



Retirement Association

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2021-22 Report
UWRA Annual Report
Esther Olson, President

This has been another tough year but we survived and accomplished a lot in spite of the hardships – so as the year ends, it is a good time to look back, and a good time to look forward.

UWRA bylaws state “The purpose of this Association is to promote the interests and welfare of Association members, to facilitate their support of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the surrounding community and maintain liaison with relevant University and community organizations.” (Bylaws, Article 2: Purpose)

In spite of the continuing COVID pandemic, the UWRA again managed to make good on its various missions in 2021-22; thanks to the work of our dedicated committees, elected officers, and members of the board of directors. All of these activities – board and committee meetings, a wide range of programs, and breakfast get togethers– were done exclusively via Zoom technology. While we feel like we are seasoned veterans in the use of Zoom, it still presented some challenges. But it also provided some real opportunities to expand our ability to reach our members anywhere in the world. And for the most part, we were able to deliver high quality programs for our members and continue normal business operations.

During the 2021-22 year, we offered our members twenty five Zoom presentations on a wide variety of topics such as COVID updates, Cryptocurrencies, Quantum Computing, the Campus Master Plan, Hidden Gems in Campus Libraries, Italian Civilizations, ETF and SWIB updates, Master Gardening, Heart Health, an African Safari, Buying Computers, and a virtual Apostle Island Hike and Kayak Tour. The East-West Breakfasts were able to continue virtually allowing members to enjoy hardy breakfast conversations with friends and colleagues. And we can’t forget our new and expanded newsletter which continually generates words of praise.

In order to provide this many benefits, we rely on many individuals who have given and continue to give generously of their time, energy and expertise for the common good. The June 2022 *Sifter* includes a list of the many members who have worked tirelessly in managing the affairs of the Association and in organizing the many popular and informative programs offered over the past year.

As with any organization, UWRA is dependent on a central core of folks who maintain the operations and keep the organization viable. Our collective thanks go to the following individuals for their outstanding service to the Association during this past year:

Sandi Haase, our Executive Director, who successfully brought us through the pandemic and kept the organization on an even keel while the world spun around it. Her continued good spirits and superb computer skills were invaluable during this trying time. Together with the Business Office Operations Team (BOOT: Barbara Rust, Larry Winkler, Beth Zemp, Jurgen Patau), Sandi also provides expert management of the Association’s website, keeping it up to date and supplied with a wide range of announcements of interest and importance to members, as well as the site of record for our reports and other business activities.

Mary Czyszczak-Lyne provided excellent leadership for the Strategic Framework Initiative and continues to play a key role in our Association. Phase two which included reviewing and formulating proposals concerning the financial health of the organization is underway and will be implemented over the next year. In March, the Strategic Framework team sponsored two Town Hall Meetings: opportunities for the membership to talk with the Board about likes and dislikes, how to get more involved, how decisions are made, the history of the organization, how to share talents and skills, how

to have a positive association experience and much more. These events were well attended, and some valuable information was gathered.

Sheila Leary, the new editor of our newsletter, who redesigned, reformatted, and expanded *The Sifter* to include several new and well-received features.

A big debt of gratitude also goes to all the officers of our Association: Marian Fisher, our Secretary, who captures with singular grace the essence of our meetings; Beth Zemp, our Treasurer, who carefully monitors the finances to keep us more than solvent; Jane Dymond who, as both luncheon committee chair and President-Elect, provides a vast knowledge of campus events; and Chris Kleinhenz, Past President, who continues to bring his enthusiasm and campus knowledge. Many thanks go to all the members of the Board of Directors who devote so much of their time to keeping the Association running smoothly and for managing the Association activities and business affairs for the benefit of all of our members. Special thanks go to those Board members who are completing their three-year terms: Millard Susman, Jack Sorenson, and Marcy Doelp. Their dedication and good sense helped guide our Association through this rocky year.

Much of the work of the Association is done through our committees, and we are greatly indebted to all their chairs and members for their innovative ideas and careful planning of the many and diverse events we have enjoyed over the past year in spite of an ongoing pandemic. These committees (chairs in parentheses) are Electronic Technology (Bruno Browning, Ann Wallace); Financial Matters (Jack Sorenson, Jurgen Patau); Retirement Opportunities (Sue Fischer, Mary Beth Plane); Travel (Esther Olson, Peggy Daluge); Luncheon (Jane Dymond); Partnerships & Engagement (Chris Kleinhenz, Tom Broman); and Membership (Bob Dye, Mary Czyszczak-Lyne). Their dedication and invaluable contributions to our Association have made possible the many virtual presentations we have enjoyed over the past year. Planning has already begun for next year's programs and events. It is my sincere hope that some of our programming will be able to return to in-person participation soon.

The UWRA maintains a good working relationship with UW-Madison. Five UWRA Board members served on the UW-Madison Retirement Issues Committee (RIC) to address issues of concern to retirees and those close to retirement. This year RIC drafted a survey that will be released next fall to all University employees and UWRA members to determine what is needed to provide a happy retirement experience. Each year the Provost distributes a memo encouraging campus units to involve UW-Madison retirees as volunteers for special projects in their units.

Over this past year our members have continued their generous support of the Association by attending our various events, by suggesting topics for presentations to our committees, by standing with us during this unprecedented pandemic, and by their generous financial contributions. Thanks to the combined generosity of members and the Association, we collected \$2,840 for the Open Seat Pantry (a student food bank.) This is another example of our continuing partnership with the University.

The support of our members and their generous spirit are much appreciated. This past year, 2021-22, was an unusual, but very good year for the Association, and next year should be so as well. The UWRA is thriving and is dedicated to providing its members with a rich experience as it works toward its stated goals.

I'd like to close with a quote by Austrian poet and novelist, Rainer Maria Rilke – **“And now we welcome the new year. Full of things that have never been.”**