

President's Report
Annual General Meeting
June 3, 2020

Over the past year the University of Victoria Retirees Association increased its membership, maintained its positive financial situation, and we maintained our active social and intellectual events schedule until the pandemic struck. In order to do all of these things, we rely on our volunteers to whom the Association owes an enormous amount of gratitude. We are also helped in many ways by the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health – we have office space in the IALH and the staff is very generous in providing help and support for our work. In addition, the Office of UVic Alumni Affairs provides our organizational link to the University and its Director is actively engaged in supporting our initiatives.

The Association entered the year with a full slate of activities and programs planned, but the COVID-19 pandemic severely curtailed things with the imposition of social distancing protocols. Some of the highlights of our past year include:

Membership

- The UVRA has now surpassed the 720 mark in number of members.

Communications & Office

- Our new website is fully functional and on-line.
- We publish our newsletter – *Grey Matters!* – four times a year, and all but a handful are now distributed on-line.
- *EventBrite* – an on-line registration & ticketing service – has been incorporated into the operations of the UVRA. It has proved to be a very effective and economical resource in operating our social and outreach events.
- We held a Board retreat in February to articulate perspectives on future directions.

Social Events

- Four lunches with presentations are usually scheduled but only 2 were held this year:
 - December – Christmas
 - February – Chinese New Year
- Local visits:
 - Restricted due to pandemic

Community Outreach

- Elder Academy – we experienced a bit of a slow down last year with David Docherty stepping back but this year, with a new Program Committee And Advisory Board, each with new chairs the Elder Academy has had a very vibrant year up until the shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - September: *Activities to Enhance Your Quality of Life as You Age*
 - October: *Canadian Politics: Past Present and Future*
 - November: *Complementary Medicine; Expanding Your Choices*

- January: *Sex, Drugs & Alcohol: Use & Overuse*
 - February: *Living Without Oil Part 1*
- MasterMinds series – the 14th year of four consecutive Wednesdays in April was fully scheduled but then cancelled due to the pandemic.
 - United Way: UVRA members contributed \$37 828 to this year’s campaign - ~15% of the university total.

University Outreach

- The first UVRA Scholarship was awarded this past September to a doctoral student in clinical psychology working in the field of 55+ research.

Benefits

- Extended health coverage has been fairly stable with a mix of Blue Cross (the UVIC plan continued), the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) and Johnson plans with a slight majority going with Johnson.

In Progress

- Office support: We are now budgeting for part-time, paid office support from our own revenues. We continue our active association with the Institute for Aging and Lifelong Health and their wonderful staff members. We will continue working through our University linkage, the Alumni Relations Office, to secure some part-time office support.
- Elder Academy: Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic situation which may continue into 2021, planning is underway to configure formats and presentations that will allow for the Elder Academy to continue offering high quality sessions by experts on a wide variety of significant topics.

As noted in the introduction, the Association is reliant on the voluntary work of many individuals to continue our activities and functions. One of our valued volunteers, Gerry Emery, sadly passed away this year and he will be sorely missed. He and his wife Betty were stalwarts in serving as the welcoming and registration staff for all Elder Academy events.

The resurgence of the Elder Academy has been particularly noteworthy this past year. David Docherty has remained with the Program Committee to provide experienced and expert guidance, along with other committee members: Lou Schmidt, Jane Birkbeck, Peggy Talley, Dick Chappell and Barry Ming-Mah (who also helps organize our Chinese New Year’s lunch). Of particular note, John Gunton has done a remarkable job in chairing the committee, and actively organizing and participating in Elder Academy sessions.

Winona Pugh and James Pearce who have served on the UVRA Board for many years are stepping down. We owe them thanks for their service, and they will be missed but not forgotten.

The new year will begin with a continuation of pandemic restrictions in place and so, our Association activities will be curtailed until relatively normal social life is restored. In the meantime, we will work on developing new formats for our events.

I wish everyone a healthy and safe summer. And further, I hope and trust that: this pandemic will come to an end in the near future, and we emerge stronger and wiser.

John Anderson