

## **UIRA President's Report for 2017-18**

### **Michael Barron**

In many ways, this year has been about exploring the ways in which we engage with current and future members. Our primary direct communication engine is the *Gray Hawk* newsletter under the watchful eye and tremendous leadership of our three year editor, Linda Muston. Email notices from Sue Otto, President-Elect and Program Chair, regarding our outstanding array of programs and special opportunities have kept us all informed on a timely and regular basis. Our website is in the capable hands of Phil Klein, providing a wealth of information about past and current year activities. Engaging and informing our members is the prime directive for your Board.

Our monthly programs have been wide-ranging and very well attended as you will see in Sue Otto's annual report. From my perspective, the variety of opportunities ranged from thought-provoking to entertaining and also introduced us to new campus facilities as well as a retrospective look at the evolution of the Pentacrest. Many of these excellent ideas had their genesis from the membership survey conducted last year by Past-President Nancy Hauserman as well as from Sue's very active program committee members. The UIRA continued to sponsor annual events such as the annual flu vaccination clinic with the Visiting Nurse Association, the presentation from UI President Bruce Harreld, the summer picnic at Terry Trueblood Park, co-hosting with UI Benefits the meeting about changes in health care policies and cost-sharing, and the Business and Awards Luncheon.

Our relationship with UI Faculty-Staff Benefits continues to be excellent and interactive. In addition to the November meeting on health care benefits, we also present at their several meetings during the year for prospective future retirees. We want to introduce future retirees to the benefits of our organization and invite them to membership upon their retirement. We remain in conversation with UI Benefits and HR to determine how we might be even more proactive in reaching out to recent and future retirees. The UIRA Board's current interest is to transition from the current "opt-in" process to one where the free first-year membership would automatically accrue to each retiree in their first year.

We are especially proud of our ability to provide scholarships to deserving undergraduate students. The second student to receive our scholarship was selected this spring. Exciting! Perhaps even more exciting is that our endowment with the UI Center for Advancement has performed well enough that this summer we will transition to an academic year award. Depending on Board action later this spring, it appears we will be able to reinvest some of our income to grow the size of our endowment as well as award as many as two additional students in 2018-19. Of course, we will continue to accept donations to our scholarship fund so that our goal to award even more students will be realized.

Last, I wish to thank the membership for allowing me to serve in the presidential cycle. That experience has been very meaningful and enjoyable for me. Retirees Rock!

