UVM RETIRED FACULTY & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

2011 MEMBERS SURVEY
Compiled: June 24, 2011

METHOD: A 10-question survey was composed by the UVM RFAO Board and made available on the surveymonkey.com website. The link to the survey was sent to ~550 members of the listserv on April 25, 2011 and the link was also placed on the RFAO website. 120 replies were received by May 17, 2011. A “reminder” was sent to the listserv on May 17, 2011. Collection was stopped on June 24, 2011 with a grand total of 160 responses, for a response rate of ~29%.

Following is a summary and interpretation of the results based upon 160 completed surveys:

Question 1 What is your status? 98.1% of respondents were retired faculty and less than 2% indicated they were retired officers of administration. The organization needs to recruit more actively retired officers of administration to bring an administrative perspective to issues that come before the Retired Faculty and Administrative Officers.

Question 2 Please indicate your gender? 72% of respondents identified as males and 28% of the respondents identified as females. It is assumed that these proportions will be more balanced over the next 10 + years given the increasing number of female faculty in the senior associate and full professorial ranks. In the meantime, the organization needs to reach out to female faculty to learn of their participation in the operation of the academic and administrative wings of the University; this will be hard to do; beyond RFAO scope?

Question 3 What year did you officially retire from UVM? The largest number of retirees, 47% of the respondents, retired during 2005-2011, while for 2000-2004, 29% of the respondents retired during this latter time period. There were 34 persons who retired during the period 1990-1999 while 4 respondents retired between 1989 and one respondent who retired pre-1980. In summary, there is a relatively large pool of retired persons, mostly faculty, many of whom stay connected to UVM. This group can be a valuable asset for the University with experience and expertise that may be tapped to contribute to teaching, research, and academic administrative initiatives for specific periods of time. It is important to assess the impact of such a hiring program on adjunct faculty. The intent here is not to displace younger faculty but to advantage the student body and UVM with the availability of senior teachers and scholars. I think this could open a can of worms that at this time would be problematic e.g. union contracts.
Question 4 How many years were you employed at UVM? Impressively, almost all respondents who start their careers at UVM stay at UVM for periods of 20+ to 40+ years. As a consequence there is a wealth of attractive features and institutional memory available to UVM that can be harnessed to identify the UVM Principles and Qualities that “keep people” at UVM.

QUESTION 5 WHAT WAS YOUR ACADEMIC RANK AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE TITLE AT THE TIME YOU RETIRED FROM UVM? The majority of respondents were Professors when they retired (63%), and 16% were Associate Professors.

QUESTION 6 PLEASE INDICATE YOUR COLLEGE AT THE TIME OF YOUR RETIREMENT (YOU CAN INDICATE MORE THAN ONE) The largest number of respondents were faculty from the College of Arts & Sciences (A&S) embracing 39% of the total respondents, followed by College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) with 17%, and the College of Medicine (COM) with 15% of the total respondents. The data suggest that it would be valuable to meet with the Dean’s of these three Colleges to ascertain the current role of retired faculty in their respective units, and to assess the interests of these Deans for further involvement of retired faculty in their colleges.

Question 7 If you have been involved with any UVM-related activities since retirement, please indicate the activity and the year(s) in which it occurred. If none, please move to question # 8 There were 75 responses to this question. Teaching, paid through Continuing Education or through one’s home department, was by far the most frequently reported activity (approximately 38 out of 75 responses), followed by research and scholarship, undergraduate advising, and then by a variety of activities such as serving on admissions committees and advisory boards.

Question 8 Please indicate your level of interest in participating in the twelve listed activities ranging from teaching to strengthening further community relations at the city/town, state, and beyond levels. The majority of respondents to this question were interested for compensation in teaching an undergraduate followed closely by a graduate course. There was some interest in activity subject to compensation in the area of research and scholarship. The number of respondents not interested in any of the 12 listed activities far exceeded the number of respondents interested in participating in the listed activities providing they were compensated for their participation. In short, there appears to be a subset of respondents interested in primarily teaching and research activities providing they are compensated for their participation.

Question 9 Please rate each of the following seven topics as to their importance to you: one (1) is least important, ten (10) is very important (only one answer allowed per topic). It appears as if the three most important topics for the respondents
are learning more about UVM benefits for retired persons, attend a workshop on taxes and trust funds, and attend a workshop on aging and exercise. Many residents live quite a distance from UVM, and didn’t see how they could benefit from conventional workshops held on Campus or the immediate surrounding area.

Question 10  You are finished with the formal portion of the survey. Please use the following space for any general comments. There were 32 separate responses to this question. Almost all of them were positive about past and current interactions with UVM, and many positive comments about the development of our web page, reaching out to retired persons by the survey, and encouraging comments to keep up the good work of the UVM-RFAO. There were five of the 32 separate responses that expressed concern over the future directions of UVM, the lack of financial support for a specific department, and apparently capricious and unjust actions regarding the termination of an important UVM program.

09/29/2011 - Robert B. Lawson