**Windsor University Retirees' Association (WURA)**

**President’s Message**

**Annual General Meeting**

**December 3, 2024**

This, my second year as President, has been another busy year for our Association.

However, before I highlight some of those activities, I would ask that we take a moment to remember our friends and colleagues who have passed away during this last year. There have been far too many of them. All are recognized on the ***In Memoriam*** page on the University’s website: <https://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/1124/memoriam>. Many of our friends and colleagues were loyal and active members of our Association and we will miss their ideas and their energy in the years ahead. I would ask you to stand, if able, for a moment of silence.

Let me start with our **Communications Committee**. They continue to have a busy agenda which is outlined in the attached Report from the Committee. Hopefully, you have enjoyed our ***Hot Topics*** series and the issues of our ***e-Bulletin*** that have been published this year. Also, I hope that through my reports and the articles in our ***e-Bulletin***, you have had the chance to become familiar with the challenges and opportunities confronting us and the actions taken by your Executive to respond to them.

The Committee Reports, attached below, detail the activities of our respective Committees -- I know you will recognize the efforts of these Committees on behalf of the Membership. Nonetheless, I would like to highlight a few initiatives that have occupied your Executive’s time and energy during this past year.

Throughout the year, we have continued to make contributions to the **WURA Scholarship Fund**.  We believe it is important to keep growing the capital in this Fund so that we can provide enhanced aid to more students in these economically challenging times. We currently provide six Scholarships a year to Undergraduate students with a value of $2000 each. The Executive is committed to making further one-time contributions to the Fund when our budget allows in order to grow the Fund so that we can provide more scholarship dollars to more students. We are in discussions with the University to suggest that four of our existing six scholarships be named in honour of our colleagues William Phillips, Cormac Smith, Datta Pillay and David Palmer -- members who made significant contributions to WURA**.** We urge all members to consider the **WURA Scholarship Fund** as a destination for your funds when donating to the University.

**We have a new home**! Last April, The University established the **Age Friendly University Campus Faculty Hub Committee**, chaired by Dr. Erika Kustra, Associate Vice President Academic.  This Committee’s focus has, initially, been on establishing an office and a meeting space which is accessible and can serve as a venue where retirees can meet informally to share ideas and renew old acquaintances.  The result is our house at 360 Sunset! In particular, I would like to thank Veronika Mogyorody as the WURA member on-site during the entire remodel of our new home. Also, we owe a great big “thank you” to the following University employees: Daniella Beaulier, Heather Cantin, Cherie Gagnon, Anne Mullen, John Regier and Minke Wilcox.

A new umbrella Committee, with both a broader membership and a more comprehensive mandate is being formed. This committee will continue working on the University’s application for membership in the Age Friendly University Global Network and plans on how to meet the ten principles of the Network.

I want to give a “shout-out” to our **Social Committee** chaired by Christina Simmons for all of their work on the Holiday Party and the President’s Tea. I would be remiss if I did not mention the work of Richard Dumala in organizing our highly successful Trip to Stratford! Watch for next year’s event – I am sure it will be bigger and better.

At the President’s Tea held on June 13, 2024, we gave **Heather Pratt** the *“Friend of WURA” Award*. We wanted to acknowledge Heather’s outstanding support to our WURA researchers. Thank you, Heather!

The work of the *University Ad hoc Committee* struck to study the **Ontario Pension Plan** (UPP) has been completed. For a complete update on the workings of the *Ad Hoc Committee*, please see Ihor and Gordon’s Report under that Agenda item.

**WURA’s Pensions and Benefits Committee** members along with Human Resources and Green Shield are reviewing our current **Green Shield benefits** package. It has been a few years since the last review and we look forward to the Committee’s findings and recommendations. The Committee plans to hold a vote of the Membership on possible changes to the benefit plan.

Our **Membership Committee** continues to work hard to attract new members. We are convinced that there has never been a better or more important time to join our Association. We welcome Member involvement -- if you have an idea for an in-person, hybrid, or exclusively on-line program, let us know. Our Association is for ALL OF US, so become involved in whatever way suits you. It’s good for your mental health.

Thank you to the members of the Executive and all Committee Chairs and Committee Members for working so hard on behalf of the WURA Membership. As he steps off the Executive, I want to thank Bruce Elman for his valuable contributions. I also want to gratefully acknowledge the long and excellent service of Dr. Ihor Stebelsky, as he too, steps away from our pension and benefit committees.

It has been my privilege to serve with such a wonderful group of colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwendolyn Ebbett