

President's Report 2010-2011

Last year I noted that UMRA did not have any space on campus we could call our own. Subsequently, I contacted Mr. Terry Voss, Executive Director of Human Resources, with a request for space in which we could keep our files. Rosalyn Howard, Director of Learning & Development Services (L&DS), has given us such space in the L&DS complex in the Isbister Building. The University of Manitoba Faculty Association generously continues to make their boardroom (and guest parking spots) available to us for committee meetings.

In May 2011, I attended the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) 9th National Conference in Regina. While many of the conference sessions were interesting, I reported to the Executive Committee that very little information was presented that would help us to better fulfill our purposes as an association. Sending a delegate to the CURAC conference has been a (if not *the*) major expense for us each year. Based on my experience this year I have recommended to the Executive Committee that no decision be made about sending a delegate to the next CURAC conference (April 2012, in Victoria B.C.) until we have had the opportunity to evaluate the conference program.

During my term as President I have heard from several UMRA Members who, upon retiring with many years of service to the University, had been denied a Retired Staff ID card. These Members had met one, but not both, of the eligibility requirements for Retired Staff, i.e., 10 or more consecutive years of employment in a continuing position and age 55+ at the time of retirement. Denial of Retired Staff status also meant that these Members were denied the benefits that go with it: a U of M e-mail account, the use of Library services, and free membership in Recreational Services.

In December 2010, I discussed this situation with our Benefits and Pensions Committee and with the Executive Committee. There was agreement that UMRA should approach the University on behalf of such Members. In January 2011, John Mundie (UMRA's first president), Glenn Swift (then acting chair of our Benefits and Pensions Committee), and I met with Mr. Terry Voss. We proposed that the University modify the Retired Staff eligibility requirements so that more of our Members could qualify. We made the case that this was a concrete way for the University to acknowledge the contributions which our Members have made, and continue to make, to the University community.

Mr. Voss was very receptive to our proposal. Over the course of the spring and summer he and I exchanged ideas about how to extend benefits to our Members within the constraints imposed by current University policies and procedures. I'm very pleased to report that the outcome of this cooperative process has been the University's creation of the status of Associate Retiree (a term coined by Mr. Voss). Members who meet specific age-at-retirement and years-of-employment criteria will be issued an Associate Retiree ID card by the University. They will be entitled to a sponsored U of M e-mail account, use of Library services, and membership in Recreational Services at the alumni rate. The University has agreed that this status will be available only to UMRA Members. The Executive Committee has decided that lifetime membership in our association should be a prerequisite for becoming an Associate Retiree. In the near future, we will be notifying the membership about this new status and providing details about the eligibility criteria, the application process, and the benefits available to Associate Retirees.

Let me conclude by thanking the members of the Executive Committee, the members of our standing and ad hoc committees, and Janice Mann (our webmaster) for their work on behalf of our association. I look forward to working with the new and returning members of the Executive Committee during the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Goldstein, President