

New Retiree Organizations: What AROHE Can Do for You



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A variety of administrators and faculty from institutions across North America contact our AROHE corporate office every month with questions about starting a retiree organization or supporting one. These contacts provide us with information about what institutions are doing for and with their retiree populations. In this article, I will focus on our most recent inquiries made by individuals needing assistance for their retiree organization.

Over the past few years, we have been contacted by two distinct groups. The first group is composed of administrators or retirees in the process of establishing retiree organizations. They need help knowing where to start and how to get organized. The second group is composed of retirement organization leaders looking for ways to improve relationships with their campus administrations.

The AROHE office supports both newly forming and established retiree organizations. Some of the ways we assist them are by providing customized consulting, sending the AROHE Start-Up Kit with its accompanying attachments, and providing web access to resources developed by our AROHE members. The members themselves are valuable resources who provide insight based upon experience. The insight gained through AROHE members discussing successful practices is frequently customized to suit different campuses.

In the case of newly forming retiree associations and organizations, sometimes it's hard to know where to start. And although AROHE members from long-established retiree organizations can provide experienced insight, often times AROHE members from newly-formed

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organizations offer the most detailed and valuable information for a startup organization. At the upcoming AROHE Conference, there will be many opportunities to network with new and long-established retiree organization representatives.

An important tip for all organizations is to identify and engage well-known and respected faculty and administrators (retired or not) to be spokespersons and champions for your organization. Those that are deeply knowledgeable about your campus' culture and political structure can be valuable supporters that will connect your retiree organization across campus.

They can also help garner resources and support from important campus units. Having support from the academic side of the institution, such as a campus President or Provost, makes a big difference. However, in these hard economic times, we have seen financial support for retiree organizations coming from human resources departments, alumni associations, and foundation or development offices.

AROHE conducts a survey of services provided by member and non-member campuses to their retirees, including but not limited to retiree organization support. Campuses can take advantage of the wealth of information provided through the survey findings. The findings, along with other information about our organization, can be obtained through contacting AROHE at info@arohe.org.

AROHE welcomes SUNY's individual campuses as members and stands ready to assist them with starting a new retiree organization and strengthening an existing one. These services are available at no cost to campuses thanks to an agreement through which the SUNY Retirees Service Corps and System Administration cover the cost of campus memberships until June 30, 2014. Contact your campus HR office for information on this arrangement.

We encourage you to connect with AROHE, become an active member, use the password-protected resources on the AROHE web site, and attend the upcoming AROHE 10th Anniversary Biennial Conference October 21-24, 2012 in Raleigh, North Carolina. ■