Campus Retiree Organization Profile

The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College

by Professor Emeritus Bud Macy, President of RASCC, and Professor Emeritus Pete Herron, RASCC Webmaster

The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College (RASCC) was conceived in January 2002 by Pete Herron. Many Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) retirees felt totally disconnected from the college once they retired. Colleagues retired, were promoted, got sick, and even died without any notice being sent to retirees. A few of us realized that there were many retirees feeling the same way and who wanted to reconnect with the college.

In 2002 Pete made some informal inquiries, contacting the college president’s office, the three unions, the college’s foundation and as many former colleagues as he could. With the help of a few retirees and the SCCC foundation office, letters were sent to all retirees who lived locally and for whom we had a mailing address. This letter invited them to several organizational meetings. Out of these meetings a core of very enthusiastic retirees spent close to a year establishing the Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College.

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 sounded 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 as members. Others were willing to include some administrators. In the end, all Suffolk County Community College retirees – no matter what position they had – were eligible to be members. We also 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 the RASCC. Once we obtained the addresses of most retirees we were able to notify them of the

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since been added to the executive council. The Governance Structure Committee also developed the by-laws and the RASCC membership application form.

Once we were able to 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. Food always attracts people! The college’s theatre department provided a wine reception for retirees at one of its productions. In 2003, RASCC became 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, the RASCC provided volunteers at those events.

The Activities Planning Committee is the most active RASCC committee. It is responsible for providing an ongoing selection of interesting activities for member participation. Among the myriad activities arranged by this outstanding committee are day trips to such venues as Macy’s Fireworks Dinner Cruise, Long Island Ducks baseball games, Peconic Bay Lighthouse Cruise, Lincoln Center, World Trade Center Memorial Museum, the Boston Pops Orchestra, New Jersey’s Sculpture Garden and many other local historical and cultural sites. We have also enjoyed overnight trips to Cape Cod (including Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard), a Vermont Fall Foliage Tour (including the Von Trapp family home), a Duck Boat Tour of Boston, and more recently to Lake George, NY.

When we realized the RASCC needed a logo, a contest was held. Bud Macy won the contest with the design in column two.

Learning who is retiring and when has been and still is a problem. We have worked with the college’s Human Resources office to learn who is currently anticipating retirement but because of privacy concerns they are not able to provide us with any information we could use to directly contact retirees. Many retire without our knowledge, resulting in missed opportunities of increasing RASCC membership. We have created a tri-fold brochure on the RASCC to be given to retiring employees that will allow them to sign up for our organization if they are interested.

RASCC annual dues are $25. New retirees do not pay dues the first year of their retirement.

The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College communicates with its members by email, newsletter and website. Recent copies of the newsletter and pictures of recent RASCC events, planned activities, RASCC by-laws and much more can be found on its website, www.rascc.org. The annual RASCC membership directory enables members to keep in touch with former colleagues. RASCC also recently launched a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/sccretirees) for existing and prospective members.

The RASCC faces many of the same challenges as most organizations do: There are never enough members getting actively involved. The most popular events are the spring luncheon in May and the holiday party in December. However, for most activities the response is minimal. Of course, we don’t expect the 20% of the members who live out-of-state to attend local events.

In November of each year the RASCC has its membership renewal drive. This drive is followed up in January with a reminder letter to those who have not paid their current dues. Often there are nice notes of appreciation accompanying the renewal forms, especially from those living out-of-state.

By far, the greatest challenge lies in attracting new members and getting them involved. We are especially fortunate to have a college administration which supports us wholeheartedly. In fact, Suffolk County Community College President Shaun McKay is our most ardent supporter, constantly championing our cause and including the RASCC in many college events.

RASCC sponsors numerous activities at the college, including the Salute to Excellence, the major fund-raising event at SCCC; the SCCC Foundation annual golf outing; and the Governance Awards Luncheon, which recognizes individuals whose college-related performance has been deemed superlative. In addition, the RASCC contributes to support Embracing Our Differences, an organization dedicated to overcoming discrimination.

While the challenges involving the Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College are great, the rewards are far greater, and it has been an honor and a privilege for both of us to be a part of this outstanding organization.