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EMERITI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HOLDS RETREAT ABOUT FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The executive committee of the Emeriti Association held a retreat on March 30, devoted to several planning objectives. The theme for the daylong meeting was the question of how the Association could better serve present and prospective members, and thereby expand its ranks as an increasing number of faculty colleagues reach retirement.

The committee that arranged the retreat and developed its agenda included Joseph Casanova, Demetrius Margaziotis, and Barbara Sinclair. Moderator for the discussion was Janice Mirza, a senior auditor on the Chancellor's Office staff. The event was held at Villa Gardens, the Pasadena retirement facility at which several Cal State emeriti now reside. Kenneth Phillips, a past president of the Association and a long-time Villa Gardens resident, arranged for the requisite facilities and services, which included an extensive buffet for lunch.

Opening deliberations were devoted to the issue of membership recruitment. The discussion emphasized the need for a statement about the Association to be included in the official letter sent to newly designated emeritus professors. The President will be asked to include such a statement in future official letters sent over his signature.

During the discussion on membership, the following data were cited: total number of emeriti now living, 523; life members, 213; current annual members, 68; former members, 113; never joined, 119. Some relation to geography was briefly considered, regarding colleagues who have moved away from Southern California following retirement.

There was a general consensus that emeriti should see themselves as continuing and contributing members of the campus community, in accord with the official policy statement adopted by the CSU Board of Trustees. In that regard, there were suggestions recommending that the Association resume past activities in conjunction with active faculty, notably workshops on preparing for retirement. Although such workshops are now conducted by administrative representatives from Human Resources and from PERS, emeriti could participate.

That discussion led directly into the second segment of the agenda, on-campus activities that emeriti might undertake. Suggestions included mentoring of students and of new faculty; seminars as opportunities for interaction between emeriti and active faculty members; and an outreach program specifically for faculty in FERP.

Questions regarding the composition of the executive committee arose in regard to program expansion, because the development of the proposed activities would require the participation of additional Association members. It was clear that task groups to plan and conduct such activities would have to be drawn from the general membership.

Discussion next turned to the need for funds, beyond the small dues increase already on the ballot for the 2007 membership meeting scheduled for May 4, where voting on that recommendation and on a slate of officers will take place following the luncheon. The primary need is for the fellowships program, especially because of the large increase in student fees, larger for graduate students than for undergraduates. This issue occupied the third segment of the agenda. Several participants raised the question of a closer collaboration with the Development Office, which oversees all student scholarships.

The final segment of the agenda concerned the nature of programs at the annual events of the Association, which feature guest speakers. A related question was raised regarding the possibility of presenting a lecture series apart from the traditional fall and spring luncheons, which might include outside guests as well as emeritus faculty members as speakers. The possibility of collaboration with the OLLI program was suggested for future follow-up.

The points raised during this retreat will be revisited as action items at executive committee meetings to come. The entire meeting was recorded for reference as needed. The general conclusion was that the Emeriti Association has a full program before it for formal action and future development.