

## **Retiree Initiative Planning Group (RIPG) Annual Report 2020-2021**

Retirees were unable to gather in-person during the year as a result of COVID-19 protocols; and RIPG also canceled our grant program for both faculty and staff in solidarity with the actively employed members of the Skidmore community. Nevertheless, we were determined to continue our mission of supporting the connection of retirees with one another and with the college

### **1. Events:**

In May of 2020, RIPG hosted our first (experimental) Zoom gathering to bring together retirees and celebrate the newly retired for that year. As part of that event, we offered Zoom tutorials for those not familiar with the platform. Building on the success of that event and realizing the pandemic would continue to prevent in-person activities, we sent out a survey in September of 2020 to assess interest in a range of topics we supplied and asking, as well for volunteers to offer presentations on topics of their choice.

As a result, RIPG hosted six Zoom presentations on a range of topics as follows:

- Lisa Aronson (Anarchism and the Stelton Modern School)
- John Cunningham (Computer Graphics and 3-D Printing)
- Penny Jolly (Renaissance Puzzles)
- Pushi Prasad (Identity Tensions in Liberal Enclaves)
- Martha Wiseman (Cinematic Autobiography: *The Beaches of Agnes*)
- Pedagogy during the Pandemic (roundtable moderated by Sarah Sweeney from the Art Department and including current faculty members Jennifer Chelnoky, Winston Grady-Willis, Jason Ohlberg, and Bernardo Rios who discussed—and demonstrated—their pedagogical innovations during the pandemic)

In addition, Sarah Goodwin has hosted a monthly (open-to-all) Zoom discussion group on “Race and Racism” since July 2020 that includes readings proposed by group members.

RIPG also offered retirees an opportunity to welcome Skidmore’s new president, Marc Conner, and we hosted a Zoom reception in January of 2021 that included a short presentation from President Conner and opportunities to ask him questions.

Under the auspices of HR, Dave Carboni has offered potential Skidmore retirees a series of seminars on financial management, and for the last few years (with funding from RIPG), has also offered retirees seminars on special topics as well as one-on-one consultations. This year, we did not host the seminar but we did fund the one-on-one consultations.

### **2. Communications:**

In addition to the survey noted above, RIPG sent out periodic newsletters to retirees to keep them informed of events and other matters pertaining to retirees. With the help of the Office of Communications, RIPG also worked to keep the retiree website updated.

### **3. Advocacy:**

In response to concerns voiced by retirees about possible changes in Skidmore’s health-care benefits that might affect retirees, RIPG’s Terry Diggory wrote letters to the appropriate administrators, voicing the concern that retirees ought to have a formal role in college discussions that might result in policy changes that would affect them. He and Sue Rosenberg of

RIPG visited with President Marc Conner and HR Interim Director Sarah Delaney Vero to make this case with the result that retirees will now have a presence in such conversations.

RIPG's Sharon Arpey and Paty Rubio worked with the Office of Special Programs to enable free access for retirees to the college's Encore Program.

In addition, several RIPG members worked with Marta Brunner, College Librarian, on continued access by retirees to library resources, including data bases.

#### **4. The Retiree Oral History Project (ROHP)**

RIPG's Lynne Gelber, along with a small committee, continued with a modified schedule (as a result of the pandemic) to interview retirees and link those interviews to our website.

#### **5. Resources:**

This year, RIPG added 64 items of interest to retirees to our library collection. To take a look at what is available, visit [Retiree Library Home - Retiree Library Collection - LibGuides at Skidmore College](#)

#### **6. Campus Campaign:**

RIPG's Terry Diggory (Campaign Planning Committee) and Susan Kress (Campaign Subcommittee) were members of the campaign team. Retirees contributed **\$715,149.00** to the total raised.

#### **7. National Visibility:**

The website of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) [AROHE - Home](#) features the story of Skidmore's Retiree Library Collection as well as many other best practices either initiated or adopted by RIPG—such as our staff grant program, our continuing project to interview retirees (Retiree Oral History Project), our In Memoriam project, our field trips, etc. If anyone wishes to receive membership benefits (free for all Skidmore retirees with Skidmore's subscription to AROHE), with full access to the website and regular news bulletins, please let Susan Kress know at [skress@skidmore.edu](mailto:skress@skidmore.edu)

#### **Summary:**

In all, 70 Skidmore people and their guests took advantage of RIPG-sponsored events and activities during 2020-2021, with an additional 11 more corresponding with us about those events and indicating their interest. For more information about resources and benefits for retirees, please visit our website at [Skidmore Retirees](#)