

University Senate Retirees Rights and Benefits Committee
Annual Report, 2020-21

The committee began its year by reviewing items that had been discussed in the previous year. Regarding the possibilities of suggesting a larger facility for retirees to live near campus, Chris Brown stated that he would ask some questions about how we should investigate this. We had also discussed retirees being able to take advantage of purchasing computer hardware and software at discount prices, and Chris Brown ensured the committee this is available for retirees who secure adjunct research status. Paul Laird had followed up with Derek Kwan, director of the Lied Center of Kansas, on the possibility of having restored the program of discount tickets for KU retirees. This program cannot be reinstated because of current financial realities, but there is a small discount on Lied Center tickets for all seniors and there is also a program run through the Endacott Society (available to its members) that provides free tickets for one event that the Society chooses from a list of events supplied by the Lied Center.

The *KU Retirees Handbook* for 2020 was completed during summer 2020 and placed online. HR insisted that they had to approve the version that Laird submitted to Kathy Reed, a step that seemed to be a new part of the process. Because of the vagaries of COVID-19, making it difficult for committee members to reach the staff in various university offices and causing many current restrictions to normal activities, the committee decided, in conjunction with Kathy Reed in the Governance Office, that the 2021 update of the *KU Retirees Handbook* would be accomplished in fall 2021.

A discussion involving helping those about to retire from KU to learn about the many steps they need to go through caused Chris Brown to send a letter in the fall from his office to those faculty members retiring on December 31, informing them of the areas in which their efforts towards retirement would need to be focused. This was in advance of the more detailed letter that they would receive from HR. The committee also suggested to Mike Rounds, Vice-Provost for Operations, that a similar letter be sent to retiring staff. In a later meeting that Chris Brown had with Mike Rounds and Madi Vannaman, Associate Director of Human Resources for Benefits, they agreed on the following: multiple channels and opportunities should be used to communicate with those about to retire; Faculty Development should send out messages to all faculty about retirement in early to mid-spring concerning issues that they will need to address, other things to think about, and KU resources that could assist them in various areas (KU Scholarworks, University Archives, HRM, etc.); and an immediate plan to send a message in early December to those taking part in the 2020 Voluntary Separation Incentive Program.

In reaction to the committee's charge from the University Senate to consult with KU retirees to "Promote all appropriate means of communication with retirees, with special emphasis on seeking information from them about their needs and concerns," the committee decided to send out an electronic poll to retirees to survey their experience in retiring KU, their use of benefits they receive from the university in retirement, and other aspects of their lives. The Governance Office decided that the poll would only go out to

those that had retired in the last year. Through a process of focus groups and discussion, the committee developed this poll in the first half of Spring Semester, and it was sent to recent retirees in March. The committee received the raw results from the poll in the first half of April and will send its report on the poll to the Governance Office early in summer 2021.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paul Laird
Chair, FY 2021 Retirees Rights and Benefits Committee