

RETIREE ASSOCIATION BOARD MINUTES
Friday, Dec. 19, 2025
9:30 a.m., MAC Hall Gathering Room

Attendance: President Dan Spielmann, Vice President Pat Przybelski, Recording Secretary Chris Sampson, directors Jeanellyn Schwarzenbach, Kevin Fermanich, Ken Fleurant, John Stoll (Zoom)

Guest: Brian Rammer of Alumni Relations and University Advancement

Call to order

Spielmann called the meeting to order at 9:30. There was a quorum with seven present.

Approval of minutes

Schwarzenbach/Fleurant moved and seconded to approve minutes of the previous meeting. All ayes. Motion passed.

Update on University news

Rammer shared recent campus news:

- The University celebrated a major, \$1 million gift for student scholarships honoring retired Biology Prof. Charles Ihrke. The scholarships will go to students with financial need interested in careers in STEM fields. The donor is Dr. Paul Schilling, Class of '82, a former student of Ihrke's.
- Eligible to graduate at December 2025's two commencement ceremonies will be 506 individuals receiving degrees. In a new tradition, each new alumnus crossing the stage will be handed, immediately after receiving their diploma case, a small commemorative "Phoenix ember." (The embers are actually small dark landscaping stones gathered from near the metal Phoenix sculpture. The sculpture was relocated this past year to the Kress Center plaza from the circle entrance where the new library is under construction.)
- To mark progress on construction of the Cofrin Technology and Education Center, a topping-out ceremony is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7. Members of the campus community are invited to ceremonially sign the beam to be placed at the highest point of the new building. All are invited.

Recap of fall Retiree Association events

The Tour of Library Archives attracted more than a dozen retirees and spouses for a full afternoon with staff member Deb Anderson; participants asked questions, shared their own stories and stayed overtime for what was a very enjoyable event. Likewise, the joint "Dinner and a Movie" night proved popular, too, with about a half dozen UWGB retirees enjoying Italian fare at Gallagher's in Allouez before departing for the Neville and an Italian cinema showing presented by the International Film Society and Prof. David Coury. The evening was held in partnership with the local Italian-American club.

Events for spring 2026

Dan confirmed that the annual Retirees Reception at Women's Basketball will take place from 11:45 to 12:45 on Saturday Jan. 24 prior to the 1 p.m. tip between the Phoenix and Detroit Mercy at the Kress. With regard to possible arts and performances for spring, Chris said he would inquire about the possibility for discount tickets and/or a retiree reception for

the Weidner Philharmonic on Saturday night, May 2. Another possibility at the Weidner would be a Sunday matinee on May 17 featuring the Civic Symphony of Green Bay. Stay tuned. It was also mentioned that there might be retiree interest in UWGB's special Earth Day observances this year (the week of April 20), to include the premiere of a local documentary on Green Bay area watershed rehab featuring interviews with campus-connected experts. Stay tuned.

Announcing the 2026 Retiree Association Scholarship recipients

With growth in the principal and the turnback of unused awards from previous recipients, a very impressive \$9,000 was available for the next round of scholarships. The honorees come from a range of academic disciplines and communities across Wisconsin:

- Lilli Valenzuela, Milwaukee, Nursing
- Preston Wampole, Thorp, Human Biology
- Dan Koland, Appleton, Organizational Leadership
- Mac Fitzsimmons, Lyons, Psychology

Three students will receive \$2,500 scholarships, and the fourth will receive a \$1,500 award.

Lengthy discussion of chronic challenges in acquiring, maintaining a Retiree 'database'

Ken Fleurant, our tireless volunteer on Retiree emails, web pages and electronic communication in general, reported that the Retiree Association list of email contacts now stands at 258 total. How many of those email addresses are good? Hard to say, because you don't automatically get bouncebacks when there's no delivery. Also, the "whom" is not always discernable, because in some (many?) instances all we have are cryptic, no-clue email handles, like perhaps FormerPhoenix@xyz.com, or initials only. Could/should we query the good emails we do have for more or updated info? Perhaps. Despite our repeated efforts over the years, though, UWGB HR and IT have not really offered up any easy solutions on Retiree database acquisition and maintenance; in fairness, privacy guidelines and security protocols are complicating factors. We have had to rely on extending sign-up invitations when we do happen to get wind of pending employee retirements... and then hoping that those new retirees think to notify us or sign up when and if their corporate @uwgb.edu addresses go away. Results have, obviously, been hit or miss. Will we ever have the capacity for automatic enrollment to receive Retiree Association communications? Or will it always be just voluntary opt-in? Both Fleurant and Rammer indicated we will just have to continue exploring, and pressing forward for a solution that works for the Association. It may be that, for the foreseeable future, we just need to double-down on efforts to publicize the opt-in options.

Adjournment: Sampson moved and Fermanich seconded to adjourn. All ayes, at about 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sampson, Recording secretary