

**UIRA President's Report**  
**Carolyn Wanat**  
**July, 2022**

The 2021-2022 year was one of adapting to ongoing challenges imposed by the Covid virus. The UIRA board and program committee decided to hold most programs on Zoom with limited outdoor events. We had hoped to return to in-person meetings during the year but wanted to make everyone's safety a priority. UIRA members remained loyal by attending virtual sessions. As the year came to an end, the board and program committee are once again deliberating about program delivery options for next year. Leadership remains hopeful that it will be safe to hold some in-person meetings with caution.

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, the organization continued to fulfill its mission and purpose. The Program Committee, newly formed in 2020-2021, planned virtual programs. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of new board members and officers, and the Awards Committee recognized recipients of university and community service awards. Once again, we held an electronic election thanks to Sue Otto's generosity in setting it up. The annual meeting was held in June via Zoom. Orientation and onboarding of new members was held virtually and in person. Our membership chair, assistant to the treasurer, and treasurer collected and processed dues. In the third year of the pandemic, UIRA remained stable in continuing its traditions and working on new initiatives. Following is a summary of the year's highlights.

### **Programs**

We offered 16 programs; 13 virtually and three outdoors. We continued to offer the traditional UI Benefits Program in November and met President Barbara Wilson in December. Virtual programs included lectures on a wide variety of topics including Grant Wood, the Pentacrest Museums, Critical Race Theory, Politics and Protest in Pictures, and human trafficking and domestic violence. Outdoor programs included hikes at Kent Park and Cangleska Wakan Ephemeral Forest and kayaking at Kent Park. Attendees included long-time members and several new members who joined the forest hike.

### **One Day at Iowa**

UIRA participated again this year in the "One Day at Iowa" fundraising campaign. The event was a great success. UIRA members contributed \$2066 to our endowed scholarships fund with the Center for Advancement. Two scholarships will continue to be awarded annually to undergraduate students.

### **Supporting Our Students**

Opportunities were available to make contributions to the student-led UI food pantry and clothes closet. Both organizations requested donations of food, professional clothing, and monetary gifts.

### **Organizational Change**

The past year has been one of potential organizational change. UIRA leadership continued the work begun by past presidents to establish a formal relationship with the University of Iowa. UIRA is the only institution in the Big Ten Retirees Association that does not have a formal affiliation with its university. In the fall, UIRA leaders began meeting with the President's office to receive assistance with

membership management and communications. Meetings with President Wilson's office and leaders in the Center for Advancement have moved us closer to securing help we need to remain a current, vital group. Specifically, UIRA needs technical assistance in collecting dues electronically, up-to-date communications technology through a new website and email system, and assistance with arranging and setting up events. It is hoped that details will be finalized over the summer. Members will receive further information through email or a special edition of the *Gray Hawk*.

### **Presidential Award**

The President's Award is given to members who have made substantial and sustained contributions to UIRA. This year, I gave the award to Chuck Dayton. In the six years that Chuck served on the board, he was Assistant to the Treasurer. It was Chuck's responsibility to collect membership applications and checks for dues from UIRA's mailbox. He gave the membership chair the application forms and the treasurer the checks for deposit. While he described himself as "only a gopher," Chuck held an essential role under our existing membership system. By separating checks from applications, Chuck ensured that UIRA conducts its business in a financially responsible and honest manner. Chuck's strong sense of integrity and commitment to UIRA exemplifies the professionalism of UIRA.

### **Thoughts and Thank You**

As we enter the third year of the pandemic, we will continue to evaluate and modify how we provide opportunities for our members to attend meetings and enjoy the educational and social aspects of UIRA. Our top priority is to provide quality offerings under safe, comfortable conditions for as many members as possible. I am confident that the Program Committee has the creativity and energy to accomplish this goal.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as president during the past year. It has been fun to engage with the dedicated members of the leadership teams. Thank you to the Board of Directors for their loyalty, dedication, and hard work for UIRA: Pat Mason-Browne, David Fitzgerald, Deb Cobb, Chuck Dayton, Benny Hawkins, Lois Lembke, Vicki Siefers, Billie Townsend, Lesanne Fliehler, and recently appointed Mike Barron. I especially want to thank president-elect Ed Dove and past-president Sam Cochran for their support and wise counsel and past-past president Emil Rinderspacher for his instruction in Zoom. Thank you to Frank Mitros, EFC liaison, webmaster Phil Klein, and Feather Lacy for administering the listserv. And a final, huge thank you to the Program Committee: Sam Cochran, Nancy Williams, Billie Townsend, Alice Atkinson, Lesanne Fliehler, Ellie Herman, Nancy Langguth, and Emil Rinderspacher. Your hard work and positivity have been gifts for the organization.