

Report of the Retirement Planning Subcommittee

The terms of reference of the Retirement Planning Subcommittee were to examine the retirement planning services currently available at the U of M and to recommend ways in which such services could be improved. Our work progressed in three stages.

Stage 1: Identifying retirement planning services currently provided to U of M staff

We contacted Dawn Dumankse, Retirement Specialist in the Pension Office, to get a list of current retirement planning services at the U of M. Those services are:

- 1) consultation with the Retirement Specialist about pension options and processes within the Pension Plan;
- 2) the Employee and Family Assistance Plan (which offers on-line or telephone consultation on topics relevant to planning for financial and social aspects of retirement);
- 3) an on-line Formula Pension Calculator that provides an estimate of the amount of an individual's defined benefit pension; and
- 4) retirement estimates/quotes for financial planning.

Stage 2: Identifying retirement planning services not provided by the U of M

Initially, we used the Retirement Planning Centre at York University as a model of “best practices.” A review of information on York University's website revealed several kinds of retirement planning services which are not available here. They were:

- 1) seminars on topics such the university pension plan, financial planning, the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security programs, etc.;
- 2) e-seminars, i.e., on-line presentations on topics such as financial planning, life insurance, and estate planning; and
- 3) a downloadable retirement planning guide.

Stage 3: Getting Feedback on retirement planning services

In August, 2016, we sought feedback on retirement planning services from U of M retirees, members of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA), and members of the Association of Employees Supporting Educational Services (AESES). UMRA's general email

list was used to contact retirees. Both UMFA and AESES generously agreed to send an email message from us to their membership. In the case of UMFA and AESES we specifically requested feedback from those members age 55+, i.e., those most likely to have given some thought to retirement.

Each group was asked to respond to three questions:

- 1) If you have retired within **the past five (5) years** [retirees]/contacted HR on matters related to retirement [UMFA and AESES members], do you feel that the information you received from the University was sufficient to let you make an informed decision about retirement? If it was **insufficient**, what additional information would you have liked to receive?
- 2) Which, if any, additional planning services (i.e., seminars, e-seminars, and retirement guides) should be available here?
- 3) Do you have any suggestions for improving retirement planning services?

Reminders were emailed to all three groups in mid-September. By early October we had received replies from a total of 78 individuals: 10 retirees, 22 UMFA members, and 46 AESES members.

Observations and Recommendations

The observations and recommendations which follow are based on a) the responses of retirees and current staff to our questions, b) information obtained via email or telephone contact with City of Winnipeg and University of Winnipeg human resources personnel, and c) information on the websites of the Civil Service Superannuation Board of Manitoba, the Manitoba Telephone System, Winnipeg Transit, and the following western Canadian universities: Regina, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Alberta, and British Columbia.

1) U of M retirees and staff who had consulted the Retirement Specialist in the Pension Office said that the information they received was helpful in their decision-making. However, some current staff reported that they did not know that there is a Retirement Specialist at the University. **We recommend that the University improve its communication with staff about the services provided by the Retirement Specialist.**

2) Many respondents expressed a desire for seminars/workshops on topics related to retirement. Suggested topics included:

- a) the University pension plan,
- b) financial planning for retirement,
- c) the OAS and CPP programs, and
- d) the effect of retirement on the availability and/or cost of employee benefits (e.g., supplementary health coverage, email accounts, etc.).

The University has offered pre-retirement seminars in the past, but not recently. **We recommend 1) that the University resume offering seminars on retirement-related topics, 2) that the University consult with each employee group (AESES, UMFA, UNIFOR, CUPE, etc.) in regard to the optimal scheduling of seminars for its members, and 3) that, whenever possible, seminars be recorded and made available for viewing on-line.**

3) A number of respondents mentioned that they would like to be able to find answers to basic questions about retirement on the University's website. **We recommend that the University have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on retirement on the Human Resources web page.** (See Appendix 1 for examples of questions that could be included in an FAQ.)

4) Several respondents said that they had little understanding of the procedure for retiring from the University. We note that the Civil Service Superannuation Board of Manitoba has a very detailed retirement checklist on its website, as do some universities (e.g., the U. of Calgary website has pre-retirement, retirement, and post-retirement checklists for support staff and for academic staff). **We recommend that a pre-retirement checklist for support and for academic staff be available on the Human Resources web page.**

5) Some retirees from the Faculty of Arts called attention to the fact that they had been able to make an informed decision about retirement because they were able to get a detailed estimate of their post-retirement financial situation from an Executive Assistant in the faculty. **We recommend that each staff member be entitled to receive a comprehensive estimate of their post-retirement financial situation (including income from all sources) from the Pension Office.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Sealey and Jay Goldstein

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Appendix 1

Examples of Questions for a Retirement FAQ

- 1) Is there a best time to retire?
- 2) Can I work after I retire, and if so, what are the tax implications?
- 3) What are the pros and cons of taking my money out of the University pension plan?
- 4) Does the University use a formula (e.g., the “magic 80”) to determine retirement eligibility?
- 5) How can I find out what my pension will be at retirement?
- 6) Can my spouse/partner attend a meeting with the Retirement Specialist?
- 7) What is the “base rate” in calculating my pension?