Editor’s Note: Alan is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

History of the Organization

Back in the mid-nineties, a small group of retired faculty members at SUNY New Paltz 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 unseen 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.

The unofficial retired faculty 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” organization. This unofficial group—we have no official name—meets twice a year at a luncheon. The College President attends as many of these as possible.

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 campus 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.
- A ‘listserv’ exists for communication with those retirees who use email.
- 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 electronically to retirees.
- Our alumni publication, The Observer, is mailed to all emeriti.

Something we started from almost nothing has become a powerful networking tool among New Paltz’s retirees and strengthens their connection with the campus.

If you have questions regarding the SUNY New Paltz Retired Faculty organization, feel free to contact me at dunefska@newpaltz.edu.

To learn more about SUNY New Paltz, go to http://www.newpaltz.edu/.

Campus Retiree Organization Contact Information:

For a list of primary contact persons at select SUNY campus retirement organizations, go to http://www.suny.edu/retirees/campus_programs/select_suny_campus_RO_contacts_12-11.cfm

New Paltz Retirees Luncheon, November 2011.