

President's Report

2013-14

The following is an overview of some developments in the past year that are worth noting.

First, the University of Manitoba Retirees Endowment Fund (UMREF) is now in place. By mid-2014 retirees contributed \$7,500, an amount that was matched through a provincial government program. This initial endowment of \$15,000 is enough to make it a viable bursary fund. One objective of the UMRA executive is to increase the size of the endowment. It is a fund that will accept small and large donations from both academic and support staff retirees.

Second, I met with Greg Juliano, the associate vice-president (human resources), in August. The obvious objective of the meeting was to remind administration that UMRA and its members are still interested in the university and that there are retirees willing and able to contribute positively to the academic community.

Among the issues discussed with Mr. Juliano, were two that need support from members in order to be realized. One was the concept of a "retirement centre." This idea has been around for a couple of years, and is an UMRA executive priority in that there is an ad hoc committee to explore the possibilities. The impetus for a retirement centre comes from a feeling that retirees could benefit from a venue with a wide range of retirement information beyond the very specific information the university provides to each individual at retirement. What form should a retirement centre take? This is an idea that is worth developing, but it also needs input from you.

Another topic of discussion was whether retirees, both support and academic, can be engaged as volunteers to enhance the student experience and the educational mission of the university. While it is true that many retired academic staff continue to be involved in their departments as senior scholars/professors emeriti, it is also clear that retirees can contribute to university life in ways that transcend specific departmental links. I ended this year's meeting with Mr. Juliano by strongly suggesting that at least one brainstorming session be convened to explore the possibilities. I would welcome ideas from you to take forward.

I also attended the 12th Annual conference of the College and University Retiree Association of Canada that was held over two days in Hamilton. One issue that was shared by all of the more than 50 participants was the challenge of reminding their respective administrations that retiree associations in general, and retirees in particular, are an important constituency with potential.

Finally, I thank every member of the executive committee, whose participation at the four meetings we held this past year, was always helpful.

Ed Unrau, President