialogue.
5. Continue to maintain a description of the AFU Council on the UMRA.umn.edu/partners webpage (Attachment A).
6. Make use of Eric Hockert’s remarks (Attachment E) for other UMRA overview purposes.

Background

The University of Minnesota was admitted to the international Age-Friendly University (AFU) consortium in September 2020. See the Ten Principles (Attachment B) and letter (Attachment C) signed by the UMN President agreeing to support these principles. UMRA asked Lynn

Eric Hockert
AFU Representative from UMRA FY25
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Anderson to serve as the UMRA representative to the U of M's AFU planning committee in May 2020. When the U was admitted to AFU our group became a Council.

The Council meets about 6 times a year. In our meetings we have gotten to know each other and our units and all of the contributions that we are making toward helping the U expand its ability to be an even better AFU and reach more people. We are sharing relevant information about our units with each other's members. See attachment D (Rolling Meeting Notes). There has been some preliminary consultation with the UMC, UMD, UMM, and UMR campuses but we do not yet have members from those campuses on our Council.

The AFU Council has planned and held an Age Friendly University Day on the third Monday in June since 2022. Lynn Anderson was involved in the planning of each AFU day through June 2024 and UMRA was engaged, supportive, and many UMRA members participated. UMRA had a booth at each AFU Day. The day has included a breakfast and lunch, a presentation by the Vice President, a presentation by a member of the AFU Council, presentations from local (and national) age-friendly organizations, tabling by all of our Council organizations and a few more (for instance AARP), and workshops. Ron Matross (UMRA, Membership and Communications Committee, Chair) coordinated UMRA's involvement this year (June 2025) with additional participation by Diane Young (UMRA President for FY26), Julie Sweitzer (UMRA President for FY25), Kris Mortensen (UMRA news editor), and Eric Hockert (UMRA past president for FY24). Eric also filled in for Governor Walz's wife who could not attend to give welcoming remarks. Eric gave a brief (5-minute) overview of UMRA (Attachment E) at the request of Rajeane Moone (main lead for AFU Day from the Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation (CHAI) in the UMN School of Public Health).

Eric Hockert

UMRA Representative to the AFU Council (FY25)

Eric Hockert
AFU Representative from UMRA FY25
7/27/25

Attachment A

From umra.umn.edu/partners > Age-Friendly University 12/10/2024

In September 2020, the University became the first institution of higher education in Minnesota to enroll in the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities. Being an active part of the University's new [Age-Friendly University initiative](#) underscores UMRA's commitment to older adults, retirees, and lifelong learners.

As we age and move into retirement, we carry with us lifetimes of experience in innovation, creativity, and leadership. At the University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA), we choose to purposefully engage in age-inclusive activities and learning opportunities for the betterment of our university and communities. We are a proud member of the Age-Friendly University of Minnesota Council where we envision a campus that is a leader in age-friendly work, older adults are fully integrated into university life, and our students are fully prepared to meet the needs of our changing communities.

Values

The Council believes that:

- We all benefit from intergenerational approaches and exchanges
- Lifelong learners bring experience and perspective that enrich education
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central pillars to all the work we do
- Ageism is a pervasive form of bigotry that must be challenged and eliminated

For more information visit the [Age-Friendly University of Minnesota website](#).

Facilitated through the School of Public Health's Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation (CHAI), the Age-Friendly initiative is overseen by a council of representatives from across the Twin Cities campus, including the Advanced Careers initiative, University of Minnesota Alumni Association, Extension, University of Minnesota Foundation, MN Northstar GWEP, Retirees Association, and OLLI. For more info [contact us](#).

Learn more about UMRA's involvement.

- [Age-Friendly University \(AFU\) Global Network](#)
- [Minnesota is an Age-Friendly University](#)
- [CHAI: New center is committed to healthy aging The University of Minnesota as an Age-Friendly University overview](#)

Eric Hockert
AFU Representative from UMRA FY25
7/27/25

- [Age Friendly University background](#)
- Eric Hockert – UMRA Past-President and UMRA representative to the University of Minnesota Age Friendly University Council, ehockert@alumni.umn.edu

Attachment B

Age-Friendly University Global network

The Ten Principles

1. To encourage the participation of older adults in all the core activities of the University, including educational and research programs.
2. To promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue second careers.
3. To recognize the range of educational needs of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue Master's or Ph.D. qualifications).
4. To promote intergenerational learning in order to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
5. To widen access to online educational opportunities for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation.
6. To ensure that the university's research agenda is informed by the needs of an aging society and to promote public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
7. To increase the understanding of students of the longevity dividend and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society.
8. To enhance access for older adults to the university's range of health and wellness programs and its arts and cultural activities.
9. To engage actively with the university's own retired community.
10. To ensure regular dialogue with organizations representing the interests of the aging population.

Ten Principles of an AgeFriendly University

AFUGN.org

Attachment C

Endorsement letter signed by UMN President Joan Gabel

September 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Age Friendly University Working Group,

Please accept this letter of endorsement to enroll the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in the Global Network of Age Friendly Universities.

The University has a longstanding history of innovative programming for older adults as well as education and research in geriatrics and gerontology. This initiative will build on this history as our communities continue to grow older and we explore new ways to engage older adults in our campus community.

This endorsement establishes the Age-Friendly University of Minnesota Twin Cities Council with

you as charter members and facilitation by the Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation. The Center

for Healthy Aging and Innovation is responsible for all resource and staffing needs related to this

work. This Council is charged with mapping the University's services, programs and research to the

Age Friendly University principles as well as supporting collaboration and initiatives across the

campus. In addition, the Council will explore supporting all of our University of Minnesota campuses

in their age friendly work.

I am excited that the Council will work to expand opportunities for lifelong learners to pursue their

passions and engage with our campus community and ensure a geriatric competent workforce.

I look forward to hearing about your work.

Eric Hockert
AFU Representative from UMRA FY25
7/27/25

Sincerely,

Joan T.A. Gabel

President

University of Minnesota

CC: Joe Gaugler, PhD

Professor and Robert L. Kane Endowed Chair in Long-Term Care and Aging
Director, Center for Healthy Aging & Innovation

Attachment D **Rolling Meeting Notes**



Age-Friendly University of Minnesota

Council Meeting

Thursday, April 17, 2025

10 - 11 AM CST

[Zoom Link](#)

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. AFU Day Updates
 - a. Budget
 - b. Program
 - c. Sponsorship & Booths
 - d. Registration
 - i. Attendees - 58 (plus group)
 - e. Marketing
 - i. [Option 1](#), [Option 2](#)
3. AFU Newsletter
 - a. Please email wolff416@umn.edu information to feature, deadline: May 16?
4. Five-Year Report
5. Updates

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Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

1 - 2 PM CST

[Zoom Link](#)

6. Welcome & Introductions
 - a. Eric Hockert, Allycia Wolff, Shelley Horstman, Rajean Moone, Helene Benitez, Sue Nankviell, Teresa Schicker, Kate Klosterman
7. Age-Friendly University Day Check In
 - a. Budget
 - i. Friendly reminder to confirm your sponsorship if haven't already
 - b. Program
 - i. Have invited Lt Gov Flannigan - cannot confirm until 3 days ahead of time
 - ii. "Research Panel" option - featuring research and work in gerontology
 - iii. See working agenda [here](#)
 - c. Sponsorships & Booths
 - i. Have extended times for breakout sessions and lunch
 - ii. Grant, Provost Office - received \$5,000 for AFU Day, AFU Council sponsor at \$5k, AARP \$2,500 sponsor + session
 - d. Registration
 - i. [Site](#)
 - e. Marketing
 - i. Start promotion for attendee registrants first week in March
 - ii. Will share marketing materials as created
 1. Social media posts highlighting event, speakers, offering
8. AFU Newsletter
 - a. First edition! Winter 2025
9. AFU Council 5 year report
 - a. Rajean has started a draft - view/edit [here](#)
10. Friendly reminders, if haven't already considered:
 - a. [AFU Council language](#), website update
11. Updates:
 - a. GWEP – Teresa Schicker
 - i. Free - Open Source online library
[Death Dying and End of Life Resources](https://nexusipe.org/informing/resource-center/death-dying-end-life-resources) This contains resources for students, learners and professionals. Materials are also for patients, families and caregivers. The materials are related to dying, death, end of life, and burial or disposition.
<https://nexusipe.org/informing/resource-center/death-dying-end-life-resources>
 - ii. Annual Geriatric Case Competition

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1. Upcoming year will feature 9 different sites!
- iii. [Age-Friendly Care and Education Collection](#) This collection hosted by the MN Northstar Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) highlights educational, clinical, research, and policy resources for health professionals, educators, learners, and others interested in improving care for older adults.
 - iv. Rajean and Christina Cauble presented at University of St Thomas (who just entered global age-friendly network) – utilized GWEP toolkit as resource to faculty
 - v. **Education Resources to Teach Age-Friendly Care** <https://mngwep.nexusipe.org/> This site contains education products to teach age-friendly care.
- b. Bakken – Sue Nankivell
 - i. [Rearview Mirror Revelations: What It Means to Grow & Give for Life](#) (March 20)
 - ii. [Purpose Quest](#) - self paced, 6 course class
 - iii. [Being Peace Together: Cultivating Kinship and Wellbeing for All Beings](#) (Feb 27)
 - iv. Upcoming Spring events, workshops, series - [view here](#)
 - v. [Healing Together: The Power of Community Care in Fostering Mental Health with Minaa B.](#)
 - c. UMRA - Eric Hockert
 - i. AROHE.org Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education- currently serving as as President-elect, President starting Jan 2027
 - ii. Upcoming Webinars: Health Cognition // Navigating Change
 - iii. Age-Friendly University Global Network - meeting next week
 - iv. Big 10 Retirees Association - chair of program planning committee for 2026 conference
 - v. AARP – within retirees association, volunteer announcement - advocate working with state reps and senators, policy advocacy
 - d. Women's Center - Shelley
 - i. Up scholarship amount! \$5k/up to 70 scholarships
 - e. UMN Foundation – Helene
 - i. Estate and Gift Planning Seminar – take place in Spring
 - f. Office for Equity and Diversity – Kate
 - i. Working as team ongoing with University leaders
 - ii. Kate invited to speak as panelist for [Caring for People with Memory Loss Conference](#)
 - g. CHAI
 - i. Monday, March 24th -- [Reframe Rural Housing Webinar](#) @ 10AM
 - ii. Monday, March 31st -- [CHAI Speaker Series](#), Aging & Disability Webinar

Attachment E
Eric Hockert remarks given at the June 2025 AFU Day
McNamara Center

AFU Day – UMRA comments

Thank you, Rajean, for all your work to make today a success. And thank you to all the other AFU Council members and, especially, to Allycia Wolff for all her work and coordination of today's activities.

What do you do after you complete your working career at the university? For many of you, you devoted years and, in many cases, decades of your lives to support the university and its mission. You retire and then – what's next?

As Rajean mentioned, the University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA) has a long and enduring connection to the university, to the community, and to the AFU Council. We have over 800 members who are retired faculty, P&A staff, civil service and bargaining unit people. Not all higher education retiree groups across the United States and across the globe are as inclusive as we are here. Some include only emeriti professors. I'm working to change that! We welcome everyone retired from all parts of the university across the state and recently established a stronger connection with retirees from the Morris campus. UMRA is very active and engaged with our members, with the university, and with the community. Here are a few highlights of a few of the things we do.

A recent Harvard study (Robert Waldinger) found one of the key elements of happiness is strong, supportive social connections. Social activities bring people together. We have monthly luncheon forums with notable speakers, events at Como, Mississippi River boat rides, breakfasts focused on selected topics, Cabinets of Curiosity to visit places of interest around the university and many other activities. We have Special Interest Groups covering a wide range – photography, hiking, travel, reading, family history, financial and legal issues. There are Professional Development Grants for Retirees where any university retiree can submit a proposal to UMRA to continue their research interests and receive funds (small amounts). Monthly Living Well workshops to help people lead healthy lives. Volunteering is a significant part of UMRA and an opportunity to give back to the university and to the community. UMRA's volunteer center (URVC) coordinates connections with about 80 projects per year and over 400 volunteers who collectively provide several thousand hours to the university and to the community. Here's one example of a URVC volunteer project.

AARP Minnesota has a government advocacy program directed at helping to get legislation passed at the state level to benefit older and, actually, all Minnesotans. I mention this one because I was one of the many volunteer advocates who visited and talked with state senators and representatives on several issues including a Fraud Restitution Fund which will provide money to Minnesotans who have lost money due to fraud. This passed as part of the Tax Omnibus Bill this session and was a large win for our efforts. We also advocated for continued funding of the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging. This one will require some more effort in future legislative sessions. Please visit my AARP friends in the exhibit area to learn more about how you can benefit and give back. You can learn more about UMRA, our activities, and how you can join (if a university retiree) by visiting us in the exhibit area. We are engaged with the university in other ways – the Senate, Provost's office, Public Relations department, the Alumni Association, and with the Board of Regents where I recently appointed John Finnegan (former Dean of the School of Public Health) as UMRA's representative in this actively engaged role. We expect this role will develop into an active resource for the Regents to tap into the extensive (thousands of career years) experiences of our members.

UMRA also has international connections. We are a member of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) where I'm President-elect. AROHE has over 100 higher education retiree association members in the United States and Canada and we are looking to expand that worldwide with the recent formation of a virtual retirement organization for people who do not have a home with their former institution.

One possible path to greater worldwide inclusion is with the Emeriti Professors Network. This is European based but includes members from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Croatia, Australia, United States, Canada, Zambia, Uganda, Israel, Botswana, and others. We are working to bring together our wide ranging interests to address issues we have in common.

UMRA is engaged with the other Big Ten, now 18, retiree associations through the appropriately named Big Ten Retiree Association where we share common interests, problems, and hopefully solutions. The annual conference is here in 2026.

Finally, as you may already know, there is an AFU Global Network that originated in Dublin, Ireland and that is now based at Arizona State University. Several of us on the University of Minnesota Age Friendly University Council participate with this global network and expect to find beneficial connections as it continues to develop.

Rajeana, thanks for providing this time to share the UMRA story. Allycia, thank you for working to make today a success and an enjoyable one for all of us.

Please stop by our table to meet some of our UMRA leaders including Julie Sweitzer (current President), Diane Young (incoming President, July 1), Ron Matross (former President and current chair of our membership committee) and Kris Mortensen (newsletter editor who works to keep us all up to date and informed). Say hello, share your thoughts, and maybe join over 800 of your fellow retirees and former colleagues in this portion of your next phase in life.

Thank you.

Eric Hockert
AFU Representative from UMRA FY25
7/27/25