

**SUNY Retirees Service Corps**  
**Notes from Advisory Council Meeting**  
**Thursday, April 8, 2010**  
**SUNY Plaza, Albany**

**Meeting Attendance**

Ed Alfonsin (phone), Alan Dunefsky, Peter Herron, Jim Kalas, Bob Kasprak, Curtis Lloyd (via phone), Barbara Mierzwa (via phone), Gail Myers, Bob Pompei (via phone), Joan Prymas, Carl Wiezalis, Judy Wishnia, Tom Wolff, Ram Chugh, Julie Petti, Pierre Radimak and Peter Thomas.

**1. Opening Remarks:** Tom Wolff called the meeting to order and introduced and welcomed new council members Ed Alfonsin (Potsdam), Bob Pompei (Binghamton) and Joan Prymas (Herkimer).

**2. Notes of the October 8, 2009 Advisory Council Meeting:** The Council accepted the notes with the corrections pointed out by Gail Myers in her "Update on NYSOFA."

**3. Notes of the January 13 Executive Committee Meeting:** The Council accepted the notes.

**4. Advisory Council Membership:** Council members suggested writing a letter to Vince Aceto thanking him for his service to the RSC. Mark Walter from New Yorkers Volunteer/State Commission on National & Community Service received permission from his superiors to serve on the Advisory Council as a non-SUNY member. In response to a query from Gail Myers, Tom Wolff and the other Council members indicated that they'd like Gail to continue representing the NYS Office for the Aging as a non-SUNY Council member and thanked her for her valuable assistance to the Council. Gail agreed to continue to serve on the Council. The search continues for a state-op campus member from the Finger Lakes Region. The Council recommended efforts be made to recruit new members who enhance racial diversity as well as SUNY retirees with a professional, clerical or support staff background (classified service). They also supported developing a pool of potential candidates who would be interested in filling future Council vacancies.

**5. Term of Appointments - Rotation:** The Advisory Council approved Tom Wolff's "SUNY RSC Advisory Council Membership Terms" plan. It sets one-, two- and three-year terms for current and future state-operated campus/community college Council members between 2010 and 2018. Under the plan, which takes effect immediately (4/8/10), the newest members serve the longest terms. The RSC Executive Committee will recommend when terms should expire (e.g., end of academic year, calendar year, fiscal year) and suggest potential dates for an Advisory Council annual meeting, during which a Council chair and vice-chair will be selected.

**6. Review of the Nov. 12 Conference/7. Report on the Conference Evaluations:** The Council members were pleased with the conference outcome and the favorable comments from the participants.

**8. Overview of Conference Proceedings:** Each campus president was sent a copy of the Proceedings with a cover memo from Curtis Lloyd. The Council recommended that copies of the Proceedings also be sent to the coordinators of existing SUNY retiree organizations, the SUNY Board of Trustees, chairs of college councils (state-operated campuses), chairs of community college boards of trustees, and possibly community college foundation presidents and the presidents of major unions.

**9. Future SUNY Retirees Conferences:** The Council voted to hold a major retirees conference every two years. The next RSC conference would be held in November 2011. The members also discussed encouraging campuses with active retiree organizations to host regional conferences in alternating years. The Executive Council will review both topics in greater detail. They might also explore the feasibility of pursuing potential outside vendors to help fund the biannual RSC retirees conference.

**10. Strategies for Promoting Campus-based Retiree Organizations:** The Council discussed the idea of requesting a letter from Chancellor Zimpher that would be sent to campus presidents urging them to create or strengthen a retiree organization. Council members agreed with Curtis's suggestion to wait three to four months

to ask for the Chancellor letter since his recent Proceedings cover memo to presidents included a paragraph on retiree organizations.

**11. Role of Advisory Council as Regional Liaisons:** Ram distributed a list identifying the Council liaison for each of the ten SUNY regions and the campuses within each region. Ram said there were 12 campus retiree organizations in place when the RSC was created in 2008. Only two additional organizations have been created since then, bringing the total to 14. The Advisory Council set a goal of doubling the number of campus-based retiree organizations by the end of the year. To accomplish this, each Council Regional Liaison was asked to identify, encourage and assist at least one campus in their region start a campus-based retiree organization. If the liaison's home campus does not already have a retiree organization in place, he or she will work to establish one there, as well. The liaisons will be provided with retiree organization start-up materials they can share with the campuses as well as contact info for existing retiree organization coordinators and people who attended the RSC's 11/12/09 inaugural conference.

Additionally, Advisory Council liaisons were each asked to obtain and submit at least three personal stories of retirement from SUNY retirees in their region by the next Council meeting. The Council member should include their own retirement story if they have not submitted it already. Ram said the write-ups, which will be posted in the SUNY Retiree Experiences section of the RSC Web page, should include the following elements: planning for retirement, specifics of how he or she is spending their retirement, whether the retiree ended up doing what they had planned to do, and lessons they would like to share with current employees planning to retire.

Ram also requested Council members to send him names of retirees from their campuses who have made significant contributions in providing service to their campus and local community, in teaching and research, etc. This information will be included in the "Retirees in the News" section of our Web page.

**12. Updating of the Web Page – Key to the Mission of the RSC:** Curtis Lloyd reported that the RSC Web page has been on hold due to evaluation and planned redesign of the entire System Administration website and IT infrastructure. He said conversations are underway about the possibility of an IT department staff person providing limited technical support for the RSC page. Curtis said even if that materializes, he would still like his department (Human Resources) to take ownership of RSC Web page development, with Melissa Starman of his staff and Pierre Radimak of the RSC keeping the page up-to-date.

**13. Periodic Updates to the Conference Attendees and Expanding the Distribution List:** Nearly 96% of RSC conference attendees surveyed expressed interest in receiving periodic updates from the RSC regarding retiree-related issues/events. An e-mail distribution list will be created for this purpose. Ram asked the Council members to give him the names and e-mail addresses of other retirees from their campuses who might be interested in being added to this distribution list.

**14. A Brief Survey on Current SUNY Retirees Involvement in Campus and Community Service:** The Advisory Council supported Jim Kalas's suggestion to conduct a brief survey that will gauge the degree of involvement of SUNY retirees in campus and community service. Jim and Ram will design the survey, which will be sent electronically to conference attendees and to as many other SUNY retirees as possible using all available channels. It was suggested that existing SUNY campus retiree organizations be contacted for obtaining information relating to the nature and magnitude of involvement of retirees in service.

**15. SUNY Retirees and Peace Corps:** Carl Wiezalis reported that the Peace Corps and Project Hope are interested in forming a relationship with SUNY. The organizations requested a meeting that would include discussion of the RSC, its goals, and the potential role of SUNY retirees as volunteers for the Peace Corps/Project Hope. Carl said Mitch Leventhal, the new SUNY Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs, supported scheduling the meeting. The Advisory Council did, as well. The attendees would include representatives from the Peace Corps and Project Hope, Carl, Mitch Leventhal, Tom Wolff and Ram. Carl will schedule the meeting.

**16. Update on New Yorkers Volunteer/State Commission on National and Community Service:** The report was postponed as Mark Walter of New Yorkers Volunteer was unable to attend the meeting due to an emergency.

**17. Update on NYSUT Retirees (RC39):** Peter Herron indicated that the website of NYSUT RC39, the NYSUT community college retiree council, should be up and running soon. The Retiree Association of Suffolk Community College (RASCC) website ([www.rascc.org](http://www.rascc.org)) has been functioning for several years. Pete requests that Advisory Council members visit the site and provide feedback.

**18. Update on the UUP Active Retirees Committee:** Judy Wishnia reported that her organization is a proponent of Professional Rights, whereby SUNY professional retirees would be afforded the same rights and privileges as retired faculty (parking, library privileges, etc.). She said that retired professionals at many campuses are currently denied such rights. Also, Judy indicated that the Active Retirees Committee newsletter won another award as the best newsletter of its kind in the state.

**19. Update on the NYS Office for the Aging:** Gail Myers indicated that the OFA is hosting "Senior Day on the Plaza" at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany on Wednesday, May 5 from noon-3:00 p.m. She distributed brochures to Advisory Council members and asked them to help her promote the event by forwarding the information to their networks. She also handed out the new Aging Network brochure.

**20. Retired Public Employees Association (NYS):** Bob Kasprak spoke with an official of the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA), who expressed interest in exploring a collaboration with the RSC. Bob said the RPEA is not political and only deals with retiree-related issues. He proposed having someone from the RPEA serve as a non-SUNY representative on the Advisory Council.

#### **21. Other Items:**

- **Strategic Plan Comments Letter:** The Advisory Council approved writing a letter to Chancellor Zimpher and Strategic Planning Committee members commenting on the draft SUNY Strategic Plan. The letter, which will be signed by Tom Wolff and Ram, will state that the Plan document did not mention anything about the involvement of SUNY retirees, stress how our retirees are a vital resource, and indicate that the RSC and its Advisory Council would be happy to discuss how best to use retirees in shaping the future of SUNY.
- **Chancellor Zimpher Invitation:** The Council also supported inviting Chancellor Zimpher to attend its next meeting in August. It was hoped that she would be able to attend today's meeting, which had been proposed by the Executive Committee. However, the Chancellor was unavailable due an extremely busy schedule (state budget negotiations, preparation for the launch of the new SUNY Strategic Plan, etc).
- **Advisory Council Member Directory:** Ram said a directory containing Advisory Council and RSC resource people contact information will be created and distributed to the Council in the near future.
- **AROHE Conference:** Ram reminded Advisory Council members that the annual AROHE conference will take place October 14-17 at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT.

**22. Next Meeting Date:** The Advisory Council will meet again on Wednesday, August 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at SUNY Plaza.