

University of Iowa Retirees Association (UIRA)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: October 21, 2025 1:00 PM

Hybrid: 2520 –C UCC and Zoom

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

Call to Order –Lois Cox, President, called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion from Mike Barron, seconded by Jean Florman, the September 16, 2025 minutes were approved.

Reports from Officers

President –Lois Cox welcomed Tom Vaughn, a faculty member at the College of Public Health in his pre-emeritus days, as the new Emeritus Faculty Council (EFC) liaison.

The ad hoc committee, Nancy Langguth, Rachel Stewart, and Lois Cox, formed at the September 16, 2025 meeting to respond to the Age-Friendly University survey circulated by the Csomay Center formulated their responses and submitted it. If any Board members would like to see what got submitted, please let Lois know.

The bi-annual meeting between UIRA and central administration as represented by Senior Asst. VP Joni Troester and Chief HR officer and Assoc. VP Cheryl Reardon is scheduled for October 22. Lois needs to submit agenda items for that meeting and BOD should submit topics/concerns to her. Some agenda items include inquiring about the possibility of appointing UIRA liaisons to university committees such as the Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee (FRIC), and perhaps the committees that oversee arts and athletics, does Central HR have ideas for how to communicate more effectively with retirees from employment categories, merit staff and staff from bargaining units, that are currently underrepresented in the UIRA membership. Cindy is planning to attend to discuss improved contact with soon-to-be-retirees and the recently retired.

Lois listed volunteer efforts as a New Business topic this month. She was prompted to do so by observing the importance of this from other sister institutions at the recent Big Ten Retirees Association (BTRA) conference. While some associations focus their efforts on community activities, others focus on university-sponsored programs such as serving as volunteer jurors in law school mock trials or portraying patients at medical school training events. Is this something UIRA should be exploring more actively?

President Elect-Rachel Stewart- Rachel shared information from different sessions that she attended at the Big 10 Retirees Association Annual meeting in August 2025.

Some of the programs/topics that other universities provided for their members included Health Care Changes, Aging Well, Student Scholarships, Research opportunities, fund raising for the student food pantry, Zoom workshops on variety of topics, and Journalism students interviewing retirees.

Some universities focus more on engagement with their members rather than increasing membership. One university partners with their local senior center for bus-ride events and holds some of their programs at their centers.

Benefits You Receive from Your University: UIRA should view individual sites for member-only benefits (Maryland, Washington, Michigan) and check out Nebraska's benefits web page.

Various notes:

- How can we be more welcoming?
- More interaction with members via surveys and interest forms.
- Use other retirement centers for programs, etc.
- Perhaps a "Living Well" program (or series)? Can HR help with this or open their programs to retirees?
- We need to figure out the perks and benefits from the UI and make sure our site is up to date.
- Some schools offer summer programs (the "Third Semester").
- Offer a luncheon "fair" with people from various organizations that need volunteers.
- Should our videos be on a YouTube channel?
- Figure out events that will pull in introductory members.
- Look into AROHE - Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education

Past President— Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash-see Program Planning Committee report.

Treasurer – Todd Stewart-Todd reviewed the monthly income statement through 10/15/2025 and the Balance Sheet through 10/15/25. Todd indicated that revenue will pick up after the middle of the month because it takes about two weeks for checks to be cut then deposits can be made.

EFC Liaison to UIRA-Tom Vaughn-After Lois introduced Tom to the BOD, Tom shared that he was on the faculty at the College of Public Health for 29 years. He had been the Faculty Council President in the past.

UIRA Liaison to EFC-John Allen-John attended the Emeritus Faculty Council (EFC) Meeting of October 6, 2025. There were brief oral reports from a couple of the committees .EFC Communications is working to update mailing lists and are in the process of converting their communication to members by using Dispatch. The elections committee talked about how to identify and recruit candidates for the Council. The lecture committee reported that Mary Ann Rasmussen would give a lecture on November 20. Campus Planning reported about ongoing discussions about replacement of the Burlington Street Bridge. Project details are in flux still. See the city website about this:

<https://www.icgov.org/government/departments-and-divisions/public-works/engineering/construction-projects>

Liaison to FRIC reported on concerns that have arisen with some higher billings from the UI downtown hospital (old Mercy) for some who have University health care plans. The university is still trying to work out how to handle this and encouraged those on university plans who are impacted to contact HR.

Rod Lehnertz, UI VP for Finance and Operations and University Architect, was the guest speaker. He spoke about several things. Health care, and particularly rural health care, is state priorities right now and UI looking for more operational support from the state to support rural services. The university is working on a simulator for nursing. This fall UI had the second largest entering class in history. The aim is to have 32-33,000 students because more students would stretch the UI infrastructure (Campus, safety, roads and teaching resources). Building projects- Tippie is expanding into Gilmore Hall and a rarely used internal patio. The 1936 Art Building is being renovated and expects to see the Graduate College and Public Policy in that space. Many changes slated for IMU due to renovations. Dance will move from Halsey to the former art museum. Plans are to demolish Halsey and the lot across from the IMU will undergo significant changes that will make it more usable.

There was a question about the planned closure of the State Historical Society and Mr. Lehnertz offered that the building had been well-maintained, but did not comment about materials being moved out of the building.

Committee Reports

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

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

Gray Hawk –Diana Lundell-Editor-Deadlines for the November newsletter:Call for content: Nov. 3, Content deadline: Nov. 16, Editing, final text prep: Nov. 16, Diana sends to Board editors: Nov. 19, Diana sends final text to Kellie: on or before: Nov. 21, Kellie sends draft for final editing changes: Nov.24/25, Kellie sends email newsletter: Nov. 25/26 prior to Thanksgiving holiday if possible OR Nov. 29/30.

Photo Contest : The deadline is March 16, 2025. We 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-nothing to report.

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

Cindy provided data about UIRA membership: Comparison of paid members for last year and current year: October 10, 2024: 515 members at the start of the 2024-2025 UIRA year. October 16, 2025: 539 members at the start of the 2025-2026. This is our first year of having introductory members who received a free period of membership and now can choose to convert to paid membership and that may have increased our membership in year-to-year comparison.

Cindy provided facts about our 2025-2026 dues-paying members that included their job type prior to retiring, how many live in Iowa and out of state, and the year that they retired. There are 68 dues-paying members who did not renew and 582 introductory members who did not choose to become dues-paying members.

There was discussion about reaching out to the paid members that did not renew. UIRA could mail postcards to the dues-paying members who did not renew. See Old Business section about decision related to this discussion. UIRA could reach out to the 139 introductory members who did not restrict their addresses to encourage them to become paid members but that would be costly.

Cindy indicated that many introductory members do not become paid members. Ideas were discussed on how to better engage introductory members. The email that goes to introductory members shortly after their retirement from Kellie Digmann is being reviewed. Rachel Stewart, UIRA webmaster, will create an "update your contact information" link on the UIRA website in order to have the most up-to-date contact information for both our introductory members and dues-paying members.

In the past central HR used to offer a full day of programming related to retirement preparation and no longer provides this. Could/should UIRA fill that gap and create a "preparing for retirement series" or host a panel discussion on resources and ways to get involved or a "fair" where staff would be available at tables to answer questions. This could be available to newly retired staff and those retiring in the near future. There were many ideas about including various community resources to help. (UI and SHIIP) See Old Business section about decision related to this.

Membership survey: Thanks to Diana Lundell for clarifying that the goals of the membership committee are both recruitment and retention. To meet those goals, UIRA needs to learn more about our members and what adds value to their membership in UIRA. The committee agreed that a survey of dues-paying members would be helpful to gauge their interest in programming, activities, social events, and to gather suggestions on other ways to engage the membership. Other questions might include the length of their membership; zoom vs. in-person preference, what would increase the value of their membership, etc. The committee members will work on a draft for a survey.

Cindy met with the Program Planning Committee (PPC) and shared suggestions from the Membership Committee about ways to encourage more members to attend programs. The PPC agreed that it would be beneficial to survey individuals who attend the programs. Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash will give the program (in person and Zoom) attendance lists to Cindy so she can update emails or zoom names in the

membership dataset and our dispatch distribution list. Social events like the barn party are well attended. Should additional social events be offered throughout the year? Since the PPC is currently planning with the Home Brewed band and food pantry for a fundraising event and with the 30th anniversary celebration event during the spring semester, UIRA may not need more social events this year but should consider this for future years. Proposal to create an event/fair/panel discussion for introductory members and soon-to-be retired UI employees. See Old Business.

Nominating Committee- Jean Florman (Chair), Mike Barron, Lois Cox-no report.

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

The PPC has met three times so far (August/September/October), with one introductory meeting with Pete Damiano; then Pete came again with Eric Rossow (Student Life)

Past programs:

OCTOBER:

- Tuesday, October 14, 2520-D UCC-- IMMIGRATION: Bram Elias, College of Law (John arranging). Lunch for in-person members.
- 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 as been combined into one, extended session. Over 105 members signed up to Zoom.

Upcoming programs:

NOVEMBER:

- Monday, November 4, 1:00 – 2:30, 2520-D UCC, Children’s Literature LUNCH to be ordered
- Thursday, November 20, 11:30 – 1:30, November 4, Songs on Jane Austen—with singer in costume, note: IC Public Library; with piano; light refreshments]

DECEMBER:

- Thursday, December 11, 1:00 – 2:00, in 2520-D UCC President Wilson, “State of the University” annual presentation. Need to decide on Light Lunch or treats.

Future Programs:

- “Capital Culture”-Des Moines: Jean’s daughter-in-law, Blaire, is the Director of Ballet DM. Dates: May 16-17. Ballet- May 17 performances. Ballet DM partnering with Harkin Center (disability inclusion initiative).
- Proposal:
 - o UIRA will reserve a block of seats at Ballet Des Moines.

- o Include a tour of the Harkin Institute the following day.
- o Optional refreshment reception or cocktail hour before Friday's performance.
- o Ticket range: \$35–\$85 (consider matinee discount).
 - Follow-up: Draft "Save the Date" announcement with details.

HOME BREWED band fundraiser for Student Food Pantry

- o Evalyn invited Pete Damiano and Eric Rossow to attend the program meeting to discuss the concert benefit for the UI Food Pantry. Possible location is the Reunion Bar on the Ped Mall. The event will occur in the spring semester. After event date and location has been decided the event needs to be publicized. Home Brewed, UIRA and the UI Food pantry will be involved in publicizing the event. Discussed entrance charge, raffle for items, and food purchase at the venue. More details forthcoming.

Presentation by Eric Rossow – Food Pantry Needs

- o FY24 Statistics:
 - o Individuals served: 10,179 (up by ~3,000 from previous year)
 - o Households served: 13,607
 - o Food distributed: 164,305 lbs (up from 117,000 lbs)
 - o Client Base: Includes UI employees; usage is tracked through a swipe system and weighed for accurate data.
- o Most Needed Items: Personal care products—diapers, wipes, toilet paper.
- o Additional Needs: More fresh fruits and vegetables.
- o Donation Options:
 - o Direct Donations: QR code linked to UICA (5% fee applies for tax-deductible gifts,
 - o Amazon Wish List: QR code for direct delivery to IMU.
 - o Hybrid Event Model: Combine QR code giving, raffles, and admission fees.
 - o Potential Partners: Donors, Student Government, and others.

Special Interest Group (SIG) Explorer's Report-Co-leaders:Lesanne Flieher, Marianne Mason

(Information provided by Lesanne):

- Nov. 19, 2 p.m., Scott Park Trail, 640 S. Scott Blvd., park at Rita's Ranch Dog Park
- No walk in December.

Website Update Committee- Rachel Stewart (Chair), Lesanne Fliehler, Carol McGhan-nothing to report

Old Business:

30th Anniversary celebration: Evalyn indicated that the Program Planning Committee will begin working on planning the 30th Anniversary activities in November.

At the September meeting, the Membership Committee presented an idea for a possible event for introductory members to encourage them to become dues paying members. This is a significant undertaking and more discussion is needed to determine UIRA's role in this event. Kevin Ward will talk to Sonatina Fernandez and Rebecca Olson in HR to learn more about the organizations involved when HR offered this service.

Spring outing to see Ballet in Des Moines-the day for the ballet performance is on Sunday, May 17-see Program Planning Committee section for preliminary information about this.

New Business:

Postcard outreach to UIRA members who did not renew their membership this fall: Cindy Seyfer, said the cost would be less than \$50 to purchase printable postcards and mail them. To break even on the mailing costs, four of the 68 whose membership expired would need to renew for one year at the \$12 rate. BOD agreed to spend the funds to reach out to these members.

Volunteer program-Tabled

One Community, One Book event: Lois Cox was asked by Adrienne Wing, College of Law if UIRA was interested in being a co-sponsor for a One Community, One Book event on November 10, 2025. Carolyn Chalmers, wrote a book They Don't Want Her There and Carolyn is a speaker at the event. Carolyn spoke last year about her book and UIRA was a sponsor. A motion was made for UIRA to provide \$200. Motion was seconded and vote was unanimous for UIRA to provide \$200.

Adjourn: On a motion from Rachel Stewart, seconded by John Allen, Lois adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm.