San Francisco State University Retirement Association

Off-Campus Bulletin - Summer 2011

President's Corner - President Tom Spencer

As we end the 2010-11 academic year, I want to update you on a few issues:

***Board of Directors*:**
Gene Michaels will be leaving our Board as he will be spending considerable time outside the Bay Area. Gene will be replaced by Mamdouh Abo-El-Ata. Thanks Gene and welcome Mamdouh. Newman Fisher will return to our Board in his capacity as Past President bringing with him much history and wisdom. Welcome back Newman. Grace Robinson will be taking a leave of absence as she is "expecting." Kay McGough will be replacing her as editor of our *Off-Campus Bulletin*. Congratulations Grace and thanks Kay. A complete listing of the Board of Directors can be found on the inside of your Membership Directory.

Initiatives:
Julian Randolph has been doing an outstanding job in his capacity as our Membership Director finding newly and not-so-newly retired faculty and staff. The job is not as simple as you might think. Jim Van Ness is working on the development of a new policy to allow retiring staff to keep their email accounts after retirement. We thought this issue had been resolved years ago.

Travel Grant Awards:
Thanks to Gene Michaels, Dan Buttlaire and Julian Randolph, our travel grants to staff members for this year have been awarded. (See the report later in this issue of the *Off-Campus Bulletin*.)

Endowment Fee:
I am sorry to report that the request we forwarded to the new VP for Advancement Robert Nava to waive the 2% annual management fee on the endowment funds of the University Women's Association, Friends of the Library, and the Retirement Association has been rejected. While thanking us "for being champions for the University . . . ," the return letter, signed by VP Nava and the Chair of the Foundation Board Scoble, states that "waiving the fee would be giving preferential treatment to one donor (or set of donors) over another . . . ." Apparently, the strictly VOLUNTEER nature of our three organizations along with their long campus histories were insufficient grounds to differentiate us from other donors, in the eyes of the Foundation. It seems that as the size of institutions increase, oftentimes the decision making becomes more impersonal. It saddens me to see SFSU succumbing to this "one rule fits all." The VP's letter concludes, we "look forward to working with you as we continue to build a culture of philanthropy at SF State."
Have a great summer everyone.

In Memoriam

* Teresa Campbell * Edwin Kruth * Sofia L. Prudenciado * Mary Topalis * James Winfrey *

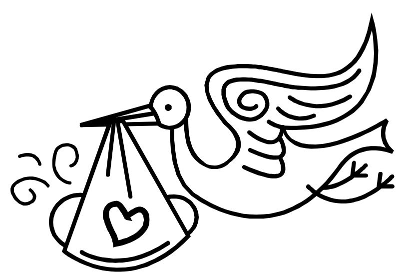
Travel Grants:

The SFSU Retirement Association Travel Awards Committee received thirty-three applications for staff travel awards. Applicants responded to announcements of the availability of these staff travel grants published in three issues of CampusMemo. Eugene Michaels chaired the Travel Awards Committee, and Dan Buttlaire and Julian Randolph also served on this committee. Twenty-three applications were received from women and ten from men; twenty-five were received from staff and eight from faculty, who are ineligible this year. Seven travel grants were awarded, including six $500 awards and one $250 award (amount requested by applicant). Awards were made to the following staff members:

- Sharon Bliss, Fine Arts Gallery
- Lisa Galli, Biology Department
- Shimina Harris, University Park South
- Bridget McCracken, Public Administration
- Angelia Portacio, Academic Technology
- Joy Viveros, Pre-Doctoral Program
- Yoshiko Yamamoto, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Thank you to members who have recently contributed to the Endowment Fund to support future travel grants to faculty & staff: Virginia Garrity in memory of Edwin Kruth; Urania Gluesing; Mary & Larry Ianni in memory of Edwin Kruth; Marie Ribanyi; and Ronald Trauner.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Retirement Association Endowment Fund, please make your check payable to "SFSU Retirement Association Endowment" and mail your donation to our treasurer: **Jim Van Ness, 922 Evergreen Way, Millbrae CA 94030.**



Welcome New Members!

* Rodger Birt * Carol Fields * Gary Hammerstrom * Dorothy (Dodie) Lindsay *
* Gary Penders * Bob Picker * Norma Tarrow * Mike Wong *

University Retirement Association Email Address: retire@sfsu.edu
University Retirement Association website: www.sfsu.edu/~retire

The April 23, 2011 ERFA Meeting

Submitted by Larry Ianni

The semi-annual meeting of the ERFA board was dominated by two subjects: the status and future of pensions managed by PERS and the declining affordability of the long term care plan initiated by PERS about fifteen years ago. Both subjects were treated in a presentation by PERS board member J. J. Jelincic, and the latter topic was also discussed by the ERFA endorsed candidate for election to the PERS board, Donna Snodgrass.

The PERS fund has rebounded significantly during the recent improvement of the stock market and now stands at 240 billion dollars. This improvement results in an improved profile of sources from which current retiree pensions are drawn. Currently 64% a pensioner's monthly check comes from the profits of PERS investments, 15% comes from the contributions of currently employed PERS members and 21% from the state budget. This breakdown shows that the fund is in sound condition to meet its obligations to current retirees without either being a drain on the state budget or being unable to underwrite the kind of retirement for current employees that they are entitled to expect after contributing over the length of their careers.

It is highly relevant to consider the fluctuation in the proportions of funding sources to gain a perspective on the argument that public pension plans in California must be changed before they become a crushing burden that will drive the state into insolvency. Within the last decade the portion of a pensioner's check which comes from the profits of the PERS investments has varied from as low as 46% to as high as 75%, with the lower figure being the one of the shorter duration. Even when the principal of the fund was at its low point, it earned slightly more than 7% annually. The PERS plan is the nearest to a fully funded retirement plan in the country. (Of course, you may want to ask yourself whether fully funded is a fair standard to require. After all, shouldn't the employer--i.e. the state--make some contribution to its employees retirement?)

Why, with the healthy state of the PERS fund, is there so much pressure to change the retirement system for public employees to a defined contribution plan rather than the current defined benefit plan. First of all, the nature of the crisis could be clarified by distinguishing the state level public employee situation from the situation of county and city public employee retirement plans. These latter plans are seriously underfunded and clearly cannot be sustained. To lump the PERS situation together with these is a tactic of those who would want to change public employee retirements even if they were solid as a rock.

Secondly those people who want to change public employee pensions have created a panic by arguing that there is a looming 300 billion dollar shortfall looming by using a bizarre calculation based on a dubious premise. The initial assertion is that pension funds are currently invested in hazardous investments and that they should be invested in only the safest investment possible: government bonds. If placed there, this money would earn 2% a year. After several decades, these safely invested funds would be 300 billion dollars short of being able to meet their obligations.

Recall that it was stated earlier that the PERS funds have averaged earnings over 7% annually for decades. In fact, at the moment the funds are earning 18%. Is the current spectrum of invests truly reckless? What is sensible about moving the funds to the so-called safe investment? Is there any large pool of money that is invested in the so-called safe investment? The social security fund is, and we can all see what a marvelous success that has been.

Those of us who have been carrying the PERS long term care plan are still not recovered from the shock of last year's premium increase (or having to opt for diminished coverage to avoid it.) Everyone at the meeting who carries this coverage breathed a sigh of relief to hear Mr. Jelincic say that the PERS board now feels it has the plan "under control." As we opened our mail this first week of May, plan participants found a letter from the plan's managers saying that starting this year we could expect a 5%annual premium increase. If we had received this news a month earlier, we would have asked at the meeting for a clarification of what Mr. Jelincic meant by "under control," especially when he sat through the presentation of Donna Snodgrass, the ERFA endorsed candidate for election to the PERS board.

Ms. Snodgrass stated that one of her aims if elected to the board is to achieve a major modification in the long term care plan to improve its affordability. She says that this can be achieved by merging it with CSEA's long term care plan, which has 160,000 enrollees. (The PERS plan currently has several thousand enrollees and stopped accepting new enrollees a year ago.) The merger would preserve some, though not all, of the benefit features of the PERS plan and make it more like the CSEA plan which is offered to CSEA by several insurance companies. Of course, having the greater number of enrollees would make possible more affordable premiums. Her case for the merger sounded very convincing and appears to be a promising possibility for exploration because the projected premium increases scheduled for the PERS plan will soon make it unaffordable for most retirees.

DUES REMINDER

Unless you've already paid, or are a life member, your $20 annual dues for 2011 are now due. Your dues paying status is shown on the top line of the mailing label. "Life" indicates you are a lifetime member; a number indicates the last calendar year you paid annual dues (e.g. "10" means 2010). We are very much in need of your support to make our programs and activities a success. If you have any questions about your dues status, you may contact Treasurer Jim Van Ness at (650) 873-4035 or by email at: jvnavn@comcast.net

If you'd like an easy way to keep track of what's happening on campus, Gene Michaels has volunteered to forward an electronic copy of each ***CampusMemo*** by email to those who are interested. So if you would like to receive SFSU's weekly ***CampusMemo*** by email, please complete the form below and provide your email address to Jim Van Ness -- by mail (address below), or send an email to: jvnavn@comcast.net

You can access the current issue of CampusMemo (as well as all back issues) yourself by going on the Retirement Association's website (www.sfsu.edu/~retire), clicking on CampusMemo on the left, and then clicking on the date of the issue you wish to read.

If you wish to make a donation to our Endowment Fund (to fund future faculty and staff travel/professional development grants), please write a separate check and mail with the below form.

Name: ________________________________ Phone: ________________

Address: ____

Email address: ___________________________________

Would you like to receive SFSU's weekly ***CampusMemo*** by email? _______

Amount enclosed: ___ $20 Annual dues for 2011___ $100 Life membership

Contribution to Endowment Fund: $ _______ (Please write separate check)

Please make check(s) payable to: **SFSU Retirement Association** and mail to: **Jim Van Ness, 922 Evergreen Way, Millbrae, CA 94030**

SAN FRANCISCO STATE'S HISTORY CORNER

By Meredith Eliassen

How the Registrar saved the Summer Program in 1934

From 1928 to 1935, Dean of Women Mary Ward directed the Summer Programs of the College, which were some of the largest in California. Ward was the only woman in the country at the time to direct a state summer school program with a student enrollment over 1,100. Florence Vance enrolled as a student at San Francisco State Normal School in 1908. She received her elementary teaching credential in 1910, and was appointed to the faculty to teach geography while assisting Mary Ward in the Training School. For many years Vance was the registrar of the Elementary Education Department. In 1923 she was appointed to the position of recorder to assist registrar Mildred Holman Woods. Vance was known for her beautiful penmanship, that that year the Summer Session "was deprived of cash by the [State] budget." Woods saved Summer Session by aggressively registering students who showed their support for the college. Vance became the College Registrar in 1934, a position she held until her retirement in 1954. Miss Vance was remembered for her efficiency, kindness, and love of the University. Her career spanned the years from Frederic Burk to the move to the Lake Merced campus.

Students learned about native plants by studying trees shrubs, flowers and ferns of the Redwood region. Here students decorate the redwood log and make ozalid prints with native flowers and ferns (Courtesy of SFSU Archives, J. Paul Leonard Library).

San Francisco State's Pioneering Training in Recreation

Prior to formal college programs in Recreation in colleges in the United States, coaches Daniel Farmer and Harold Harding from the Physical Education Department developed an idea of offering training for camp counselors since they work with children in 1937. The following year, San Francisco State offered a Recreation Camp in Cazadero, California, where students could earn credits learning about camp administration and problem solving, doing arts and crafts with native materials, learn about native plant life, puppetry, clay modeling, photography, camp cooking, first aid, boating and storytelling.

Participants worked in groups of five squads to focus on different interests. As a whole they participated in an organized day of activities moving from one activity to another in half-hour increments including photography, first aid, camp cooking, puppetry, clay modeling, canoeing and boating, swimming and life saving, and storytelling.

In life saving and first aid courses students obtained training to qualify for Red Cross Senior Life Saving Certification (Courtesy of SFSU Archives, J. Paul Leonard Library).