

**Revised DRAFT**  
**Re-Energizing the Emeriti  
Association:  
Report on Input from Emeriti  
Members**

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September 9, 2008

# **Re-Energizing the Emeriti Association: Report on Input from Emeriti Members**

In February 2008 a motion was passed at the Emeriti Association's general meeting that the Emeriti Board conduct a survey to identify how the Emeriti Association can best address their wants. In May 2008, the Emeriti Association Board accepted a proposal from the ad hoc committee to collect data from Association members.

## *Purpose and Specific Questions*

The purpose for the data collection process was for Emeriti Association members to describe their vision of how the organization can support them, their relationship to the University, and the University itself.

The specific questions included:

1. What do you think the Emeriti Association could do for you personally, to connect you with other Emeriti, and to maintain a connection with the University?
2. What would be appropriate activities for the Emeriti Association to support?
3. How do Emeriti feel about some of the present activities?
  - a. Monthly meetings
  - b. Past program topics
  - c. Courtesy Committee activities
  - d. Web site
  - e. Communication via email

## *Target Audience and Sample*

All UNL Emeriti Association members were included in the target audience. A sample of 20 new emeriti (3 years or less), 20 junior emeriti (3-6 years), and 20 senior emeriti (6 or more years) were selected to participate in the data collection process. Nineteen accepted the invitation for a two-hour luncheon discussion, and also completed a short questionnaire.

## *Data Collection and Analysis*

*Small group dialogues.* Using the specific questions previously identified, one small dialogue group was held June 23 and two on July 23, 2008. Ad hoc committee members led the dialogues and hand-recorded the discussion in each of the groups. Notes from the three groups were summarized according to topics which emerged. All of the ad hoc task force members independently checked the notes to verify that they reflected what was said. For the June 23<sup>rd</sup> group, the summaries were e-mailed to the participants to verify that the summary reflected the discussion.

*Quantitative survey.* Again, using the specific questions previously identified, a paper/pencil survey was developed (Addendum A). Responses were hand-tabulated; means and percentages were calculated as appropriate.

## Findings

### Summary of the Small Discussion Groups

*The notes are structured around topical areas—not a chronological recounting of the groups' discussion. No priority is attached to the order in which items are reported.*

**QUESTIONS:** How can the Association support the emeriti? ...the University? ...and their relationship to the University?

**MONTHLY MEETINGS** were seen as a key part of the EA's contribution to the membership. Many in attendance recalled specific programs they had found particularly interesting. During the course of the session, several suggestions were offered regarding ways to improve the monthly meetings. It was also suggested that attendees at each meeting be asked to call four emeriti not in attendance to encourage them to join the group for the next meeting. Similarly, each member could be asked to bring a colleague to each meeting.

It would be helpful to form a program committee to assist the VP in identifying programs.

**Time and day of the week** There seemed to be a consensus that a meeting around mid-day would work best. It was suggested that on alternating months the meetings be held on Tuesday and Thursday to allow those with set commitments on either day to attend half of the meetings. It is critical, however, that the alternating schedule be set well in advance and strictly followed.

**Location:** The possibility of using the Champions Club for meetings, which has the advantage of good parking on City Campus plus good meeting space, should be explored. If the Tuesday/Thursday format is adopted, the Champion's Club should be the site for one of each.

Tours of other facilities, such as the Tractor Museum, may spur interest.

Of on-campus locations, the East Campus Union seems to be the best.

**Social emphasis:** Food availability was seen as facilitating social interaction, one of the assets of the monthly sessions. However, the fixed price format at the East Campus Union was not seen as supportive of individuals securing lunch at the Union.

The importance of social interaction, including how the monthly meetings are structured, was seen as key.

A number of discussants commented on the opportunity the EA offers to individuals to get to know other emeriti with whom they had little contact during their employed years at UNL. With the increasing “compartmentalization” of departments, efforts should be expended to facilitate cross-departmental and cross campus relationships.

**Program Content:** Several individuals suggested having the Chancellor or one of the Vice Chancellors give an update on an annual basis.

How about very different events—e.g. a picnic, movie night (e.g. at Joyo) etc.

As new buildings or major renovations come on line, tours, such as the International Quilt Study Center meeting in April, would provide good subject matter for a meeting.

**Agenda:** There seemed to be unanimity that the business meetings were too long. The question of whether Board meetings were open to all emeriti was raised. If so, that would ameliorate concerns about the Board “running amok”. [NOTE: *The EA Bylaws are silent the matter of what, if any business should be brought to the monthly meetings other than the election of officers which must take place at the November meeting.*]

**Memory Moments**” must be continued.

**Golf:** Lessons coupled with regular rounds might prove to be a popular event.

**STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS** is an event to which the EA might wish to tie an event such as a coffee with bagels one hour before the address. This is an event many emeriti already attend and capitalizing on this event would emphasize the tie between the EA and UNL.

**COLLABORATION WITH OTHER GROUPS:** It was suggested that the Association might offer “skill development “courses such as digital photography or selling on E-Bay, perhaps with a “teaser” at the monthly meeting.

There needs to be a careful and extensive discussion regarding the relationship between OLLI and EA. For example, OLLI’s courses need to be kept in mind in scheduling EA programs to avoid overlap. Ways in which the two might more effectively collaborative should be considered.

**OUTCOMES MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TO UNL:** Emeriti’s continuing contribution to the UNL community (e.g. through OLLI and dissertation supervision) should be kept in the administration’s mind. Explore how emeriti are volunteering to support departments and colleges and establish some kind of working relationship with deans and directors to encourage them to involve emeriti and acknowledge their contribution.

Work with the administration to establish recognition for outstanding service by emeriti after retirement. (NOTE: The Pound Howard and Doc Elliott Awards are traditionally given to emeriti based on pre-retirement accomplishments.)

## **MEMBER SUPPORT AND BENEFITS**

**Transportation** for emeriti unable to drive—for example, many live in retirement communities, and most retirement communities provide a van to transport residents to various events. By a search of our membership list, it could be determined how many members live at, e.g. Eastmont. An Emeriti representative might approach the Eastmont program staff to coordinate a van trip from the community to emeriti meetings. Other partnerships with the retirement community may also be possible. The group saw “transportation” as being more important than sending gift baskets for special birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

**The national association meeting** should provide ideas for additional benefits

**We are here** and our benefits should continue.

**Membership** in Nebraska Club or health clubs are an option to be explored.

A “**hard copy**” **newsletter** might be a way of reinforcing ties to emeriti without internet access or the mobility to attend meetings. Who would create it? Who would pay for its delivery?

**The Wisherd Fund** is a critical asset of the EA. The possibility of using more Wisherd money to encourage attendance at monthly meetings was posed. Dues are very, very low—to the extent that they are a “joke”!

**The Scarlet** is seen as a critical tie between emeriti and UNL. All reported finding it of great value in keeping up to date on UNL activities, including retirements. Of those in attendance, six currently have either a mailbox or an office on campus, although some rarely visited either. One participant did not have access to the internet. [NOTE: Given the explicit purpose of the Wisherd Fund, I wonder about using Wisherd funds to pay for the postage (\$25/year) for those who really do not have internet access. Those who have internet access but would **prefer** a mailed copy would pay for it personally.] Seven of those in attendance receive two copies of Scarlet—one at work, one at home.

**The Courtesy Committee’s** functions should be re-examined. Cards for illness are questionable, as are gift baskets. Acknowledge deaths and recognize emeriti who receive special awards. Delete cards for anniversaries and birthdays except at age 90 or beyond.

**SUPPORT AND RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS:** Participation in the EA by new emeriti is key to the EA’s success. It was suggested that the EA offer an orientation to those who are about to retire. Subjects might include: a. opportunities available in the UNL/Lincoln community for volunteering, b. what EA offers, c. tips on how to retire

successfully, d. personal experiences with health insurance, etc. This would assist in new emeriti in seeing EA as a helpful, productive organization and encourage participation. Because newly retired faculty may not be ready to join the EA during the transition year, a second year of complementary membership should be considered. The welcome luncheon at the Champions Club is a great addition.

The Benefits Committee should work with the Provost’s Office to require a decision by appropriate administrators as to whether a retiring faculty member will be granted emerita/us status on the PAF.

***SOME ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED***

- Has the EA outlived its raison d’être. Faculty are retiring later, many leave Nebraska, increasingly and are less likely to be “joiners.”
- Are dues too low? Is the cost of collecting dues out doing their revenue?
- Is there a perception among current faculty that emeriti are over the hill?
- How to deal with non-resident emeriti?
- Why should one want to be a member of the EA?

**Results of the Paper/Pencil Survey**

N = 19 – Those who attended the discussion groups answered the survey

How desirable is it for the Emeriti Association to...

	Very desirable	Doesn't Desirable	matter	Undesirab	Very undesir	MEAN
<b>(monthly meeting)</b>						
a. ...arrange a monthly meeting?	1	2	3	4	5	1.3
n. ...meet on the University campus?	1	2	3	4	5	1.7
b. ...hold a monthly meeting the same time of the day (AM, noon, pm)?	1	2	3	4	5	1.8
c. ...hold a monthly meeting the same weekday (Mon, Tues, Wed, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	5	2.2
o. ...meet off campus at a restaurant (or other appropriate place)?	1	2	3	4	5	3.3

How would you feel about alternating meeting dates on different days of the week?

%	
26	1. Bad idea
21	2. It wouldn't bother me
53	3. Give it a try

How would you feel about alternating meeting times between morning, noon, and afternoon?

%	
42	1. Bad idea
32	2. It wouldn't bother me
26	3. Give it a try

**(programs)**

f. ...organize programs/tours whereby Emeriti

can visit new/remodeled UNL sites?	1	2	3	4	5	1.6
e. ...arrange programs related to personal needs (i.e., health, finance, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	5	2.4
d. ...arrange programs related to University activities only?	1	2	3	4	5	3.2

**(communication)**

l. ...send meeting announcements via e-mail?	1	2	3	4	5	1.6
m. ...maintain a web site with nice to know Emeriti information?	1	2	3	4	5	1.6
k. ...send meeting announcements via snail mail?	1	2	3	4	5	2.9

**(courtesy)**

j. ...send Emeriti members cards at times of illnesses?	1	2	3	4	5	2.5
g. ...give Emeriti members gift baskets for decade birthdays, 80 and over?	1	2	3	4	5	3.1
h. ...give Emeriti members gift baskets for special wedding anniversaries?	1	2	3	4	5	3.6

Will you participate in UNL	%	Are you....
% Emeriti activities?	37	1. A New Emeriti (3 years or less)
67 1. Definitely will	10	2. A Junior Emeriti (3-6 years)
33 2. Probably will	53	3. A Senior Emeriti (6 or more years)
0 3. Probably will not		
0 4. Definitely will not		

**Motions from the Ad Hoc Survey Task Force**

It was moved that the Emeriti Association Board accept the report from the Ad Hoc Survey Task and that the Emeriti Association Board accept the following steps to implementation the recommendations:

1. September 2008 – All EA Board members will read and study the Ad Hoc Survey Task Force’s report and bring their questions to the Board meeting for clarification.
2. October 2008 – All EA Board members will submit the five topics they consider to be the top issues to address immediately. The EA Board President will summarized all topics (or issues) submitted and the Board will rank order the topics.
3. November 2008 – All EA Board members will submit items under each of five topics listed as high priority in the October 2008 meeting and identify who, or which committee, should address the topic. The EA Board President will summarize all items submitted and the Board will determine the final suggestions to implement.

4. December 2008 planning meeting – The EA Board will (a) integrate the high priority items selected for implementation in 2009 in an appropriate manner, and (b) list the other lower priority items for implementation over the next few years.

These motions were approved by the Board at the September 9, 2008 Board meeting.

This is the report edited by Robert Fuller for inclusion on the Emeriti Association Website.

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