

Minutes for the Dec. 12, 2024, Emeriti and Retirees Association Meeting, submitted by Kim Hachiya, Dec. 17, 2024

The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association met Dec. 12, 2024, at Nebraska Innovation Campus. The meeting was co-hosted by the Office of the Chancellor, the UNL Alumni Association and the NU Foundation.

ERA President Larry Dlugosh called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. He thanked UNL Chancellor Rodney Bennett, Bill Johnson from the NU Foundation, and Shelley Zaborowski from the Nebraska Alumni Association, for hosting this year's luncheon. He also thanked Denise Todd (Foundation), Annette Wetzel (Chancellor's Office), and their teams for making this such a special and enjoyable event. Larry introduced Chancellor Bennett.

In his remarks, Bennett suggested we try to avoid the "narrative of gloom and doom" that seems to be pervasive, because there is good news.

He said his administration focuses on three pillars: Excellence, prominence and impact. Among signs verifying we are achieving these are rising enrollments, increases in private giving and evidence alumni and others retain confidence in UNL. Bennett noted that nine faculty received National Science Foundation Early CAREER grants this year, and 180 faculty are featured in a 2024 list of the world's most influential researchers as reported by Stanford University.

He said we need to continue to tell the public why higher education is important and why students should choose UNL. One area of concern is the steep drop in international student enrollments, which began during the pandemic and has not bounced back. UNL needs to increase recruitment and also boost graduate stipends to be more competitive.

He thanked the group for its continued commitment and loyalty to UNL.

After lunch, Larry resumed the meeting, starting with Memory Moments:

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| Gerald Finnegan | College of Business |
| Deborah Wood | National Drought Mitigation Center |
| Clarice Martin | University Dining Services |

Larry noted that Earl Hawkey is stepping down as treasurer following 7 years in the position. "His guidance and attention to detail has been very much appreciated as we wish him well. Please join me in thanking Earl for his service as ERA Treasurer." Earl reported "the association is solvent."

Bill Johnson, Senior Vice President, NU Foundation, spoke about the success of the current capital campaign and thanked the group and members for their contributions. He noted that the campaign is a bit ahead of pace.

Shelley Zaborowski, Director, Nebraska Alumni Association, conferred the Doc Elliot Award, which is given to a retired faculty member, to Nancy Mitchell, professor emeritus from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Pat Crews, ERA Wisherd Award Committee Chairperson, conferred the Wisherd Award for Outstanding Service to the University to Robert Diffendal, professor emeritus, School of Natural Resources.

Before passing the gavel to incoming president Pam Edwards, Larry thanked the board for its work this past year and announced the members of the 2025 board:

I would like to take a moment to recognize your board and incoming president and president-elect. Officers and board would you please stand as I call your name?

Incoming President for 2025 – Pam Edwards
President-elect/Vice President – Vicki Highstreet
Secretary, Kim Hachiya
Treasurer, Deb Henrichs

Directors –Term ending 2024 - Roshan Pajnigar and David Wilson
Directors–Term ending 2025 - Tom McFarland and Nancy Mitchell
Directors – Term ending 2026 - Gary Heusel and Rita Kean

*Two new members of the Board of Directors, Jim Lewis (2025-2027) and Lyda Snodgras (2025-2027).

Standing Committee Chairs – Alfred Stark, Pam Edwards, Don Weeks, Roshan Pajnigar, Jane Zatechka, Jim Griesen, Julie Johnson, Doug Jose, Vicki Highstreet, Connie Boehm, Marjorie Kostelnik, and Pat Crews

Pam accepted the gavel and adjourned the meeting.