



CSURA

Cleveland State University
Retirees Association

Newsletter
Spring 2024
Edward G. Thomas
Editor



President's Message

After an unusually mild winter, we seem to be entering spring earlier than usual, or so it appears as I write this. This winter, your Retirees organization went into a brief hibernation, but we have plans for new activities in the spring. This letter reviews last fall's Retirees' events and mentions some events planned for spring.

Last fall and early winter, two events were held just for CSU Retirees' and their guests, plus the Alumni Affairs Office organized two additional joint events for CSU Alumni and Retirees.

On October 30, the Retirees met with Cleveland State President Laura Bloomberg. Approximately 30 retirees and guests attended. After giving a talk that focused on CSU's new marketing initiatives, President Bloomberg spent the next half hour answering questions from retirees on a variety of matters. Her responses were refreshingly clear and frank, even on sensitive issues such as CSU's current

budget deficit. Personally, I thought that it was the most engaging meeting between faculty and a CSU President that I had witnessed since Michael Schwartz' tenure in that office.

As part of CSU's celebration of Homecoming Week in November, the CSU Alumni Association hosted a luncheon for faculty and staff members who are alumni of the University. Also invited were members of the CSU Retirees Association. The major focus of the occasion was the recognition of new Associates of the University. Several members of the CSU Retirees Association attended the event, including many of the new Associates.

On December 7, the Alumni Office hosted a Holiday Reception for CSU Alumni and Retirees. Those who attended were asked to donate non-perishable food or toiletry items for the CSU student food pantry; some also gave monetary donations. Attendees were served a variety of hors d'oeuvres. CSU Alumni were well represented, but few Retirees attended. If the Alumni Office hosts this event next year, perhaps more of us can attend. It is a practical means of supporting current students.

Also in December, we revived the tradition of inviting Retirees to the annual Messiah Sing at Trinity Cathedral. The event drew a smaller number than it did before the pandemic, but those of us who attended enjoyed the performance and the lunch that followed. In addition to those who attended the event at Trinity, a couple more joined us for lunch afterwards at The Viking Public House, CSU's new restaurant, which replaces the former Elements. The restaurant is currently open from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. every day except Monday, and it offers an alternative to the overcrowded eating places on Playhouse Square for anyone willing to walk a few blocks before or after attending a performance there.

This spring, the Retirees' Association plans to sponsor two events, a talk by Jeremy Genovese on the created language Esperanto, and our Annual Dinner. In addition, OCHER is inviting Retirees from all public Northeast Ohio Universities to a meeting in Akron in early April. See the last page of this Newsletter for more information on these events. I hope that we will have increased attendance for these activities.

I also should mention that a Retired Faculty member who receives health care coverage through STRS' Aetna Medicare Advantage plan contacted me to inform me of his struggles with his health care provider. This Retiree asserts that the Aetna Medicare Advantage plan enables its members to receive a full annual physical each year, but that his health care provider routinely schedules him for the standard Medicare wellness exam instead. He has asked me to remind Aetna enrollees to check their plan's explanation of benefits to ensure that their health care providers adhere to its provisions.

Finally, Ed Thomas took the photographs you see in this Newsletter. In addition, as he has done for several years, he edits the newsletter and writes many of its stories, including articles in this issue highlighting three of the four events mentioned earlier. Without these efforts, we would have no way of communicating with our members. I want to thank him for the crucial role he has played in this organization, both in its previous incarnation and in its current one.

David Larson
President, 2023-2024

CSURA People Page

*Congratulations and welcome to our new CSU Retirees:
who retired between May 2023—January 2024:*

Ahmad, Sulaiman
Barclay, Tommie
Brown, Eric
Corrigan, Diane
Crowe, Jeffrey
Fazenbaker, Larry
Fondren, Gale
Kaminsky, Daniel
Kilbane Jr, James
Lane, Winifred
Lewandowski, Cathleen
Lewis, Kenneth
Lieberth, Mitch
Lieske, Joel
Lieske, Karen
Meier, Heidi
Mortimer, Daniel
Nimmer, Joseph
Oden Harris, Gail
Slusarz, Randy
Sopko, Christine
van den Bogert, Antonie
Winbush, Victoria

* Lists from Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, and HRD

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.

2023-2024 CSURA Officers, Executive Board Members, and Staff

Executive Board

David Larson, President
Kimberly Neuendorf, Vice President & President-Elect
Lloyd Snyder, Past President & Secretary
Vicki Plata, Treasurer
Edward G. Thomas, Communications Coordinator

Representatives to Faculty Senate

Catherine Hansman (2023-2025)
Kimberly Neuendorf (2022-2024)

Representatives to OCHER

Jeremy Genovese
Rodger M. Govea

Matthew Knickman, Director, Alumni Relations & Corporate Engagement

*In Memoriam**

Faculty

James A. Lock, Professor Emeritus, Physics, October 28, 2023

Michael Schwartz, President Emeritus, January 2, 2024

Lee W. Gibbs, Professor Emeritus, Religious Studies, February 14, 2024

Staff

Julie A. Rittenhouse, Sr. Director, Corporate & Foundation Relations, October 11, 2023

Nancy M. Hanacek, Associate of the University, Law Library, December 15, 2023

Rebecca A. Laird, Associate of the University, Chemical & Biomedical Engineering Department, February 15, 2024

October 30, 2023 Program: "We Are Cleveland State University"

Dr. Laura Bloomberg, President, Cleveland State University

On Monday, October 30, 2023, CSU President Laura Bloomberg met with members of the CSU Retirees Association and their guests in Parker Hannifin Hall. Also in attendance was Dr. Nigamanth Sridhar, CSU's Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Bloomberg began her presentation by discussing her background as a teacher, K-12 building principal, and university faculty member and administrator in Minnesota. She explained that she was attracted to CSU because of its potential for impacting the region in a positive way.



President Bloomberg

Using a number of PowerPoint slides, President Bloomberg "walked" the attendees through the thinking behind CSU's new branding message—We Are Cleveland State University. To begin this part of her presentation, President Bloomberg played a video that was based on this new tagline. A major point is that CSU "transforms lives." Dr. Bloomberg noted that everyone should expect to see more advertising featuring this message in the coming months.

President Bloomberg noted that CSU not only serves its students' educational needs, but the institution also plays several other roles in the region as explained below.

We are an anchor institution. Some 87 percent of the Fall 2022 students were Ohio residents. Of the in-state students, 82 percent were from Cuyahoga County and the immediately surrounding counties.

We provide the resources to succeed. The three-year average Pell Grant rate for CSU students is 45.1 percent (the Ohio university average rate is 29.4 percent). Some 55.0 percent of CSU undergraduate students receive federal loans (the Ohio undergraduate rate is 42.5 percent). Furthermore, according to *U. S. News & World Report's 2023 Best Colleges* rankings, CSU is the number one school in Ohio for social mobility (i.e., a measure of a school's success in enrolling and graduating large proportions of economically disadvantaged students).

We fuel the economy. CSU has the most in-state graduates of any public institution in Ohio, and these graduates largely remain in the state and work here. Studies of CSU's graduates reveal that the rate of employment in Ohio is 91.9 percent one year after graduation, 84.8 after five years, and 78.6 percent ten years out. The average Ohio employment rates across all the state universities are 75.7 percent, 68.3 percent, and 64.6 percent, respectively.

A recent economic impact study conducted by the independent research firm Lightcast revealed that CSU contributed \$3 billion to the Northeast Ohio economy in 2022. According to the study, this figure was arrived at by measuring "the combined operations, construction, clinical, research, entrepreneurial, visitor and student spending related to public universities..." Also included was the value of volunteerism and the "enhanced productivity" of alumni.

Lightcast's study also estimated that CSU graduates receive \$6.80 in additional lifetime earnings for each dollar they spend on college. Taxpayers also saw an equal rate of return, receiving about \$6.80 in benefits for each dollar of public money invested. Finally, CSU graduates create a societal value of \$19.10 for each dollar invested based on alumni's increased lifetime earnings, increased business output, and social savings in reduced healthcare and criminal justice system-related costs.

We are a beacon institution. Through its recruitment of talented students and distinguished teachers and researchers, Cleveland State serves as an example for other institution of higher education. To maintain this position, President Bloomberg said that the University is designing its future for the next five years and for the next fifty years.

For the closing question-and-answer session, CSU's Provost Nigamanth Sridhar joined in. Most of the questions had to do with budgets and rumors floating around about decreased state support for higher education.



Dr. Nigamanth Sridhar

"Homecoming Week Luncheon for Alumni Staff and Retirees"

November 14, 2023

On Tuesday, November 14, the CSU Alumni Association hosted a luncheon for faculty and staff members who are alumni of the University. Also invited were members of the CSU Retirees Association. The occasion was part of CSU's 2023 Homecoming Week celebration.

After being treated to a buffet meal, the attendees heard a short address from Mr. Douglas Dykes, Associate Vice President of CSU's Department of Human Resources. Mr. Dykes, who earned two degrees at CSU, mentioned how fortunate he felt to have been able to attend CSU. He encouraged those in attendance to be thankful for the opportunities they have been given, to be advocates for the University, and to help the University acquire the funds it needs to offer opportunities to others in the future.

The second part of the "formal" program was the announcement of those retired staff members who have been approved by the Board of Trustees as Associates of the University. This program has been recently revived after having been discontinued in 2020. The new Associates of the University are:

Last Name	First Name	Year Retired
Coburn	Anne	2019
Creighton	Edith	2019
Laird	Rebecca	2019
Robertson	Sherri	2019
Schoof	Gregg	2019
Smerek	Melinda	2019
Sullins	Yolanda	2019
Tortelli	Dominic	2019
Kralik	Maribeth	2019
Smith	Nancy Carlucci	2019
Dontenville-Ranallo	Jo-Ann	2019
Chudzik	Barbara	2019
Carter	Laverne	2020
Hammon	Karen	2020
Kabat	Stephen	2020
Lunder	Violet	2020
Spademan	Robert	2020
Yost	David	2021
Jeppesen	Bruce	2021
Becker	William	2021
Brown	Patrice	2021
Colston	Karen	2021
Haymon	Nedra	2021
Heiss	Kenneth	2021

New Associates of the University—Continued

Last Name	First Name	Year Retired
Locker	Karen	2021
Morrison	Vern	2021
Rechner	Marcia	2021
Dugan	Jane	2021
Zinner	Michele	2021
Sokolowski	Patricia	2021
Leadbetter	Marilyn	2021
Helfrich	Donna	2021
Mundell	Joseph	2022
Simon	Mary Therese	2022



The Homecoming Luncheon was held in the Student Center Ballroom.



Among those in attendance were (left to right):
Angie Vrettos-Grommek, Anne Coburn,
and Barbara Margolius

"Homecoming Week Luncheon" (Continued)



Barb Chudzik (left) and Karen Locker (right) showed off the Associate of the University certificates that they received at the luncheon



Also attending the luncheon were (left to right): Vicki Plata, Violet Lunder, and Maggie Jackson.



Enjoying the event were George Burke and recent retiree Heidi Meier.



Violet Lunder visited the buffet table at the luncheon.

December 13, 2023 Program: "Messiah Sing & Lunch at Viking Public House"

By Edward G. Thomas, Communications Coordinator

On Wednesday, December 13, 2023, members of the CSU Retirees Association and guests attended the annual Messiah Sing at Trinity Cathedral. The event had extra meaning this year as Todd Wilson, the long-time Director of Music at Trinity, had announced that he would be retiring from his position at the end of the year. Thus, this was his last turn as Conductor of the Trinity Chamber Orchestra. After the concert, the retirees and guests went for lunch at the Viking Public House (formerly Elements) at 2300 Euclid Avenue in the Parker Hannifin Administration Center. Presented below are photos of both the Messiah Sing and the luncheon at the Viking Public House. In the photo captions, attendees are named from left to right.



Todd Wilson conducted the Trinity Chamber Orchestra.



The Trinity Chamber Orchestra had 18 members for the Messiah Sing.



Conductor Todd Wilson gave instructions to the audience members who were participating as singers for the program.



The pulpit at Trinity Cathedral



Participating in the Messiah Sing were CSURA President David Larson and Michael Huggill.



Delia Galvan-Sanchez also attended the Messiah Sing.

"Messiah Sing & Lunch at Viking Public House" (Continued)



Leo Jeffres was among those who attended both the Messiah Sing and the Viking Public House lunch.



The Viking Public House is in the renovated and expanded space formerly occupied by Elements Restaurant.



Ed Thomas also had lunch with the CSURA group.



Joining the luncheon group were Barbara Cavender and her husband, Lee.



Violet Lunder and Karen Locker posed for a photo at Trinity Cathedral.

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 28: CSURA Speaker Event: The Esperanto Language

Jeremy Genovese, Ph.D., Emeritus Associate Professor of Human Development and Educational Psychology, will give a talk on the language Esperanto, the world's most widely spoken constructed auxiliary language intended primarily for international communication. This hybrid event, held both virtually and in person in Berkman Hall 318, will begin at 1:00 p.m. EDT.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER BY MARCH 27](#)

Wednesday, April 3: OCHER (Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees) Conference

UCHER has been busy preparing a conference for retirees and soon-to-be retirees to be held at the University of Akron on Wednesday, April 3. The attached flyer provides more details, including the program session topics. The \$20 registration fee includes lunch, coffee breaks, and parking.

TIME; 9:30 am - 4:45 pm, Wednesday, April 3, 2024.

Place: Quaker Station at The University of Akron

Please see attachment in email.

CSURA Annual Election

It is the time of the year when CSURA elects new leaders for the organization. Elected positions available are Vice President (and President-Elect), Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition, the Board will appoint members to serve as Representatives to Faculty Senate and as Representatives to OCHER (the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees). If you are interested in throwing your hat in the ring for one of these positions, please [CLICK HERE](#) to apply before 3/27/24.

Call for "Life After Retirement" and "I Remember..." 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.

The December 2019 issue of the Newsletter carried a new kind of article written by a CSU retiree. John Hunter, former chairperson of the Department of Art and former Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, suggested that fellow retirees might want to share their memories of CSU. I invited him to inaugurate this feature, and his submission, "I Remember...Walter Leedy," appeared in December 2019. So, if you have memories to share of people, places, or events that stand out in your mind from your years at CSU, please share them with your fellow retirees through the Newsletter. Articles in the 900-1,200-word range are preferred. Contributions may be submitted to me at the following email address: e.thomas@csuohio.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

Edward G. Thomas
Communications Coordinator