

## **Retiree Initiative Planning Group (RIPG) Annual Report 2023-2024 (10/1/24)**

The retiree community at Skidmore had another successful year. A summary of key selected activities is provided in this report. Of particular interest are the many excellent events and speakers offered throughout the year, the process for the new College Strategic Plan and ensuring retiree voices are heard, the Age Friendly University Initiative, and the Regalia Project (recycling caps and gowns from retirees to new faculty).

As always, our events and activities are guided by our mission of supporting the connection of retirees with one another and with the college.

### **1. Communications:**

RIPG members sent out periodic emails to retirees to keep them informed of events and other matters pertaining to retirees. The Office of Communications continues to keep the retiree website updated. This fall an important updated Retiree Brochure will be published.

### **2. Events:**

RIPG hosted or promoted a variety of events this year:

- Yoga Sessions with Deb Fernandez (June 5, 12, 19, 26, 2023)
- Discussion Group on Race & Racism (June 28, 2023)
- SPAC Event NYC Ballet, "SPAC Premiers Young Choreographers Program" (July 19, 2023)
- Lenox Shakespeare Company & Lunch, "Lunar Eclipse" (September 30, 2023)
- President Conner's Luncheon with Retirees (October 31, 2023)
- Penny Jolly Presentation, "Why is Medieval Art So Bad?" (December 6, 2023)
- Yoga Sessions with Deb Fernandez (January 9, 16, 23, 30, 2024)
- Susan Walzer Presentation, "Retiring with Self Compassion" (February 22, 2024)
- Retiree Reception with Dean of Student Affairs Adrian Bautista, "Navigating Free Speech Issues on Campus" (March 7, 2024)
- Lisa Aronson Presentation, "Dora the Anarchist" (March 28, 2024)
- Elizabeth Sobol Presentation, "SPAC and the Saratoga Community" (April 10, 2024)

These events were all well attended and greatly help retirees to keep connected to each other and to Skidmore.

### **3. Grants:**

Grants this year were awarded as follows:

#### **Faculty Grants:**

- Will Bond (Theater)  
Frankenstein
- Gordon Thompson (Music)  
Sixties British Pop, Outside In, Vol.2 Itchycoo Park (1965-1970)
- Will Bond (Theater)

- Ongoing Yoga Facilitator Certification
- Mary Beth O'Brien (Foreign Languages & Literature)  
Jewish Avengers of the Holocaust in East German Films (1962-1972)
- Deborah Fernandez (Dance)  
Visual Art from Dances - Collage Works - Prints to Archives

#### **Staff Grants:**

- Karen Brackett (Education)  
Model Early Childhood Laboratory Schools Making a Difference in Diverse Academic Communities
- Phil Glotzbach (President)  
Honor Your Freedom - Winning Strategies to Succeed in Colleges
- Karen Ernst  
Ballston Spa Community Band

#### **Faculty and Staff Joint Grant:**

- Barry Pritzker & Sue Bender (Advancement & Anthropology)  
Jill Sweet Archival Project

Those interested in RIPG's grants program can find more information about faculty and staff grants at [Grants for Retirees \(skidmore.edu\)](https://www.skidmore.edu/grants-for-retirees). The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) makes decisions about faculty grants on behalf of RIPG. A committee chaired by Sue Rosenberg of RIPG, and including representatives of RIPG and HR, oversees staff applications.

#### **4. Advocacy:**

- RIPG's IT Subcommittee continued to advocate on behalf of retirees. There is still work to be done in securing access to certain college data bases and in gaining Media Services support for retiree events. The exclusion of retirees from the Microsoft Office License was a policy we were unable to change, but it was noted that free versions of the similar software on Mac and Windows seem nearly as good for most users. The College did revise practices this year allowing retirees to print in the library.
- This past year's data breach, which extended to UnitedHealthCare and other overlapping data bases, was reviewed, and given that these type of data breaches seem to be proliferating at all sorts of businesses, all are urged to closely manage privacy settings and reports with the major credit bureaus.
- Concerns were expressed about the decision to limit retirement plans to TIAA only, but it was reported that Vanguard funds would still be available through the TIAA platform. It was noted communication on this key change is critical.
- RIPG aims to stay abreast of the College's ongoing strategic planning process, to help get retirees' voices included.

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

RIPG's Lynne Gelber, along with Sue Bender and Sandy Welter, continued to interview retirees this year and link those interviews to our website. Retiree interviews added (or in the process of

being added) to the website include Philip Glotzbach, Tim Brown, Joan Berenguer, Ruth Andrea Levinson, and Deb Fernandez.

More than fifty interviews are now archived on our web site: [Skidmore Retiree Oral History Project · Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project](#). The group continues to discuss ways of bringing these interviews to the attention of a wider audience, especially alums. An article in a future *Scope Magazine* issue is in process.

## **6. The Age-Friendly University Global Network**

As first reported in the 2021-2022 Annual Report, RIPG has continued to explore the feasibility of joining this international network. The mission and principles of AFUGN (as well as the list of colleges and universities that have already signed on) can be found at this link:

<https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly> A small steering committee (Sharon Arpey, Susan Kress, Barry Pritzker, Paty Rubio, and Joanna Zangrando) developed a proposal that was circulated to a group of Skidmore faculty, staff and administrators with potential interest in this project. Feedback from this community about the proposal was favorable and the committee was encouraged to continue making contact with stakeholders and interested faculty and staff. The steering group met with President Conner and VP Woodfork in June of 2024. President Conner and VP Woodfork expressed appreciation for the findings in the proposal but do not believe that joining AFUGN is aligned with Skidmore's mission (to focus on the education of undergraduates) in this resource-challenged moment. They did not leave the door open for further discussion of this matter with them. However, they expressed support for RIPG's programming and outreach and for all the ways RIPG promotes an age-friendly environment at Skidmore.

## **7. Resources**

RIPG continued to add items of interest to retirees to our library collection this year. To take a look at what is available, visit [Retiree Library Home - Retiree Library Collection - LibGuides at Skidmore College](#). Paty Rubio and Joanna Zangrando oversee purchasing retiree library materials. If you have a recommendation for the retiree library, please be in touch at [prubio@skidmore.edu](mailto:prubio@skidmore.edu) We very much welcome suggestions.

## **8. General Support for Retirees**

On behalf of RIPG, Terry Diggory and Susan Kress have continued conversations with Janet Casey, RIPG's liaison with Academic Affairs, as well as with the Director of HR, Julie Delay. Both continue to be supportive of RIPG's need for some administrative support, and conversations are ongoing.

## **9. 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 full access to the website and regular news bulletins, please let Susan Kress know at [skress@skidmore.edu](mailto:skress@skidmore.edu) This past year an excellent, free three-part program “Reimagining Retirement,” dealing with the transition to retirement as well as tools for preparing for that change, was offered on-line.

### **Summary:**

In all, 143 Skidmore people (88) and their guests (55) took advantage of RIPG-sponsored events, grants and activities during 2023-2024, with more corresponding with us about these events and indicating their interest. (Ann Henderson keeps our records of attendance.) We welcome expressions of interest in serving as a member of RIPG or giving a lecture or presentation, as well as advice about future programming or resources for retirees. For information about current resources and benefits for retirees, please visit our website at [Skidmore Retirees](#)

### **Members of RIPG:**

Janet Casey (Academic Affairs Liaison)  
Lori Dawson  
Terry Diggory (Convener)  
Jeanne Eddy  
Gove Effinger  
Deb Fernandez  
Lynne Gelber  
Laura Goodwin (HR Liaison)  
Ann Henderson  
Susan Kress  
Pat Poirier  
Barry Pritzker  
Sue Rosenberg  
Paty Rubio  
Mike West  
Joanna Zangrando

### **Acknowledgements:**

We continue to remain very grateful indeed to Janet Casey (Academic Affairs Liaison) and Laura Goodwin (HR Liaison), who attend our meetings and champion retirees in numerous ways.

We also thank the following people. Without their support we could not sustain our programs and carry out our mission:

Jen Barthelmas (Budget)  
Bonnie Bertrand (Food Services)  
Megan Bove (Surrey Coordinator)  
Jim Calhoun (HR Liaison for Finances)  
Dung-Lan Chen (Retiree Library)  
Julie Delay (Director of Human Resources)  
Flagg Taylor and Faculty Development Committee (FDC oversees Emeritus Grant Awards)

Patty Folts (Financial Reports)  
Marcia Godden (Accounts Payable)  
Carrie Imbrogno-O'Dell (Supervisor of Catering)  
Jesse O'Connell (Assistant Director, MDOCS)  
Michelle Osgood (IT)  
Sean Duffy (Web Manager)

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We are also appreciative of those serving on the Retiree Initiative Planning Group who completed formal contributions this past year on behalf of the college:

Sharon Arpey  
Ken Hapeman