

## TURFA 2023-24 Annual Report

Annette Chappell, TURFA President 2023-24

[This report covers the TURFA presidential year from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.]

**Towson University Retired Faculty Association (TURFA)** had a busy and productive year in 2023-24. TURFA's objectives serve the needs of TU retirees and help them maintain contact with the university that has fostered their careers for decades.

TURFA organizes a variety of events and activities for retirees. These include nearly monthly *happy hours*, a monthly *non-fiction book discussion* group (eight books were read and discussed), a monthly *classic film discussion* group (eight films were viewed and discussed), and several *bike rides* in and around the area (mostly in northern Baltimore County, but one in Anne Arundel). We hope to add more "field trip" type activities in 2024-25.

A major role for TURFA is to serve as an advocacy organization for retired faculty. **In that role, we have been particularly active this year in protecting retired faculty members' university privileges, and in responding to the State of Maryland's plan to cut off retirees' prescription benefits.** Advocacy efforts are detailed below.

The most dedicated TURFA volunteers are the members of the Executive Committee and committee chairs. The Executive Committee and Leadership in 2023-24 were the following:

### TURFA 2023-24 Elected Officers

President – Annette Chappell (English; CLA)

Past President – Larry Shirley (Mathematics; Graduate Studies)

President-Elect – Jim Roberts (Political Science)

Secretary – Janet DeLany (Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science; Graduate Studies)

Treasurer – Rodney Stump (Marketing)

Member-at-Large – Pat Alt (Health Science)

Member-at-Large – Virginia Thompson (Geography and Environmental Planning); succeeded by

Maggie Reitz (Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science; Provost's Office)

Academic Senate Representative – Martha Siegel (Mathematics)

Academic Senate Alternate Representative – Deitra Wingert (Health Sciences)

FACET Representative – Michael Bachman

## **Committee Chairs and Other Leaders**

Program and Events Committee Chair – Thomas Maronick (Marketing)

Benefits and Privileges Committee Chair – Martha Siegel (Mathematics)

Outreach Committee Chair – Jane Wolfson (Environmental Science and Studies)

Oral History Project Co-Chairs – Ron Matlon (Communication Studies/Mass Communication) and Margaret “Peg” Benner (English)

Online Information Co-Coordinators – Margaret “Peg” Benner (English) and Howard Kaplon (Mathematics)

Legislative Affairs – Tracy Miller (Early Childhood Education and Academic Advising)

CLA Commemorative Moments Representative – Jo-Ann Pilardi (Philosophy and Women's Studies)

## **SPECIAL TURFA ACTIVITIES**

Every fall, TURFA holds our *Fall Forum*, a public address open to the TU community, featuring a speaker or panel discussing current issues. In November 2023 the forum featured a panel of TU faculty and staff addressing issues around Artificial Intelligence. Introduced by TURFA president Annette Chappell and moderated by Assistant Provost Patricia Westerman for the Faculty Academic Center of Excellence (FACET), the panel consisted of

Dastyni Loksa, Computer and Information Science

Donal Howley, Kinesiology

Emily Bailey, Philosophy and Religious Studies

Samuel Collins, Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

The panel discussed pedagogical issues posed by AI, including such areas as source reliability, user ethics, intellectual property rights, and student security.

The Office of the Provost hosted its annual brunch for all Towson faculty retirees, especially welcoming new retirees, on June 24, 2024. The event was held in the South Pavilion. We were greeted by President Ginsberg; the keynote speaker was Provost Melanie Perrault, who gave an overview of current university initiatives and plans. New retirees were recognized, and the newly elected TURFA Executive Committee leaders were introduced.

Guided by the Outreach Committee and its chair, Jane Wolfson, TURFA members again this year engaged in mentoring students and in volunteering at commencements. The TURFA Outreach Committee is working on a program to allow retired faculty to contribute professional clothing to the university's clothing bank for students to draw upon when preparing for interviews. The TURFA Executive Committee, with leadership by Martha Siegel and Ron Matlon, updated the university's list of emeritus/a faculty.

## **ADVOCACY: UNIVERSITY RETIREE BENEFITS**

TURFA leaders have spent many hours this year in meetings with university leadership in order to clarify and protect the benefits retirees are guaranteed by university policy and by the TU/TURFA memorandum of understanding (known as an MOU).

Early in the 2023-24 year, TURFA was engaged particularly in clarifying the parking privileges of TURFA members and protecting those privileges against potential misinterpretation.

During the year, the university promulgated a new policy of privileges for all retirees holding State of Maryland status (in other words, not including retirees who were contractual or adjunct when they worked at TU). That policy took precedence over some parts of the MOU, and TURFA leadership worked with university leadership to clarify those relationships. However, some of the benefits TURFA members have come to count on are different from those in the new all-retiree policy, and stem from other sources (such as the academic senate's conferral of emeritus status), so TURFA leadership is continuing to hold discussions with university leadership in order to be sure those benefits are accurately described and are maintained.

## **ADVOCACY: PRESCRIPTION BENEFITS**

TURFA was deeply involved in the effort to reverse the State of Maryland's decision to take away Part D prescription benefits from all state retirees. The TURFA task force on Part D was headed by president-elect Jim Roberts and included the following members:

Michael Bachman, TURFA member

Jane Clark, University of Maryland Retired Faculty Association

John Dedie, Community College of Baltimore County

William Kahn, former Maryland Assistant Attorney General

Kathlyn Miller, The Wisdom Institute (UMBC retiree association)

Tracy Miller, TURFA, Legislative Affairs Chair

Peta Richkus, former Secretary of Maryland Department of General Services

James Roberts, TURFA president-elect

Jane Wolfson, TURFA member

The task force members were tireless in reviewing legislation, testifying before committees of the General Assembly, and keeping constituencies informed. However, despite the excellence of their work and the accuracy of their arguments, the legislature did not provide the desired relief.

The task force therefore turned to providing full and timely information to TURFA members (and other constituencies) in order to assist in the transition to choosing Medicare Part D prescription coverage.

Communication about Medicare Part D enrollment has continued to be a priority for the TURFA leadership and was chosen as the subject of the 2024 Fall Forum.

## **TURFA INTERACTION WITH TOWSON UNIVERSITY UNITS**

TURFA continues to maintain liaison with the colleges, through the two Members-at-Large who are part of the leadership team. We continue to encourage retired faculty to remain in contact with their former departments and, as noted above, we facilitate the university's maintenance of emeritus/a lists for each college and department.

We have a member and an alternate on the Academic Senate, a relationship which facilitates coordination between retired faculty and their colleagues who are still teaching. We also have a member on the board of the Faculty Academic Center of Excellence (FACET) in order to help us keep up with best practices in teaching and scholarship. We are working to enhance the relationship between TURFA and the university libraries.

## MEMBER COMMUNICATION

The executive and leadership team engages multi-channel communication with TURFA members. During 2023-24 we instituted a Facebook page for the members as well as maintaining an extensive website.

The TURFA president sends an almost-every-month newsletter with up-to-date information, and the TURFA secretary sends periodic emails with timely details and reminders. Many of the emails this year have concerned the Plan D situation: our aim has been to keep TURFA members fully informed at every stage.

TURFA's semi-annual electronic news magazine, *The Advocate*, has always been a point of pride, but it has also been difficult to produce on a regular basis. In spring 2024, the TURFA president appointed a communication task force to take a comprehensive look not only at *The Advocate* but at all our forms of communication with membership, to suggest "smarter" ways of getting timely news and information to our members.

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Oral History Project (OHP), led by Ron Matlon and Peg Benner, completed three video interviews in spring 2024 with members of the College of Fine Arts and Communication: Jim Anthony (Music), Peter Lev (Electronic Media and Film), and Jim Paulsen (Art). Those interviews are now available through the university archives and through the TURFA web page.

Thanks to generous underwriting by Dean Lisa Plowfield, the OHP has scheduled interviews with five members of the College of Health Professions (CHP) for fall 2024: Ray Stinar (Kinesiology), Charlotte Exner and Marcy Weinstein (Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science), Liz Keened (Nursing), and Jack Osman (Health Science).

## 2024-25 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President – Jim Roberts (Political Science)

President-Elect – Michael Bachman (Computer and Information Sciences; Office of Technology Services)

Past President – Annette Chappell (English; College of Liberal Arts)

Treasurer – Rodney Stump (Marketing)

Secretary – Janet DeLany (Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science; Graduate Studies)

Member-at-Large – Patricia Alt (Health Sciences)

Member-at-Large – Maggie Reitz (Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science; Provost's Office)

Academic Senate Representative – Martha Siegel (Mathematics)

Academic Senate Alternate Representative – Deitra Wingert (Health Sciences)

FACET Representative – Michael Bachman (Computer and Information Sciences; Office of Technology Services)

Library Liaison – TBA (A.S. Cook Library)

Committee Chairs and other leaders to be appointed by incoming president.