

# The Association of Retired Rice University Faculty

October 5, 2018

## Conference Report to Members: The Role of Retired Faculty in Universities

### SUMMARY

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, the Association of Retired Rice University Faculty co-sponsored a conference with the Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies on the Role of Retired Faculty in the University. The conference had three parts following welcome statements by C. Fred Higgs III, Rice University Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Rob Bruce, Jr., Dean of the Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies:

I. Conference Address: *University Programs and Retired Faculty: A National Survey and the Emeritus College Innovation*

Roger Baldwin, Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University

2. Responding Panel: Implications for Small Universities

Dr. C. Sidney Burrus, Panel Chair, Emeritus Professor and former dean of the George R. Brown School of Engineering, Rice University, and ARRUF Director.

Dr. Neal Lane, Professor Emeritus, The James M. Baker Institute, Rice University; and former chancellor, University of Colorado; provost, Rice University; and National Science Advisor and former Director of the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Mary B. McIntire, former dean of the Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies.

Dr. Rob Bruce, Jr., Dean of the Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies, Rice University and former director of the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill's William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education and director of the Center's Office for Online Learning (COOL).

Dr. James Pomerantz, Professor of Psychology, Rice University; former dean of Social Sciences, Rice University, and former provost and acting president, Brown University.

3. Lunch and roundtable discussion. Participants joined panelists and table hosts in discussing the most interesting ideas and programs from the presentation and panel discussion, adding new possibilities.

About 30 persons participated in the conference, which was held at the Anderson-Clarke Center, the home of the Glasscock School. One key point found agreement among all participants: The Association of Retired Rice University Faculty must deliver potential benefits to the University as well as to former faculty members as individuals. This report contains several recommendations, but additional specific ideas from the roundtable discussions will be distributed at the meeting.

## DISCUSSION

The invited speaker, Dr. Roger Baldwin, the Mildred B. Erickson Distinguished Chair and Emeritus Professor of Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University, reported on the changing definition of retirement and the results of a national study he conducted in 2016-2017. The study gathered information about 180 of 200 retired faculty organizations across the country. Baldwin emphasized that the notion of retirement as an abrupt and total shift from work to a period of inactivity and leisure has changed. In the mythology of retirement, an irretrievable loss of identity also occurs, which Baldwin's study confirmed. Before leaving his spot as TV Late Show host, David Letterman ironically conveyed the intensity of feeling: "I'll miss it, desperately. One of two things: There will be reasonable, adult acceptance of transition. Or I will turn to a life of crime" (*NYTimes*, May 3, 2015).

In his welcoming statement, C. Fred Hicks, III, Rice University Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, described the valuable lifelong connections faculty form with students, colleagues, and the University during their careers. Thankfully, these ties may enable retired professors to resist a life of crime, but across the country universities and retired faculty are seeking other solutions, forming independent associations, university sponsored organizations, and even, at four universities, a new college or unit named "the emeritus college." Baldwin explained that such organizations were found to have varied structures and programs. Some seek to enhance social interaction or organize travel, while others support teaching, research and other forms of scholarly work. However, a lack of clearly defined purpose and regular review, Baldwin told the audience, is keeping many of the organizations from maximizing their success.

After Baldwin's presentation, a panel with varied experiences responded to the results of the survey, commenting on the implications for Rice. Sidney Burrus chaired the panel, which included Neal Lane, Mary McIntire, James Pomerantz, and Robert Bruce, Jr. Their diverse experiences with programs and faculty roles sparked a lively discussion of ARRUF's prospects.

Teaching Department Courses. In opening the panel discussion, Chair Sidney Burrus commented that while some retired faculty want to continue teaching, the abundance of Ph.D. holders not affiliated with universities might see retired faculty as competition. In response, Jim Pomerantz emphasized the need for a regular process of evaluating those who are hired outside the regular tenure-track system. While 70 percent of students taking psychology courses at Rice are taught by non-tenure-track faculty, Rice does not have a rigorous evaluation process for hiring these people (although those who have been hired, he noted, earn very high student evaluations). He suggested that if retired faculty wish to teach credit courses, both they and non-tenure track candidates should be reviewed.

Teaching in Continuing Studies Programs. Mary McIntire affirmed the comments that Dean Bruce made in his welcome statement, that faculty and retired faculty have been crucial partners in the establishment of the summer school, the Master of Liberal Studies Program, and the Master of Arts in Teaching Program as well as non-credit courses the Glasscock School offers. She described these programs and others in Continuing Studies as responsive to community needs and essential to adapting the academic work of a research university to benefit individuals and groups, such as teachers.

Continued Research and Local and National Publication. Neal Lane noted that participation in the Baker Institute has been another way for retired faculty to continue their research and publish their work for the benefit of policymakers and a wide public audience. He also suggested that ARRUF might do research leading to advocacy on the campus, such as documenting people's problems and recommending solutions. For example, edges of steps and platforms have sometimes been left unmarked and constitute a tripping hazard. Since some of us are less agile than we used to be, he said, we are likely to be more aware of obstacles that make it difficult to navigate the campus, and we can provide a service by pointing those out to the administration.

Reaching Expanded Populations. Dean Bruce affirmed ideas already expressed and explained that at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill the continuing education and on-line education programs he directed were another valuable way of expanding the university's reach across the country. Rice may want to involve retired faculty in programs that serve people who cannot easily come to the campus in the future.

Serving the Region Collaboratively. Over lunch, all participants joined the discussion, recommending ideas to be explored at the November 13<sup>th</sup> general meeting. David Ryden, Acting Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Houston-Downtown, attended the conference and joined in the discussion. He agreed that there might be opportunities for retired faculty organizations at multiple universities to collaborate in addressing educational trends and community or regional needs. For example, the notable ethnic diversity in the Houston area could become a source of either conflict or strength; universities might champion mutual understanding and appreciation. Retired faculty organizations could collaborate in visiting schools and retirement communities with talks suited to Black History Month or Hispanic History Month, festivals such as the Greek Festival, the Italian Festival, and the Indian Festival, or the Livestock Show and Rodeo. The retired faculty groups could collaborate with the Asia Center, museums, and other institutions, either in research projects or educational events.

Many More Good Ideas. Advocacy and research to support policy changes were also on tables' lists of recommendations. Among these are representation and liaison activities with other campus institutes, departments, and organizations; community service projects, collaboration with student mentoring and college courses; advocacy for members; clearer policies regarding emeritus and non-emeritus faculty; and services to departments and international students.

Key Point. One main point found agreement among all present: The Association of Retired Rice University Faculty must deliver potential benefits to the University as well as to former faculty members as individuals. Because current practices in departments and schools at Rice were surveyed in April, plans can build on what some departments are already doing. Survey results as well as consolidated recommendations from the round table discussions on October 3<sup>rd</sup> will be weighed at the ARRUF general meeting and reception at Cohen House at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. Members are urged to attend.

Will we choose adult acceptance of amazing new possibilities for ARRUF? —Otherwise, a life of crime! Attend the November General Meeting!

*Note: This report does not include all ideas brought up in conversations across the session. Additional information will be made available at the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Bring your own ideas sparked by reading this report to the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.*