

Crib Sheet: UMRA President-Elect

Chip Peterson, August 2017

I prepared this document at the close of my year as President-Elect, in the hope that it may contain hints useful to some future occupant of the position. Before new use, it will need updating.

Job description

According to the 2018–19 Operating Manual, the president-elect:

- Plans the monthly meeting in consultation with the President.
- Chairs the Program Committee and is responsible for the selection of speakers and workshops for the monthly meetings in approximately the calendar year following his/her election.
- Presides over Board meetings and monthly luncheons when the President is not able to attend.
- Consults with the President as needed.
- Serves on the University Retirees Volunteer Center Board of Directors.
- Helps to recruit new members.

Program Committee

Committee charge: The 2017–18 Operating Manual outlines the responsibilities of the committee as follows: “To provide for the programs at the monthly luncheon meetings and for the workshops. It is customary for committee members to take part in inviting guest speakers, writing up their talks and bios for the Newsletter, and hosting and introducing the speaker at the luncheon. Also, to propose to the Board possible special events that will support the mission of UMRA. The committee generally seeks to line up speakers and presentations three to six months in advance. The outgoing committee therefore typically programs the first three speakers and workshops of the upcoming academic year.”

Membership & terms: The UMRA Bylaws mention neither this nor any other committee by name (with the exception of the Nominating Committee). The only guidelines thus come from the Operating Document, which states the following: “The committee comprises the UMRA president, president-elect, past president, and two or more members of UMRA appointed by the president. Appointed members serve three-year terms. To ensure continuity, the terms of the appointed members do not run concurrently.” At present the number of appointed members is six, in three staggered cohorts of two members each, but that is more formal than the Operating Manual prescribes, and a future committee could change the pattern at its discretion. Nothing in the Operating Manual precludes reappointment of a member whose term is expiring; however, a reasonable amount of committee turnover is desirable.

Workshop Subcommittee: Workshop Subcommittee develops workshop proposals for consideration by the full committee to approve. Although this has consisted of a subset of the full committee, there is no reason it couldn't also include non-committee members.

Meetings: The Operating Manual does not prescribe the frequency of meetings. Some chairs and committees might choose to meet regularly; others might prefer to conduct most business by email and to meet only two or three times during the year.

Toolkit: Most of the hints that would otherwise go into this crib sheet are already contained in the committee's Toolkit, a collection of documents designed to facilitate the smooth functioning of the committee. The master versions of Toolkit documents reside on the chair's computer. A few items are updated continuously through the year, others only annually or as needed.

Planning and executing luncheon presentations and workshops:

- *Oversight:* Although the point person for a particular speaker or workshop normally does most of the work, the committee chair needs to keep abreast of progress to assure that nothing is falling through the cracks.
- *Audiovisual equipment:* The Campus Club provides microphone and, if needed, a projector, but not a computer. The point person needs to find out if the speaker will bring his/her own laptop (most do); if not, the speaker brings a flash drive and the point person brings a laptop or arranges for another UMRA member to do so.
- *Introduction of speaker:* Following the meal the UMRA president usually makes a few announcements and then introduces the committee chair, who in turn may make some brief announcements (including a reminder of the workshop that will follow the talk) before turning the floor over to the point person, who introduces the speaker.
- *Reimbursement of speaker costs:* UMRA reimburses non-U of M speakers for parking or public transit costs incurred in attending the luncheon. If the speaker drives to the event, the chair gives him or her six dollars in cash plus an UMRA discount parking coupon; if s/he uses public transport, the chair reimburses its cost. The chair keeps track of these expenses and, following the May meeting, submits an accounting to the UMRA Treasurer for reimbursement. Receipts are not necessary.

Summer activities: The summer is a busy time for the committee chair. It usually involves at least the following:

- The outgoing and incoming committee chairs jointly appoint new members to fill committee vacancies.
- The outgoing chair recommends to the UMRA Secretary any revisions in the Operating Manual's description of the committee.
- The outgoing chair updates the toolkit as needed, drafts the committee's annual report, shares all items with the committee, requests feedback, and further revises as needed.
- In August or September the outgoing chair updates and revises this Crib Sheet and passes it on to the incoming chair.
- Like other committee chairs, in September the outgoing chair prints significant committee documents (the updated Toolkit items, the annual report, the president-elect crib sheet, and any other significant committee output) and submits all to the History Committee for inclusion in the year's UMRA contribution to the University Archives.

- Around August or September, the incoming committee chair acquaints incoming members with the contents of the Toolkit, whether in a separate orientation for new members or as part of the academic year's first meeting.

URVC

The president-elect also represents UMRA on the Board of Directors of the University Retirees Volunteer Committee, which normally meets bi-monthly in the McNamara Alumni Center. Members receive meeting materials as email attachments in advance; the exception is the agenda, which members typically do not see until the meeting. At each meeting those Board members present receive a coupon to cover the full cost of parking in the adjacent ramp.

Appendix: Overview, UMRA Program Committee Toolkit

The toolkit consists of various resources for use by the committee and its members in carrying out their mission. Some documents will be updated continuously, others only as needed. The committee chair maintains the documents and sends updated versions to other committee members at appropriate moments.

ProgCom contact info 20xx–xx: Lists committee members' terms, addresses, phones, and email addresses. Updated annually or when entries change.

History of speakers: List of past programs, beginning with 2004–05 (the earliest year for which the UMRA website includes newsletters). Updated at least annually.

History of workshops: Similar for workshops; goes back to 2011–12. Workshop subcommittee chair assists committee chair with updates.

Task timelines: Suggests timing and division of labor for various tasks. First section covers the committee's annual cycle; second guides work for setting up individual speakers and workshops and will prove especially important for session point person.

Confirmed speakers 20xx-xx: Working document updated continuously through the year as new sessions are pinned down. Updated as information changes.

Future speaker possibilities: List of potential speakers the committee or individual members have identified. Continuously updated through the year as other names are added or speaker dates are pinned down.

Session tracking sheet: A tool that session point people can use as much or little as they wish for structuring their work and assuring tasks are completed in a timely fashion.

Sample emails to speakers: Several examples that might help a point person as s/he arranges for a speaker or a workshop.

Newsletter guidelines: An aid to guide a point person preparing an article submission concerning a luncheon speaker or a workshop. Reviewed at least annually in consultation with the newsletter team.

UMRA Program Committee 2016–17: Suggested Timelines

Part I: Overall Committee Timeline

June: Outgoing chair (the incoming UMRA president) meets with incoming chair (the incoming UMR president-elect) to discuss the position, review current status of program/workshop planning, discuss/update this document, discuss committee membership, etc. (Currently, in addition to the three people in the presidential succession, the committee has six members, each one serving a three-year term, so normally each summer two members will be rotating off and two new appointments will need to be made.)

July: Committee and workshop subcommittee memberships are finalized for the coming year and prospective members confirm their willingness to serve. (Officially, the incoming UMRA president appoints the committee.)

September: Committee holds face-to-face meeting to discuss process, review what has already been lined up by the predecessor committee, identify potential speakers, and begin planning and assigning responsibility for approaching potential speakers and workshop leaders.

Rest of year: After the initial meeting, much of the committee's business is conducted by phone and email, and further meetings are on an as-needed basis.

Part II: Timeline for each luncheon during the year

For each speaker, one person (most often the committee member who originally proposed him/her) does most of the following, although sometimes they might be divided up among two or more people (especially when the proposer is not a member of the UMRA Program Committee). This point person should cc the committee chair on all relevant correspondence. The committee chair should remain vigilant to assure strict adherence to the timeline.

3–9 months before the luncheon:

- Gets committee approval of potential speaker or workshop leader and topic
- Approaches the speaker about willingness to give a presentation if date can be worked out.
- Firms up a date, gets final speaker commitment

At least 3 months before the luncheon:

- Gives speaker some information about UMRA and the luncheon format
- Asks speaker for biographical information (or sometimes a draft article), photo (must be high resolution; most are okay as they come out of the camera, but photos compressed for email are often inadequate), and description about thrust of talk

At least 10 weeks before the luncheon:

- Reconfirms date & topic with speaker
- Nudges speaker if photo or bio or information on content of talk is still missing
- Begins drafting newsletter article (be sure to include title of presentation)

At least 2 months before the luncheon:

- Drafts newsletter article and asks speaker for comment/corrections

At least 6 weeks before the luncheon:

- Submits newsletter article and speaker photo to editor

At least 2 weeks before the luncheon:

- Touches base with speaker to remind about arrangements concerning location, parking, luncheon format, time constraints, equipment needs, etc.

At the luncheon:

- Serves as lead host: Greets speaker upon arrival, introduces her/him to president, program committee, chair, and others (including technical support)
- Introduces the speaker

Within 1–2 days after luncheon:

- Submits newsletter article summarizing the presentation

Within a week after luncheon:

- Program committee chair sends handwritten thank-you note on UMRA's behalf

Sample Messages to UMRA Speakers 2016–17

Note: The following are examples that might help a point person for a luncheon program draft his/her own message to seek or prepare a speaker. Actual messages will always be different, but some passages below may prove appropriate almost verbatim. –Chip Peterson, President-Elect and Program Committee Chair, 2016–17

Example 1: Cold message to a potential speaker

Dear _____,

[Introductory sentence could go here saying something about your relationship to the proposed speaker. Three examples: 1) “You probably don’t know me, but I heard you give a wonderful talk on [topic] at [location] last year.” 2) “I am writing at the suggestion of a mutual friend, [name], a former colleague of mine.” 3) “It has been far too long since I saw you. Retirement has lots of pluses, but I miss the contact with friends and colleagues on the campus.”]

I am writing now to ask if you might be willing to give a talk on [topic] to the University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA), of whose Program Committee I am a member.

UMRA holds luncheon meetings in the Campus Club the fourth Tuesday of each month from September through May save December. (Because of Thanksgiving, the November meeting is often the third Tuesday). At present we are working on our schedule for [year or time period]. Speaking slots are still open during that period for the following dates: [list].

The format is lunch at 11:30, followed by the speaker and discussion from 12:00 to 1:00. People often are eager to ask questions individually afterward, so it would be ideal (though not at all required) if you could block out your calendar until 1:30 or so. Attendance tends to average a bit over a hundred. Unfortunately, the free lunch and a parking reimbursement are the closest thing to an honorarium that we are able to offer.

Please let me know if you would consider giving a talk to UMRA and, if so, which months might be open on your calendar. I will then try to pin down a specific date and get back to you quickly.

Cordially,

[Point person’s name]

Example 2: Confirmation message to speaker who has accepted based on phone conversation(s) rather than email exchange

Dear _____,

We are delighted that you have agreed to speak on [topic] to the U of M Retirees Association (UMRA). We know how busy you are, and we are extremely grateful that you are willing to take time out to speak to us geezers. I thought it might be useful for you to have in writing some of the things we discussed.

You are scheduled to speak on Tuesday, [month, date], on [topic or general topic area]. We meet in Campus Club rooms A-B-C [add Coffman Union & its location if speaker isn't from U of M]. The format is lunch at 11:30, followed by the speaker from 12:00 to 1:00. Discussion tends to be very lively, and we encourage speakers to hold their formal presentation to 45 minutes or less in order to leave at least 15 minutes for interactions with the audience. Usually some attendees are eager to be able to ask questions individually afterward, so it would be ideal (though not at all required) if you could block out your calendar until 1:30 or so. Attendance at the luncheons tends to average a bit over a hundred. Unfortunately, the free lunch and a parking reimbursement are the closest thing to an honorarium that we are able to offer.

I hope you can send me a few things sometime this month:

1. A title and/or some indication of the content. This will be helpful for me as I draft the newsletter article on you and your talk.
2. Some biographical information, also for my help in drafting the article. If you have a bio as well as a c.v., please send both.
3. A photo of yourself. A head shot is preferable if you have one. It can be in either color or black and white. Guidelines from our editor: "Photos need to be at a resolution suitable for print publication. Most photos as they come out of a digital camera will be adequate if they have not been compressed for purposes of emailing. The photo cannot be a Web picture (generally only 72 pixels) unless it is offered in 150 DPI or larger."
4. A list of any audiovisual equipment you would like to have (beyond the podium and microphone, which are standard). Most speakers who want to use PowerPoint bring their own laptops, but we can obtain one if necessary.

Like the rest of our program committee, I'm excited to have [topic] on our agenda and am looking forward very much to your talk.

Warmly,

[Point person's name]

Example 3: Reconfirmation message two or three weeks before the luncheon

Dear _____,

We're looking forward immensely to our luncheon with you on [date]. I'm attaching the newsletter article on your talk.

A few minor details and questions:

The luncheon will be in Campus Club A-B-C, which is on the fourth floor of Coffman Union [add address if speaker is not from U of M]. The meal itself is from 11:30 to 12:00 and your talk from 12:00 to 1:00.

There is an informal coffee hour before the luncheon. Feel free to come as early as 10:30 if you would like a chance to chat with some of the members. Otherwise, please do arrive at least by 11:15 so we can be sure everything is set up properly. I understand you will be bringing a laptop for your PowerPoint presentation; the Campus Club will provide the projector and screen, as well as a podium and microphone.

As I believe I mentioned before, we generally hope speakers either use an interactive format or allow about 15 minutes at the end for Q&A. It will be great you are able to stay around for a little while afterward to answer individual questions, but don't feel obligated if you have other commitments.

The default menu this month is [dish according to newsletter]. Please let me know if you would prefer the vegetarian or gluten-free option instead.

[Paragraph mostly for speakers from outside the U of M; delete or adapt/shorten for speakers from the campus] UMRA will reserve parking for you in the East River Road Garage (which otherwise might be full when you arrive); let me know immediately if you would like us to put you on the list. Even though your reservation assures space, sometimes it takes a while to find an open stall, so please plan your arrival time accordingly.

Would you like to chat with me on the phone for a few minutes sometime between now and your talk? Or are we set?

Anything else I should have covered in this message?

Warm regards,

[Point person's name]

UMRA Luncheon Presentations or Workshops: Session Tracking Sheet 2016–17

Basic information:

Session date:	Speaker or workshop leader:	Title/affiliation:	Topic (title when known):
Address:		Phone(s) & email:	Point person on ProgCom

Session tracking table (most lead times are suggestions; a few, including newsletter articles, are strict deadlines)

Task	Who Responsible*	Min. lead time	Target Date**	Date completed	Notes/comments
Identify speaker, subject, and date		4 mos.+			
Get session approval from Program Committee		4 mos.+			
Get final commitment from speaker		4 mos.+			
Brief speaker on UMRA and luncheon format		3 mos.			
Request photo, bio, & content info from speaker		3 mos.			
Remind speaker if photo/bio/content info still missing		10 wks.			
Begin drafting Newsletter article		10 wks.			
Reconfirm date & topic with speaker		2 mos.			
Finish drafting article & request speaker feedback		2 mos.			
Send newsletter article & speaker photo to editor		6 wks.			
Brief speaker on parking, audiovisuals, other logistics		2 wks.			
Serve as speaker's lead host at luncheon		0			
Assure audiovisual aids all are functioning properly		0			
Introduce speaker at luncheon		0			
Reimburse speaker for parking if needed (com. chair)		0			
Submit newsletter account of session		1–2 days after			
Send thank-you note to speaker (committee chair)		1 wk. after			
Post PowerPoint on web		2 wks. after			

*The point person for the session—usually the UMRA member who originally proposed it—often takes on all of the tasks listed in the table except those identified as falling to committee chair. However, sometimes there are good reasons for distributing tasks among two or more, for example, when the original session proposer is not a member of the UMRA Program Committee or the point person is going to be out of town at some stages.

Additional notes: