August 12, 2019

Dear UNM Retiree,

The UNM Retiree Association was created to represent and promote the welfare and interests of all retired UNM employees. For this mission to succeed, you need to hear from us and we need to hear from you. We serve all UNM retirees and want to communicate with you on a regular basis, whether or not you’re a dues paying member. We have lots of news to share with you in this letter and in the future, and we want to know how we can better serve you.

Please send us your contact information as soon as possible, including your preferred email address. You can send the information either by emailing us at retiree@unm.edu, calling 505-277-3187, or mailing the information to: Retiree Association, MSC11 6330, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. This mailing came from UNM Human Resources, so we may not have your contact information (mailing address and email) unless you give it to us directly. This letter has two purposes; the first is if you are not an active member, we are inviting you to join us. The second is whether or not you are already an active member we want to bring you up to date on the issues we are working on.

In the current climate of fiscal constraints, it is critical that our Retiree Association be strong as we work on behalf of retirees, to not only protect retirement benefits, but also to enhance the wellbeing of our retirees and provide opportunities for retirees to actively engage in the community. Over the past few years, we have worked diligently to try to protect retiree health care benefits, ERB pension benefits, improve retiree health, help retirees to navigate the health care system, and provide opportunities for retirees to engage in meaningful activities and social events. During the next few years, we will work to strengthen existing programs and develop new programs to further serve retirees.

The UNM Retiree Association Legislative Committee volunteered during the last legislative session to protect ERB pension benefits. They contacted legislators, attended ERB Board meetings and Stakeholder meetings to prevent Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) reductions from becoming a part of legislative changes. Although the UNM Retiree Association supports some of the actions proposed to improve the financial position of the ERB pension fund, we do not support any further diminishment of the COLA. We realize many retirees planned their financial futures based on the availability of COLAs to offset inflation. As a result of legislative changes, employers will increase contributions by .25% and UNM Retirees in the Return to Work Program, working within the .25 F.T.E. limit, will start contributing to the ERB, at the employee rate, starting July 2020. Despite this additional contribution from UNM and employed retirees in 2020, we anticipate another full force effort will be required to prevent COLA reductions in the next legislative session.

Your Association’s Program Committee has offered a number of social events for retirees to visit and to enjoy many of the wonderful places Albuquerque and New Mexico have to offer. Over the
last year, the UNM Retiree Association arranged tours and visits to Zimmerman Library murals, the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Kimo Theater, Albuquerque Museum, and Botanical Gardens. Consider attending one of the monthly activities offered. Check the Association’s website at retiree.unm.edu for upcoming events. Give one a try you’ll be glad you did! Also, our annual holiday party is in December and our annual meeting will be next May (dates to be announced). All UNM retirees and their guests are welcome to attend.

The UNM Retiree Association participated in the evaluation of proposals for UNM post-65 retiree health plans offered in 2019. Several new insurance vendor options were added, some at a significantly lower cost. As premium costs increase, the UNM Retiree Association will work with Human Resources to continue to provide lower cost options whenever possible. The Benefits Committee is also working with UNM Human Resources to make sure their website has a complete list of UNM retiree benefits and the links to individual UNM departments offering those benefits.

The Communication and Membership Committee has been working to improve and update the UNM Retiree Association website and to find better methods for reaching UNM retirees. A survey was administered to UNM retirees, by e-mail, asking retiree preferences regarding programming and preferred methods for receiving information. Thank you to those retirees who answered the survey. The survey results will guide future programming and event planning.

As you can see, many volunteers in the UNM Retiree Association work hard to provide events and activities to serve you and to work on your behalf to protect the benefits we have all earned during our employment at UNM. We can always use help and we welcome your participation on any of the Association's valuable committees, such as Benefits, Legislative, Program, and Communications.

Right now the most important thing you can do for us is send us your contact information as soon as possible, including your preferred email address. You can get the information to us either by emailing us at retiree@unm.edu, calling 505-277-3187, or mailing the information to: Retirees Association, MSC11 6330, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

If you’re not an active member, please consider paying your dues by going to our website-retiree.unm.edu/membership.html. The dues are modest, but go a long way to helping the Association meet its important mission. Membership dues are currently $15 for an individual, and $20 for a household (retiree and spouse/partner or a two retiree household) annually. Multiple years may be paid for at the following individual rates: two years $25, three years $35, four years $45, five years $50 and lifetime $100.

Sincerely,

UNM Retiree Association Board of Directors
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