

University Senate Retirees Rights and Benefits Committee
Final Report for 2020-21

Committee members: Paul Laird, chair; Jo Cink, Susan Gronbeck-Tedesco, Ed Martinko, Sandy Patchen, Peggy Robinson; Chris Brown, ex-officio

The University Senate Retirees Rights and Benefits Committee met three times during the 2019-2020 academic year; the final meeting on 30 March fell victim to the Covid-19 pandemic. With a new chair this year, our first task was to ascertain where the committee's activities stood at the end of Spring 2019. The last chair, Elspeth Healey, gave Paul Laird access to the Google Docs materials from the previous year that showed where work stood on the committee's survey of retiree policies at peer institutions. We pursued this task in order to identify other possible low-cost benefits that the committee might suggest for KU retirees. The committee completed this survey during the course of the year and also learned more about the Sprague Apartments, KU's housing for retirees on campus.

This research led to committee to suggest the following initiatives:

That KU explore an addition to the Sprague Apartments or ascertain whether it might be possible to raise private donations or find a private corporation that provides independent living, assisted living, and nursing care to build a facility near campus where retired members of the faculty and staff could live, allowing easy access to the campus for those retirees who desire such.

Look into the possibility of restoring retiree discounts at Lied Center events for KU retirees that were available several years ago. (Paul Laird discussed this with Lied Center Director Derek Kwan in February, who explained that another program has taken place for several years through the Endacott Society from which retirees could benefit if they joined it. He did not think that the more expensive program that existed several years ago could be re-initiated at this time.)

Ask whether retirees might be able to purchase hardware and software under university agreements, obtain discounts on computer purchases, gain access to limited site licenses and reduced-cost software packages, and enroll in non-credit computer courses free of charge.

Ascertain whether KU retirees could have voting privileges in the KU University Senate.

Except for the Lied Center initiative, these ideas have been passed onto Chris Brown to see how we might proceed. Discussions started, but further progress this semester has been stalled by the Covid-19 crisis. Pursuit of these matters will be among the first tasks for the committee next year.

The committee is charged to update the *KU Retirees Handbook* each year, and we have finished the research for that task. Its completion has been delayed, but the new version of the handbook should be ready to go online before the end of May.

Other matters that the committee worked on in 2019-20 included acquiring the Christmas Party List from the Chancellor's Office as a way of enlarging our list of retirees living within a 50-mile radius of Lawrence, expanding by hundreds the number of retirees that we can contact concerning the matters before the committee. We also made the list available to the Endacott Society.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paul Laird
Chair, FY 2019 Retirees Rights and Benefits Committee