



CSURA

Cleveland State University
Retirees Association

Newsletter Fall 2024

Edward G. Thomas
Editor

President's Message



Greetings to CSU Retirees! As your Cleveland State University Retirees Association (CSURA) President for 2024-2025, I'd like to extend a welcome and an invitation to engage with the organization in the various exciting activities we are planning this academic year.

First, a thanks to immediate Past President David Larson, Treasurer Vicki Plata, Communications Coordinator Ed Thomas, and the rest of the CSURA Executive Committee. After a pandemic-era lull during which the group ceased to function, these officers have brought the organization back to be an important part of the CSU community. With a new name that reflects its increased inclusivity, "membership" in the Cleveland State University Retirees Association is available automatically to all faculty and staff who are retired from CSU (there are currently no dues). The organization is in need of additional volunteers for officer positions; please consider active involvement in the group.

Some important announcements:

The CSURA has a new Facebook page, where you will find up-to-date information about upcoming activities (go to CSU Retirees Association on Facebook).

With the re-birth of our organization as the CSURA, there has been a need for a revised set of bylaws. The CSURA Bylaws Committee has been at work, and after approval by the Executive Committee, the new bylaws will be distributed to the full membership soon. Voting on the bylaws by the full membership will take place at an October 10 dual-purpose meeting—the special vote on the revised bylaws will be followed by our annual coffee and dessert get-together with CSU President Laura Bloomberg. More information on this gathering will be emailed to you and will also be available on the CSURA Facebook page.

Online CSU Faculty Profiles are once again available for those who request them. Any retired faculty member can request reactivation of their Faculty Profile by sending an email request to facultyprofile@csuohio.edu.

During the 2023-24 academic year, activities for the CSURA membership increased to nearly a pre-pandemic level. In October 2023, a dessert meet-and-greet was held with CSU President Bloomberg. In December 2023, the organization participated in the CSU Alumni Association's annual "Pause for a Cause" Holiday Event in support of the campus resource center and food pantry; and the membership attended the Trinity Cathedral Messiah Sing and gathered for lunch at the Viking Public House. In March 2024, CSURA officer Jeremy Genovese gave a presentation on the constructed language of Esperanto, a talk that was revelatory for those in attendance. In June 2024, the Annual CSURA Social and Dinner was held at Mather Mansion, with over 60 registered participants.

Save the dates! Upcoming CSURA activities for Fall 2024 semester include: A September 26 walking tour at Lake View Cemetery (register online at <https://support.csuohio.edu/register/?id=627caa9a-c54b-4ca4-8f63-f4e9f53e77b8>); the October 10 bylaws meeting and reception with the President; the November 19 Annual Homecoming Retiree & Faculty and Staff Alumni Luncheon; in December, participation again in two annual events—the December 5 "Pause for a Cause" Holiday Celebration (with the CSU Alumni Association) and the Trinity Cathedral Messiah Sing (and lunch).

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find updates from the CSURA corresponding representatives to the CSU Faculty Senate and to OCHER (Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees). The former includes some key points about the current budget crisis at the University, and the latter reminds us of the importance of CSURA as an organization that represents our interests at the state and national levels, particularly regarding issues of healthcare and pensions.

We look forward to your attendance at our upcoming events, and welcome your input regarding future activities of the organization, as we plan for Spring 2025 and beyond.

Kim Neuendorf
CSURA President, 2024-2025

CSURA People Page

2024-2025 CSURA Officers, Executive Board Members, and Staff

Executive Board

Kimberly Neuendorf, President
David Larson, Past President
Victoria Winbush, Secretary
Vicki Plata, Treasurer
Edward G. Thomas, Communications Coordinator

Representatives to Faculty Senate

Catherine Hansman (2023-2025)
Kimberly Neuendorf (2024-2026)

Representatives to OCHER

Jeremy Genovese
Rodger M. Govea
Matthew Knickman, Director, Alumni Relations & Corporate Engagement

Note from the Newsletter Editor

Please direct comments, questions, and article ideas to Edward G. Thomas, Newsletter Editor, at the following email address: e.thomas@csuohio.edu.

*In Memoriam**

Faculty

Karl B. Bonutti, Professor Emeritus, Economics, October 2023
Alan Miles Ruben, Professor Emeritus, Law, February 21, 2024
S. Ramagopala Rao, Associate Professor Emeritus, Marketing, April 3, 2024
J. Heywood Alexander, Professor Emeritus, Music, 2024

Staff

Carolyn Mateer, former Librarian, 2022 (not previously reported)
Lawrence Nichols, II, former VP, Human Resources, June 2, 2024
Jean R. Packard, Administrative Coordinator, Employment Law Clinic, June 14, 2024
Frances Mentch, Social & Behavioral Science Librarian, July 25, 2024

Retirees (since September 2023)

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Department</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Department</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Fazenbaker, Larry | Urban Center | Rozen, Etmun | Accounting |
| Meier, Heidi | Accounting | Zhu, Jianping | Mathematics |
| Slusarz, Randal | Conference Svcs. | Ekelman, Beth | Occup. Therapy |
| Mortimer, Daniel | IS&T | Hampton, Frederick | CASAL |
| Crowe, Jeffrey | Grounds | Manning, Philip | Crim./Sociology |
| Ahmad, Sulaiman | Bursar | Mitchell, Maureen | Nursing |
| Kaminsky, Daniel | Accounting | Verbanik, Shirley | Convo. Center |
| Sopko, Christine | IS&T | Breeze Jr, William | English |
| Lieberth, Mitch | Student Life | Cieslewicz, Steven | IS&T |
| Brown, Eric | Institutional Rsch | Heinrich, Heike | Academic Progs. |
| Meadows, Elizabeth | Campus411 | Hoges, Pamela | Custodial Svcs. |
| Jackson, Marvin | Custodial Svcs. | Hupcey, Patricia | Viking Card |
| Rudd, Jill | Communication | Isom, Valerie | IS&T |
| Simons, Robert | Urban Studies | Morin, Deborah | CASAL |
| Chang, Myong-Hun | Economics | Oates, Derek | Police |
| Chu, Pong | Electrical Engr. | Raven, Hyacinthe | Career Services |
| Gleeson, Robert | Urban Studies | Sharpe, Suzanne | Urban Studies |
| Hung, Yung-Tse | Civil Engineering | Stelts, Thomas | Parking |
| Kellogg, Wendy | Urban Studies | Gibson, Maria | Nursing |
| Lee, Paul | Accounting | Bond, Meredith | VP, Research |
| Menendez, Anthony | CASAL | | |

CSURA News Items

CSURA Has a New Facebook Page

We have established a new Facebook page for our organization. Please follow it to get the latest information about CSURA. Go to Facebook and search for “Cleveland State University—CSU Retirees Association” or connect with the page using the following URL:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61561611029201>

CSURA Needs a Vice President

The Cleveland State University Retirees Association is currently operating without a Vice President. Under both our former bylaws and our new proposed bylaws, the Vice President, who is also President Elect, serves in the absence of the President and is responsible for organizing the Association’s annual dinner in cooperation with the CSU Alumni Office. If you are interested in serving in this position, please send an email message to that effect to Kimberly Neuendorf, our current President. Her email address is k.neuendorf@csuohio.edu.

CSU Newsletter Needs “Life after Retirement” Articles

In past issues of this newsletter, one of our most popular features has been the “Life After Retirement” articles submitted by our retirees. Since the spring of 2011, we have published letters and photos on this subject from 19 retirees. Since we don’t have a backlog of such articles, now is the time to send in YOUR contribution.

We want to know where you are living and what you are doing in retirement. Are you still active in your professional life? Are you engaged in community service activities? What hobbies do you now have time to pursue? Where have your travels taken you? What new adventures have you had? In short, what have you been up to since you retired? Please also send publishable photographs of yourself and your activities. If you wish, you can tell your former colleagues how they can get in touch with you. **Send your article to Ed Thomas, Communications Coordinator, at e.thomas@csuohio.edu.**

Note from the Newsletter Editor

Please direct comments, questions, and article ideas to Edward G. Thomas, Newsletter Editor, at the following email address: e.thomas@csuohio.edu.

March 28, 2024 Program: "The Esperanto Language"

Dr. Jeremy Genovese, Emeritus Associate Professor of
Human Development and Educational Psychology



Dr. Jeremy Genovese

spoken constructed auxiliary language intended primarily for international communication. This hybrid event was held both virtually and in person in Berkman Hall 318.

Dr. Genovese began his presentation by discussing the history of the Esperanto language. It was introduced in 1887 by Ludwik Zamenhof (1859-1917), who lived in what is now Bialystok, Poland. Bialystok was a multi-ethnic city made up of Jews, Poles, Russians, Germans, and others. Disputes and confrontations were common among the various ethnic groups, and Zamenhof hoped that his newly constructed language could help improve communications and human relationships among the citizens of his city. Trained as an ophthalmologist, Zamenhof was fluent in several languages. He published his original book, entitled *Internacia Lingvo* (International Language), using the pseudonym Dr. Esperanto. Soon, the adopters of the language were calling it "Esperanto." Proponents of the language eventually came to be known as Esperantists.

Zamenhof's planned language was designed to be easy to learn. It had phonetic spelling and completely regular rules. Its system of word formation allowed for creativity and innovation. It was not intended to replace any existing language, but was neutral, not tied to any imperial power or ethnic group.

With respect to grammar, the language had simple rules. For example, opposites were formed by the use of the prefix "mal-" (e.g., *juna* = young / *maljuna* = old). All verbs were regular, and verb tenses were formed by using specific endings (i.e., "-as" formed the present tense (*amas*), "-os" the future tense (*amos*), and "-is" the past tense (*amis*)).

On Thursday, March 28, 2024, Jeremy Genovese, Ph.D., Emeritus Associate Professor of Human Development and Educational Psychology, gave a presentation on the Esperanto language to CSU Retirees Association members and guests. Esperanto is the world's most widely

Over the next 50 or so years, Esperanto became relatively popular among several specific special interest groups, such as Pacifists, Suffragettes, Socialists, Rotarians, Anarchists, Theosophists, Tolstoyans, Vegetarians, Naturalists, and Chautauquans. It was endorsed by the Bahá'í Faith, the Oomoto religion of Japan, and Spiritism (Brazil).

No fewer than six Nobel Prize winners were Esperantists, including Sir William Ramsay (Chemistry), Sir Joseph J. Thomson (Physics), Alfred Hermann Fried (Peace), Charles Robert Richet (Medicine), Daniel Bovet (Medicine), and Reinhard Selten (Economics). Among a number of other famous Esperantists were J.R.R. Tolkien, Leo Tolstoy, Jules Verne, Susan Polgar, George Soros, and Harry Harrison.

By 1907, there were at least two publications that promoted Esperanto. They were *Amerika Esperantisto* (based in Chicago) and *The American Esperanto Journal* (headquartered in New York City). In 1908, the first American Esperanto Congress was held at the Chautauqua Institution in New York.

According to Dr. Genovese, there was even an attempt in the early 20th century to form an independent nation with Esperanto as the official language. The area in question was the neutral state of Moresnet, a very small region that was created a hundred years earlier at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Moresnet was located between present-day Belgium and Germany. A sizable proportion of the residents of the territory spoke Esperanto, and adopting Esperanto as the official language was a natural step toward even more independence. However, the area's neutrality was upset with Germany's invasion of Belgium at the beginning of World War I, and the nation was annexed by Prussia in 1915.

Ludwik Zamenhof (1859 - 1917)



March 28, 2024 Program: "The Esperanto Language" (continued)

As it turned out, Ohio played a role in expanding the popularity of Esperanto in the early 20th century. In 1927, the first endowed Esperanto school was opened in Lithopolis, Ohio, by Mrs. Mabel Wagnalls-Jones. Lithopolis is located approximately 18 miles southeast of Columbus, Ohio. Mrs. Wagnalls-Jones was the daughter of Adam Wagnalls, the co-founder of the Funk and Wagnalls Publishing Company. Because the school was endowed, tuition was free, and classes were offered in the daytime, in the evening, and by correspondence.

By the early years of the 20th century, the Esperanto Movement was also alive and well in Cleveland. The Cleveland Esperanto Society was formed in 1908, and eventually there were Esperanto clubs in Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights as well as at Western Reserve University and at Case Institute of Technology. A major figure in the popularity of Esperanto in Cleveland was Professor Frank Tomich, who taught in the Modern Languages Department at Fenn College. Professor Tomich conducted lessons in Esperanto on WHK radio in addition to offering classes on the language at Fenn College and at the Y.W.C.A.

In 1937, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Ludwig Zamenhof, came to the United States to teach Esperanto and promote its use as a universal language. She spent time in Cleveland, where she was active in the meetings of the local Esperanto clubs. In 1938, the 31st Congress of the North American Esperanto Association was held in Cleveland. Both Lidia Zamenhof and Professor Tomich were featured speakers at the event. Unfortunately, Ms. Zamenhof was forced to leave the United States at the end of December 1938 when her tourist visa expired.

Although Esperanto had grown in popularity for about 50 years, it did have its detractors, including many political figures and organizations. While Esperanto claimed political neutrality, it was denounced by nationalists, including Adolph Hitler and other top Nazis in Germany and Josef Stalin in Russia. In fact, the language was banned in Germany, and several members of the Zamenhof family, including Lidia Zamenhof, were executed at the Treblinka death camp in 1942.

After the end of World War II, Esperanto began to grow in popularity again. Esperanto clubs were formed or resurrected; Esperanto conferences and conventions were scheduled; and several international non-profit organizations adopted Esperanto as a working language. Esperanto has been used and/or referenced in various elements of popular culture, such as films, musical recordings, books, podcasts, television programs, and video games.

In the past couple of decades, the Internet has been particularly effective in promoting the learning of the language and supporting its use. For example, there is an Esperanto Wikipedia that provides access to approximately 400,000 articles in the language. It is estimated that there are some two million Esperanto speakers worldwide.

Dr. Genovese closed the presentation by asking if there were any questions. As usual, this led to a lively question-and-answer session.

June 6, 2024 Program: "CSU Retirees Association Social"

By Edward G. Thomas, Communications Coordinator

On Thursday, June 6, members of the CSU Retirees Association and guests gathered at Mather Mansion to hear an update from the Alumni Office and to re-connect with their fellow retirees. This event, termed a "Social," is scheduled annually in the Spring. Many of the attendees are shown in the photos below (we apologize if we missed you). In the photo captions, attendees are named from left to right.



Leo Jeffres & Susan Kogler Hill



Kim Neuendorf & Heidi Meiers



David Yost, Steve Kabat, and Kim Neuendorf



Delia Galvan, Jeremy Genovese & Michael Dover



Matthew Knickman



Jack Plata, Vicki Plata & George Burke



David Larson & Michael Hugill



Janet Bessas, Vida Lock & Marjorie Placek

June 6, 2024 Program: "CSU Retirees Association Social" (continued)



Joyce Zabor



Crystal Fulton & Lillie Fulton



Ruth Bonner



Mittie Davis Jones, Lenon Wright, Ed Briskey &
Alice Reviere Smith



Gloria Webb, Charlene Jones, Loretta Gray & Michael Dover



Lloyd Snyder, Katie Watkins &
Dennis Keating



Patricia Sokolowski & Elaine Morison



Lew Patterson & Janice Patterson

June 6, 2024 Program: "CSU Retirees Association Social" (continued)



Nisha Jain & Chet Jain



Cathy Thomas & Ed Thomas



Sharron Williams & Victoria Winbush



Pritibha Ghatage, Roger Marty & Anant Ghatage



Andy Gross & Lois Gross



Peter Phillips & Sandra Phillips



Rasul Khan & Rodger Govea



Richard Ritley & Catherine Hansman

Faculty Senate Report

By Kim Neuendorf & Catherine Hansman, CSURA Representatives

CSURA annually elects two non-voting representatives to the CSU Faculty Senate. For the academic year of 2023-2024, our representatives were Kim Neuendorf and Catherine Hansman. The following report spotlights some of

First, we'd like to remind CSURA members that all CSU Faculty Senate minutes are available online on the CSU Faculty Senate webpage (<https://www.csuohio.edu/facultysenate/archived-minutes-faculty-senate>).

Major items of relevance to CSU Retirees from the 2023-2024 Faculty Senate meetings include the following:

In Spring of 2024, President Laura Bloomberg reported on a major consultation project executed by EY-Parthenon, examining University finances and areas of investment to strengthen the institution. EY-Parthenon is the global strategy consulting arm of the accounting firm Ernst & Young. Faculty Senate President Anup Kumar had called for a "broader stakeholder conversation" between EY and a wider sample of CSU personnel, leaving him "skeptical" of the outcome of the process. Key conclusions of the EY consultation included the finding that the University is "too big for its projected enrollment" and needs to be "down-managed" to a smaller size. A budget reduction of \$40 million was announced for the next fiscal year (2024-2025).

As part of this cutback, a voluntary separation incentive program for faculty and staff was announced. Beginning in April 2024, the VSIP offered a one-time lump sum payment to eligible employees equal to their annual salary. All employees with 10 or more years of continuous CSU service (30+ hours per week) are eligible. The plan offers eligibility to more than 700 full-time faculty and staff, which is about 63% of the University's 525 full-time educators and 43% of the nearly 900 full-time staff members. The plan is in progress at this time, as options for separation dates for staff range through December 2024, and for faculty through June 2025.

During Spring 2024, alternative uses for University buildings were discussed, including additional contractual uses for the Wolstein Center and possibly converting Rhodes Tower into student housing.

Ongoing revisions to the Faculty Personnel Policies by the University Faculty Affairs Committee have been monitored by our CSURA corresponding representatives to Senate, and amendments to these revisions have been successfully introduced by our reps throughout this process as needed. As part of these efforts to retain and potentially expand University services for retirees, online Faculty Profiles are once again available for those who request them (see President's Message, this newsletter).

The new CSU Faculty Senate President for 2024-2026 is Dr. Carol Olszewski (Music Therapy).

OCHER Report

By Rodger Govea, CSURA Representative

CSURA annually appoints representatives to OCHER, the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees. OCHER is a not-for-profit organization of retiree representatives from the public four-year institutions of higher education in Ohio. It meets four times per year in Columbus, with its purpose being to serve as a forum for and promote the welfare of retirees of Ohio public institutions of higher education. For the 2023-2024 academic year, our representatives were Rodger Govea and Jeremy Genovese. Dr. Govea provided the following comments about the issues faced in the year just completed.

As most of you probably are aware, the State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS) has recently experienced upheaval from within the ranks of retired teachers, and has received national coverage of the controversies. I will attempt to summarize these disputes as fairly as I can.

Right off the bat, I want you to know that the system is financially healthy. It recovered fairly well from market setbacks in 2008 and 2020. It is ranked among the most fiscally sound retirement funds in the US, and has outperformed most other educational pension programs. So, whatever problems may exist, they have not yet spilled over into an actual threat to the system.

The current controversy stems from a movement coming out of the Ohio Retired Teachers Association (ORTA), which is made up primarily of K-12 teachers but also includes some higher ed retirees. The other Ohio retirees association is the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees (OCHER), a much smaller organization formed by the public universities in Ohio (Cleveland State is a member in good standing), and which has not been involved in the controversy.

The original complaint grew out of the STRS decision to withhold cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). Some felt that the suspension in COLAs was hyper-conservative and unwarranted. This led to a movement within ORTA that succeeded in changing the makeup of the STRS governing board. Although they call themselves "the reform movement" I will not use that term since it implies malfeasance or corruption on the part of the previous board, of which there is no evidence. Whatever one wishes to call them, the challengers now hold a majority on the board.

This faction also contends that the STRS investment strategy is expensive, since it hires investment experts and grants performance bonuses to them if the investments perform well. According to the challengers, those experts could be replaced by the use of index funds, which are tied directly to stock market indexes and require no investment expertise. They contend that the savings realized by using fewer investment experts would easily finance current and future COLAs.

STRS has countered these accusations, pointing out its superior record on investments (the most recent report shows a 10% return on investment, far exceeding assumptions). They point out that there is a demographic imbalance caused by fewer teachers in the system and an increasing number of retirees. This imbalance creates a need for increased return on investment, and STRS believes that it has hired an excellent group of consultants, and it will lose them if they are not adequately paid.

Enter the Ohio State Government. Last year Governor DeWine replaced a board member from the challengers, when he realized that they were now holding a slim majority. That attempt failed when it was ruled that only a court could remove a sitting board member. This year, the governor forwarded a set of accusations to the Attorney General's office and asked for an investigation. The accusations revolved around attempts to secure the services of a firm that had never handled investments for a retirement fund. That investigation has yet to produce any charges or indictments.

Professor Genovese and I attended the OCHER meetings during the past year, and we have kept the CSURA board apprised of the developing issues.

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 26, 2024: CSURA Tour of Lake View Cemetery

The CSURA guided walking tour at Lake View Cemetery will be happening on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 1:30 pm. It's a 90-minute specialized tour that will include Cleveland history (with an emphasis on higher education) and some CSU connections as well!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER BY SEPTEMBER 23](#)

Thursday, October 10, 2024: Meeting with President Laura Bloomberg and Business Meeting to Vote on CSURA Bylaws

CSURA members and guests are invited to meet with CSU President Laura Bloomberg, who will share information on the state of the University. This will follow the Business Meeting where CSURA members will vote on the proposed set of Bylaws for the organization. The draft of the proposed bylaws will be distributed via email. Details and registration on the event will follow.

Time; 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 10, 2024.

Place: Student Center, Rooms 313/315

Refreshments will be provided.

Tuesday, November 19, 2024: Homecoming Week Luncheon for Alumni Staff and Retirees

At 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, the CSU Alumni Association will host its annual luncheon for faculty and staff members who are alumni of the University. Also invited are members of the CSU Retirees Association. The occasion will be part of CSU's 2024 Homecoming Week celebration. Details and registration on the event will follow.

December 5, 2024: Alumni Reception and Pause for a Cause 2024

The CSU Alumni Association will host this winter open house complete with appetizers and desserts to celebrate the holidays. The event begins at 5:00 p.m. Members of the CSURA are invited to attend. The event also serves as a fundraiser for Lift Up Vikes!, the campus support center and food pantry that offers relief to CSU students who need some help to make ends meet and stay on track toward their educational goals. Details and registration on the event will follow.

December 2024: Trinity Cathedral Messiah Sing and Lunch at Viking Public House

For several years, members of the CSU Retirees Association and guests have attended the annual Messiah Sing at Trinity Cathedral and then met for lunch afterwards. We plan to do the same again this year. However, the time and date for the 2024 Messiah Sing have not been announced. After the concert, CSURA members and guests will gather for lunch at the Viking Public House (formerly Elements) at 2300 Euclid Avenue in the Parker Hannifin Administration Center. Details on the event will follow.