

President's Report
Annual General Meeting
June 4, 2025

Greetings to my fellow retirees. I cannot believe that another year has passed so quickly. I have now reached the term limit as President as outlined in the UVRA Constitution. I will be stepping down and will also be leaving the board of directors. It is important that this association be renewed and that others bring forward their ideas, energy and talent to ensure that this organization remains relevant.

I want to reinforce that it is vital that UVRA members come forward and contribute their time and enthusiasm to their association. Many of the current board members have served multiple terms and they could not be expected to continue without more support. Frequent requests for volunteers have gone virtually without response and although we have tried to carry on with few hands-on deck this situation cannot continue. At this point, there are several vacancies on the board and the Executive after this AGM. This is not a tenable situation. The more folks that assist the smaller the load and the greater the potential. If UVRA members want a true association which advocates and looks out for its interests, then folks MUST step forward. I know that UVRA is not alone in its lack of active participants but that is not comforting because I know that many of our members are active in a multitude of other places. I am concerned that they believe that UVRA will continue without their help – if that is your perspective then you are incorrect. If nothing changes...then UVRA will cease to exist and function in its current form and it will become a shell with no ability to support or advocate for its members.

On a more positive note, our financial position as an organization is very favourable. We have funds to support activities which could be used with volunteer support. Although access to various health benefit plans is a key benefit offered through UVRA membership, we could provide MUCH MORE if we had the capacity that comes from more participants leading new initiatives. We continue to receive new memberships, but I believe that the numbers could definitely increase with more marketing materials such as a brochure and connection with other areas at UVic.

Membership

- UVRA has just under 790 members, with a majority being life members.

Communications & Office

- Our website continues to expand its relevance as a resource for information at www.uvic.ca/retirees.
- "Grey Matters!", our UVRA newsletter remains an amazing information source with a multitude of articles. It is available on our website and via email to the membership.
- We are fortunate that Sanjit Roy provides support in a broad range of activities both in the office and in other activities such as the website.
- We appreciate the support of the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health (IALH) which provides us with office space.

Social Events

- We had hoped to provide additional events over the year but due to a lack of volunteers were only able to offer the Chinese (Lunar) New Year (thanks to Barry Ming) and the Christmas Luncheon.

Community Outreach

- The Masterminds series completed its 19th year with four sessions scheduled on consecutive Wednesdays in May however, the final two sessions were cancelled due to low registration. We thank Patty Pitts for finding wonderful speakers and topics. Unfortunately, the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health (IALH) was unable to assist us and UVRA was on its own in organizing these sessions. We did however, receive assistance from the VP External's Office in obtaining facilities for the presentations.
- United Way: UVRA was unable to find a volunteer to lead our section of the campaign this year.

University Outreach

- Two UVRA Graduate Scholarships were awarded again this year to assist new researchers in providing valuable insights through the study of adults 55+. The two recipients for the 2024/2025 UVRA Awards are Carolyn Brandly (Social Dimensions of Health) and JiaRui Zhu (Public Health and Social Policy). These scholarships are selected by an independent third party.

Benefits

- Johnson, the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) and Blue Cross (continuation of UVic plan) continue to be available. Be certain to check periodically for updates or changes. The travel plan benefit continues as a significant option. For more information check either on the UVRA website or on the websites of the specific plans.

Ongoing and In Progress

- UVRA remains a member of the Later Life Learning (LLL) Initiative of CURAC/ARUCC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada) which distributes information and access on a wide range of fascinating sessions that are offered across Canada.
- Our continued membership in AROHE (Association of Retired Organizations in Higher Education) provides access to their informative newsletter on aging and wellness. Their second three-part series on "Reimagining Retirement: Holistic Cognitive Health" contains many great ideas. You can view the recording of this series on the AROHE website.
- This years CURAC/ARUCC Conference is in Montreal, Quebec from May 21-23.
- We continue the access to Cyber Seniors. They provide free technology support and training specifically for seniors. We list their information as part of the weekly event emails.

In closing, I want to express my thanks to my fellow board members for their continued diligence on behalf of our members. I am grateful to be a member of UVRA as this organization was established to provide support for its members and has provided access to excellent health and other benefits. I want to personally ask you to put yourself forward to take part in UVRA. UVRA needs your support. I know that our members have extraordinary skills and knowledge so think what you could do to help this association, and your fellow retirees. Contact UVRA and say that you are interested in sharing your time with UVRA. The type and size of the commitment is for you to decide.

Again, on behalf, of the UVRA Board, I am signing off and express my best wishes. Have a safe and healthy summer and all the best going forward. I hope that I will bump into you at a future UVRA activity.

Keep well and stay safe.

Margaret Klatt

President, University of Victoria Retiree Association