

University of Iowa Retirees Association (UIRA)
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2025, 1:00PM
Hybrid: -2520-C UCC Zoom

Attending: John Allen, Michael Barron, Lois Cox, Jean Florman, Nancy Langguth, Diana Lundell, Cindy Seyfer, Rachel Stewart, Todd Stewart, Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash, Cathy Wilcox.

Not attending: Mike Noel, Minnetta Gardinier

Call to Order –Lois Cox, President-Lois called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes-The May 20, 2025 was the final meeting of the 2024-25 BOD. Those minutes were approved via email by the 2024-25 BOD. Therefore, there were no minutes to approve at the September 16, 2025 meeting.

Reports from Officers

President –Lois Cox - Lois Cox and Rachel Stewart, President Elect, attended the Big Ten Retirees Association annual meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan during the first week of August. The expanded size of the group brought up the question of whether and to what extent schools provide financial support for representatives of their retiree organizations to attend these meetings, especially since some of them will now be taking place at greater distances from the Midwest. At this point, UIRA is dues-financed, which may require discussion in the future.

Lois has now attended two of these meetings and found both to be interesting and thought-provoking. The schools vary significantly in what their retiree organizations look like. While most, like UIRA, are membership organization requiring dues, some schools like Michigan confer membership in the retiree organization simply by virtue of retirement. Again, this is something UIRA should discuss, especially given that UIRA has no retirees of Merit staff or bargaining units on the board and members of those groups are distinctly underrepresented in UIRA membership.

There were sessions on health care programs, membership demographics, university-provided staff support, charitable volunteering, engaging retirees who live remotely, and many other subjects. Rachel and Lois tried to split up to increase coverage of the topics, and Rachel may have additional information to share. Lois said it's worth the money to send UIRA representatives to these meetings, and hopes to pursue some of these topics further in upcoming UIRA meetings.

President-Elect – Rachel Stewart- Rachel will provide a summary of the sessions that she attended at the Big 10 Retirees Association Annual meeting in August 2025. That information will be included in the BOD packet of materials for the October BOD meeting.

Past President-Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash-nothing to report.

Treasurer – Todd Stewart- July-August expenses include travel for UIRA President and President-Elect to attend the Big 10 Retirees Association Annual meeting. In September there will be an increase in deposits for membership dues. Lois Cox asked if Todd had any information about the time lag for deposits to appear in the UIRA bank account. Todd has not received any updates about this.

Emeritus Faculty Council (EFC) Liaison to UIRA-Lois Cox will be notified by the current President of the EFC of their new representative to UIRA.

UIRA Liaison to EFC-no report.

Awards Committee- Mike Barron (Chair), Nancy Langguth-nothing to report.

Budget Committee - Todd Stewart (chair)-nothing to report.

Gray Hawk –Diana Lundell, Chair- With the September 2025 issue, UIRA published the first Gray Hawk email newsletter. Many thanks to Kellie who did the heavy lifting to get it into the new format; Lesanne Fliehler who acted as the editor once again while Diana was in Alaska; other Board members who served as proofreaders.

This new format achieves what the Board intended—providing news in an easily consumable format that is in line with the UI branding and does not require design cost.

Diana anticipates that future issues will come together more smoothly (and take less of Kellie’s time) as everyone becomes used to the format.

Deadlines for the October newsletter: Call for content: Sept. 3, Content deadline: Sept. 16, Editing, final text prep: Sept. 16-19, Diana sends to Board editors: Sept. 19, Diana sends final text to Kellie: on or before Sept 23, Kellie sends draft for final editing changes: Sept. 25/26, Kellie sends email newsletter: Sept. 30

Diana brought up a question about the Gray Hawk Writers. Should they be UIRA members? This is a writing group that has existed for many years. It started with UIRA members and friends of friends who were invited to join the group. Members sometimes have their writing published in the Gray Hawk. The group has limited their membership to 16 and only take on a new member if an existing member leaves. Currently only three of the 16 are UIRA members. Some of the others have not had any significant association with the University of Iowa and some live out of state.

The writers group was formed before UIRA officially became part of the UI. The BOD may need to review the Gray Hawk writer’s group affiliation with UIRA. Lois Cox will contact Jennifer Wohn who is the current leader of the group to get additional information.

Discussion arose about the name of the writers group. Gray Hawk is the name of the UIRA newsletter and if the writer’s group limits membership and members are not UIRA members, should they continue to be called the Gray Hawk writers group? Since Lois Cox will be contacting Jennifer, this topic could be a future agenda item under old business.

Photo Contest: UIRA will promote the contest in the January and February issues of the Gray Hawk newsletter.

Manual Update & Orientation Committee - Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash (chair), Lesanne Fliehler, Chris Brus-no report

Membership Committee - Cindy Seyfer (chair), Chris Brus, Diana Lundell, Mike Noel, Kevin Ward

Kellie updated the following based on information provided to her by the Membership Committee.

- Renewal dispatches (Dispatch is system used to send emails)
- Downloadable Renewal Membership form from the UIRA website
- Cashnet membership forms
- Cashnet storefront – shortened text following updates to the website. Kudos to Rachel and Kellie on these changes which are a definite improvement.
- New nondiscrimination and accessibility University statements

The renewal process kicked off with Kellie sending out separate dispatch emails to the following groups.

- Dues-paying members whose membership will expire in August 2025
 - August 15th notice sent to 213
 - September 1st notice sent to 135
 - September 20th notice
- Introductory members whose introductory period will expire in August 2025
 - August 15th notice sent to 643
 - September 4th notice sent to 615
 - Sept 20th notice

Emails will go out in October to those who do not renew, to inform them that they have been removed from the UIRA membership and will no longer receive the Gray Hawk and encourage them to consider renewing their membership.

Cindy provided spreadsheets as of September 9 of the dues-paying and introductory members who received the most recent renewal reminder. She asked the BOD to review the list for individuals that they know and to reach out to them and encourage them to check their email for the UIRA reminder and become a dues-paying member. They may be more responsive to personal outreach than standard UIRA email.

Cindy discussed a proposal for a new initiative for introductory members: to have a “meet and greet” for introductory members with the UIRA Board of Directors. These could be done in October and February. The sessions would provide an opportunity for the UIRA board to share information about UIRA and how participation in UIRA can assist with the transition to retirement for recent retirees. This session could be coordinated by both the Membership and Program Planning Committees. BOD members agreed this could be beneficial for introductory members. Cindy will provide more information to the BOD at a future meeting.

Nominations Committee-Jean Florman (Chair), Mike Barron, Lois Cox. Jean reported that the committee hasn't met yet. She has collected information (mostly excel spreadsheets) from last year's chair, Mike Hovland, and is starting to put together a list of tasks before a preliminary committee meeting.

Jean hopes to have a preliminary committee meeting in late fall so they can start thinking about prospective Board members and officers before the kickoff meeting in February.

Program Planning Committee-Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash (Chair), John Allen, Lois Cox, Jean Florman, Diana Lundell, Rachel Stewart, Cathy Wilcox, Pat Kenner, Rick Walton (has previously chaired PPC)

The PPC has met twice so far (August/September).

Upcoming Programs:

September: We have been unable to schedule any other programs in September besides the Barn Party.
Fall Barn Party - Friday, September 26, 4:00 - 6:30 pm:

- Home of UIRA members Steve Scheckel and Pam Terrill: 4317- 320th St NE, Iowa City
- RSVP by September 16 to van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu
- Limited to 65 participants; RSVP required
- Ron Clark, presenter. \$300 honorarium
- Lois, Cathy. Jean and Nancy will be unable to attend party
- Volunteers needed to help assemble sandwiches on the morning of Friday, Sept 26 –Diana, Evalyn, and will help.
- BOD members: please plan to bring a large salad or dessert
- Volunteers also needed the day before (9/25) to help set-up tables and chairs in the barn. John, Mike, Jean and Rachel have agreed.
- Rachel wants to include an RSVP function in the Gray Hawk. This may or may not be ready in time for Barn Party rsmps. Evalyn has been receiving rsvp's to her email

OCTOBER:

- Tuesday, October 14, 2520-D UCC-- IMMIGRATION: Bram Elias, College of Law (John arranging)
- Thursday, October 16, 1:00 – 2:30 pm, 2520-D UCC. The Annual UI Health Care Enrollment Options for UI Retirees (Sonatina Fernandez) and Health Insurance Decisions (SHIIP Counselor- Kevin Ward) as Open Enrollment begins. This year, these presentation have been combined into one extended session. IT assistance has been requested!

NOVEMBER:

- Thursday, November 20, 11:30 – 1:30, November 4, Songs on Jane Austen—with singer in costume, IC Public Library; with piano; light refreshments]

Under consideration:

- Children's librarian and bookseller-UIRA had a program last fall that was well attended. (Lois to investigate)
- Money Management (Clark Buelt) (Lois to investigate)

DECEMBER:

- Thursday, December 11, 1:00 – 2:00, in 2520-D UCC President Wilson, "State of the University" annual presentation. Confirmed seminar room. (Room available from 12:30 for tech set-up.)
- Decide on Light Lunch or treats.
- IT assistance has been requested.

FUTURE PROGRAMS:

Capitol Culture: 24 Hours in Des Moines. Jean Florman began a discussion about Ballet Des Moines (BDM) and other cultural offerings in DM. Her daughter-in-law, Blaire, is the Director. Jean believes UIRA should branch out and offer more programs in the Arts. Des Moines has exploded into a "happenin' place". 2026 will focus on Ballet Without Barriers, working closely with the Harkin Institute and also at BDM's new studio.

Jean recommends offering a day & night event around their cultural offerings: Sculpture Garden, Art Museum is gorgeous. If participants want to attend the ballet performance and stay overnight, there is a discount at Surety Hotel for people with tickets.

There are two performances in the spring. The day also could include a tour of the new BDM studio plus a chat with the Executive Director.

- Spring shows: Nothing Holds Still. (Feb 27-28,7:00) and Cinderella (May 16-7:00 and May 17, matinee)
- Potentially tour Harkin Institute, which is a yearlong partner in Ballet Without Barriers. Other partners include the Iowa School for the Deaf and several other educational and nonprofit organizations
- Most of the activities are within walking distance downtown (except the art museum). Des Art Center, Pappajohn Sculpture Park, and Iowa Capitol Building
- Advertise it as "learn the capitol", ""Capitol Culture: 24 hours in Des Moines".
- 2-hour drive from Iowa City to Des Moines by the time you get downtown and park.
- Blaire would need to set aside tickets. How many do we think would be interested? Send out a questionnaire to gauge interest. Survey on the website with separate email. Jean can write a blurb, Des Moines Arts center needs transportation
- Bus in February; matinee makes more sense. Bus seems problematic. If overnight, tickets to Ballet at Surety Hotel get a discount.

HOME BREWED band fundraiser for Student Food Pantry

- Evalyn invited Pete Damiano, leader of the band, to attend our meeting to discuss the concert in aid of the Food Pantry. He recognizes there is “a lot of food insecurity” in the community.
- He shared that HomeBrewed is fully booked for the fall semester, but can make it work in the spring semester.
- Pete wants to be in touch with Eric Rossow (IMU) and Food Pantry staff, all working together to create a very successful event. [Zoom meeting set up for Sept 19] Both Pete and Eric have been invited to join the next PPC meeting on October 7.
- Need extended publicity beyond the Gray Hawk. Home Brewed’s and Pantry’s networks too. Facebook.
- Expect IMU catering to be required.
- Hawkeye Room in IMU seems a good place with reasonable parking, but Evalyn will contact Old Brick to discuss possible venue.
- For further discussion: Shall we pursue the idea of having this event alongside 30th anniversary?

Explorer’s Group Lesanne Fliehler, Marianne Mason (co-leaders), Alice Atkinson

- This year walks are scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month (September-May).
- Details on each walk will be emailed to the group a few days ahead of the event. No RSVP is required.
- In addition to those listed below, we hope to schedule a guided hike in the fall by either Bur Oak Land Trust or Johnson County Conservation.
- Sept. 17, 10:00 a.m., Clear Creek Trail Extension, Robert’s Ferry Rd./Tiffin Timbers Disc Golf Course, Tiffin
- Oct. 15, 10:00 a.m., James Alan McPherson Park, 1858 7th Ave. Ct., Iowa City
- Nov. 19, 2 p.m., Scott Park Trail, 64 Explorer’s Group 2 p.m., Scott Park Trail, 640 S. Scott Blvd., park at Rita’s Ranch Dog Park, Iowa City
- No walk in December.

Website Committee - Rachel Stewart (chair), Lesanne Fliehler, Carol McGhan-nothing to report.

Old Business-30th Anniversary Celebration. 30th Anniversary Celebration Committee –Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash (Chair), Lois Cox, Rachel Stewart

John Allen suggested having a theme to the celebration. Since 30 years is a “pearl” anniversary, the theme could be “PEARLS OF WISDOM”. Speakers/activities based on this theme. Must get started very soon with plans and arrangements!

Evalyn Shalash-Van Allen distributed a draft of possible locations for the events. We could have more than one event and could have speakers.

New Business

UIRA Liaison to the EFC for 2025-26-A retired faculty member on the UIRA BOD needs to be the liaison. The EFC meetings are on the first Monday of each month from 9:30-11:30. John Allen volunteered to be the UIRA liaison with Nancy Langguth as his back up when he can't attend the meetings.

Recent Health Insurance Changes-Role of UIRA. Lois Cox will inquire with Central HR about having a UIRA Board member on the Funded Retirement & Insurance Committee (FRIC). The EFC has liaisons with FRIC and other UI committees such as the UI Library, Hancher, and Athletics. Lois asked John and Nancy to pay particular attention to other EFCs liaisons when they attend EFC meetings.

TEAMS Training-Kellie, HR Administrative Services Coordinator (ASC) assigned to UIRA will provide a brief information session about TEAMS at a future BOD meeting.

Age Friendly University-Lois Cox sent information to the BOD about a survey that the College of Nursing is coordinating for the UI to be recognized as an Age Friendly University. Individuals and groups can complete the survey. Lois suggested that UIRA BOD complete a group survey. Nancy Langguth and Rachel Stewart volunteered to help Lois complete a group survey. Information about the survey will be in the Gray Hawk.

Outreach to new introductory members-See Membership Committee report about plans to have a meet and greet for introductory members.

Increasing UIRA Membership-Lois Cox reported that some other Big 10 universities have similar issues as UIRA does about getting retirees to join UIRA. Couple universities have a large number of retired nurses in their membership. UI nurses are part of the SEIU bargaining unit and it seems that many nurses commute to Iowa City for work. UIRA may need to get more information about this group of retirees to determine if having events where a majority of retirees live could be beneficial in increasing UIRA membership.

Venturing outside IC for events-see Program Planning Committee report, Future Programs about travelling to Des Moines for events. Jean Florman will put a proposal together with dates and activities for this event.

Adjourn

On a motion from Todd Stewart, seconded by Rachel Stewart, Lois adjourned the meeting at 2:28 PM.