

University of Arizona Retirees Association

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017

by Bob Perrill

Many organizations go through a time of turmoil and soul searching, but with luck and hard work they come out stronger than before. The beginning of UARA fiscal year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 was our time. Soon after the election of officers in July, it became apparent that a struggle for communication, cooperation, and leadership had begun. The treasurer left in September and the president and several others left in November. Health reasons prevented the VP from assuming the presidency, and Bob Perrill was elected to fill that position.

It was evident that an Executive Committee with only six elected members was too thin to support and lead the UARA into the future. We immediately began working to change our organizational structure to a Board of Directors, all elected by the membership. To accomplish this, we needed to change the bylaws to allow for a 15 member Board of Directors. Roger Caldwell was the driving force to accomplish this monumental task within the time constraints outlined in the old bylaws. In addition, we needed to find a slate of 15 candidates for the new board, a joint task accomplished by the nominating committee.

The announcement and reasons for changing the bylaws was presented to the membership in the January newsletter. In May, the membership voted overwhelmingly in favor of the bylaws change. At the same time, the membership voted in favor of all 15 candidates for the board. We received over twice as many ballots than any previous election, showing great membership support.

With the election confirmed, the new UARA Bylaws and the new Board of Directors became official on July 1, 2017. The board elected from within its ranks: Alison Hughes, President; Castorila (Cassie) Unda Ciotti, Vice President; Judy Doan, Secretary; Liz Gradillas-Fimbres, Treasurer; and Bob Perrill became Past President, all effective on July 1, 2017.

In addition to the three newsletters published each year, we sent out four postcards for special reminders and announcements. The positive results were more members attending luncheons and activities as well as two exceptional candidates coming forth for the new Board of Directors.

Our membership enjoyed three luncheons. They were at Skyline Country Club with Commander Brian Seastone, UAPD Police Chief, as guest speaker in October 2016; Tanque Verde Ranch, with their usual great buffet, in January 2017; and Lodge on the Desert with Dr. Celestino Fernandez as guest speaker in April 2017. We also planned our first summer luncheon to be held in July for our year-round members. A Luncheon Survey was distributed in January to better understand what our membership would like for the future luncheons.

Two tours, one to the Pima Air Museum and one to the Hidden Treasures on Campus plus the Mirror Lab, were both well attended. We also sponsored several sports events. In September, we had discount tickets for a UA football game, in November we went to the women's volleyball game with UCLA, and in May we had our 5th annual UARA day at the ballpark. Go Cats!

UARA continued its support this year for UA students by presenting four scholarship awards from the three UARA scholarship endowments at the foundation. Recipients were: Jeremy Pierce Bessett, a Veterinary Science major; Andrew Jonda, a Russian language major; Bianca Joanna Duarte, working to become a Physician's Assistant; and Lauren Nguyen, a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology.

A new Program Endowment was established in collaboration with the UA Foundation and Office of Government and Community Relations. Annual payouts from this new endowment will provide financial support for a variety of new, creative UARA programs for our members.

UA Government and Community Relations continues to support UARA through office space and utilities. We also have a great relationship with UA Human Resources and we presented information about UARA at the six Pre-retirement Meetings with the help of Mike Krebbs. Mike is an Ex Officio member of the new board.

The Advisory Council and now the Board of Directors meetings are held in a spacious meeting room at Habitat for Humanity. This year, we had a Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Day to give back to this great organization. We have encouraged and continue to encourage our members to get out and volunteer with the many organizations throughout the university campus and across the Tucson area.

We discussed travel opportunities with and for our membership, but setting up tours was not something UARA could efficiently accomplish. This year, we teamed up with the UA Alumni Association, and in the January newsletter we informed our members by listing the many trips available through the Association's 2017 travel schedule.

UARA hosted and presided at the Tri-University meeting at ASU this year. These annual meetings allow the three university retirees organizations to share ideas. Discussion topics included membership, programs, funding, seminars, scholarships, luncheons, and future goals. Each organization is different, but we have a lot in common.

The UA Retirees Dinner in May was attended by five newly elected UARA board members and, as president, I had a chance to speak to the attendees. Several new retirees said they planned to join. Also, a highly qualified financial person approached and agreed to do an outside audit of UARA. This audit was necessary with the change to a new Board of Directors and it was important to complete the audit before the new Treasurer assumed that position in July.

A listserv has been created for board member communication. Another one is being set up to include all members, and another to contact new retirees. An electronic network is vital for rapid communication and the dispersal of general information. Newsletters and postcards are expensive, a drain on our limited financial reserves, but they will continue as long as the membership needs them.

A bylaws change allows UA employees within two years of their retirement date to become eligible to join UARA. The special rate of \$10 per year will continue until they retire, when it will increase to the regular \$20 per year. Joining UARA before they retire is a great way to transition into this important change and to meet people who are already living the retired life. This is also a good way for UARA to gain active new members.

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