

UMRA Web annual report

DATE: 06/24/2026

TO: Diane Yount, UMRA President
Jerry Rinehart & Cathy Lee Gierke, Co-Chairs,
UMRA Organizational Continuity Committee (OCC)

FROM: Cathy Lee Gierke, Webmaster

RE: Annual Report 2025-26, Website and member portal

Charge to the Committee (Briefly, one sentence)

Manage web resources for UMRA, design and technical aspects. This includes UMRA.umn.edu and the member portal. This year the member portal was converted and moved from retirees.umn.edu to UMRA.wildapricot.org

Committee members (include any designated duties)

I collaborate with Kris Mortensen and Kathy Jensen putting materials on the website. Kathy does work with graphics on the website, and adds new event to the UMRA calendar. Kris adds articles to the website.

For the member portal, Mike Austin does event setup; Virgil Larson does tasks related to member applications and member renewal; Fumi Katagiri produces and sends out all-member emails that come in to UMRA-Members@umn.edu; Sandy Weisberg manages reservation inquiries and changes, and builds registration lists and nametags. Because Michael and Sandy's roles are so critical, they provide backup for each other,

Each event has an event organizer that submits the event info, reviews and approves setup, tracks to be sure enough emails go out, and just acts as the owner of the event. Jane Glazebrook serves this role for the Program Committee events, making sure Sponsors are listed, and reviewing Forums and LWW.

Activities (Number of meetings, location, number participating, etc.)

We rarely meet, although we did meet earlier this year to discuss process with the Host Team.

Focus of activities and key outcomes/accomplishments of this committee this year

Each of the volunteers mentioned has been working on learning to use the new WildApricot software. Emails between us have helped clarify where processes need

adjustment. I serve as point of coordination between the volunteers, making sure that tasks get to the right person when necessary, filling gaps where tasks are not in any other domain and answering technical questions where we meet problems.

Policy issues or changes over the year? Why?

Everything changed, really, as a result of the new system. Processes are documented on the member portal Help pages:
<https://umra.wildapricot.org/Admin-Help>

Challenges or problems faced/solved? Innovations?

Because there are so many volunteers involved, it can be problematic to be sure the appropriate information gets to the right person. One thing we have implemented is a CONTACT US form that goes to multiple people (Sandy, Cathy, Kathy J, Michael A), so there is always someone to answer questions. Another way we try to address this is by using a form to collect event submissions. The form submission is stored in Google Forms, and anyone who needs it can access the info. Kathy J, Kris M and Michael A all have need of event info for various purposes.

We have found that we can reduce fuss and mistakes by using the default announcement, reminder and confirmation templates for each event, where the description is built into the email. Confirmations and Reminders use this same info, with the addition of info from the "Additional event information" field. This simple scheme makes event setup greatly easier than needing to customize up to 8 emails for each event.

We have also standardized the timeframes for Announcements and Reminder emails to simplify these decisions: <https://umra.wildapricot.org/Events-Setup>

We learned that we could make events available to unique audiences by using the tag field in the Event info tab. For the BTRA conference held here in summer 2026, registration was public, but NOT visible on the member Event list due to this tag.

Another interesting use of our member portal was in service to members needing new health coverage as the UMN cancels Medicare coverage last winter. We put up a discussion forum for this topic which had enormous participation.

The profile and member search have gained some recognition of how it can serve us. The member search was one of the primary criteria we looked for in our search for a new member portal. WA provides a powerful, flexible search of member profile information. In addition to info about member interests, we have added a question whether people are willing to provide transportation to other members to member events.

Suggestions for future chairs/leaders

Any way to simplify processes while maintaining high quality of product is helpful. Processes are so intricate that it is easy to overlook key details from sheer volume.

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

Assure that we receive feedback on quality and utility, so we can identify where processes may still need improvement to satisfy member needs.

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

We should continue to expose members to what the member search can do – for our UMRA groups, as well as for individual members. As part of that, we need to continue to emphasize for members to complete their profiles.