

(Approved) UMRA Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 22, 2021 11:00 a.m.
Zoom call-in

Present: John Anderson, John Bantle, Kris Bettin, Frank Cerra, Will Craig, Bill Donohue, Gary Engstrand, Cathy Lee Gierke, Cherie Hamilton, Greg Hestness, Eric Hockert, Jean Kinsey, Ron Matross, Kris Mortensen, Claudia Parliament, Chip Peterson, Donna Peterson, Jerry Rinehart, Barbara Shiels, Cathrine Wambach, Gloria Williams

1. Anecdotes

Frank convened the meeting at 11:00 and announced that he would have to leave the meeting early and that Jan would take over as chair.

Frank also reported that he, Bill, and Jan had met with Ole Gram in the Provost's office, at Ole's request, to discuss retiree amenities. The discussion arose because in the normal policy review process, the Faculty Emeriti Policy had come up for review. Gram told them he expects no big changes, but that there may be a need for an adjoining administrative policy. There is no corresponding policy for P&A, Civil Service, or Bargaining Unit staff. He said that if you have a umn.edu account, it is not likely to go away.

Bill added that it is possible the University will remove the umn.edu accounts from retirees [and others, like alums?], but it is not likely. Jan said that the amenities most likely to be scrutinized are those where the University is paying for a license and offering benefits that have financial implications. She agreed that Gram said it was unlikely the UMRA email address [umra@umn.edu] would be changed.

Jerry suggested that Frank or others talk with the U of M Foundation about this. He noted that the University tries to get students to keep their umn.edu emails as a way to keep them connected to the University. To take away the umn.edu email address from them would be self-defeating.

2. Review/approval of January Board Minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. EC Draft Minutes

There were no questions about the draft 2/15 Executive Committee minutes.

4. Treasurer's Report

Greg reported that the checkbook balance is \$24,393 and that there has not been much activity in January. There have been no OIT charges yet. There were revenues of \$2,665 (some of which is dedicated for Zoom funding) and expenses of \$1,297, for a net gain of \$1,837. There have been expenses and revenues in February.

The Board unanimously approved Greg's report.

5. JOIE Editor

Will introduced Kris Bettin, approved as JOIE editor at the last Board meeting, and said she had hit the ground running. He asked her to discuss what is in the hopper.

Kris B began by saying she is ready to upload papers to JOIE and there are four submissions in the pipeline in various stages of review. One problem has been obtaining reviewers, so she is seeking to expand the pool in order that subsets of people can review articles, rather than asking all reviewers to review every submission. She would like to increase the visibility of JOIE in order to increase the number of submissions and will rely on the UMRA website and newsletter to help. She wants it to be clear that submissions are open to the entire University community (and she already has one submission from an alumnus).

Will said he appreciated how Kris B has clarified the purpose of the journal and what she is looking for; that should help increase the number of submissions. Kris said she will keep polishing the purpose so everyone knows it is a journal of public interest open to anyone at the University, retired or not. Most important is high quality. Will noted that one paper coming is a history of the Family Social Science department from Jan Hogan. The UMRA Board, he added, is a potential source of writers.

Gloria reminded Kris B that all materials related to the journal should be provided to her (Gloria) for placement in the Archives.

Kris B related that the journal had no provision for continuity; there was no documentation on procedures or anything else, so she has been keeping notes and will set up a Google account so the next editor can know what has been done. Frank told her that he would like to see her job description as well as the continuity information she is preparing. He observed that most journal websites provide information on formatting, topics, and so on. He thanked Kris for taking the position and thanked Will for his work on rejuvenating the journal.

6. Nominations Committee Report

Bill noted that he had distributed a memo to the Board about the Nominations Committee, an annual event. The Board must take action today to approve the appointment of the Nominations Committee. He provided the names of those proposed to serve:

1. Jeanne Markell
2. John Romano
3. Peggy Rinehart
4. Barbara Shiels, Board member
5. Jan Morlock, President Elect
6. Bill Donohue, Past President

Two members of the Board are leaving, creating two vacancies, Bill said. KaiMay Terry has said she is willing to stand for re-election. They also need to identify a president-elect; UMRA has a treasurer and secretary and both have indicated a willingness to continue to serve. If the Board approves the appointment of the Nominations Committee, it will develop a slate of candidates for positions to be voted on at the May UMRA meeting. He invited Board members to nominate individuals for open positions.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the membership of the Nominations Committee.

7. Summer Programming

Frank told the Board that this agenda item does not require decisions and will be brought back at the March meeting. He invited the Board to provide ideas for summer programming.

Jan reported that the Program Committee had talked about a recess over the summer, as has been the practice in the past. Operating virtually now, they are hearing sentiments favoring get-togethers over the summer, the character and frequency of which have yet to be determined. She noted that John Anderson had suggested more interactive sessions, and the Program Committee is open to proposals, anything from traditional webinars to more interactive sessions.

One reason to have a recess, Jan commented, is to spell people who do the production of the virtual events. Perhaps they should think of different kinds of sessions that would require different people and skills to produce them.

Gloria asked if these sessions would be in addition to the retreat. Jan responded that a retreat is held every other year; there was one in August of 2020 so the next one would be in the summer of 2022.

Cathy W asked if there is any chance UMRA could have an outdoor face-to-face event, perhaps in August, perhaps at the Arboretum or the St. Paul gardens. Most UMRA members might be vaccinated by that time. Cherie said that the Social Activities Committee is looking at a summer event at the Campus Club, which is re-opening on May 1; if the Board approves, they will plan summer events starting in June.

Jerry said it is worth considering taking the summer off. Zoom becomes too much for many and there could be burnout among those doing the work.

Jean said that it would not be necessary to have three meetings per month in the summer; she agreed with Jerry that the production people have worked hard and need a break. One event per month, however, would help keep people together. She said the Photo Club meets over the summer most of the time, so there are UMRA groups that do meet.

Jan said she would try to settle the issue of whether there should be summer events and if so, how many, by the time of the March meeting.

8. McNamara Space

Frank provided an update on the space in McNamara, occupied by three groups. Two issues arose, the lock on the door and the telephone. There was agreement to use a standard lock and key, with the three organizational presidents deciding who should receive a key. As for the telephone, there would be no cost to UMRA for relocating the current phone to a new location. Moreover, because UMRA has an EFS code, there will be no monthly charge, so UMRA can retain the telephone line.

Kris M asked if the suite number in McNamara would remain the same. Frank said that was undecided; he will let her know. Kris said it can be changed in the newsletter if necessary.

9. Organizational Continuity

Jerry recalled that the task force on organizational continuity has provided several reports to the Board; this one—distributed in advance of the meeting—is the conclusion of the reports. They recommend establishing the Organizational Continuity Committee (OCC) to bring together the history committee, a historian, the archivist, and others. Under the provisions of UMRA bylaws, the president appoints the committee. Jerry added that Frank believed it would be helpful if the

Board supported the proposal. They included the charge to the committee and distinguished the positions of archivist and historian. This would not be an active committee but would serve as a resource to help committee chairs and others get reports prepared and identify where they can be more efficient. He and Chip will continue as chairs until others can be identified to assume the roles.

Chip thanked Gloria Williams, who is rotating out of the historian position, for her work and her patience in gathering materials for the archives. Gloria asked that her name be added to the list of original task force members in the report (Jerry said he would do so) and asked if this would be the final report. The final report came to the Board a couple of months ago, Jerry reminded her, and today's proposal is action to establish a committee pursuant to the task force recommendations.

Gloria raised a question about the role of historian versus archivist and whether Julie Wallace preferred the title "historian." Gloria said she thought Julie Wallace was interested in undertaking or promoting work on UMRA's history. Chip said if Julie is indeed interested in the role of Historian as well as Archivist, there is no reason she could not occupy both positions. Chip indicated he would follow up with Julie to clarify.

Frank clarified that the OCC is a new committee and that the History Committee is disbanded. He asked Jerry and Chip to let him know when they need to be on an agenda and to send him the names of new members so he can appointment them to the new committee.

Jerry also thanked Cathy LG, who had been a key player in the work of the task force. Cathy LG reported that she had directed Kris B to Google Drive; it is not for toolkits and so on but it is a way to do collaborative online work. The UMRA archives webpages are more narrowly focused.

At this point Jan assumed the chair.

10. Committee Reports¹

10c. Program: Jan drew attention to the written report she had provided and reviewed the programs for the next three months. Barbara reiterated the Program Committee report point that Greg did a great program on February 9 on the history of policing in Minneapolis. She learned a lot from his talk.

10d. Workshops: Ron reported that the scheduled speaker lost his Internet connection just as the February 16 workshop was starting so it was rescheduled to

¹ There was no 10a or 10b on the agenda.

March 2. They had a record number of people sign up—114—and many of them were willing to sign up for March 2. On March 16 the presenter will be Erik Moore, the University Archivist and head of the Digital Conservancy, who will talk about how to spot treasures in family records and documents. April will have a talk about the mystery of the Minneapolis mega-murder and the speaker will be a national park ranger; it should be a lot of fun. May will bring Dr. Ann VanHeest to talk about keeping your hands and fingers healthy.

10e. PDGR: John B reported there is \$6,145 from crowd-funding; with the challenge grants, there is about a \$48,000 balance. The PDGR Committee meeting focused on increasing mentorship in the future and raising money since the program lost the University funding. A faculty member from Morris joined the Committee; he looks forward to a Duluth faculty member and would like another one from the Twin Cities. Jan suggested looking for a Twin Cities faculty member from among the new UMRA members.

10f. Communication and Outreach: Jean reported that the Committee has a meeting scheduled for March 4 and will take up a number of issues related to how to handle communication post-COVID. She called together an ad hoc group on February 10 to discuss communication and programming going forward and will bring recommendations to the Board later. The rock star of the Committee is Will; his suggestions about PDGR led to four articles in different publications.

[Will later clarified that there were five publications from his PDGR impact study and that the full report will be published in JOIE.] Gloria asked Will to submit this information to her for the Archives. Will said that it should be part of the C&O annual report.

Kris M noted that it was an article Will wrote for the newsletter summarizing the impact of PDGR that prompted the second \$10,000 matching gift was donated.

10g. Social Activity and Travel: Cherie said that John A had sent her a report on the interest survey indicating that one person was interested in the Social Activities Committee; she sent information to the person, who seems interested. Three others were interested in travel and she let them know of opportunities to participate.

Cherie later reported that the Portugal trip is still on hold and that she thought the price might go down.

10h. Membership: John A recapped how UMRA recruits new members, through the letter from the Office of Human Resources that UMRA provides. OHR

tells him how many such letters go out each month. The average last year was about 25 per month; September-November were 77, 77, 76, December was 159, and January was 510. The last is clearly the effect of the retirement incentive the University offered. There has been quite a bit of interest in UMRA membership (the first year is free): 39 in February, larger than usual because of the large retiree numbers in December and January.

UMRA held a virtual new-member event in October and have decided to do them more frequently. There was another one on February 11 with breakout rooms and 19 new members. The response was good and people indicated they'd had fun. After the event, John sent an interest survey to those who participated and those who had been invited; there were 19 responses. He said he was glad to know that Cherie had made contact with those who'd expressed interest in social activities and travel.

They plan another new-member event in May, because it is more likely people will be interested in joining UMRA soon after they retire.

Cherie asked if there are activities people expressed interest in that UMRA does not offer such that it should consider expanding activities? John A said that is the responsibility of the Board to determine.

John B asked if anyone had expressed interest in the PDGR Committee. John A said that none had done so.

10i. Regents Liaison: Jerry said he had nothing to add beyond the written report he had provided the Board. There has been much covered in the press, both good and bad. The alcohol advertising policy was very controversial. UMRA could recommend a change in its policy in that regard.

Bill asked if the Board plans to do a self-assessment or if it is occurring. Jerry said it has not been done but the Board is talking about it. Brian Steeves [Board of Regents Executive Director] asked if he should move forward on bringing in an outside consultant, but a self-assessment is difficult for a body that cannot choose its own members. So there will be more discussion; there was reluctance on the part of some to do a self-assessment. Is the worry that the Board would receive bad press from it, Bill asked? It appears that way, Jerry said. Bill observed that the Board has conducted a self-assessment in the past and he was surprised it would not do so now. Jerry subsequently added a correction to his report regarding this issue: Steeves indicated that this process (should it proceed) would likely not be exempt from open meeting/privacy laws.

The other major report was on policing and diversity issues. Some see the police as a problem, some see a lack of police as a problem. Included among a number of recommendations in the report were requiring body cams for campus police; adding officers and call boxes; establishing a campus safety oversight

committee; moving UMPD organizationally to the office of Finance and Planning. Students are concerned about the militarization of the police but they are always glad—if they get in trouble—when they are dealt with by the University police rather than Minneapolis police.

10j. URVC: Eric said he had no update this month.

Bill commented on the regent selection process (now going on) and reported there would be a legislative meeting (Joint Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee) to recommend four new regents to the legislature. The election will take place sometime after February 23.

Jan adjourned the meeting at 1:25.

-- Gary Engstrand