



University of Manitoba Retirees Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Marshall McLuhan Hall

October 4, 2025

(pending approval at the 2026 (AGM)

In Attendance: Janet Sealey, Dennis Cooley, Gail Mackisey, Mark O'Riley, Heather Brownlee, Daniel Sitar, Laurie Morris, Ron Morris, Michael West, Jay Goldstein, Carol Goldstein, Judy Anderson, Fiona Parkinson, Gladys Stewart, Arlene Young, Robert O'Kell, Maureen Forrest, Donna Strang, Ed Unrau, Janice Mann, Barbara Iwasiow, Joan McConnell

Regrets: June LaRonde, June Stewart, Gene Walz

1. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to accept the agenda

Maureen Forrest / Dan Sitar

Carried

2. Approval of the Minutes of AGM held on October 5, 2024

Motion to accept the minutes

Jay Goldstein / Laurie Morris

Carried

3. Business Arising

The UMRA Endowment to be covered later in the meeting.

4. Reports;

President, (Janet Sealey)

Janet orally reported on the successes, challenges, and highlights over the last year, indicating that UMRA's work has been continuous and going well.

The printed report follows:

It has been a very busy and productive year for the University of Manitoba Retirees Association.

After two years of discussion, UMRA launched a partnership with the Retired Teachers Association of Manitoba (RTAM). Through a change to RTAM's by-laws, a new Education Community Membership category was created and the University of Manitoba retirees were the first group to join in spring 2025. While some U of M retirees already had access to the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) benefits plan and travel insurance, the addition of RTAM's benefits' plan and travel insurance provided an à la carte feature that the UMRA Executive Committee saw as beneficial to all U of M retirees.

This past spring, for the first time, UMRA was granted permission to attend the university's retirement planning seminars to provide information on the benefits of joining UMRA and how staying connected to the university improves one's sense of belonging through community engagement. Mark O'Riley, VP, and I attended four U of M retirement planning sessions to promote UMRA. Most of the attendees at the sessions were within five years of retirement and there was one open session for anyone to attend no matter where they were on their retirement journey.

UMRA's other major focus this past year was the ongoing discussion with the university administration for improved benefits for retirees. Under the leadership of Mark O'Riley and June Stewart, chairs of the UMRA Benefits and Pension Committee, we are working hard to finalize a benefits package that will meet the needs of retirees.

The UMRA Executive Council met with Tracey Peter, Vice-Provost, and offered our support in the launching of her 'Onboarding and Mentorship Improvement Project', to support early career scholars and increase engagement opportunities for senior scholars/emeriti. She also hopes to work with UMRA to develop a more interactive retirement planning web page. Dr. Peter is working closely with HR to ensure that whatever is developed for faculty is also implemented for support staff. Dr. Tracey Peter's office has also implemented additional retirement readiness/pre-retirement planning initiatives for staff that she hopes will provide a more holistic retirement experience. Mark O'Riley and I attended a Retirement Readiness Peer Network Session on Wednesday April 23, 2025 to promote UMRA.

On May 28, 2025 UMRA hosted a *Coffee & Conversation* virtual event to discuss the findings of a study completed by Dr. Michelle Porter to gain perspectives of Senior Scholars and Professors Emeriti on their experiences and challenges, their relationship with the university, and their suggestions for change. The session featured both Michelle Porter, Director, Centre on Aging and Tracey Peter, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs). It is hoped that given the benefits that Senior Scholars and Professors Emeriti see for themselves and the University, adopting the study's recommendations will potentially enhance benefits for both individuals and the University and go a long way to improve age inclusivity.

UMRA finalized and submitted our changes to the 2003 relationship agreement between UMRA and the university administration. We are waiting on the university to respond.

The U of M's new Adult Companionship Service Directory was featured in the UMRA fall e-newsletter. It is hoped that it will generate interest among U of M retirees who wish to remain connected to the U of M.

On August 19, 2025 we had a small dedication ceremony of the UMRA bench that was installed near the centre of campus. The idea of the bench was that of Dr. Jean Paterson and her rationale for it was.....many of us, as retirees, enjoy contemplation: either in solitude or in the company of friends. The bench would provide a spot to contemplate, to indulge in reminiscence, share creative ideas or just plain

rest." Thanks to Mark O'Riley, Maureen Forrest and Gladys Stewart for all their efforts in bringing Jean's idea of the bench to fruition.

In closing, I am very appreciative of the work of all UMRA committee members, especially Mark O'Riley, VP, for all his hard work and dedication. It has been a real team effort on so many fronts by all committee members.

Motion to accept the President's report:

Janet Sealey / Dan Sitar

Carried

Vice-President and Benefits and Pension Committee, (Mark O'Riley)

Mark orally reported that negotiations with Human Resources have taken a shift for the better. It's been more than 20 years since our plan has been revised. David Muir, who has extensive experience in administration at the U of M, has been especially helpful in the negotiations. Mark O'Riley and members of the UMRA committee have also met with Jamie Gerlach, who is working for the U of M on improvements to the retirees' plan so that it will be brought closer in its provisions to those of the active employees of the U of M. We are seeking terms that might be widely valued by our members in their provision, need, cost, and flexibility.

We have been compiling data from other plans, such as Canada Life and RTAM (Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba) which we could include in shaping our presentation to Human Resources at the U of M. The UMRA Executive will draw up an updated report.

We will make the material available to our members, to be followed a month or so later by an UMRA webinar to ask members which options they would prefer (for instance on vision care and dental care, for which our needs and usage would be greater than they might be for current U of M employees). We would prepare a revised proposal, taking into account members' responses and preferences, before putting our proposal through a final scrutiny. We would then take our proposal to Human Resources.

There was extensive discussion among attendees, and many questions about what examples offered at CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) and RTAM we might take guidance from. Mark said it is hard fully to compare the benefits before we get a proposed agreement in place.

The Vice President's Printed Report follows:

Greetings all, it has been my pleasure to serve in the Vice President's role for another year.

Benefits:

As I mention in last year's report over the last several years it has been increasingly apparent that the benefit plan for U of M retirees is no longer in line with other existing plans, so UMRA has been lobbying to address this. Throughout our negotiations with the university we have engaged in several activities to better understand the concerns of retirees with the current plan. To help get a better understanding of member's needs, we:

- published a newsletter article on the benefits plan and our efforts to enhance it, and then invited members to email us on their benefit priorities.

- held a webinar to review the current plan and then engaged in a dialogue to explore ways to improve it.
- met with the members of the University's benefits team that serve retirees, to hear the concerns that have been shared with them about the current plan.

With these sources of information the UMRA Benefits and Pension Committee (B&PC) began to sense the changes needed. However they also recognized that they needed to ensure that the plan still remained affordable to retirees on a fixed income.

We have also worked to form partnerships with other retiree communities so that our members can customize and enhance their coverage in ways that work best for them by enrolling in the benefit plans with the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) and the Retired Teachers Association of Manitoba (RTAM). These plans offer several À la cart options allowing our members to customize their coverage at competitive rates. Webinar's have been held in the last year so that our members can get to know more about these plans. We have captured videos of these sessions that we can share with you if you wish. Our goal is to work with the university to craft a good basic plan that provides good affordable coverage, with the understanding that if a retiree wants further coverage they can use the RTO and RTAM to get good enhancements at competitive rates.

As I mentioned in the last report getting support from the university to update our benefits plan has been slow due to several factors. This year we continued to work around several University personnel changes that set us back, however we've reached a point now where we are in the final steps of securing quotes for the changes we would like to see made to the plan. The journey has been long and a bit challenging but we are close to being able to send out a proposal to retirees. I want to thank the B&PC for all the work and energy that they have invested in this process. As a committee we always worry if we are getting the mix right so we will send out the proposed changes to the benefits plan to get your feedback before we commit to anything with the university. Once we get your endorsement it is likely that these changes will need to get approved by the President's Executive Team and the University's Staff Benefits Committee before it goes for final approval from the Board of Governors. If all goes well we should have the changes ready to be put in place when the new year starts for the benefit plan at the beginning of April.

Bench:

The university now has a fetching new park bench on the Fort Garry campus with a plaque noting that it has been put in place due to the generosity of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association. I thank Maureen Forest and Gladys Stewart for all their help in getting the bench installed. It is located near the walkway between University Centre and the Fitzgerald building. These are just a few of the highlights from my work in the role of VP over the last year.

Motion to accept the Vice President and Benefits and Pension Committee report:

Mark O'Riley / Maureen Forrest

Carried

Treasurer, (June LaRonde)

Janet Sealey, who reported on behalf of June LaRonde, thanked June for her service with the Executive since 2014, as she was stepping down as Treasurer.

Assiniboine Credit Union

Bank balance -period ending July 31/25

\$ 8,678.81

Income:

CURAC Affinity Pgrm Rebate – April 24/25	957.73	
CURAC membership fee	300.00	
CURAC grant for conference	200.00	
UMRA membership fees (July/24-June/25)	<u>2,535.00</u>	
Total Income	\$3,992.73	=====

Expenses:

President Reception - April 27/25		
- Students 3MT Gift cards	120.79	
- Printing material	75.04	
University of Manitoba:		
- 3MT Awards donation	1200.00	
- Bursary	1000.00	
- Scholarship	1000.00	
- Zoom License	240.69	
- Hermetic Tour – Legislative Bldg	140.40	
- Appreciation Luncheon(Nov21/24)	111.87	
- 2024/25 Renewal Campaign	207.71	

CURAC Conference-

- Montreal-May 21-23/25	981.67	
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Retirees Bench – U of M Campus

- General Services- Victor Stanley	<u>4,137.88</u>	
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Total Expense \$9,216.05

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BMO Investment Statement:

Opening balance (this period)	\$32,795.08	
Change in value,	\$1,238.37	
Closing balance	\$34,033.45	<u>\$34,033.45</u>
Total Asset		\$42,712.26
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***Note: Value of investment since opening is up by \$15,333.45**

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s report:

Joan McConnell / Gail Mackisey

Carried

Membership Committee, (Gladys Stewart)

Our contact with retirees is affected by the postal strike. Members should check their email for UMRA updates on the negotiations over retirees' benefits and send their comments to the Executive.

Members: Gladys Stewart (chair), Jay Goldstein, Norma Godavari, Jean Paterson, Dianne Bulback.

Statistics for 2024-2025 Membership Year (October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025)

Updated as of Sept 09, 2025:

Total membership = 843

Members (lifetime, annual or biennial fee paying) = 463 (55%)

Associates = 380 (45%)

Since the start of this membership year, 23 retirees joined UMRA, 16 members were deceased for a net change of +7.

Membership fees: Annual fees remain unchanged: one year @ \$15.00 two-years @ \$25.00 and lifetime membership \$100.00.

Reminders for renewals of annual memberships for 2025-2026 were forwarded by email in late August to 46 members. We had nine members renew and pay fees electronically. Hard copies with return-stamped envelopes have been sent by Canada Post to 37 members. Thank you to those who have renewed.

The membership committee held two meetings in the past year to review promotion, and plan for events. In the past 12 months, UMRA Members and guests participated in four community activities with positive feedback.

On December 12th, 21 members and guests toured the Manitoba Electrical Museum on Harrow Street. The participant cost was very reasonable, \$6 per person. The 90-minute tour cost of \$25.00 was paid by UMRA.

On May 20th, 18 members and guests enjoyed an excellent tour of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences Glenlea Research Station located 20 minutes south of the University of Manitoba campus. The participant cost for the tour was \$10.50.

The Hermetic Code Tour of the MB Legislative Bldg. occurred on August 12th. We had the maximum number of participants at 25, 18 members and 7 guests. The tour guide, Don Finkbeiner, was very pleased with the engagement of our group. Positive feedback was also received from attendees. Guests paid \$37.80. Members were subsidized by \$7.80, paid \$30.

Our last activity was on August 19th with the Fort Garry Campus Public Art Walk. Liv Valmestad, Art Librarian, U of M, led 15 participants on a free one-hour very interesting walking tour of some of the unique art pieces around the campus. We encourage members to join future planned activities.

Service Awards were initiated by the UMRA Executive in 2023. There are awards for 5, 10, and 15 years of

service on UMRA committees. The Membership Committee tracks members' service. This year, two members qualified for a 10-Year award and one for a 5-year award.

Thank you to Jay Goldstein, for his continued commitment and work on the membership records database. Please send any changes in your address by email to retirees@umanitoba.ca

Motion to accept the Membership Committee report:

Gladys Steward / Fran Parkinson

Carried

Communications Committee, (Gene Walz)

Janet Sealey reported on behalf of Gene Walz.

Janice Mann has been a great help in editing and producing the last Newsletter. The Fall Issue is finished and will be distributed on September 8.

I want to thank everyone on the Executive who helped provide articles for the issue, especially Janet Sealey, Mark O'Riley, Bill Kops and Gladys Stewart. As usual, Jay Goldstein and Ed Unrau helped on the In Memoriam entries, Bob Talbot contributed photos and Janice Mann proof-read the entire issue with sharper eyes than mine.

Once again I'm seeking assistance on the newsletter; as my cohort of retirees is getting older. I'll need someone from the recent retiring cohort. It would be beneficial if a woman and someone from university staff (i.e., non-academic) could be recruited.

Endowment, (Ed Unrau)

There will be a fall fund appeal conducted by the U of M. It will be an opportunity to support one or both of the UMRA endowments, one for a scholarship and one for a bursary. The U of M has continued to recognize the value of these awards and to acknowledge our contributions, an awareness that could help us in current negotiations.

As of September 30, the capital market value of the funds is as follows:

UMRA scholarship fund: \$46,608 (an increase from last year's \$37, 817)

UMRA bursary fund: \$60, 817 (an increase from last year's \$49,265)

Most of the increase in capital value can be attributed to the buoyant equities market of the past year, and not to an influx of cheques from donors. The scholarship funds support an award to a graduate student enrolled in a research/study program related to an aspect of aging. The bursary fund supports one or more awards to an undergraduate student in any program. The size of the awards each year depends on available sums determined by a formula that the U of M applies to the awards that they administer.

MOTION to accept Endowment report:

Ed Unrau / Jay Goldstein

Carried

Nominating Committee, (Daniel Sitar)

Dan explained that the nominating system does not allow for nominations from the floor. The Executive encourages retirees to participate by joining committees and contributing to their work. After a general discussion with members of the UMRA Executive Committee, the following individuals have agreed to be nominated for elected positions on its Executive Committee

President Janet Sealey duration – one year
Vice-President Mark O’Riley duration – one year
Secretary Dennis Cooley duration – two years
Treasurer Dianne Bulback duration – two years
Members-at-Large – for information – appointed by the Executive Committee
Ian Jones duration – two years
Jay Goldstein duration – two years
Edward Unrau duration – two years
Gladys Stewart duration – two years
Bill Kops duration – two years

Nominations for elected office are mixed, two for one year and two for two years. This process allows for partial turnover of Executive Committee leadership and maintenance of continuity in assisting new leadership members to adapt to their assigned responsibilities. June LaRonde, the current Association Treasurer, has agreed to be available to Dianne Bulback next year to provide mentorship to her successor as the new incoming Association Treasurer.

Motion to accept the Nominating Committee report:

Daniel Sitar / Arlene Young **Carried**

Past President, (Daniel Sitar)

Dan has been serving as back up to the current president and provides historical memory in the Executive.

Overall, my responsibilities for 2024-5 have been limited this past year. As Past President, I also serve as Chair of the Nomination Committee of UMRA. That report is provided separately. I also continue to serve as the University retiree representative to the annual United Way of Winnipeg Campaign. I am pleased to report that University of Manitoba retirees continue to demonstrate leadership in making contributions to such a worthy cause.

5. New Business

Assessing retirement plans (June Stewart)

Janet Sealey reported on behalf of June.

Janet briefly outlined the Sun Life retirement plan. A number of retirees have taken up the plan when

they chose not to stay with the U of M. The Sun Life plan is structured much like the U of M's, though it does offer a few options and possibly lower fees. The Benefits committee has also actively been assessing other possible plans through RTAM (Retired Teacher of Manitoba) and CURAC. We will be compiling comparative details and making them available to UMRA members.

Motion to accept New Business report:

Joan McConnell / Laurie Morris

Carried

6. Adjournment

Motion to accept

Daniel Sitar / Ed Unrau

Carried.