Proceedings of the Inaugural Conference

Re-Imagining SUNY Retirement:
Strategies for Designing Campus-Based Organizations that Serve Retirees and Offer Opportunities for Public Service

November 12, 2009
SUNY System Administration, Albany, NY

Edited by Ram Chugh, Ph.D., Executive Director
SUNY Retirees Service Corps

www.suny.edu/retirees
Proceedings of the Inaugural
SUNY Retirees Service Corps Conference*

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* The Conference was held on November 12, 2009 in Albany, New York and the Proceedings were published in March 2010. Permission to reproduce the material within this document may be obtained by contacting the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (retirees@suny.edu).
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Preface

This publication contains the proceedings of Re-Imagining SUNY Retirement: Strategies for Designing Campus-Based Organizations that Serve Retirees and Offer Opportunities for Public Service, the inaugural conference of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC).

The conference, which took place on November 12, 2009 at SUNY System Administration in Albany, NY, focused on recognizing the outstanding potential of SUNY retirees as a tremendously valuable asset and determining the most effective means for mobilizing it for service to the University and community.

Dr. Ram Chugh, Executive Director of the RSC, compiled and edited the conference presentations and panel discussions as a resource for attendees and interested parties who were unable to attend the event. We hope you will find this document useful in your efforts to start or expand a campus-based retirees organization.

We would like to thank several SUNY System Administration staff members for their help with the creation of this conference proceedings document, especially Pierre Radimak for his editorial assistance and David Schillinger for designing the cover page. Thank you, also, to Robin McCulloch, Bonnie Corlew and Maureen Lanahan for their assistance in the assembly of this publication.

Special thanks to Ray Ortali and Paul Hudson of the University at Albany Emeritus Center for volunteering to document the November 12 conference in images. Several of their photos adorn the proceedings cover.

Finally, the SUNY Retirees Service Corps extends its deep appreciation to the speakers and panelists whose insights and expertise helped make the Re-Imagining SUNY Retirement conference a success.

For more information regarding starting or enhancing a campus-based retirees organization, feel free to contact Dr. Chugh at (518) 320-1488 or ram.chugh@suny.edu.

Additional resources may be found on the SUNY RSC website, www.suny.edu/retirees.

March 2010
Citation

Whereas, the spirit of serving and supporting one's community is a long-standing American tradition and one of the most admirable examples of expressed willingness to improve the lives of others, and the Empire State applauds initiatives such as The SUNY Retirees Service Corps' Inaugural Conference, "Re-Imagining SUNY Retirement," which encourages people to share their time, talent, knowledge and other resources to contribute to the betterment of our communities and our society as a whole; and

Whereas, the State University of New York's (SUNY) retirees constitute a rich resource for the University as well as for the State, and there are nearly 20,000 current SUNY retirees and approximately 1,000 employees retiring each year who are highly educated, possess a variety of professional expertise and skills, and have many years of working experience; and

Whereas, "Re-Imagining SUNY Retirement" will explore strategies for linking the talents and time of SUNY retirees to the needs of campuses and local communities — mobilizing a tremendous asset and, in the process, enriching the lives of our retirees; and

Whereas, The SUNY Retirees Service Corps was formed in early 2008 with the goal of encouraging campuses to institute programs which will link the valuable and largely untapped resource of talent and experience of SUNY retirees with the organizations in the community that need their skills and expertise, and these campus centers will also serve as a social network for the retirees; and

Whereas, attending this event are SUNY retirees, employees planning to retire, individuals overseeing the existing SUNY campus retirees programs, and staff and administrators interested in starting retiree organizations at their campuses, and we welcome them to this valuable gathering that seeks to raise awareness of the immense value of SUNY retirees and to develop strategies for engaging them in community service; and

Whereas, all New Yorkers appreciate the pool of talent, decades of experience, and potential for learning that SUNY retirees collectively represent, and we join to congratulate and commend The SUNY Retirees Service Corps for sponsoring this conference to help SUNY retirees stay connected with each other, their campuses, and their communities;

Resolved, Therefore, I, David A. Paterson, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby confer this Special Citation in recognition of this inaugural conference entitled

RE-IMAGINING SUNY RETIREMENT

and offer best wishes to all attendees and The SUNY Retirees Service Corps for a productive and successful event, and furthermore, express gratitude for your willingness to extend yourselves for the betterment of the greater New York population.

David A. Paterson
Governor
November 12, 2009
November 12, 2009

Dr. Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor
State University of New York
State University Plaza 353
Broadway Albany, New York
12246

Dear Chancellor Zimpher:

I send my warm regards to you and all attendees of the Re-Imagining SUNY Retirees Service Corps Inaugural Conference, and I applaud you for your commitment to advancing service in New York State. This program and others like it mobilize a tremendous resource and, in the process, enrich the lives of our retirees.

The First Lady and I place a high value on service and civic engagement. Through our own experiences, we recognize that the greatest resources in our state are the individual talents and enduring compassion of New Yorkers. I have charged my State Commission on National and Community Service to harness this resource to expand opportunities for individuals to become involved in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities, and to enhance the capability and sustainability of those organizations that are serving to meet the needs of those communities.

I extend my appreciation to all New York residents who answer the call to service and volunteer.

Sincerely,

David A. Paterson

cc: Ram L. Chugh, Executive Director, SUNY Retirees Service Corps

www.ny.gov
November 12, 2009

To the participants in the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Inaugural Conference:

I apologize that I am not able to join you in person today, but I wanted to welcome you to SUNY Plaza for this Inaugural Conference.

I want to commend each of you for your commitment to public service, both through your many years of service at SUNY, and now as members of the Retirees Service Corps. Individually and collectively, you represent a vast resource for SUNY and for our communities -- and I have no doubt that your experience and expertise will be tapped in ways that will enrich campus life and your own lives.

As SUNY is engaged in a system-wide Strategic Planning process, we are exploring the best practices that will enable us to maximize our capacity as a world-class system of higher education and a driver of economic opportunity across New York. The Retiree Service Corps can play a critical role as we draft the roadmap for SUNY’s future.

I know you will have a very productive and engaging day together, and I will look forward to hearing about the ideas for engagement that emerge from this conference.

Again, on behalf of the State University of New York, I salute you for your past service, and for your ongoing commitment to SUNY and the quality of life in our communities.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Zimpher
Chancellor
SUNY Retirees Service Corps: Vision, Mission and Goals
by Ram Chugh, Ph.D.
Executive Director, SUNY Retirees Service Corps

I. Introductory Remarks

This conference has been in the planning stage for quite some time and it is good to see it come to fruition. This is our inaugural conference on SUNY Retirees and we are pleased with the overall turnout. We have about 40 campuses represented here. I wish to thank each one of you for taking time to attend. You are the very purpose of this conference. The plan is to learn from each other through sharing of our experiences. I sincerely hope we succeed in accomplishing our goals and in meeting your expectations.

In my presentation, I plan to give a quick background about the SUNY Retirees Service Corps – how, when, and why it was created and where we plan to go with this program. The initiative to create a SUNY RSC came from the University Faculty Senate with the support of System Administration. A Task Force on Retirees was appointed in January 2007 to study issues relating to SUNY retirees. The Task Force was made up of representatives from University Senate, System Administration, and SUNY campuses including community colleges. Most of those members now serve on the Advisory Council.

The Task Force made its report to the University Faculty Senate in April, 2007, recommending the establishment of SUNY RSC to create awareness about the potential value of retired faculty, administrators, and support staff and to encourage campuses to establish programs to promote "retiree-campus-community" relationships.

At its meeting in spring 2007, the Senate passed a resolution recommending to the Chancellor the creation of a Center for SUNY Retirees, which we now call the SUNY Retirees Service Corps. Carl Wiezalis, the immediate Past President of the Faculty Senate, played a key role in getting the Senate to adopt that resolution and later in convincing then-SUNY Chancellor John R. Ryan to approve it.

Curtis Lloyd, Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, played a major role behind the scenes to gain support from the Chancellor and in obtaining modest funding and staff support for the center. The SUNY Retirees Service Corps was formally established in early 2008.

It is important to recognize that the creation of this Center was the result of a strong team effort. The Task Force, University Senate and System Administration, worked together as a team in making this happens. Let me publicly thank the University Senate for supporting this initiative and the SUNY System for approving it. I would like to emphasize that before making its recommendation to the Senate, the Task Force studied the retirees’ issues within SUNY at length. It looked at the data on SUNY retirees and their socio-economic profile. It also did a survey of the retiree programs at SUNY campuses, and surveyed the services offered by campuses to their retirees. Additionally, it looked at the retiree organizations at other academic institutions and at the growing recognition of the value of retirees and elderly population to society.

Thus, the Task Force recommendation for the creation of a SUNY Retirees Center was based on a thorough study of retirees’ issues not only within SUNY but also from a broad national perspective.
II. Profile of SUNY Retirees

Based on the data on retirees for the period 1996-2006, there are now about 13,000 retirees from the 34 state-operated campuses. If we include community college retirees, this total is expected to be about 20,000. That is a very large pool of retirees. Between 1000 and 1200 SUNY employees retire each year.

SUNY retirees are diverse in terms of their expertise, educational background, occupational mix, professional experience, age distribution, gender and racial mix. They offer many areas of expertise which could be useful in community service. Many community service organizations lack such resources and they could greatly benefit from the services of retirees. By sharing their expertise, retirees enrich their own lives as well.

Areas of expertise include: Health care; Social services; Economic opportunities; Education; Environmental issues; Business management; Accounting and budgeting; Problem solving, Mediation/negotiation; Agriculture; Rural and urban issues; Local and state government, and many other areas.

III. Programs Relating to Retirees at SUNY Campuses

We collected information from the campuses about programs relating to retirees. We found that about 12 campuses out of 64 had programs devoted to retirees. These campuses included the four university centers, Environmental Science and Forestry, Oneonta, New Paltz, Cortland, Oswego, Potsdam, and Plattsburgh.

We observed considerable variation in the services provided by these retirees' organizations. The University Centers at Albany, Binghamton and Buffalo had the most active retirees programs.

Most of these programs are focused on emeriti faculty and engage in such activities as promoting social interaction, information sharing among the members, and providing voluntary services to their campuses and local communities.

Several retirees from various SUNY campuses have achieved an excellent reputation for their continued involvement in community service at the local, state, and national levels. For example, a 91-year-old University of Buffalo retiree devoted about 500 hours to voluntary service this year. One can find examples of such involvement in voluntary work at many campuses. However, most campuses do not seem to have any organized institutional structure to connect retirees with community service.

Several campuses expressed strong support for having a system-wide center for retirees to serve as a resource center, provide logistical support to the campuses, and to house a database on retirees.

IV. Services Offered by Campuses to Their Retirees

We surveyed the campuses regarding the kind of services and privileges they provided to their retirees. The survey included 43 different services, and the top 10 services provided by most campuses are listed below. The results are from the state-operated campuses.

1. E-mail access
2. Library privileges
3. Adjunct teaching opportunities
4. Invitations to campus events
5. Campus ID card
6. Receive campus publications
7. Computer access
8. Retiree luncheon or functions
9. Free or reduced fee for gym or exercise facility access
10. Office space

V. Programs Relating to Retirees at Other Institutions of Higher Education

We also looked at the programs relating to retirees at other institutions of higher education. We found a growing interest at major universities, nationally and internationally, to provide programs to connect with their retirees and to engage them in a variety of service activities at the campuses and communities. Examples of campuses with active retirees' programs:
- The University of Southern California Emeriti Center
- Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees
- North Carolina State University Association of Retired Faculty
- University of California at Berkeley Retirement Center
- Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto
- Arizona State University Retirement Association
- Duke University Retirees Program
- And many other universities have centers/institutes on retirees
- College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC)
- Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) – a nationwide organization that provides support services to campuses planning to start retirees' organizations. I am very pleased that Barry Culhane and Janette Brown from AROHE are with us today to share their perspectives on retiree organizations in other institutions.

VI. Growing Recognition of the Value of Retirees: A Nationwide Trend

We looked into the recent studies regarding retirees.

- In the 1960s, the policy agenda around aging was focused almost exclusively on the dependency needs of elders, not on their potential as a community resource. Instead of asking "Who would take care of them?", we should be asking “What could they contribute?”

- Retirees are becoming a new force in the society. We are living longer, lead a healthier life, and enjoy many years of productive life. We have time, talent, considered trustworthy, and display civic pride.

Edited quotes from selected studies on retirees and elderly:
- Retirees are our only increasing natural resource – utilize it effectively.
- States seek to tap into growing resource: Older Volunteers.
- Aging is an asset for communities and higher education.
- Retirees – a new constituency.
- Strengthening of universities through active contributions of the retirees.
- Utilizing America's Most Wasted Resource.

VII. Selected Survey Findings Relating to Retirees and Older Americans

- Older Americans (65 and over) are referred to as "Super Volunteers." They are often the most reliable and committed of all volunteers. They have knowledge, experience, and time.
• A 2006 study (The Joys of Retirement Survey) found that 68.3% of retirees would volunteer if asked and 86.1% said they would volunteer if asked to do something that interests them.

• A 2004 AARP study showed that 79% of baby boomers believe they will still be working after retirement – most expect to devote more time to community service.

• Research indicates staying involved keeps retirees physically and emotionally strong.

VIII. Findings Relating to Higher Education and Retirees

• Integrate retirees into your mission – provide a caring environment, assess their special needs, promote programs to utilize their time and talent in a mutually beneficial way.

• Investment at universities should continue into retirement with appreciation and gratitude.

• By recognizing retirees, we honor our past. (USC)

• An organization’s character is judged by how it values its retirees. (UAlbany)

In this broad context, the Task Force felt rather very strongly that SUNY had a unique opportunity to develop programs where the potential of our retirees could be realized for the greater good of the public. It was a win/win proposition where our retirees, campuses, and communities stood to benefit immensely.

IX. Administration of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC)

• The Retirees Service Corps is located at System Administration in Albany and administered by a SUNY retiree, serving as a part-time executive director. It functions under the jurisdiction of the System-wide Human Resources Department. The RSC has been given a small budget and staff to support its activities.

• A System-wide Advisory Council, composed of about 15 SUNY retiree members and six to eight support personnel representing various stakeholders, guides the work of the RSC. An Executive Committee, composed of five members from the Advisory Council, oversees the day-to-day work of the center.

X: RSC Mission

The mission of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) is to:
• promote a strong a strong “retiree-campus-community” connection within and among SUNY campuses;
• create awareness about the potential value of SUNY retirees;
• encourage campuses to institute programs to promote social interaction among retirees; and
• provide opportunities for engagement in university and community service.

The RSC will also encourage campuses to provide opportunities for retirees to engage in activities for their personal and social enrichment.

XI: Developmental Goals

Since the creation of the RSC, we have had several meetings of the Advisory Council to discuss specific goals it should follow in order to accomplish its mission. Additionally, we talked with several individuals overseeing retirees programs at various SUNY campuses. We sought input from variety of other sources
including the unions. Based on these discussions, we have developed the following ten goals to accomplish the RSC’s mission:

1. **Create Awareness about the Potential Value of Retirees**
   Make campuses aware that retirees are a rich resource that remains largely untapped through periodic presentation to SUNY-wide associations, campus presidents, faculty governance groups, unions, and other appropriate organizations.

2. **Encourage SUNY Campuses to Create Retirees Programs**
   • Work with the System Administration and the campuses to create retirees programs at every campus to strengthen the connections with its retirees. Tips for starting campus-based retiree organizations are listed in section XII.
   • Retirees tend to identify with the campuses where they were employed. A campus is not only a workplace but a place where we mature, develop many professional and social ties and memories. A campus becomes a reference point in one's life and it remains that way long after retirement. Retirees share a sense of belonging to that campus.
   • However, the connection between the campus and the retirees often breaks down rather quickly and not much effort is made to reconnect with them. Individuals considered valuable by the campuses before their retirement find themselves no longer appreciated. Some retirees experience a big let-down.
   • Retirement does not imply a total disconnection with one's work; it only means entering a new phase in one's life where one's knowledge and experience would be put to a different use. During retirement, one can choose how and where to use his/her talents during the retirement years.

3. **Develop a Manual for Starting Campus Retirees Programs**
   We have developed a manual which provides information on the mechanics of starting a campus retiree program and contains descriptions of some retirees programs at selected campuses.

4. **Survey Campus Retirees**
   The manual includes sample survey questionnaires from other institutions which could be used by your campus to assess the needs of retirees and kind of services they would be willing to offer to the campus and local communities. Matching campus and community needs with the areas of interests of retirees is important.

5. **Center for SUNY Retirees Web Page**
   • Phase I of the web page: The Center has developed a web page devoted to SUNY retirees that will be our window to the outside world. It has not been officially announced because SUNY is currently engaged in redesigning all of its web pages. However, the RSC web page is accessible at [www.suny.edu/retirees](http://www.suny.edu/retirees). It provides a wealth of information, including links to all existing SUNY campuses retirees' programs.
   • Phase II will see the RSC web page serve as a clearinghouse – where retirees can log in and enroll in the programs indicating their areas of interest in community service. They can look for organizations where they would like to volunteer. Similarly, service organizations looking for volunteers can log in. This will also list service opportunities available at campuses within SUNY. Privacy issues will need to be looked into before going public with this phase of our web page.
   • Phase III – online discussion forum feature. It will allow SUNY retirees to interact with each other – social networking.
6. Collection of Data on Retirees
It is going to be tough, but we are going to use every channel to collect information on our current retirees to build an on-line directory. We will need assistance from the campus HRDs, unions, and other resources.

7. Create a SUNY-WIDE Association of the Campus Retiree Organizations
• Many of the coordinators of the current retirees programs expressed strong interest in meeting with other coordinators to exchange ideas and their working experiences. The SUNY Retirees Service Corps intends to pursue this suggestion by creating a SUNY-WIDE association of campus retiree organizations.

• This is a long-term goal but it is worth pursuing. Once such an association gets going, we would be able to do many things, such as having a periodic newsletter, highlighting the services undertaken by SUNY retirees, recognition of their service, and social networking.

8. Explore the Possibility of a SUNY ID Card for Retirees
It is proposed that each retiree be given a SUNY ID card which would say:
I AM A SUNY RETIREE
Name:
Campus:
This card would allow the retiree to use services at all SUNY campuses.

9. Work with Unions and Organizations Relating to Retirees
Networking with unions and other organization relating to retirees is vital - to learn from their experience and avoid duplication of efforts.

10. Provide Recognition to Retirees for their Contributions
Develop programs, such as newsletters and awards to publicize and recognize the contributions of made by our retirees.

XII. Tips for Starting Campus-Based Retiree Organizations*

Tip #1: Seek support of top administrative leaders and other campus groups.

Tip #2: Identify who will champion the retirement organization at your campus.

Tip #3: Research your retirees regarding their interests and needs and about their willingness to be involved.

Tip #4: Start small – be focused, flexible and inclusive.

Tip #5: Be part of the institutional organizational structure.

Tip #6: Min-Max – Minimum regulations and paperwork but maximum flexibility in your operations and activities – tailor these to retiree convenience.

Tip #7: Matching of retirees’ interests and expertise with the service needs of the campus and community.

Tip #8: Join the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE).

* Adapted from various sources, including AROHE
XIII. What You as Retirees and as Active Employees Can Do to Help

First, you can help in creating awareness about the value of our retirees and encourage campuses to stay connected with them during their retirement years.

Second, if your campus does not have a retiree association, please work with your campus retirees and administration and consider starting one. Our goal is have a retiree association at every SUNY campus – you can help in achieving that goal. We will work with the retirees and the campus administration to provide appropriate technical assistance to help get the process rolling.

XIV. Concluding Observations

In closing, let me share with you my personal philosophy with respect to sharing of our knowledge and experience with our communities. Knowledge is not only light giving but also fruit bearing. Knowledge expands our frontier of understanding of our physical universe – why things happen the way they happen. But the true benefit of knowledge is in its application to solving human problems and enhancing human welfare. SUNY retirees possess these attributes in abundance.

Campus-based retiree organizations are a perfect means of using that knowledge and experience for the benefit of society by connecting the retirees with our communities long into their retirement years.

The SUNY Retirees Service Corps is committed to helping you achieve that goal. Teamwork and networking are our guideposts. By working together, I believe, “yes, we can.”

Thank you very much for coming to our conference today. If anyone needs additional information, please feel free to write me at Ram.Chugh@SUNY.edu.
National and International Perspectives on Academic Retirement Organizations
Barry R. Culhane, Ed.D., President
Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) Board
Janette C. Brown, Ed.D., Executive Director of AROHE

I. History of AROHE (Barry Culhane)

The roots of AROHE (Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education) originated from the “west coast conference on retirement in colleges and universities” annual meeting in the late 1980s. Efforts to expand beyond the west coast culminated in a conference held by North Carolina State University in 2000. Conversations about establishing a national organization ensued, and AROHE was launched under the leadership of Dr. Paul Hadley, Professor Emeritus at the University of Southern California, who served as its first organizing President. In 2002, AROHE held its inaugural conference in Bloomington, Indiana (Indiana University). At this conference the name “Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education” was proposed and accepted and later officially incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. AROHE held biennial conferences in Nashville, TN, (Vanderbilt University) in 2004; Tempe, AZ (Arizona State University) in 2006; and Los Angeles, CA (University of Southern California) in 2008. The next conference will be held at Wesleyan University October 14-17, 2010 (www.arohe.org for more information). The 2012 conference will be held in North Carolina on the 10th anniversary of the initial conversations to create AROHE.

Two products AROHE has developed are the “Start-up and Development Kit” and a “Survey of College and University Retirement Organizations.” The AROHE “Start-up and Development Kit” is a guide for individuals who want to establish faculty or faculty/staff retirement organizations at their host institutions. The purpose is to describe the kinds of activities carried out by academic retirement organizations; summarize the experience of retirees who have created retiree organizations; and, identify alternatives for ways to create retiree organizations at specific institutions. The kit describes both strategic and tactical ways to create a retiree organization. Topics included are: creating mission statements, operating procedures, accessing retiree addresses, institutional support, organizational activities, legal and tax implications, getting started, benefits to host institutions, recruiting and maintaining membership, emeriti centers, consultation services available for AROHE members, web page development, and retired faculty benefits. The AROHE Start-up and Development Kit has been beneficial for many colleges and universities embarking on the creation of new retirement organizations.

An advantage of becoming an AROHE member is belonging to a network of national retirement organizations of all kinds to share ideas and advocate for continued retiree involvement in their colleges or universities and local communities. AROHE has members throughout the United States and Canada (CURAC - College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) who are able to communicate among themselves about specific questions or institutional approaches to various issues related to retired faculty and staff. While the general public can peruse the AROHE website (www.arohe.org), in a newly created website to be launched June 2010, members-only access to trends, best practices, resources, the Start-Up Kit, and survey results will be available. AROHE is less than a decade old, but it is uniquely positioned “to educate, to advocate, and to serve” retirement organizations across America and Canada.
II. AROHE Survey of College and University Retiree Organizations (Janette Brown)

Introduction
The Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) conducted the first on-line research survey of its kind, completed in 2008. It is an important step in discovering what colleges and universities do for and with their retired faculty and staff.

Conducting the survey illustrated the difficulty of locating retiree organizations on college campuses. This is because organizations have different names, report to different administrative or academic units, may not be formally recognized by the institution, or the organizations do not exist at all. The representative sample of North American colleges and universities includes more than 140 institutions. It represents all 50 United States and four Canadian provinces or territories; over 65% of AAU universities participated.

Retiree Organization Characteristics and Purposes
Retiree organizations in higher education take a variety of forms. Many are associations or clubs specifically for retired faculty or retired staff. Others maintain established retiree centers or learning-focused organizations for faculty or both faculty and staff retirees. Most importantly, the majority of organizations serve both faculty and staff retirees (61%) and 67% include retiree spouses, partners, and widows/widowers. Survey respondents indicate that 78% represent retiree associations or clubs while only 22% represent University sponsored offices or centers; in addition, 2% are emeriti colleges or some form of academic entity. For the most part, the retiree organizations exist for the purpose of: retiree fulfillment 94%, advocacy 53%, retirement preparation 33%, community service or teaching 30%, and University service or teaching 29%.

Institutional Support for Retiree Organizations
Financial and administrative support along with dedicated space for retiree affairs varies among institutions and so does the source of that support. While some have established retiree centers with budgets and paid staff, others have minimal support services or no services at all. While 41% of retiree organization’s chief officers report to the academic side of the university, 30% report to no one (typical of independent associations or clubs), and 25% report to the university’s administrative side. Most commonly mentioned reporting structures noted these offices: Provost (20%), Human Resources (15%), President/Chancellor (14%), Academic Affairs (6%), and under three percent noted: Development, Alumni, Foundation, and University Relations offices.

It is noteworthy that 46% of all respondents indicate that there are no paid personnel assigned to retiree matters and only 17% have full time-staff assigned to retiree affairs. While 68% have institutionally provided secretarial, postage, and copying services, other types of funding appear unbudgeted and are funded by request rather than a formalized budget within the university. In some instances, universities, fund newsletters, luncheons, or professional travel. All 140 respondents provided information about specific university funding. Of these responses, 27% have no budget funding whatsoever. For those organizations with university funding (excluding salaries), most budgets range between $1,500 and $25,000 (17%).

Retiree Privileges and Participation
The majority of institutions that offer retiree privileges are likely to include library, ID card, and email services along with free or reduced parking fees, and discounts. These privileges enable retirees to continue with official university activities such as research and teaching (59%), serving on university committees (58%) and on the Academic Senate (21%), and other official university involvement (48%). Participation through retiree organizations manifests itself mostly in recognition events, lifelong learning opportunities, and social events.
Summary and Implications
Retired faculty and staff are collectively, one of the largest untapped resources in higher education. Of all the retiree organization accomplishments mentioned in the survey, the top accomplishment mentioned the most was volunteering (21%). After retirement, some retirees contribute in significant ways through volunteering and work, but many do not contribute, due to lack of opportunity or an invitation to participate.

The SUNY system has the opportunity to promote volunteerism through its campus retiree organizations. By creating retiree organizations on college campuses and connecting them statewide, the campuses and nearby communities will benefit greatly. AROHE shares information and experience that supports in this worthy endeavor.
**2008 AROHE Survey of COLLEGE and UNIVERSITY Retiree Organizations**

The Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) is a non-profit organization.

**Retirees in higher education are an enormous untapped resource!**

This survey is the first on-line attempt to discover how colleges and universities address the needs of retired faculty and staff. It also describes how universities use retiree talent. Survey responses are from colleges, universities, and multi-institutions in higher education. All 50 United States and 4 Canadian provinces/territories are represented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retiree Organization Trends</th>
<th>Purpose of Organizations</th>
<th>Activities and Programs</th>
<th>Organizational Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67% Offer volunteer programs</td>
<td>59% Retiree fulfillment-intellectual/social</td>
<td>84% Maintain a mailing list of retirees</td>
<td>22% Increasing participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64% Have personnel assigned solely to retiree matters</td>
<td>56% Advocacy</td>
<td>81% Host social occasions</td>
<td>10% Funding &amp; resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>61% Have retiree organizations that serve both retired faculty and staff</td>
<td>33% Retirement preparation/education</td>
<td>70% Maintain an e-mail list of members</td>
<td>5% Retiree contact info — keeping accurate &amp; current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44% Offer educational programs</td>
<td>28% Community service or teaching</td>
<td>69% Organize social events</td>
<td>2% University’s recognition as valuable partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% Have senior housing affiliated with their university campus</td>
<td>14% University service or teaching</td>
<td>48% Maintain or preserve history</td>
<td>7% Communication - maintaining contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College Retiree Privileges**

| 86% Use of library facilities | 54% Maintain retirees | 25% Provide guidance to newly retired |
| 85% ID cards | 50% Voluntary involvement in service learning, civic engagement, community outreach | 23% Offer programs involving volunteerism, civic engagement, service learning, or community outreach |
| 35% Use of e-mail services | 47% Offer programs involving volunteerism | 32% Present courses/instruction of benefit to retirees |
| Travel programs | 29% Host clubs or educational activities | |
| 12% Conduct research | 20% Offer retirement education | |
| 42% Awards and recognition | 26% Workshops for pre-retirees | |
| 30% Offer ways to preserve history | 21% Memorials for recently deceased | |
| 5% Scholarships | 24% Provide student scholarships | |
| 5% Maturities | 19% Advisory mentorship programs | |
| 39% Maintain retiree records | 18% Raise funds for institution’s use | |
| 39% Publications | 13% Assist in departmental history preparation | |
| 34% Mentoring | 13% Write and/or publish vignettes of distinguished professors and/or administrators | |
| 24% Finance seminars | 13% Offer retiree re-employment programs or opportunities | |
| 2% University involvement | 6% Meet with prospective students, parents or other campus visitors | |
| 2% Problem solving | 5% | |

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**Other Challenges**

Computer Web Access  
Services for distant or frail Retirees  
Effective lobbying/advocacy  
Handicapped access  
Lack of interest  
Adjusting to changes - continuity  
Marketing & visibility  
Offering meaningful & popular activities  
Parking  
Research support  
Staying relevant  
Transportation
The Wisdom Dividend: Reinvesting SUNY’s Brain Trust Reserve
by Roger Anunsen
Founding Principal, mindRAMP & Associates, LLC

ABSTRACT: Roger Anunsen, internationally recognized brain wellness program consultant and principal in mindRAMP & Associates, offered a brain healthy challenge to stay engaged by sharing gained wisdom with SUNY campus communities. Citing evidence-based research, he explained why brain science is “the most exciting frontier of human knowledge since the Renaissance.” Continued engagement, he added, through campus-based retirement organizations serves the greater good and also helps preserve and enhance the cognitive vitality of each individual. He concluded with a challenge to conference delegates to return to their home with a new mindset to encourage SUNY retirees to do well by doing good.

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One of the most alarming challenges in this age of extended human longevity is the understanding of the aging brain. In a race against time, researchers around the globe are collaborating in what many consider the “Golden Age of Neuroscience” where cognitive decline is no longer considered inevitable. Tomorrow’s health care strategies for older adults offer pioneering visions that will integrate findings from the new frontier of the neuroscience of aging. Harnessing today’s cascade of evidence-based research can provide leaders with compelling arguments for sustainable, cost-efficient behavioral changes that can result in comprehensive brain wellness benefits.

Sir Francis Bacon understood in 1588 that “Knowledge is Power.” SUNY retiree communities could and should leverage an understanding of new neuroscience discoveries into sustainable cognitive intervention projects and programs that can tap into the rich deposits invested in SUNY’s Brain Trust Reserve.

1. The State of Brain Health
Three realities are converging with the potential to create a perfect storm capable of devastating an aging population and challenging society as a whole. First, the huge baby boomer generation is reaching traditional retirement age, increasing the percentage of the population that are considered old. Second, most of us can expect to live increasingly longer lives, well into our eighties (unless diseases like obesity and diabetes reverse this longevity trend). Third, there is a strong correlation between advanced age and cognitive decline and dementia. Faced with these facts, boomers and new retirees are increasingly anxious about being able to maintain an acceptable quality of life and cognitive acuity across an extended lifespan. We all eagerly await news of a breakthrough discovery that will control or cure Alzheimer’s and even hear talk of the search for a magic pill that will improve diminished cognition. But the hoped-for dementia cure continues to be about “ten years down the road” and the magical brain enhancement pill is little more than a quick-fix fantasy.

Beyond the personal concerns of the boomer generation, an expanding population of aging individuals, increasingly susceptible to debilitating illness and diminished cognitive abilities, would place increased burdens on all aspects of society, placing particular stress on economic and medical systems already stretched to the breaking point. The impact of growing legions of cognitively deficient elders, should it come to pass, will create devastating emotional and economic costs for the individual, their families and their caregivers. In addition to the rapid increased cost of medical care, the loss of cognitive abilities robs society a priceless intellectual resource.
With this perfect storm on the horizon, it is clear that we all need to do what we can to prepare. Fortunately, resources and energies are being focused on a valiant effort to find cures for Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. But there is another approach that may be even more effective, more plausible and immediately available; the preventive approach. While we can continue to support current research directions, we can all begin taking action immediately with what might be called a “Do It Yourself” approach to brain health. Recent breakthroughs in neuroscience research concerning neural plasticity in central nervous system functioning, neurochemistry and neural architecture have clearly demonstrated that positive behavior change can promote successful cognitive aging. An increasing body of knowledge is identifying the risk factors for cognitive decline, as well as the protective factors that promote brain health. By choosing behaviors that minimize the risk factors and maximize the protective factors, we engage the power of brain plasticity to restructure our own brains in preparation for a positive longevity. This is the approach developed, tested, advocated and supported by mindRAMP & Associates.

The “Decade of the Brain” was declared in 1990, and after a stumbling start, the scientific investigation of the brain built up a head of steam. Many now feel that we have entered the “Golden Age of Neuroscience” and that the coming century will be known as the “Century of the Brain.” Neuroscientists submit that 95% of everything we know about the human brain was learned in the last 30 years and, they add, the most of the exciting breakthroughs were in the last ten. That pace continues to accelerate with new sources of private and public research supporting a vanguard of talented, determined brain scientists outfitted with revolutionary tools and the excitement of legitimate hope reverberating with the publication of each new study.

Neuroscience has been called “the most exciting frontier of human knowledge since the Renaissance.” Four centuries ago, a new technology – the telescope – allowed scientists to expand their range of investigation of the skies, suddenly making billions of stars visible for exploration. The invention of moveable type and the printing press led to the publication of manuscripts, journals and later books that allowed early scientists to better build upon the work of others and to record their insights. Maturing trade routes and improved sailing vessels allowed global explorations and the dissemination of knowledge across cultures. Today, a wave of new imaging technology (CAT, PET, MRI, MEG), enable a new vanguard of scientists to explore the largely unknown frontier of the human brain. The fascination with billions of stars has been replaced with awe and wonder as we explore the complexity and power of our brain’s billions of neurons. Computer technology and the Internet allow these modern pioneers in neuroscience to collaborate around the globe in real time. Each publication enriches and pollinates budding fields of research. The result is another extraordinary leap of knowledge in an incredibly short time span.

2. Life’s Lessons in this Age of Longevity
Dan Buettner, a researcher working through National Geographic, has searched the globe for populations that have the greatest longevity. He has identified four self-contained populations of extraordinary longevity that he calls “The Blue Zones,” which he describes in his book of the same name. The Blue Zones project offers significant insights based on a simple premise: Do what they did. Buettner searched for commonalities in the lifestyles and behaviors of the long-lived populations in Sardinia, Okinawa, the Nicoia Peninsula of Nicaragua and in Loma Linda California with a fifth Greek Isle candidate now being researched. Some of the common behaviors Buettner uncovered were daily “unintentional” exercise, consumption of nuts, moderate eating habits with an emphasis on plants and habits of life-long socialization. Perhaps most important, the lives of these centenarians are shaped by an inner drive, an unending desire to look ahead, and a reason to get up every morning. It seems clear that somehow their “Hope Springs Internal.”

A robust body of recent research supports the power of maintaining that refusal to “give up.” Harvard Medical School’s No. 1 strategy for memory improvement is “Believe in Yourself.” It is that internal
belief that can circumvent the lingering obstacle of ageism, a term coined years ago by Dr. Robert Butler M.D., founder and president of the International Center for Longevity.  

Dr. Butler witnessed an example of this inner self-confidence when one of his centenarian research subjects interrupted a regular assessment session with a question. “Dr. Bob” asked the 105-year-old man “could I get your opinion of what’s wrong with my left knee?” “Well”, Butler replied, “you know I’m not a ortho specialist but what’s the problem?” “Well, I’m the leader of that walking group and I don’t want to disappoint anyone but my left knee is killin’ me.” “Did you fall or twist it?” asked Butler. “No, it just started hurtin’.” An authority on longevity and centenarians, Dr. Butler knew that he was out of his depth. “I don’t really know what that could be but I will get you right into a young orthopedist who be able to help you.” His patient thanked him and Dr. Butler completed the assessment session. Later, Butler was surprised to see his patient back in the waiting room asking for another referral. It seems the appointment with the young doctor began just fine with an explanation that his left knee was in pain, he had not fallen or been injured, and that he was a regular walker. He explained to Butler that the young doctor looked up from his clipboard and said “Well sir, you ARE a hundred and five.” “So I stood up to walk out,” declared the centenarian, “looked him in the eye and said ‘Well, my right knee is a hundred and five. How come IT don’t hurt?’”

Examples of successful longevity will be an increasingly important focus of future research. The lives of a few long-lived individuals will forever inspire healthy behaviors including a Guinness world record holder, Madame Jeanne Calment. This truly remarkable woman was born in Arlies, France in 1875 and is documented as the oldest person who ever lived. Her death at the age of 122 stands today as the highest watermark of human longevity, a record that will surely be broken. While she once claimed that it was her weekly intake of two pounds of chocolate, it may well have been her internal spirit, her attitude. She seemed immune from stress, once asserting that “If you can't do anything about it, don't worry about it.” Among the many instances of Madame Clament’s positive attitude was a remark to a young reporter after an interview on her 117th birthday. At the end of the interview, the reporter shook her hand; smiled as he thanked her for the lively interview and wished her a happy birthday concluding with patronizing final words “I'll see you next year.” With a calm smile, Madame Calment held on to his hand for an extended moment to secured his attention and with a nod she responded, “I suppose so,” looking him up and down, “you look pretty healthy to me.”

3. The mindRAMP Methodology

The mission of mindRAMP & Associates is to enhance the quality of life across the lifespan by ramping up the brainpower of the mature mind. The unique mindRAMP approach combines the cognitive intervention methods developed over the last decade by Roger Anunesen through his work with aging populations in Oregon, California and Idaho and ideas and methods developed by Michael C. Patterson while running AARP’s Staying Sharp program developed in association with the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives. The mindRAMP methodology was developed to deliver translational neuroeducation programs to professionals as well as to lay audiences. It is rooted in a non-traditional route to an invention method that “jump starts” older adults’ minds.

A key aspect of the mindRAMP approach is to stimulate critical thinking about the capabilities of the human brain with a structural framework for critical thinking. Ongoing mental exercise is clearly beneficial for brains at any age but in order to sustain interest and engagement in mental exercise, it is important for mature minds to understand key neurological aspects of brain function that support positive aging and to be able to recall these points and apply them in new situations. When teaching critical thinking skills, according to Diane F. Halpern, past president of the American Psychological Association, “one should ensure that the structural aspects of problems and arguments are made salient so that they can function as retrieval cues.”
Motivation is key to behavior change. Without a compelling reason we resist change and stay within our comfort zone. MindRAMP’s evidence-based neuroeducational program models confront myths about the inevitability of cognitive decline and stresses the potential for mature minds to continue to learn, create and have meaning.

Any recommendation concerning brain health and cognitive enhancement (including those by mindRAMP) should be subjected to a series of probing critical questions. The cognitive enhancement field is growing by leaps and bounds with ethical concerns about catering to anxiety about cognitive decline. Many products and services are sincere attempts to provide benefit with fewer actually based on serious, evidence-based research. Unfortunately, a great many make extravagant anti-aging claims based on little more than marketing hyperbole. Critical questions include mechanisms of delivery, evidence of effectiveness, dose, and cost/benefits. The guiding principal is “do no harm” but when the weight of evidence suggests that an intervention could help, and there is no harm in doing it, why not?

Brain health and cognitive well-being are influenced by a number of factors that have either a negative or a positive effect. Brain research has made great progress in identifying the risk factors associated with cognitive decline, as well as the protective factors. mindRAMP structures its educational courses and presentations around risk factors and protective factors across three domains: the internal environment (the body), the external environment, and behavior. Areas of discussion might focus, for example, on the risk factors associated with the physical environment or discussing the negative impact of a stressful environment. Other topics might focus on behavior risks to the brain associated with such things as smoking, over eating or substance abuse.

On the positive side, certain conditions promote brain health and cognitive fitness with a strong consensus in the scientific community, for example, that what is good for the heart is good for the brain. Good cardiovascular health is highly predictive of protection against cognitive decline and dementia. Christopher Hertzog and colleagues Art Kramer, Robert Wilson and Ulman Lindenberger summarized recent research by extending the folk wisdom of “use it or lose it.” They propose a cognitive-enrichment hypothesis that states “the behaviours of an individual (including cognitive activity, social engagement, exercise, and other behaviours) have a meaningful positive impact on the level of effective cognitive functioning in old age.” In sum, mindRAMP clients and audiences learn to identify risk factors and protective factors that arise from body conditions as well as the environment behavioural choices.

4. Jump Starting Mature Minds
Some mindRAMP clients had fallen into what we call the slippery slope of cognitive decline. Many had withdrawn from stimulating activities and allowed their cognitive abilities to fade. When an older brain has been without novel stimulation for an extended period of time, it is, in essence, a stagnant pond. Without sufficient mental challenge, without adequate nutrition, the brain will, over time, turn that stagnation into a dangerously toxic decline. Fortunately, just as a single pebble can cause a sequence of ripples across an entire pond, targeted brain stimulation can initiate ripples of activation through the mature mind. Certain types of regular brain stimulation and cognitive interventions have the potential of slowing and even reversing the decline. During four years working at typical assisted living facilities in Oregon, it was abundantly clear that while many of these older brains were near stagnation, they proved to be magnificently resilient if given the proper stimulation. “I’m not finished!” was the message signaled from the eyes of those who were jump-started. Once stimulated, the exhilaration rippled not only through their own brains, but also to their peers, staff and family who became eye and ear witnesses to the re-energized minds.

One the most exciting and powerful jump-start methods was what we called “Mind Dancing.” Beginning in 2002, a series of activities were designed specifically for a group of older adults with limited mobility,
most using canes, walkers or wheelchairs. The idea was to find a way to expose the brains of elders with limited mobility to the actions and movements of others who were not limited.

The first Mind Dancing experiment took place when a dozen residents were transported to a Texas line-dancing club. We wanted to determine whether there were benefits from watching others engage in this physical activity. As the group ambled from the bus to their waiting chairs next to the dance floor, the half-hour instruction session began with the instructor leading two-dozen young patrons through the basics of Texas line dancing. Our group, sitting on the sidelines, was intently focused on the instruction and, when the music began, each seemed ready to put their newfound skill to the test, even though none had moved a muscle. Their minds, I realized, were learning just as much as the young line dancers. So when the music began, their minds would be put to the same test as the actual dancers. Our group followed each song with hands clapping, feet tapping, smiles and laughter. After an hour of dancing, I explained that we were ready to go and with a clear and unanimous voice their message was delivered: “What’s the hurry?” We left after another hour, but their minds were eager for more.

Our mind dancing discovery was successfully replicated in a wide variety of venues including up-close observation of quilting, bowling, horseback riding, berry picking and even a day at a construction site. But the mother lode of cost-effective mind dancing programs was the local high school plays and the marching, orchestra and jazz bands. Sitting next to young musicians as they rehearsed, our brains heard, saw, felt and even smelled combined sensations and energy as these groups of players created music. These series of visits to the rehearsals brought the generations together with each benefiting. It was clear that something positive was happening in their aging brains as they watched the musicians and actors practice and rehearse. When we attended the dress rehearsal or the opening night of their performance, the elders arrived with butterflies in their stomachs focusing their complete attention throughout. At this phase of the mind dancing events, the effect within their brains seemed to be magnified as was the positive residual benefits, the ripple effect. They talked and talked about the experiences; they befriended some of the students who had, over time, greatly improved their skills. It was as though the elder had also improved their skills even if only “in their mind” as they beamed with pride during and long after the performance. Years later, research in the field of mirror neurons offers solid explanations for what was going on when the attention of our mind-dancers was riveted to the action and movement of another person.

5. The Cornerstones of a Healthy Brain

While neuroscientists differ in terms of which factor they emphasize, there is general consensus that the following factors are critical to positive aging and cognitive well-being: physical exercise, mental exercise, adequate levels of social engagement, good nutrition, adequate amounts of sleep, stress maintenance and overall control and maintenance of chronic diseases. We place an emphasis on recent findings that offer compelling data that socialization with others releases “something” in the brains that masks, delays, or even prevents the symptoms of dementia from manifesting even though autopsies revealed significant neuromarkers of Alzheimer’s disease. What is that “something?” Perhaps this too is a yet undiscovered neurochemical and maybe tomorrow’s prescription for cognitive improvement just might include: Enjoy time with others.

mindRAMP recognizes the power and potential of mature minds and rejects the view that cognitive decline is inevitable with age. We resolutely believe that learning, creativity and meaningful engagement can – and should – continue throughout the lifespan as essential ingredients for healthy, vibrant minds. The mindRAMP approach is grounded in the positive aging movement within the field of gerontology and enlists the insights of neuroscience and cognition to develop evidence-based approaches to promoting positive outcomes. mindRAMP subscribes to an asset-based attitude toward aging. This approach looks for the benefits of aging rather than assuming that age equates to debility and decline.
The metaphor of the ramp captures our approach to the pursuit of brain health and cognitive enhancement. By charting a course of action that can be initiated with single, incremental, strategic steps in the right direction. We recognize that whatever stimulations reach the human brain will, at that particular moment, make that brain either a smidgen\textsuperscript{19} better or a smidgen worse. Will those smidgens ever make a difference? Evidence strongly suggests the answer is yes. It seems that with enough of the right smidgens an aging brain can achieve and then maintain a tipping point toward a healthy brain.\textsuperscript{20} We call this motivational fact the “Power of a Smidgen”.\textsuperscript{21} If a person is not getting enough physical exercise we recommend doing something that is a smidgen, a little bit more physical than what is being done now. Each small step encourages the next step recognizing that there are two forces at work across the ramp. Negative influences are pushing in a downward, declining direction. Doing nothing makes one vulnerable to this downward push and initiates a slippery slope of debility. Action must be taken to, at least, maintain one’s position on the slope, or better, to begin moving up the ramp towards improved cognitive health on a “cognitive incline.”

While there is abundant anecdotal evidence that the mindRAMP approach successfully engages mature minds and encourages sustained positive behavior change, the gold standard of assessment is clinical trials. mindRAMP has been able to test aspects of its approach in a formal clinical trial, with significant positive results. While conducting a program at an assisted living facility, a student researcher from nearby Western Oregon University happened to be in the building on an unrelated project and saw the residents excitedly engaging in a mindRAMP MemAerobics session. The student told her professor, who was intrigued and came to see the MemAerobics program for himself. He was impressed by the program and obtained a grant to conduct a clinical trial. The trial was designed to determine whether the MemAerobics method really was an effective cognitive intervention or did it just appear to work. Seven assisted living facilities participated in the trials and the results, published two years later, established that MemAerobics did, indeed, achieve positive results.

As stated in the final report, “MemAerobics participants experienced an increase in memory ability as well as a decrease in depressive symptoms.”\textsuperscript{22} The conclusion was clear: “residents in ALF facilities who participate in MemAerobics or similar programs will probably experience an increased quality of life, through better moods, more social contacts, and increased cognitive abilities.” Perhaps most importantly, gaining an understanding of how the older brain really works lowered anxiety and renewed self-confidence, which led participants to engage in other positive activities. “The increased perceived memory ability may have given participants the confidence to engage in other stimulating activities outside of the MemAerobics sessions.”\textsuperscript{23}

The clinical trials of the MemAerobics/mindRAMP method confirmed that a supportive group setting that both explained the aging brain and demonstrated these facts with brain exercises improved the individual’s perceived cognitive ability and their confidence in their own cognitive abilities. The findings also revealed a lowering of depressive symptoms and a significant improvement in the actual cognitive abilities.\textsuperscript{24} The subjects not only believed their memory was better, it was better.

6. Conclusion
Recent advances in neuroscience have uncovered the powerful plasticity of the human mind as well as a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to both cognitive decline and cognitive enhancement. As we confront the ominous trends of increased longevity and the aging of the boomer population, we must leverage the rapidly growing knowledge about the aging brain, especially the value of taking preventive measures to minimize cognitive decline and delay or prevent the onset of the symptoms of dementia.

The mindRAMP mission squares with SUNY RSC goals: to enhance the quality of life across the lifespan by engaging communities in meaningful activities that ramp up the potential of the mature mind. SUNY
and its retirees have invested in mature minds that now possess the capacity for accomplishments BECAUSE of age, not in spite of aging. The skill, knowledge and experience acquired during a career at SUNY is a long-term investment; a SUNY Wisdom Account. Wisdom Dividends will either be kept under a mattress or be reinvested back into the SUNY communities. We issue a challenge to every conference attendee to leave this conference with a mindset to begin your personal reinvestment into your SUNY community. Do “something” to promote engagement in meaningful campus-based retirement activities will not only leverage your wisdom dividend, it will protect and enhance your own cognitive vitality.

Notes

3 OHSU Brain Awareness Season, Townhall session, 2003, Portland, Oregon.
4 Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture, www.anfa.org
5 Refracting telescopes from The Netherlands, observations of Galileo and others.
10 Address to 2005 White House Conference on Aging, Washington, DC.
11 mindRAMP & Associates, LLC, based in Bethesda, Maryland, translates cutting-edge scientific research into practical education programs and services for mature individuals and for organizations that serve mature clients. The mission of mindRAMP is to make longevity worth living with a goal of improving the quality of life as we age by protecting, nurturing and respecting the brainpower of the mature mind. East Coast Principal: Michael C. Patterson, West Coast Principal: Roger Anunsen. www.mindramp.org
17 Neurotransmitters: First discovered in the 1920s, Discoveries of astrocytes, olegodendrocytes, B.D.N.F, etc. followed during the next 90 years. What other neurochemical faucets are regularly releasing substances, both good and bad for brain health, have yet to be discovered?
18 “Others”: It is worth noting that many researchers in the area of social cognition do not limit the recommendation to socialize with “others” to humans. Could others include non-humans? Surely the human-animal bonding should
release that same type of neurochemical. What about plants? House plants and especially gardens would seem to possess the same potential to release that “something” when done as a regular basis.

19 Smidgen: a tiny amount, bit, pinch, dollop, dash, morsel, tad or speck.

21 “A smidgen isn’t much . . . but if you do a smidgen of something every day, every week, every chance you get, you can make a difference.” Fred S. Anunsen, 1961, Salem, Oregon, personal communication.

22 “We believe that these stimulating activities and an enhanced understanding and awareness of memory functioning caused the increase in memory ability. Also, the increased perceived memory ability may have given participants the confidence to engage in other stimulating activities outside of the MemAerobics sessions.” R. Winningham, et al “MemAerobics: A Cognitive Intervention to Improve Memory Ability and Reduce Depression in Older Adults” Journal of Mental Health & Aging, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2003, pp. 186-192.

23 ID at 191 (emphasis added).

24 ID at 191.

Panel Discussion on Starting a Campus-Based Retiree Organization
Chaired by Anne Donnelly, Member, SUNY Retirees Service Corps

I. Formation of the Suffolk County Community College Retiree Organization
by Peter Herron, Professor of Mathematics (Emeritus), Suffolk Community College

A few years into retirement I felt totally disconnected from Suffolk Community College, a school where I spent most of my professional career. Colleagues retired, were promoted, got sick, and even died without any notice being sent to retirees. Talking to other retirees I discovered many of them also felt that they were totally disconnected from SCC. Realizing that there were many retirees wanting to reconnect with the college, I made some informal inquiries. I contacted the college president’s office, the three unions, the college’s foundation and as many former colleagues as I could. Letters were sent to some retirees who lived locally inviting them to several meetings. Out of these meetings a core of very enthusiastic retirees spent close to a year establishing the Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College (RASCC).

By-laws had to be written, reliable workers had to be identified and mailing addresses had to be obtained and entered into a database. This all sounds so simple. Many thought the idea was great as long as someone else did all the work. There were those who only wanted retired faculty. Others were willing to include some administrators. In the end all retirees, no matter what position they had, were eligible to be members. We even included adjuncts. Being all-inclusive turned out to be crucial. It was the office staff retirees who were able to overcome institutional hurdles in getting resources essential to the formation of RASCC. Once we obtained the addresses of most retirees we were able to notify retirees of the formation of RASCC. The college provided postage and the foundation provided copying, paper and envelopes. The retirees provided the labor.

Once we could communicate with retirees we could proceed with getting retirees together and formally approve by-laws and elect officers. One union, the Guild of Administrative Officers, gave us seed money to have refreshments at some of the initial get-togethers. The theatre provided a wine reception for retirees at one of its productions. It took about a year for RASCC to become a formal organization of the college. It took several more years before RASCC had sufficient funds to support various college and foundation fund raising events. In the meantime, RASCC provided volunteers at these events.

Learning when and who is retiring has been a problem. We have worked with Human Resource office to learn who is currently anticipating retirement. Many retire without our knowledge, resulting in missed opportunities of increasing RASCC membership. RASCC gives all new retirees membership free for the first year of retirement. Most new retirees do not become active in RASCC.

During the first few years RASCC was able to have large numbers of retirees attending its activities. The annual holiday party still brings around fifty people together. Currently most RASCC events attract about 10-20 members. The executive council and the activities planning committee meet back-to-back because the memberships of these two vital groups are almost identical. Getting more members involved in the planning of activities and the governance of the organization has been a continuous struggle. RASCC must increase the number of new retirees who continue their membership after their first year of retirement and RASCC must get "new blood" into the executive council and the activities planning committee.
Ideas for Establishing and Maintaining a Campus Retiree Organization

It is hoped that the following list will be of use to those who are about to begin the task of establishing a local campus retiree organization. The list was made upon the reflection of what it took to get the Retiree Association of Suffolk Community College up and running.

1. Core group of retirees who want to remain connected to their college.
2. Institutional support (retiree contact data, stationery, copying, postage, etc.).
3. Support of all local unions.
4. Invite retirees to social events, preferably at a college campus and with food, to introduce the retirees to the concept of a retiree organization.
5. Membership should be inclusive (administrators, faculty, and support staff).
6. Get members to do as much of the work as possible (copying, data entry, envelop stuffing, etc.).
7. Retirees should be encouraged to volunteer at many college activities, especially fund raisers.
8. Many retiree organization activities should be coordinated with college events.
9. When possible, the organization should coordinate its activities with other local organizations.
10. Take every opportunity to let everyone know that the retiree organization exists and is a positive force for the total college and local community.
11. Establish a newsletter and a website. Communicating with members and the college community is essential. A website that is constantly updated is the best way of keeping members informed. Unfortunately many retirees are not computer savvy and never or rarely look at any websites. This is why a newsletter is essential.
12. Use e-mail to remind members of upcoming activities and events. Use a buddy system where members with e-mail take on a member as an e-mail buddy. The member with e-mail access informs the member without e-mail of all e-mail notices sent out by the retiree organization.
13. Most information should be posted on the website and a short notice e-mailed to members encouraging them to go to the website for more detailed information.
14. The retiree organization’s website and newsletter should be used to highlight activities of its members. For example, books authored by members, art exhibits by members, deaths of members, recent retirees, etc.
15. Distribute the newsletter to key people throughout the college community.
16. The retiree organization must be a conduit for information pertinent to retirees. Using the website, newsletter and meetings, the retiree organization must provide current information on changes in the local health insurance plan; services provided to seniors by local governments and other agents; information on opportunities for retirees to volunteer their time, energy and talents; cultural and educational opportunities for seniors; etc.
17. Many retirees do not live locally. The retiree organization must make every effort to keep these retirees in the loop. Special effort must be made to these members to contribute to the newsletter and the website. Information readily available to locals must be put into the newsletter and posted on the website so that non-local retirees feel membership in the retiree organization provides them with essential benefits.
18. Annually distribute a membership directory. The directory will enable members to reestablish connections with former colleagues who are disbursed throughout the United States.
II. University at Buffalo Emeritus Center and REV-UP Program
by Barbara D. Mierzwa, Vice President and Program Chair, UB Emeritus Center

Emeritus Center (EC) for retired faculty and staff
The EC was established in 1977 thanks to the initiative of School of Social Work faculty member, Rose Weinstein, and the support of UB President Robert Ketter. The EC was designed to enable ALL faculty and staff who retire from UB to continue their relationship with the university community.

After several changes in location on campus, the Emeritus Center now has a well-appointed lounge, library, kitchen and meeting room in Goodyear Hall (a large student residence hall). The UB President’s Office pays for maintenance and repairs to the Center’s space as well as supplies, printing, mailings and audio-visual services.

UB’s Human Resource Services Department provides names and addresses of all retirees to the Membership Chairperson of the Emeritus Center who sends new retirees an invitation to join the Center. Spouses of retirees are also eligible for membership. There are now about 500 members of the Emeritus Center. Annual dues are $3. A member benefit is a free campus parking hangtag.

Emeritus Center activities include monthly programs and excursions.

- Between September through December and February through April, the EC offers a lecture or musical performance. Then there is a social hour where a few members provide refreshments. A REV-UP volunteer recognition and reception supported by Human Resources takes place in May. There is an annual picnic in June.

  December program consists of performance by musicians from UB’s Department of Music in recognition of the many – 200 – volunteer hours provided by REV-UP.

- Some members enjoy excursions - day-trips to regional theaters and points of interest, e.g., Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous Darwin Martin House. These are supported on a pay-as-you-go basis and are often far less expensive than commercially offered excursions.

Emeritus Center provides UB with:

- Contributions to the annual SEFA (State Employees Federated Appeal) campaign. The EC president serves on UB’s SEFA administrative committee that oversees the campaign.

- Most important, the EC provides a pool of volunteers for the Retired Employee Volunteers University Program (REV-UP).

Retired Employee Volunteers-University Program
REV-UP is a collaborative program between the Emeritus Center and UB Human Resources that was created in 1990 in order to:

1. connect retirees to the University through worthwhile activities; and

2. help UB units carry out their programs.

How is REV-UP supported?
Human Resources has assigned the REV-UP Manager (.25 FTE) to conduct the program from an office in the Emeritus Center. Human Resources has equipped the office with an up-to-date computer and copier.
Since REV-UP began twenty years ago, over 30 University departments have benefited from the volunteer services of more than 90 University retirees - both in short-term and ongoing assignments. REV-UP volunteers provided about 3000 hours of volunteer service to UB last year.

REV-UP activities include:

- Assistance at on-campus blood drives
- Ushering at athletics events and concerts
- Preparing mailings for the Alumni Association, UB parking and transportation office, personnel office and the SEFA campaign
- Administrative assistance in the various UB departments – especially the Medical School and Pharmacy Schools
- Ushering and friendly assistance at special events like lecture series

Who benefits from REV-UP?
REV-UP is a mutually beneficial program. Volunteers enjoy their “work” where they interact with current UB faculty, students and staff. University departments, in turn, appreciate retirees’ time, energy and commitment to their mission.

University at Buffalo connects with its retired faculty and staff
UB offers its retirees many benefits including:

- **Access to Recreation Facilities** at a discount for retirees.
- **Access to UB's Internet Communications Network** – Retirees may continue computer access including e-mail and Internet.
- **Library Privileges** – All retired faculty and staff continue to enjoy all library privileges.
- **Computer and Software Discounts** – UB Micro Sales Center on UB’s North Campus offers computers and software at educator prices.

*Thanks to Leila Baker, REV-UP program manager, and Jack Baker, Emeritus Center Treasurer, for invaluable assistance in the preparation of this presentation.*
University at Buffalo
Emeritus Center and REV UP Program

UB Emeritus Center
- 500 Members
- Supported by the President’s Office
- Monthly Program
  - Presentation
  - Social Hour
- Theater Excursions
- Campus Parking Hangtag
- Pool of Volunteers for REV-UP

REV-UP
Retired Employee Volunteers – University Program
Emeritus Center – Human Resources Collaboration
- Human Resources Provides
  - One part-time staff member
  - Resources for REV-UP office in the Emeritus Center
    - Computer, printer and tech support
    - Clerical support as needed
    - Copy machine

UB REV-UP
3000 + Service Hours in 2008-2009
- Bloodmobiles
- Athletic Events
- Concerts and Lecture Series
- Meetings for:
  - Alumni Relations
  - Campus Parking
  - Human Resources
  - SSHA
- Office Support for:
  - Medical School
  - Pharmacy
  - Special Events

Diagram:

- President’s Office
- Human Resources
- Emeritus Center
- REV-UP

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III. SUNY New Paltz Retired Faculty Organization  
by Alan Dunefsky, Coordinator, Special Assistant for Projects, SUNY New Paltz

History of the Organization
Back in the mid-nineties, a small group of retired faculty members initiated a weekly breakfast gathering at one of the local diners. It was at these informal get-togethers that the seeds of our present group were sown.

At first, the idea was to create a list of their retired colleagues, with whom they were friendly, for the sole purpose of mailing out holiday cards. As the list grew, it was decided upon to expand the “directory” to encompass all retired faculty. It wasn’t long before they realized that some unexpected research was necessary. They wanted the compilation to be comprehensive, and not exclude any individuals. It didn’t take long to realize the enormity of the task.

The first obstacle they encountered was the discovery that the college didn’t maintain a list for them to share. This forced them to go by word-of-mouth from their colleagues to come up with names of people from memory. That’s when they realized the need to come up with guidelines, e.g. whom to include, etc. They didn’t want the directory to be an official document so they decided to include anyone who taught at the college. That meant that some faculty members that didn’t officially retire from New Paltz and may have moved on to other institutions would be included. (Keep in mind that the original goal was a directory for the sole purpose of communicating with one another.)

The next bump in the road was the discovery that some of their colleagues were deceased. Many moved out of the area (Florida, Arizona, etc.) and communication was lost making it difficult to be informed of their passing. The Internet was not as comprehensive as it is now, so once again word of mouth information was all they had. This led to the addition of an “In Memoriam” page in the directory.

After a few years and constant updates, the present directory is very accurate. We are constantly receiving new data. With the aid of the Internet, we are finding “lost” emeriti all the time. By researching old yearbooks and other documents we are able to retrieve people who had been “forgotten.” Now, through the local UUP chapter, the Human Resources Office, and Alumni Office, we are able to better keep track of retirees.

This unofficial directory is now used around campus as a guide to facilitate the use of facilities by retirees. Areas such as the library, parking office, ID central, and the Wellness Center rely on our publication.

The establishment of this directory was the genesis of the “Retired Faculty.” This unofficial group - we have no official name - meets twice a year at a luncheon. We have a “board” of 6 people that handles event coordination and communication.

Membership
All retired academic and professional faculty are considered to be members of the Retired Faculty. (At New Paltz, we refer to our professional staff people or non-teaching professionals as Professional Faculty members. Other campuses may not be doing this.) As mentioned above, we have included some colleagues who moved on to other campuses but have remained close to our faculty.

Support from the Campus
The administration at SUNY New Paltz is very cognizant of the value of our retired faculty.
Whether it be teaching as an adjunct, presenting as a guest lecturer, participating in Reunion weekend, attending alumni events, or simply being a donor, our retired faculty members contribute to the college. As a result, we receive support in several ways.

Free photo IDs are available for all faculty retirees. This gives access to the library and Wellness Center. (There is a fee attached to usage of the Wellness Center.)

All retired faculty may obtain a free parking permit each academic year.

We have a page on the college’s website that is dedicated to retired faculty. We use it to post photos and announce events.

The college, through the Foundation, pays for the printing of the Retired Faculty Directory each Fall. They also handle all our photocopying and postage needs.

Copies of News Pulse, the college’s bi-weekly newsletter, are sent to retirees.

Our alumni publication, The Observer, is mailed to all emeriti.

Up until this year’s budget cuts, retired faculty attended reunion weekend events at no charge. Even with this year’s impending cuts on the horizon, the college will be taking another look at the fee schedule.
Let me start by saying that I came to the University at Albany on January 1, 1969. As Chair of the Philosophy Department for six years, I developed our Doctoral Program and made the Program more interdisciplinary. But at the end of my second three-year term, I became aware of my forthcoming mandatory retirement, and it became clear to me that it was time for me and other retirees to discuss with the Administration what we wanted to do as retirees.

In those negotiations, what we pressed for were things like keeping our departmental office as long as possible, continuing part-time teaching and retaining the same benefits as full-time professors. We also thought we needed to have these guarantees in writing.

That’s why I was so pleased when, on May 7, 1973, the University Senate approved the text of what is now known as Bill 1972-73-20. In view of the historic importance of the text, let me read it to you in its entirety (it’s actually very short):

I. The State University of New York at Albany shall provide those faculty who retire from the Institution the following privileges in appreciation for the services rendered it in prior years:

1. All retired faculty shall be entitled to library and parking privileges and to admission to University athletic, cultural and social events on the same basis as the active faculty.
2. The spouses and widows or widowers of all retired faculty shall be entitled to whatever privileges are extended to the spouses and widows or widowers of active faculty.

II. Those retired faculty members who receive the title of Emeritus shall be entitled to the following additional privileges:

1. Attendance at Faculty meetings.
2. Attendance at University convocations and commencements.
3. Name listing in appropriate University catalog.
4. Representation of the University in professional associations.
5. Eligibility to apply for University research grants.
6. Service, by invitation, on University committees and councils.
7. Assignment of space in University offices and laboratories, as determined by availability and need.

III. These privileges shall take effect immediately.

That was in 1973. Let me now remind you of what happened in 1975. That year, the “Policies of the Board of Trustees for 1975” addressed the problem again—in a very different way.

Let me read to you a few key sentences of that text (page 29, Title E): “Privileges: Emeritus rank shall carry with it such of the following privileges which, in the judgment of the chief administrative officer are
feasible: use of library or study facilities, use of office and laboratory space, eligibility for research grants, and representation of the University in professional groups.”

As explained by Richard Collier, Secretary of the University at Albany’s Senate: “If a SUNY campus has a policy that is in conflict with SUNY Trustees’ policies, the campus is the one that has to change.” So it’s only too clear that the Senate Bill 1972-73-20 had been superseded by the “Board of Trustees’ Policy” for 1975, much to my chagrin.

But I did not get discouraged and my next move was to turn to the University Senate and ask them about representation of Emeriti in the Senate. The response was: “Well, you’ll be first! We’ll put you on the University Life Council.” And they did. I then asked: “What about benefits for Emeriti?” So they made me a member of the Benefit Subcommittee of the University Life Council.

We all agreed on the type of privileges that Emeriti should have. But our Subcommittee had no jurisdiction to legislate on them. So someone asked: “Don’t you have a group that could follow up on what we have agreed upon?” I responded: “You mean an Emeritus Center?”

And it occurred to me for the first time that establishing such a Center was the key to everything, and that I should discuss that idea with the President. I have indeed discussed it with several Presidents!

All the Presidents I approached said the same thing: They wanted us to have a Center, but not now! They talked about appointing a task force during the summer to establish the Center. But when the summer came, the current President resigned and took a job somewhere else.

The next President said that the Center would be established during the following summer, but then we were told that we could not do it because the Giants had arrived.

And one day, Kermit Hall became President. He said he was willing to meet with us, and a dozen of us met with him on August 26, 2005, at 4 o’clock in the afternoon. It soon became clear to me that the President had indeed read the file I had sent him earlier. He said to us: “I take what you have done very seriously. I think it’s very important. Right now, I have no money for it and no place to put it, but I’ll keep it in mind.”

A few months later, on December 10, 2005, he invited all retirees to a reception and told me privately: “Begin planning, because we are going to do this!” And about one month later, he called me and asked me to look at Room 134 in the University Administration Building. It was then a post office room, about 30 by 20 feet. I said: “We’ll take it!” We were then asked how many computers we needed: eleven or twelve? I said: “Three will do for now!”

And since the three basic missions of this University are research, teaching, and services, those have also become the three missions of the Emeritus Center, and I like to call them “the three voices of the Center: Research, Teaching, and Services.”

The rest is history, as chronicled in more details in the booklet we have prepared for you.

- On November 1, 2006, we had the Grand Opening of the Center, with ribbon-cutting by Provost Susan Herbst, sadly without the presence of President Kermit Hall, who unexpectedly passed away on August 13, 2006.
On March 30, 2007, the first By-laws were approved by our Board of Directors.

In 2008, the Emeritus Center became high-tech. We have a digital video camera, a projector and a sound system that we use to videotape most of our events. We then transfer them to DVDs that we make available, upon request, to the 200 or so Emeriti with whom we are constantly in touch through email.

On April 15, 2008, the Emeritus Center established a regular connection with the SUNY Retirees Service Corps, the organizer of this Conference.

On July 1, 2008, the Center and the University at Albany Office of Institutional Research launched a wide-ranging online Survey to determine how Emeriti felt about the Center, and how to make our activities even more relevant to them. That was not our first survey. Early on, we had made a few others, because we have always tried to learn how Emeriti felt about our efforts. But that Survey was our most complete and most sophisticated to date. And we have indeed learned a few important things. For example, that 71% of the Emeriti who responded live in the Capital District all or most of the year; that 77% of them were interested in attending our lectures and/or entertainment events; and that 70% were interested in receiving emails telling them what their fellow Emeriti were up to.

Finally, on November 6, 2009, we publicly recognized for the first time the Center’s Research activities (a reflection of our Research Voice): During our Emeritus Center Fourth Anniversary Celebration, and in presence of Provost Susan Phillips, eight Emeriti received a Certificate of Recognition as Emeritus Center Research Fellows for having published a book or a series of articles after their retirement. And I can assure you that’s not the last of it: We do hope to be able to recognize several more Research Fellows in the coming years.

As for the Center’s Teaching Voice, let me just mention that our educational programs now complement those of OASIS, “a national education and service organization that brings people together to enrich lives and strengthen communities.” We had teamed up early on with OASIS, because the local OASIS chapter was, at the time, the only one in the nation to be connected with a University.

For the last three years, we have been offering interdepartmental and interdisciplinary classes, such as the series of workshops on film, called Hollywood on the Hudson, that we offered at the Spectrum Theater in Albany. Also, our series on opera, called Opera 101 – Discussing and Exploring Opera, team-taught by a former member of the English Department, a former member of the French Department and the Chair of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the Albany Medical Center.

Interdisciplinary teaching and reaching the local community in the same breath, we are indeed proud of that achievement! After establishing a set of requirements for becoming an Emeritus Center Fellow in Research, one of the Center’s next goals will be to discuss requirements for a member to become an Emeritus Center Fellow in Teaching.

As for our Service Voice, I submit that services by Emeriti should include not only services to the University, such as serving in one of the Senate Councils, but also helping individual departments, ours and others, as well as volunteering for non-profit organizations as a service to “the world-at-large.” In conclusion, let me read a quote that you’ll find in our booklet: “An organization’s character is judged by how it values its retirees.” We can all agree on that, don’t you think?

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A. Summary Notes by Carl Wiezalis

This session was composed of faculty and staff from SUNY State-operated and Statutory Colleges, both retired and active.

The Chair gave an overview of the origin and development of the Retiree Service Corps concept within SUNY. The value proposition of a System-wide service organization was advanced by the SUNY University Faculty Senate with the support and encouragement of System Administration, former and current. While some SUNY campuses house retiree groups and/or emeriti organizations, many do not. The opportunity for collective focus and growth of the retiree ranks became clear as the SUNY System was measured and compared to what has been accomplished by individual colleges, public and private, all over this nation. The unrealized potential of a fully defined retiree service corps, dedicated to institutional and community service first and peer support second, became clear.

Some of the issues, concerns and recommendations of this conference session were:

- Retired faculty and staff are not always actively engaged in the business of the university, and this is a lost opportunity to capture and utilize precious resources.
- Several of the participants described their personal experiences with efforts to establish and sustain retiree organizations on their campuses.
- While some described supportive behaviors by their presidents and administrators in the establishment of retiree organizations, others described failures.
- There was universal enthusiasm for the goals of the SUNY Retiree Service Corps, and most were pleased to have the Service Corps laying the foundation for a cohesive, System-wide organization rather than a disconnected mass of atypical local groups.
- Most participants found their interests and needs among the lists presented to them in the Service Corps' "Guide to Starting a Campus-Based Retiree Organization"; most articulated their views of the value of this document in advancing their organizational efforts.
- Most felt that having these developmental activities supported and advanced by central SUNY System Administration would help promote the discussions and organizing efforts at the campus level.
- Many participants clearly wanted to remain active and recognized on their respective campuses for the foundations which they built and left for succeeding generations to stand upon. To do less is disrespectful. To forget history is to discount experience. To discount experience is to invite repetitious failure. The character of any community is measured by the respect shown to its senior contributors.

Many participants commented on the value of this discourse, and they hoped that we could do this again in the near future.
B. Summary Notes by Michael C. Patterson

Carl Wiezalis opened the discussion with a background summary on how the SUNY Faculty Senate and SUNY System came to embrace the idea of SUNY RSC. Carl emphasized the “service” orientation of SUNY RSC, which led to considerable discussion among the attendees.

One participant observed that it was a mistake to position the work of SUNY retirees as “giving back” to SUNY and the local campus. He felt that professors and staff had spent a career of “giving” to the campus and now it was their turn to get something in return. Someone else expressed concern that volunteer work on campus could erode the job security of paid staff. One person asked why it was necessary to join a campus retiree organization to do volunteer work when there were ample volunteer organizations already in place.

Other participants spoke eloquently about the sense of loyalty to the SUNY system and their home campuses. The sentiment that “We are SUNY,” and “We built the SUNY system” was expressed a number of times. One participant observed that “SUNY is a well-kept secret.”

It was suggested that retirees could play an important role as spokespersons and advocates for SUNY. This observation suggested that a possible objective for SUNY RSC would be to raise statewide awareness of the academic benefits the SUNY system offers to residents of New York State.

There was some discussion about the need for guidance in setting up and growing campus-based retiree organizations. There is a need for models that demonstrate what might be considered a tiered approach to development. This approach would provide models of small, initial, incremental steps that could be taken to get the ball rolling. Full-blown examples of successful retiree organizations may be inspirational, but they don’t explain how to get started and to work through intermediate steps.

There seem to be lingering questions about membership in campus-based retiree organizations. It seems clear that SUNY RSC and the national AROHE leadership are strong advocates for an inclusive approach that welcomes all faculty, staff and professionals who work at SUNY campuses. There was also a suggestion that spouses and family of retired faculty and staff should be included in retiree organization activities. Some participants expressed concern about possible “elitist” attitudes that tended to exclude non-faculty personnel.

In summary, the session provided a good start on a range of important discussions. SUNY RSC can play an important role in continuing to facilitate the conversation about role of retiree organizations. Further, SUNY RSC can provide critical guidance to help campus-based groups clarify how they can best serve their campus and can offer strength and support through state-wide cooperation and even national connections through AROHE.
A. Summary Notes by Peter Herron

This session consisted of mostly community college representatives. Separating the community colleges from the four-year colleges and university centers was crucial. At the four-year colleges and university centers, the emphasis seems to be on physical centers for retired academic faculty. These centers are often well financed by the local institutions. Those attending this session showed that the concerns and needs of community colleges are quite different.

From the questions and comments made, the prevailing interest is in the mechanics of establishing local retiree organizations. The very few who either have or are in the process of establishing a retiree group stated the difficulty in obtaining retiree addresses, obtaining resources for mailings, scheduling organizational meetings, getting local union and institutional support and writing by-laws and electing officers. There was interest shown in stating the purposes or goals of a retiree organization and the kinds of activities that would be of interest to its members.

Some of those attending this session were too young to be retirees. These individuals appear to have been sent by their respective college administrations. This seems to indicate that there is a positive interest, by the local institutions, in remaining connected to retirees.

Considerable interest was indicated in the composition of the retiree organization. Should there be only retired faculty? Should retired support staff and administrators be included?

Because of financial constraints, there is little expectation of office staff and physical facilities being made available to a retiree organization. This left open the question of who was going to do the work required in the formation and continual operation of the retiree organization.

Concern was shown for the need to communicate with its members, the college community and the local community. Questions were asked about how to establish and maintain membership data, a newsletter and a website.

From the comments and questions made during this session, I think that there is a strong interest in establishing retiree organizations at many New York State community colleges. The SUNY RSC can serve as a resource to those engaged in this endeavor.
B. Summary Notes by Roger Anunsen

The roundtable discussion involving two-dozen participants began with one representative explaining that they were just starting to consider organizing a retiree group when they received the conference flyer. “This conference” she said, “is what really got us going!”

Peter Herron pointed out that community colleges, unlike universities, can be a carrot for community engagement and often play a much greater proportional role in the fabric of the community. All agreed with comments like “Half of our towns jobs come from our college”, “we serve the greater community” and “nearly everyone in town has a direct connection with our community college.”

Surveys were discussed as a way to measure needs but, as one attendee pointed out, we have had retirees who don’t even want to answer the survey for fear that once they said what they would like to do in retirement, we would then target them. Other topics included partnering with the greater community through events, lifelong learning opportunities, and reaching into the community to match retiree services with local needs.

One representative from Monroe Community College, V. Sumati Devadutt, described a name their retirees have adopted in their community-wide programs: “The Builders.” Retirees, she suggested, don’t need a membership to volunteer because most are already volunteering. During their careers, retirees develop a passion for volunteering in the community and the SUNY retiree groups can build upon those retirees who are already volunteering by highlighting them as SUNY retirees.

Speaker’s bureaus and other civic engagement were mentioned as well as offering lifelong learning opportunities.

Many retirees seem willing to volunteer and share a high regard for one another but it was noted that some retirees felt their community in general had “no respect” for SUNY retirees.

Mentoring: Engage current staff with a mentoring program that could match new staff and faculty with a retiree for a one-on-one breakfast or other gathering.

Snowbirds: A reciprocal arrangement with groups in Florida where many SUNY retirees winter might bear fruit of engagement.

Time Banking: A lively discussion was held on utilizing “Time Banking” as a means of engaging members and matching their skills and passions with needs in the community. Gail Meyers from the New York State Office for the Aging offered compelling examples ranging from knitting to gutter cleaning with “chits” from volunteering hours being exchanged for needed services. It was suggested that the Internet be visited for “time banking” websites (www.timebank.org).

Where do we start?: Peter Herron offered a few of the many program items contained in his handouts and explained their uses within his group on Long Island. Janette Brown, from USC and Executive Director of AROHE, pointed to the start-up kit in the SUNY RSC Guide offers both their survey and a how-to guide.

Who do we contact if there are questions along the way?: The RSC will be one resource as are the representatives from other community colleges. Call one of those who are further down the path and ask their advice, ask them about their stories.

Roger Anunsensen concluded by suggesting that the first thing conference participants should do when they return to their campuses is . . . something. Then, two somethings, and so on with an action plan to stay in touch with the other SUNY retirement organizations.
Summing Up and Future Directions*
Chair: Tom Wolff, Chair, SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council
Facilitators: Roger Anunsen and Michael Patterson, mindRAMP & Associates, LLC

I. Issues Discussed

Major themes regarding starting and maintaining a campus-based retirement organization revolved around:

A. Retiree Organization Mechanics and Funding

1.1 The importance of institutional involvement/leadership in initiating and expanding campus retiree organizations.

1.2 The SUNY Retirees Service Corps’ role in providing System-level support, especially in gaining campus leadership buy-in.

1.3 Funding for emeritus centers and retirement organizations at state-operated and community college campuses may come from a combination of university support, college foundations, grants, and fundraising.

1.4 Campus-based retiree organization membership should be inclusive, i.e., open to all faculty and staff.

1.5 The mechanics of establishing a local retiree organization.

1.6 The need for models that demonstrate a tiered approach to the development and growth of campus-based retiree organizations.

1.7 The importance of creating/maintaining both a newsletter and a website.

1.8 How to rejuvenate an “aging” retiree center & motivate retirees to serve in the community - get an inventory of what is already there and build on it.

1.9 The RSC’s “Guide to Starting a Campus-Based Retiree Organization” as a valuable resource.

B. Programs and Services

1.10 Surveys as a way to measure retiree needs and the kinds of activities that would interest them.

1.11 Stating the purposes or goals of a retiree organization, including available programs and services.

1.12 Partnering with the greater community through events, matching retiree services with local needs, speaker’s bureaus, lifelong learning opportunities.

* The issues and action items contained within this section derive from the discussions which took place during the conference’s two break-out sessions and the Summing Up and Future Directions session.
1.13 Engaging current staff with a mentoring program that could match new staff and faculty with a retiree for a one-on-one breakfast or other gathering.

1.14 The potential role of retirees as spokespersons and advocates for SUNY.

1.15 Most service/volunteering by retirees at state-operated campuses is done on campus; the need for enhancing volunteerism in the broader community.

1.16 Most service/volunteering by community college retirees is well connected to the community, not just the campus. Since community colleges are mostly in smaller /rural communities, they are intimately involved in the community as a part of who they are.

C. Mutually Beneficial Relationships
1.17 The importance of communicating how the campus-based retirement organization will benefit retirees, the host university/college, and the community at large.

1.18 Campus-based retirement organizations as a way for retirees to continue their relationship with the college community.

D. Retiree Contact Information
1.19 Working with campus human resources office and other appropriate offices (e.g., alumni office, college foundation) and unions to obtain retiree names/contact information for membership recruitment.

1.20 Creation and distribution of a retiree/membership directory.

E. Retiree Rights and Privileges
1.21 Rights and privileges that may be made available to campus employees upon retirement, such as parking, library privileges, e-mail services, discounts, etc.

1.22 There is a SUNY Board of Trustees policy listing certain privileges that should come with the granting of emeritus rank. However, most state-operated campuses have their own policies regarding emeritus privileges.

F. Recognition of Retirees
1.23 The importance of recognizing the contributions made by the retirees to their campuses and SUNY. Several participants expressed concern regarding a perceived lack of recognition for achievements retirees made on behalf of their campuses and the SUNY system during their active employment. Retirees articulated that SUNY has benefited from their accomplishments, expansive knowledge and dedication to become the largest comprehensive system of public higher education in the country.

1.24 The potential value of SUNY retirees as a tremendously valuable resource.

II. Action Items Discussed

In his closing remarks, Tom Wolff encouraged the attendees to distill the information from this inaugural conference and to consider and identify specific action items that will further the establishment or advance the growth of a campus-based retirement organization.
A. Potential campus-level action items discussed during the conference included:

2.1 Identify and secure institutional champions who would support nascent retirement organizations.

2.2 Survey retirees to ascertain their needs and identify programs, activities and volunteer opportunities that would interest them.

2.3 Investigate the support services needed to make employees’ transition to retirement meaningful and seamless.

2.4 Determine the purposes/goals of your proposed retiree organization and the kinds of activities that would be of interest to potential members.

2.5 Work with campus human resources office and other appropriate offices (e.g., alumni office, college foundation) and unions to obtain retiree names/contact information for recruitment, creation of a retiree/membership directory.

2.6 Establish a retiree organization newsletter and website.

B. Potential SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) action items discussed included:

2.7 Define and promote the role of the SUNY RSC in encouraging and supporting campus-based retiree organizations.

2.8 Provide models of small, initial, incremental steps that could be taken in setting up and growing campus-based retiree organizations.

2.9 Research the rights and privileges SUNY and non-SUNY campuses offer to their retirees. Similarly, look into whether retirees have any responsibility toward their campuses.

2.10 Make campuses aware of SUNY Board of Trustees policy/guidelines regarding emeritus status and privileges.

2.11 Advocate that campus retirement organization membership be open to all retirees.

2.12 Create awareness about the potential value of SUNY retired faculty and staff, promote programs and activities to publicize and recognize their contributions to their campuses and community.

2.13 Work with campuses to create programs that strengthen the retiree-campus-community connection.

2.14 Explore the creation of a SUNY ID card that could be used at all SUNY campuses.

2.15 Develop, update, and strengthen the SUNY RSC website and promote it as a tool for connecting retirees with each other, their campuses, and community service.

2.16 Promote the creation of a SUNY-wide association of campus-based retiree organizations.
Roger Anunsen is the creator of the Brain Wellness Series and MemAerobics cognitive intervention programs and the host of a radio pilot program “What’s New in Brain Wellness.” Based in Oregon, Mr. Anunsen was a voting delegate to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, is a regular presenter and panelist at Joint Conference of American Society on Aging and the National Council on the Aging and presented at the “First Global Conference on Ageing” at University of Oxford, UK in July of 2009. Mr. Anunsen is a founding principal of mindRAMP & Associates, LLC.

Janette Brown, Ed.D. is Executive Director for both the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE, established in 2002) and the USC Emeriti Center at the University of Southern California (established in 1978). Janette conducted the 2008 AROHE Research Survey on University Retiree Organizations that offers extensive data on retiree programs, services, and best practices at universities in the US and Canada. Additionally, Janette recently co-authored a 2008 book chapter for "Releasing the Potentials of Senior Scholars and Scientists – Emerging Productivity in a New Era", published by the European Research Institute on Health and Aging.

Michael Burgess was appointed by Governor Eliot Spitzer, and confirmed by the New York State Senate, to serve as the Director of the New York State Office for the Aging in February 2007. His appointment was reaffirmed by Governor Paterson in 2008. As Director of the State Office for the Aging, Mr. Burgess oversees the administration of federal and state-funded programs designed to assist the more than 3.2 million elderly residents in the state, as well as programs that assist family members and others involved with helping elderly residents that are in need of greater levels of assistance.

Ram Chugh, Ph.D. is Executive Director of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC). He retired in 2002 from SUNY Potsdam as a Distinguished Service Professor of Economics after 34 years of service. He served as Executive Assistant and later as Special Assistant for Public Service to several campus presidents and as Director of the Rural Services Institute. During his career at SUNY Potsdam, Ram was instrumental in developing many programs to improve the economy of the region, served on several regional and state boards, and received numerous honors for his public service. He chaired the SUNY University Faculty Senate task force that led to the creation of the SUNY RSC. The Senate honored Ram by recognizing him as “Senator Emeritus” for his long service to SUNY and University Senate.

Barry Culhane is Executive Assistant to the President at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Dr. William W. Destler. Barry served in the United States Army as a medic from 1969-1971. He has been a faculty member with RIT since 1974. Barry served as the President of numerous organizations and is a founding member of the national Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE). He is married to Dr. Christine Licata, Senior Associate Provost at RIT, and his two daughters, Katie and Cari, are RIT alums.

Anne Donnelly, Professor of Biology (Emeritus), SUNY Cobleskill. Anne retired in September 2005 after 32 years of teaching, 28 of them at SUNY Cobleskill. As a pioneer in Computer Managed Learning, she presented in three countries and has been recognized with many awards, including the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Anne has volunteered for numerous public service organizations over the years. She is currently president of the Landis Arboretum and member of the Lions Club, Cobleskill Historical Society and the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.
Alan Dunefsky, Special Assistant for Projects, Director of Recreational Sports (Ret.), SUNY New Paltz. Alan is Coordinator of the retired faculty and staff organization at New Paltz. He is chair of the college’s Executive Faculty Council and a member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty. Alan is also on the SUNY New Paltz Alumni Association Board of Directors. He is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

Peter Herron, Founder and Past President, Retiree Association of Suffolk County Community College; Professor of Mathematics (Emeritus), Suffolk County Community College. Peter is currently President of NYSUT Retiree Council 39, the New York State United Teachers community college retiree council. He is also a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

Jim Kalas, Ph.D., Vice Chair, SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council; Associate Provost, Academic Affairs (Ret.), SUNY System Administration. Jim is currently teaching in the School of Education at SUNY Albany.

Curtis L. Lloyd serves as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Director of University-wide Human Resources for the State University of New York system. He has received several honors and awards, including the Governor’s Tribute to African American Leaders of Excellence in State Service. Curtis serves on the boards of numerous public service organizations. He is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

Barbara Mierzwa, M.S., Vice President, University at Buffalo Emeritus Center; Assistant Dean and Director, Continuing Medical Education, UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (Ret.); Member, SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council. “UB Believers” volunteer. Member of Catholic Charities of Buffalo’s Community Division and server at the Friends of the Night People community dining room.

Michael C. Patterson is a gerontologist based in Bethesda, MD who has produced and presented brain health forums and workshops across the country as director of the award-winning Staying Sharp program, a joint project of NRTA: AARP’s Educator Community and the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives. Mr. Patterson served on the Communication Committee for the CDC/Alzheimer’s Association Roadmap for Brain Health, is a board member for the National Center for Creative Aging and chairs the NCCA Research Committee. He is a co-founder and principal of mindRAMP & Associates, LLC.

Bill Reese began teaching in 1947. He served as Department Chair of Philosophy at four universities, including UAlbany (1968-74 plus several substitute terms). His publications include Philosophers Speak of God (with Charles Hartshorne); The Ascent from Below (concerning eight basic philosophic problems); The Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought. He was General Editor of three volumes of the Delaware Seminar in Philosophy of Science; Process and Divinity, the Hartshorne Festschrift (with Eugene Freeman); Editor of The Best in the Literature of Philosophy and Religion, vol. IV, 13th edition of The Reader’s Adviser; Essays on Freedom; Essays on Value. Bill also published numerous essays, and a monograph on "The Democratic Idea" in the Pacific Philosophy Forum. He gained the Rank of Emeritus in 1999. Bill is the First President of the Emeritus Center of the University at Albany.

Carl Wiezalis, MS, RT, FAARC, Member, SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council; Distinguished Service Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University; President of the American Association for Respiratory Care (2001), President of the SUNY State-wide University Faculty Senate (2005-2009), member of the SUNY Board of Trustees (2007-2009), volunteer with Project HOPE - USA in Europe, and received the SUNY Faculty Senate Emeritus Award (for a retired Senate member) for 2009.

Tom Wolff, M.D., Chair, SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council; Distinguished Teaching Professor (Emeritus), SUNY Upstate Medical University. At Upstate he served as Department Chair for Family Medicine, developed the Rural Medical Education Program (RMED), and was President of both the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine and the American Board of Family Medicine. Tom serves as a trustee on the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central NY, which supports health care for the frail elderly and children in poverty; volunteers as a food preparer for meals to the needy; and is and teaching in a new Physician Assistant program aimed at rural and medically underserved areas of Upstate New York.
APPENDIX B

About the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC)

The SUNY Retirees Service Corps was formed in early 2008 with the goal of encouraging campuses to institute programs which will link the valuable and largely untapped resource of talent and experience of SUNY retirees with the organizations in the community that need their skills and expertise. These campus centers will also serve as a social network for the retirees. Connecting retirees with each other and with community service is the central mission of RSC. Dr. Ram Chugh serves as director of the Retirees Service Corps, located at SUNY System Administration in Albany. The RSC Advisory Council provides overall direction for the work of the organization. To learn more about the SUNY RSC, visit www.suny.edu/retirees.

Current SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council Members (November 2009)

*Tom Wolff, M.D. (Chair); Distinguished Teaching Professor (Emeritus), SUNY Upstate Medical University
*Jim Kalas, Ph.D. (Vice Chair); Associate Provost, Academic Affairs (Ret.), SUNY System Administration
Vince Aceto, Ph.D., Distinguished Service Professor (Emeritus), University at Albany
Anne Donnelly, Professor of Biology (Emeritus), SUNY Cobleskill
Alan Dunefsky, Special Assistant for Projects; Director of Recreational Sports (Ret.), SUNY New Paltz
Peter Herron, Professor of Mathematics (Emeritus), Suffolk County Community College
Bob Kasprak, Associate for Campus Services (Ret.), SUNY College of Optometry
*Curtis Lloyd, M.B.A., Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, SUNY System Administration
*Susan M. McDermott, Professor of English (Emeritus), Hudson Valley Community College; Faculty Council of Community Colleges President’s Designee
Barbara Mierzwa, Program Chair and Vice President, University at Buffalo Emeritus Center; Assistant Dean and Director, Continuing Medical Education, UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (Ret.)
William Muller, Professor of Photography (Emeritus), Hudson Valley Community College
Gail Myers, Special Assistant to the Director, Liaison for the NYS Office for the Aging (Non-SUNY Representative)
*Carl Wiezalis, Distinguished Service Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University; University Faculty Senate President’s Designee
Judy Wishnia, Ph.D., Professor of History (Emeritus), Stony Brook University; Chair, UUP Statewide Committee of Active Retirees
*Ram Chugh, Ph.D., Executive Director, SUNY Retirees Service Corps; Distinguished Service Professor (Emeritus), SUNY Potsdam

* Member of Conference Planning Committee and SUNY RSC Executive Committee