President's Message

September, the new year for those of us who spent years working at the University of Guelph, brings with it the beginning of fall, the launch of the United Way campaign, a new UGRA Executive, and a new University President. Newly elected members Doug Badger, Gauri Mittal, Kent Percival, Clive Southey and John Van Esch join continuing members Robin Davidson-Arnott, Susan Evers, Dana Paramskas, Cathy Ralston, and Dave Swayne on this year's Executive. I'm very pleased to have Robin Davidson-Arnott as Vice-President this year, a position unfilled in 2013-14 that resulted in my term as President being extended for a second year. I'd like to thank Ken Woodside, who recently resigned from the Executive, for his service to UGRA. We are looking for someone willing to join the Executive for this year and to become our newsletter editor in 2015-16. If you're interested in serving please send an e-mail to president@ugra.ca

University retirees continue to make important contributions to both the University and the community. Your donations to the UGRA scholarship endowment fund will help us make this scholarship self-sustaining. We thank you if you made a donation and ask those of you who have not to consider doing so to help us reach our $45,000 goal. You can donate online through the Better Planet project at www.thebetterplanetproject.ca/donate or use the form printed on p. 7 of the newsletter.

Your generosity was acknowledged when the University received the President's Campaign Award from the United Way at the 2014 Guelph Awards of Excellence. Retirees contributed $71,029 to the 2013 United Way campaign, 18 per cent more than the previous year.

President Franco Vaccarino joined the University in August and at one of his earliest official events he hosted retirees at a reception held in the Library. Those in attendance had an opportunity to meet Dr. Vaccarino and extend their personal best wishes as he begins his term as President.

I hope to see many of you at our annual fall forum, which is focused on the transformation of the health care system in Ontario. You can find the details on p.3

And finally, please help us stay in touch by providing your current email address by using the contact us link:
http://www.ugra.ca/contact.shtml

Janet Kaufman, President, UGRA

Report on AGM

The UGRA held its 2014 annual general meeting June 19 at the Arboretum. President Janet Kaufman reported that the UGRA Scholarship endowment continues to grow and currently sits at close to $10,000. She thanked all those who have donated to the fund. She also noted the significant contribution that U of G retirees made to the 2013 campus United Way campaign.

Looking ahead to the coming year, Kaufman said the UGRA executive will continue to discuss the development of a memorandum of understanding with the University and hopes to launch some outreach to campus bargaining groups on pension issues. The UGRA is also looking at introducing an electronic payment option that will enable people to pay voluntary membership fees or make donations to the UGRA online.

In this issue

P2 Pension Update
P3 CURAC Report
UGRA Fall Forum
U of G 50 Challenge
P4 Retirees' Social Passings
P5 Third Age Learning Lecture Series Winter 2015
Recent Retirees
P6 Announcements Where are They Now?
P7 Accolades Be a Contributing Member of the UGRA
P8 Remembrance Day Service The UGRA Executive Needs Feedback

Editor: Susan Evers
www.ugra.ca
UGRA treasurer Cathy Ralston reported total revenues of $9,400 for 2013/14, a shortfall from projected revenues of $12,000. She cited several reasons for the shortfall: a hoped-for increase in advertising revenue did not materialize; the UGRA executive decided to make a special contribution to the CURAC conference this year because it was being held at McMaster University; and the 2014 Spring Forum had to be held earlier than usual this year, so the forum costs fell into the 2013/14 fiscal year.

Members of the 2014/15 executive are: Janet Kaufman (president), Robin Davidson-Arnott (vice-president/secretary), Cathy Ralston (treasurer), David Swayne (past president), Doug Badger, Susan Evers, Dana Paramask, Gauri Mittal, Kent Percival, Clive Southey and John Van Esch.

AGM guest speaker was David Kenny of Towers Watson, actuary for U of G’s pension plans. Details of his presentation are below.

Barbara Chance

Pension Update

At the Annual General Meeting of the UGRA on June 19, 2014 we were fortunate to have a talk on pensions and pension plans by David Kenny. David is a professional actuary with Towers Watson, the company which provides the university with advice on the management of our three pension plans, and he is normally present at meetings of the Board of Governors Committee on Pensions.

David first reviewed briefly the nature of our three plans. He then provided some background on ways by which cost of living increases are included within many public sector defined benefits plans generally, and specifically the operation of our plans. University of Guelph pensions are automatically increased each September to reflect any increase in CPI (limited to 8%) that is in excess of 2% ("CPI – 2"). His calculations show that over the past 10 years the average annual increase in CPI has been 1.82%, with only a couple of years where the annual rate has been just above 2%. The audience found this information helpful as it reminded the group just how much purchasing power our pensions have lost recently (about 18% over the last 10 years). He pointed out that there are a number of ways for providing indexation adjustment including: the type of arrangement that we have; a simple % of inflation (e.g., 75% of inflation); the excess of the fund rate of return over a set value (e.g. 6%); or on some other conditional criteria such as the funded status of the plan. The take away from this part of the discussion is that it may be worthwhile for UGRA to investigate whether some other cost of living arrangement for our plans may provide us with a better outcome in light of the relatively low inflation rates that seem to be the norm now. We will be working on examining this over the next 6 months.

Within Ontario, in addition to providing some solvency relief (which Guelph has qualified for), the government is expected to keep moving ahead with several pension related proposals. These include: annual pension statements for pensioners; new limits on contribution holidays; 50-50 cost sharing of contributions between employer and employee; and support for efforts to convert single employer defined benefit plans, such as ours, to Jointly Sponsored Pension Plans such as the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan.

The university is required to do a valuation of the pension plans at least every 3 years. We have just completed this exercise, and while fund returns have been good over the past 3 years, the valuation exercise also has to take into account the projected demands on the funds based on mortality rates. A new report by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries has shown that Canadian mortality rates are significantly lower on average compared to the standard mortality tables used in the past and that public sector workers have an even lower mortality rate than do private sector workers. The bottom line here is that U of G pensioners are living longer than we have previously modelled with the result that the average expected pension payout period is longer than anticipated. Recent contract negotiations have led to numerous changes to the plans, including the removal or reduction of some early retirement benefit features that will help offset higher costs.

David concluded the discussion by providing details regarding the present financial state of the plans. Based on the information provided by David, it would seem that further steps may have to be taken to bring pension liabilities in line with projected revenues.

Details of the financial status of the plans can now be accessed online on the University of Guelph web site at: http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/21ce3a27#/21ce3a27/1

Robin Davidson-Arnott
CURAC Report

From May 28 to May 30, 2014, the McMaster University Retirees Association and the Retiree Association of Mohawk College hosted the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada [CURAC] annual general meeting. Details of the conference will be posted shortly on the CURAC web site at http://www.CURAC.ca.

There were several presentations, all valuable and interesting. CURAC makes representations on behalf of retirees on many issues of interest, such as health transfers to the provinces from the federal government, and the national pension program. It also shares information from associations across the country on provincial issues such as pension stability, health care and sustainability of pensioners' health benefits.

The theme of the presentations was "Best Practices". McMaster, by virtue of its professional schools associated with the medical profession, has several excellent research projects of significant interest to retirees. Sue Becker, an engineer, described a multidisciplinary project developing a "smart" hearing aid which does a creditable job of replacing natural hearing. Brenda Vrkljan gave an in-depth analysis of McMaster research in changing perceptions about older drivers. Dr. Ellen Ryan, a professor emerita in gerontology, gave a sometimes emotional presentation on "fostering resilient aging through social participation". Byron G. Spencer is an economist specializing in (among other topics) the impacts of the aging of Canada's work force. He illustrated some effects of this phenomenon. Professor Mark Oremus outlined the McMaster Optimal Aging Initiative (MOAI), aiming to bring information and web resources to aging populations. The conference delegates were both entertained and informed by Sharron Johnston, a retiree from the Departments of Psychiatry and Neurosciences, on the power of humour as a coping skill in difficult circumstances. My presentation on the UGRA's 'best practices' focused on the Fall and Spring Forums as a way of providing information of interest to retirees.

This is time well spent on an organization worthy of ongoing support. Both the University of Guelph and UGRA made contributions at the "bronze" level to cover the expenses of the meeting.

David Swayne
UGRA Representative

The U of G 50 Challenge

From December 2-4 2014, The University of Guelph will be debuting an exciting, one-time event: The U of G 50 Challenge. Our goal is to raise $50,000 in 50 hours from 1964 donors, to celebrate the University of Guelph's 50th anniversary. We encourage all members of our community to make a gift during the 50 hours, and to pass along information about the event to a friend!

UGRA Fall Forum 2014

Date/Time:
Thursday, Nov. 13, 2014,
2 to 4 p.m.

Place:
Arboretum Centre,
University of Guelph

Topic:
An Integrated Health System for Residents of Waterloo and Wellington

Did you know that 5% of patients in Ontario use approximately 75% of the total healthcare funding available per year or that there is a single point of access for over 30 community support service agencies in Waterloo-Wellington? Join us on Thurs. Nov. 13 for our Fall Forum to learn about two of the major organizations in the delivery of health care and community services for the residents of Waterloo-Wellington. Bruce Lauckner, CEO of the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network will talk about the LHIN's strategic priorities and what it is doing to deliver its vision of Better Health – Better Futures for residents. James Downham, from the Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre will describe coordinated access initiatives being implemented to make the system less complicated and transitions of care less fragmented so that people don't fall through the cracks.

There is no fee for this event, but we will have a table set up to receive membership contributions. Refreshments will be served.
The annual Retirees’ Social was held on August 28 at the McLaughlin Library. It was an opportunity for UGRA members to welcome the University of Guelph’s new President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Franco Vaccarino. Rebecca Graham, the university’s Chief Librarian, introduced president Vaccarino. The depth and quality of the people at the university are impressive said Vaccarino. He commented that “it is people who bring plans to life” and he stressed the importance of the interconnectedness among the university, the city, and the region. The president thanked UGRA members for their contributions to the university and helping to make Guelph one of the top universities in the country. Vaccarino also acknowledged the contributions of retirees to the university’s United Way campaign which were up 28% over the previous year. The 50th anniversary of the university is an important celebration; the president said that he is “looking to move the University of Guelph forward in the next 50 years”.

UGRA president Janet Kaufman welcomed Franco Vaccarino to the University and the City of Guelph on behalf of the association.

Rebecca Graham gave an overview of recent changes to the library. A master space plan that spanned 14 months was carried out over last year and completed in the spring. She said that the process included extensive community engagement in developing the plan and that it was “an iterative process”. Early changes resulting from the plan include a new Starbucks café occupying a larger dedicated space and with expanded food options. Also the initial work on the longstanding Archives and Special Collections project is underway with the creation of the Robert Whitelaw Room. The plan also includes, longer term, “dedicated space for graduate students” and increased group study spaces for students.

Sue Bennett, Director of University and Community Relations, discussed the 50th anniversary exhibit that is now housed in the library. She said that this is a student driven project completed over three semesters by College of Art students. The exhibit covers the history of the university as seen through the lens of the four pillars of the Better Planet projects. The exhibit opened at the Guelph Civic Museum earlier this year and was moved to the library in July. Retirees were invited to view the exhibit.

Susan Evers
Third Age Learning - Winter, 2015
Arboretum Centre

10 A.M. Moral and Ethical Dilemmas Facing Canadians
Jan 14 Brian Orend, University of Waterloo
The Origin of Morals and How They Have Changed Over Time

Jan 21 Michael Veall, McMaster University
The Surge in Top Incomes in Canada: What's a Government to do?

Feb 18 Kate Johnson, Queen's University
Prison is as Harmful to the Cagers as it is to the Cage

Feb 25 Brian Orend, University of Waterloo
Civic Trust: Corruption in Politics

Mar 4 Geof Stevens, University of Waterloo
Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion

1:30 P.M. Planet Earth
Jan 14 Nick Eyles, University of Toronto
History of the Earth, Environmental Challenges, the Constancy of Change

Jan 21 Ralph Martin, University of Guelph
Food, Source, Quantity

Jan 28 Chris Eardley, University of Guelph
Natural Environment and Invasive Species

NOTE: These are the speakers confirmed at the time the newsletter was printed. For the final list of lecture topics and information on fees, visit the Third Age Learning website at www.thirdagelearningguelph.ca.

Recent Retirees

May 1, 2014
Krystyna Dziekanska Pathobiology
Mario Finoro Geography
Sophia Lim Pathobiology
Alexander Magyar Physical Resources
Karen McClements Counselling
John Prescott Pathobiology
Alex Smith OVC HSC

June 1, 2014
George B. Fitzpatrick KC-Research
Richard Goy Math & Statistics
Helen MacGregor KC-Academic
Maria Stefano Hospitality Services
Kenneth Stout CCS
Wendy Woodhouse OVC-Info Tech Services

July 1, 2014
Tom Bernier Physical Resources
Lynda Davenport Student Health Services
Linda Fluney Hospitality Services
Joan Knox Child Care Services
Eugene McNamara Physical Resources

Aug. 1, 2014
Margaret Dowling Human Resources
Norma Harrington Human Resources
Marian Kosior Physical Resources
Laurie Parr Animal & Poultry Sci
Sandra Ruston Library Access Services

Sept. 1, 2014
Peter Purslow Food Science
Rick Andretech Phys Resources
Janis R. Simpson Fam Reln & App Nutr
Kim Stewart OVC HSC
Kaniddy Ho Hospitality Services
Virginia Warren Environmental Biology
Sandra Valeriote Student Health Services
Hilary Reardon Hospitality Services
Carole White LSD-Diagnostics

UGRA

Fall 2014
Announcements

U of G Alumni Travel Program

Several unique trips are planned for 2015 and 2016. If you like exotic adventures, there are trips to the Galapagos Islands, Tanzania, Bhutan and the Himalayas in South East Asia. If you prefer to stay in Canada, you might choose a once-in-a-lifetime sailing trip through Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands in B.C., or a tour of the Northwest Passage, from Cambridge Bay to Iqaluit, on an expedition vessel.

If Europe is your thing, the travel program features a unique month-long stay in Madrid where you will live in an apartment, learn Spanish and experience the rich culture. A trip called ‘The Great Journey Through Europe’ includes a cruise with stops in Netherlands, Germany, France and Switzerland and a journey on the Glacier Express Railway in the Alps. For wine lovers, the ‘Paris to Provence’ trip offers a five-night cruise, including stops in Burgundy and Beaujolais. Back by popular demand, our visit to the breathtaking Amalfi Coast in Italy has no single supplement for solo travellers.

How about a luxury cruise? There are several options to consider with Oceania Cruises that include airfare. In September 2015 we are offering a cruise through the Aegean Sea with stops in Greece and Turkey, and in January 2016, a cruise through the Tahitian Islands. In May 2016 you can take a 14-night Trans-Atlantic cruise from New York to Lisbon, Portugal.

There are many options to consider for both the novice and experienced traveller. Visit www.alumni.uoguelph.ca/travel for further details or e-mail travel@uoguelph.ca.

Member Contributions

The UGRA now has a PayPal account for members to make their voluntary contributions to both the association and the UGRA scholarship. The link is on the UGRA web site; please check www.ugra.ca.

Where are they now?

We do hear from retirees in response to the newsletter; these messages often include a brief description of their current activities. If you would like UGRA members to know what you have been doing since retiring please send an update to secretary@ugra.ca. We begin with:

Alex Michalos, Philosophy, was Chancellor of University of Northern British Columbia from 2007-10. His 12 volume Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research was published by Springer in March, 2014. Alex and his wife, Deborah Poff, will be moving from Brandon, Manitoba to Ottawa shortly.
Accolades

U of G named three University professors emeriti at June convocation. This designation is bestowed on retired faculty who continue their scholarly association with the University. The prime criterion for nomination is sustained outstanding scholarship of such a level that it is recognized internationally.

Congratulations to:

Douglas Dalgleish   OAC
Gauri Mittal        CPES
Barry Smit          CSAHS

The Medal of Merit is awarded to a professor who has retired from the University of Guelph, and who has made outstanding contributions to teaching, the functioning of the university, or other areas which have resulted in substantial improvement to the academic life and character of the university. At June convocation, the medal was awarded to John Walton, OAC. Congratulations!

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Be a Contributing Member of the UGRA (2014-2015)

All retirees are automatically members of the University of Guelph Retirees Association, but our capacity to operate effectively on behalf of retirees depends on members volunteering to become contributing members. This money covers the cost of the newsletter and meeting room rentals for the AGM and the spring and fall forums. It also enables the UGRA to send a representative to the annual meeting of College and University Retiree Associations of Canada.

Please use the attached form to send with your contributing membership payment.

We have asked for a contribution of $20 but always appreciate those members who add some extra funds to help us carry on the work. The form has been revised to allow for donations to the UGRA Scholarship fund.

We have also provided a place on the form for those who might wish to contribute more actively to the UGRA by serving on the executive or by working on a committee or task group to carry out short-term projects.

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University of Guelph Retirees Association Contributing Membership (2014-2015) and Scholarship Contributing Form

☐ YES! I want to help promote the welfare of retirees and to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University by contributing to the UGRA’s administrative costs.

My contribution is $................................. Please make cheque payable to the University of Guelph Retirees Association (not eligible for a tax receipt).

☐ YES! I want to donate to the UGRA Scholarship fund to support an in-course student who is the child, grandchild or great-grandchild of a University of Guelph retiree.

My contribution is $................................. Please make cheque payable to the University of Guelph donate or online at www.thebetterplanetproject.ca/donate (eligible for a tax receipt, charitable registration number 10816 1829 RR001).

Name........................................................................................................... Date........................................

Address..........................................................................................................................

City/Province.............................................................................................................. Postal Code................................

Email............................................................................................................................. Phone........................................

(Please note that the email address is for UGRA communications only, unless a gift is made to the UGRA Scholarship. In that case, contact information will be shared with the University of Guelph to issue a charitable tax receipt.)

I would like to receive more information about

☐ Serving on the Executive of the UGRA or one of its committees
☐ UGRA Scholarship

Mail this form with your cheque to:

University of Guelph Retirees Association • PO Box 48-4916 • University of Guelph • Guelph Ontario, N1G 2W1

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UGRA

Fall 2014
Remembrance Day Service

Tuesday, November 11, 2014
10:30 a.m.

War Memorial Hall
University of Guelph

The UGRA Executive Committee Needs Feedback

The UGRA Executive Committee is supposed to be acting on behalf of the interests of University of Guelph retirees. Without input from our members, we operate partly in a vacuum where we try to imagine what retirees see as important issues and concerns. To do our job well, we could use more information, so please take the opportunity to let us know what’s on your mind.

Here are the ways you can contact us. Please provide a name, address and phone number. This will enable us to follow up on requests promptly.

By Email:
president@ugra.ca

Via the ‘Contact Us’ tab on the website:
www.ugra.ca

By Phone:
519-824-4120 x52197. This is phone mail only, so please a message with your name and phone number.

By Letter:
University of Guelph Retirees Association
P.O. Box 48-4916
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1