

RETIREE ASSOCIATION BOARD MINUTES
Monday, April 24, 2023
9 a.m., in-person, MAC Hall Vista Room

Attendance: President Dan Spielmann, Pat Przybelski, Kathy Pletcher, Chris Sampson, Chris Style, Ken Fleurant, Curt Heuer, Craig Lockard and Carol Emmons (Excused: Frank Madzarevic)
Guests: Jacob Depas, Brian Rammer

Minutes of previous meeting

Still missing. Chris promised to effort minutes for the last fall '22 meeting (November) and deliver for next time.

Review of recent retiree events

President Spielmann reported that more than two dozen retirees gathered prior to the Feb. 25 Women's Basketball game at the Kress for an informal snacks-and-drinks reception on the mezzanine-level corner deck overlooking the court. Most were season ticket holders. Until the very end, when the large, capable and exceedingly loud Phoenix pep band kicked in, drowning out everything, it was a successful and well-received event.

Less successful was a Retiree Association try at a gathering for a Patsy Cline/George Jones jazz and country theme concert that took place in early March at the Weidner. The reception was cancelled for lack of interest/advance reservations.

It was suggested that, for next year, the Association consider an outing to the annual student Danceworks concert, which typically draws a decent turnout and level of interest.

Update on Retiree Association student scholarship fund

Dan reported that, as expected, the market value of the scholarship fund showed a sizeable decrease during calendar year 2022, with a drop from about \$91,000 on Jan. 1 to \$80,663 on Dec. 31. The Association scholarship was able to make about \$2,700 in awards to three recipients last year, in the amounts of \$920, \$920 and \$892. It was suggested that the fund might need to dial back in light of the market decline and perhaps award only two (if perhaps slightly larger) awards in 2023. Advancement's Jacob Depas indicated later in the meeting, during his report, that this could be considered but might not actually be necessary considering the overall size and health of the fund. It will be evaluated when the time comes.

Details finalized for Association's spring Arboretum Walk

Dan reiterated plans for the annual Spring Arboretum Walk, set for Tuesday morning, May 9. Participants will gather at Lambeau Cottage at 10:30 a.m. and depart on a short- to medium-length walk on the nearby trails of the Cofrin

Memorial Arboretum. Guiding the walk will be staff ecologists Bobbie Webster and Andrew LaPlant offering an emphasis on spring wildflowers, bird species and common plants of the Arboretum. No RSVP is required, and the event is free and open to all.

Action Item: Finalize plans for summer Retiree Association picnic and meeting

Discussion of last July's Retiree Association picnic at the Weidner Center yielded positive comments including the observation that turnout (about 60) was decent for the first-time format after many years as a fall banquet. With respect to the 2023 picnic, it was decided that we'll keep things roughly the same as last year. The date will be Thursday, July 20, 2023. 4:30 p.m. social hour and 5:30 p.m. dinner. Menu basically similar to last year. Plan from the outset to do the picnic dinner inside (not outdoors). Subsidize the dinner-ticket price by a few dollars, same as last year. The guest speaker from the University will be finalized at a later date.

Update on Retiree list-serv signups

Ken Fleurant, the Association's volunteer web and email monitor, said while the list-serv saw a flurry of new signups a year ago when UWGB's IT department clarified things with regard to retiree access to uwgb.edu emails, but there have been no new signups in the last nine or 10 months. Very quiet. Ken suggested that a passive Retiree webpage link allowing newly minted UWGB retirees to sign up that way, if they choose, might be as good a method as any, and less fussy and time-intensive than Ken's efforts to do this manually. General discussion of the larger challenge followed. Several meeting participants noted that attracting membership, volunteers and event participation – for any group activity – have become a lot more difficult, post-COVID.

University news update by Depas and Rammer, and possibility of Alumni-Retiree collaboration

Director of Development Jacob Depas introduced new UWGB Alumni Relations Director Brian Rammer. He is a '91 graduate of the UWGB Education program who spent most of his professional career with the YMCA of the Fox Cities and is now happy to join the Advancement Office at this alma mater. Both Jacob and Brian emphasized the potential for Alumni and the Retirees to collaborate even more closely on future special events, and several Retiree board members concurred. A recent successful example, Jacob noted, was the EMBI (business and environment institute) award ceremony recognizing this spring's Earth Caretaker Award recipient. With current faculty and students and the recipient's favorite faculty in attendance, the event succeeded on several levels. Moving forward, Brian said he would seek to keep Retiree Association leadership well-informed on Alumni events and initiatives of potential interest, and would welcome information from us in return.

A quick overview of recent UWGB news:

- The UW System has endorsed plans for the first general tuition increase (5% total over the two-year biennium) in many years. Some of it would be earmarked to enhance faculty/staff salary pools, at least a little. Differential tuition, with higher rates for in-demand or more-costly programs such as Nursing, is increasingly being pushed as an option Systemwide.
- UWGB has made good progress on its \$20 million “Ignite the Future” capital campaign, with \$14 million raised. Recently, Schreiber Foods made a million-dollar naming rights gift to the Institute for Women’s Leadership.
- UWGB received favorable statewide news coverage and recognition for its approach to integrating the UW centers in Sheboygan, Manitowoc and Marinette into UW-Green Bay as part of the UW System “merger” of a few years ago. With the closing of the former UW Colleges campus in Richland Center, and dropping enrollment at most other centers, UWGB’s commitment to expanding options at its two-year campuses by making it easier for students there to take upper-level classes at those sites is earning praise.
- Ground was broken on a new 180+ bed, \$38 million residence hall to be constructed adjacent to the Ecumenical Center. It will be the first new hall in a dozen years, and serve as a replacement as the aging units of the old Bay Apartments begin to be taken offline.
- The University’s student-scholarship program continues to be streamlined, with applicants invited to submit a common application at a single point of entry, rather than applying to multiple scholarships and multiple programs.
- Demolition and replacement of the landmark Cofrin Library has been pushed back by at least a couple of years. With the estimated cost increasing in the last year from under \$100 million to, now, north of \$125 million, construction is unlikely to commence until at least 2025. And current plans call for the eight-story Cofrin to remain standing until the new library is completed next door.

The meeting adjourned at about 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sampson, recording secretary