

The BowWow Times

Official Newsletter of ARF (Association of Retired Faculty-MSU Bozeman)

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ARF & ADVOCACY (a message from John Jutila and Marty Hamilton): Studies have predicted the future of care for the elderly as a dangerous and delicate situation because of several interrelated factors including demographics, longer life, the structure of health care systems, declining family stability, and the financial constraints of retirement. Social support and institutional arrangements for the care of elderly are sorely inadequate and are derived, in part, from long-standing negative social perceptions of the elderly. That being the case, active participation by the elderly in organized groups is central to promoting more favorable policies and outcomes for policy decisions. This is especially true now that all levels of government are considering major policy revisions, some of which would pose serious difficulties for the elderly.

Apart from the political support given by national organizations such as the AARP, there is a need for organizations at the local level. In this regard, ARF has become a recognized and respected voice for the retired academic community on issues being addressed in Montana. ARF represents the needs of its members, informs the University and Board of Regents of those needs, and helps formulate innovative solutions. The Montana University System (MUS) has discovered that through ARF, the MUS has access to retired academics and a forum for presenting and discussing proposed policy changes.

ARF must focus not only on reacting to proposals by policy makers but also on a proactive strategy for improving the well-being of academic retirees. A proactive engine has been set in motion. In terms of supporting each other, ARF has recognized the need for a Friendship, Support, and Social Services group that maintains contact with retired faculty and spouses, especially those who have become isolated, perhaps due to aging, illness, or loss of spouse. If the situation requires some service, such as a weekly visit or occasional transportation, that need can be brought to the attention of the appropriate support persons. Much can be accomplished simply by coordinating email messages about our retired colleagues, for example, serving as a clearing house for information concerning deaths or serious illness. If you would like to coordinate or be involved in this service, please contact Don Mathre.

In terms of working for improved institutional and state support, the newly-formed Rights, Benefits, and Privileges Committee will conduct a study and create a list of retiree benefits that typically are provided by peer universities, but are not available to MSU retirees. For example, while most of us retirees are under the rules of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), most future retirees will be under the rules of the optional retirement program (ORP) which is administered by TIAA-CREF. It is unclear what policies apply to phased retirement, post-retirement employment, etc., for ORP retirees. The study will utilize AROHE materials, a canvas of American university web sites, TIAA-CREF guidance, and personal contacts. ARF has identified preliminary focus topics (e.g., fair policies for ORP retirees), but the actual focus for future action will be based on consultation with both ARF members and MSU constituencies. Ultimately, ARF will prepare proposals for revising university retirement policies so they provide appropriate rights, benefits, and privileges for retired faculty. It may be that TRS and ORP retirees will have differing policies and procedures.

The success of ARF's advocacy depends on the efforts of engaged ARF volunteers. We hope you are convinced that there is strength in numbers and that retired faculty need a strong advocacy organization. Please volunteer to work on the activities and projects listed here or on other ARF projects. See [Committees & Teams](#) on the ARF web site. If you have ideas for new projects, please discuss them with any of the [ARF Officers](#). Thanks.

ARF ANNUAL REPORT: The new report is available on-line at:
http://www.montana.edu/retired/ARF-AnnualReport-FY2011_26Jun2011.pdf

WEB SITE: Dwight Phillips has worked hard to maintain and expand our web site at www.montana.edu/retired. On the “Links” page, he has added some sites of interest to our group and to retirees in general. The first, under current items of interest, is to a publication that talks about retiree centers on university campuses and the role they can play. Two other links are further down the page under the section “links to retired faculty organizations” and include new links to the UC Berkeley Retirement center. The other link is to the Rutgers Retirement group which is unique in that it seems to have links to a lot of advice on end-of-life issues, like wills, obituaries, planning, etc.

MONTHLY LUNCHEONS: Monthly luncheons will begin again in September. Pierce Mullen will be organizing these meetings. If you have suggestions for speakers, please contact Pierce.

MEETING WITH MSU PRESIDENT: The officers of ARF met with MSU President Waded Cruzado on June 9 to go over what we have been up to over the past year and to confer with her on what she would like to see ARF be involved in to help the university. The President was very supportive of ARF projects and plans. She had good ideas for implementing our plans and offered the assistance of MSU offices. We suggested that the search committee for a new Commissioner of Higher Education should include a faculty retiree member. She concurred and plans to contact the President of the U of M to elicit his aid in bringing this suggestion to the Board of Regents. ARF will meet next with the President and Provost this coming December.

ARF OFFICE – 338 Culbertson: The ARF office is on the west side of the hall on the far north end of the third floor of Culbertson. There is a key box near the door. You can get the PIN from any ARF Officer. To enter the office, punch “clear”, the PIN, “open”. Follow the same procedure to replace the key, which you do before entering the office. The ARF phone has voice mail; call 994-7730. The office contains two computers, but only one is on the internet so far. For the main computer, the user name is ARF and no password is required. There is WiFi access in the room in case you want to work on your own laptop computer; click on MSU-Guest or RF-Connect to gain access to the internet. If you have an active campus account, the MSU-Guest server will prompt you to logon to that account. Please feel free to use the ARF office for meetings, project work, writing, counseling students, etc. There is a log book on the coffee table. Please help us keep a record of office usage.

RETIREES’ ASSOCIATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA: Bob Swenson, Marty Hamilton, and John Jutila recently traveled to Butte to meet with seven representatives of the committee that is forming a Retirees’ Association at the University of Montana. The ARF folks described our structure, services, and projects. The University of Montana folks had some good ideas that ARF will seriously consider; for example, distributing a pamphlet that list all benefits and privileges available to retirees. The two groups agreed to meet together at least twice a year, and more often if desired. They also agreed to work together to achieve common goals, such as issues determined by Montana University System policies. To learn more about the Univ. of Montana Retirees’ Association, visit its web site <http://www.umt.edu/retirees/>.

OUTREACH: ARF plans to explore the merits and mechanisms for creating associations of retired professionals and retired classified employees at MSU. ARF will meet with representatives of the other three MSU campuses to discuss ways to organize retired faculty across all of MSU. The participants will discuss the merits of either including all MSU retired faculty in ARF or creating a retired faculty group on each non-Bozeman MSU campus.

DUES: Dues for 2011-2012 are now being accepted. For the year ending June 30, 2011, ARF had 49 paid members. As a reminder, dues are \$15 for regular membership; \$25 for a sustaining membership; \$50 for a contributing membership; \$100 to become a benefactor; and \$200 for a lifetime membership. Mail your checks to the ARF treasurer, Don Mathre, 731 South 12th Ave, Bozeman, MT 59715. Make checks payable to the MSU Association of Retired Faculty.

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