

University of Iowa Retirees Association (UIRA)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: November 18, 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 John Allen, the October 21, 2025 minutes were approved.

Reports from Officers

President-Lois Cox- On Oct. 22, Rachel Stewart, Cindy Seyfer, Todd Stewart, Kellie Digmann and Lois Cox met with Joni Troester, Senior Assistant VP in Human Resources. The first topic -- having UIRA liaisons on standing university committees such as FRIC (Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee), recreation services, Hancher, athletics, and the library. Joni agreed that it would be beneficial to have a UIRA liaison to FRIC. After UIRA selects a liaison, Lois will notify Joni of the liaison.

The second topic-- difficulties in having a full range of UIRA members from different employment categories to fill board and other leadership positions. Joni will give this some thought and will notify Lois with any ideas. Joni suggested the name of one person to contact for ideas on how get more UIRA members from a specific employment group. Evalyn Van Allen Shalash will contact that person. Mike Barron knows someone who worked with clinical nurses and will contact that person. Evalyn and Mike will update the BOD at the December meeting.

Related to the topic of membership, Lois brought up that UIRA members pay dues, and although the dues are low, requiring dues might impede broad membership, and consequently UIRA's ability to speak as a well-informed representative of all retirees. Lois indicated that UIRA was not asking for university support in lieu of dues but wanted Joni to know the challenges of getting new members. Joni asked if UIRA had considered a more active role in volunteerism and Lois has added this on the agenda as a new business topic.

Cindy asked Joni if UHR has information about when people plan to retire in the near future. Some faculty and staff members have chosen phased retirement and UHR knows that they will be retiring. However, beyond that group, UHR doesn't know staff retirement plans in advance. Now that UIRA is officially an advisory board of the university, a request was made to Joni to ask the Office of General Counsel and other knowledgeable sources about allowing UIRA to have access to those in phased retirement as well as address information of staff that have already retired. Joni said she would inquire about this.

President Elect-Rachel Stewart-nothing to report.

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

Treasurer-Todd Stewart. Todd distributed the cash flow and balance summary sheets at the meeting. Todd is waiting for a \$1500 deposit that will change the cash flow from a deficit to a positive amount. UIRA has a CD at Hills Bank that has matured and Todd will renew it.

UIRA Liaison to the EFC-John Allen- John attended the November 3 Emeritus Faculty Council meeting.

EFC discussed trying to get additional university administrative support for the council, noting the UIRA arrangement.

Some Iowa lawmakers have encouraged the Regents to sign on to the Trump administration's Excellence in Higher Education Compact, while others have asked the Regents to reject it. The suggestion was to have a discussion of the Compact to be facilitated by members of the Lecture Series committee. A Regents spokesperson said that they are "reviewing" the compact. [As of this writing, it does not appear that it is on the November agenda]. In fact, the EFC event has since been announced for November 20. See <https://emeritus-faculty.uiowa.edu/news/2025/11/academic-freedom-implications-recent-changes-iowa-law-and-rules-board-regents-john>

The Hancher liaisons reported that there does not appear to be much interest from the Hancher committee in the input of the EFC or other liaisons.

The IT Advisory Committee reported on the current structure of ITS, which now includes UIHC. Zoom will be discontinued as some point, but a date has not been set.

The meeting concluded with a report from Tyler Bell, Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering. The university will offer an AI "certificate" beginning in 2026, and he is one of the professors who will teach the foundational course for the certificate.

EFC Liaison to UIRA (Ex-Officio)-Tom Vaughn- Tom informed the BOD that he is a co-liaison to the UIRA. He will not be at the December UIRA BOD meeting and Ed Dove, the other co-liaison, will be at the December meeting.

Standing Committee Reports

Awards Committee- Mike Barron (Chair), Nancy Langguth. Mike asked Diana Lundell to include information in the next Gray Hawk issue about submitting nominations for the two UIRA awards-service to the University and service to the community.

Budget Committee- Todd Stewart (Chair)-The committee hasn't been formed yet but Todd has topics for the committee to review: determining amount to spend on food/refreshments for programs, honorariums for speakers, and should a certain amount of the cash balance be kept "in reserve." Todd will check with Kellie Digmann for the annual report on the UIRA scholarship fund.

Gray Hawk -Diana Lundell-Editor- Deadlines for the December newsletter: Call for content- Nov. 5, Content deadline- Nov. 16, Editing, final text prep-Nov. 16-19, 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, 2026. The January and February issues of the Gray Hawk newsletter will have information about this.

Manual Update and Orientation Committee- Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash (Chair), Chris Brus,Lesanne Fliehler-no report.

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

Cindy Seyfer provided an update that UIRA now have 542 paid members and that is up by 3 since last month. There are 440 introductory members that have memberships that will expire after August 2026.

Mike Noel provided addition data analytics on membership residency. Kit Gerkin is a new member of the committee.

Postcard Mailing to Expired Dues-Paying Members Update

Postcards were mailed 11/12/25 to 55 addresses and the cost was \$51. Will wait to see how many pay their dues and then will be able to gauge the effectiveness of the mailing. Cindy provided the copy of the postcard text.

Kellie Digmann confirmed that introductory members that had their membership end in August 2025 had received three emails about becoming paid members and they are no longer receiving dispatch emails. It was suggested that a 4th mailing be sent encouraging them to become paid members and to use the text that was used on the postcard mailing. The membership committee will review the length of time that is currently used to determine the introductory membership period. It's possible that the BOD may want to make changes in the future.

Cindy attended the UHR meeting and brought up the topic of having a "retirement fair" for newly retired or soon-to-be retired employees. Joni said that UI Benefits stopped providing the full-day in-person retirement event because the majority preferred to meet one-on-one due to their individual needs and some preferred individual Zoom meetings. Joni will check with Benefits staff regarding any concerns or support if the UIRA BOD decides to sponsor a "fair". BOD will be updated. Joni suggested that UIRA survey the introductory members to get their feedback about UIRA sponsoring an in person info fair.

Nominating Committee- Jean Florman (Chair), Mike Barron, Lois Cox- First meeting will be on December 3, 11:00, 2520C.

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

The PPC met on November 4 and all committee members were in attendance.

1. Programs that have occurred:

Bram Elias – “Emerging Issues in Immigration Law” (Oct 14): Excellent response; potential repeat topic with Stella Elias for global perspective.

Healthcare Insurance Program (Oct 16): Very successful. Track attendance and recording views (ask Kellie). Kevin Ward highly praised.

Children’s Book Program: Good turnout (18 in person + 18 on Zoom). Lois to send thank-you note; Prairie Lights reading list for Gray Hawk.

2. Upcoming Programs:

- November 20: “Songs on Jane Austen” – Noon–1:00 pm, Room A, Iowa City Public Library
- December 11: “State of the University” – President Barbara Wilson- 1:00–2:00 pm, 2520-D UCC Light lunch

Evalyn shared Ideas and plans for future programs that include Homebrewed / Student Life Fundraiser, Sunday, February 15, 2026, 4:00–6:30 pm at Tavern Blue, Coralville-could have door prizes but no raffle; Capital Culture Trip – Des Moines (May 16, 2026). In addition to these, the committee will be reviewing other suggestions for programs for the spring semester.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, December 2, 2025, 1:00 – 2:30 pm, Room 2520-C, UCC

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

- 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-no report.

Old Business:

UIRA 30th Anniversary Ad Hoc Committee- Evalyn Van Allen Shalash reported that a meeting was held on November 4, 2025. Attending were: Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash, Pat Kenner, Cathy Wilcox, Diana Lundell, John Allen, Rick Walton.

Proposed date for a luncheon and speaker: late April, late May or early June depending on the speaker’s schedule. Suggestions for speakers were discussed and Evalyn will contact one of the proposed speakers. The committee has a list of possible venues and will discuss them to narrow down the choices.

Other ideas for the 30th anniversary: invite members to submit photos and/or memories. Could encourage participation through “Pearls of Wisdom” stories and/ or exhibits or provide lunch programs with panel of retirees sharing travel stories/photos (e.g., Bobbie Schwartz, Nancy Langguth).

New Business:

Cindy Seyfer provided the first draft of a survey for dues-paying members. BOD provided a lot of feedback on the survey. Cindy will have the membership committee review the suggestions and work on a second draft. The purpose of the survey is to gather information on the satisfaction level of the members and ways UIRA can improve and attract new dues-paying members. After the final draft has been approved, Kellie Diggmann will design the survey using Qualtrics.

Lois Cox asked for a volunteer to be the UIRA liaison to FRIC and Mike Barron volunteered. FRIC meetings are held, usually via Zoom, on the first Friday of each month, Sept.- Dec. and Feb.- May from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. A brief discussion ensued about liaisons to Rec Services, Athletics and the Library but no action was taken. Tom Vaughn is the EFC liaison to rec services and he said that committee meets only once a year.

Volunteering opportunities for UIRA members-Lois Cox added this topic for discussion based on feedback that she received from Joni Troester as well as from information that was shared at the Big 10 Retirees Annual conference in August. BOD is interested in this but more discussion is needed at a future BOD meeting.

Adjourn: On a motion from Diana Lundell, seconded by John Allen, Lois adjourned the meeting at 2:33 pm.