

FYI Emeriti - Notes for December 2019

Lunch reservations for December 19

Reservations must be received before noon on Friday, December 13 but don't wait. Contact [Tom Franz <franz@ohio.edu>](mailto:franz@ohio.edu)

The menu for the December Luncheon is

- Fresh Fruit
- Spinach Salad
- Blackened Tilapia
- Wild Rice Pilaf
- Roasted Cauliflower
- Fresh Baked Rolls
- Assorted Holiday Desserts

Secretary Allyn Reilly has arranged for the December 19 Emeriti Association Luncheon program. He reports:

The program will likely consist of seasonal favorites, show tunes, and classical pieces. We are in for a treat!

Performers:

Debra Rentz, Associate Professor of Instruction in Voice, and Chair, Voice division of the Ohio University School of Music.

Ms. Alexandra Bruno, M. Mus. in Voice.

Mr. Daniel Mullins, M. Mus., Ohio University School of Music. Daniel is proficient in a number of musical activities: violin is his principal instrument, but he is also a sought-out collaborative pianist. He is also a music educator, and is founder of and principal teacher in a string instrument teaching program based in McConnellsville, OH.

Professor Rentz' bio can be found on <https://www.ohio.edu/fine-arts/rentz>. Here is a very brief bio:

Soprano Debra Rentz, a native of Illinois, has performed extensively in opera, operetta, oratorio, recitals and orchestral concerts. Rentz has performed leading roles with many professional companies, including Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Light Opera, Pamiro Opera, and Boston Academy of Music.

Rosemary Rossiter, OCHER Representative, reported on the latest OCHER meeting:

Nov 19, 2019

OPERS Benefit Planning

No health care changes anticipated until next year, if then. Topics are now being considered to address a \$24 billion unfunded liability, which has been the result in part of a reduced assumed rate of return. Solutions might include a change in COLA consisting of a two-year freeze (2022 and 2023), followed by a return to currently in-place COLA's, which are 3% or less depending on the beneficiary. Also being considered is a 24-month freeze on COLA's for new beneficiaries. All changes are subject to legislative approval.

STRS Health Care Update

The health care balance sheet is in very good shape due to lower-than-expected spending. There could be consideration by board of making the \$29.90 Medicare premium reimbursement permanent. In the news nationwide, there are four large players now offering policies which combine medical care and prescription coverage. Such policies could be a predictor of big changes coming, to which all plans will need to be attentive. In the opinion of STRS directors, the *Columbus Dispatch* coverage of pharmacy benefit manager practices is somewhat misleading, especially with regard to spread pricing.

Legislative Report

Nothing under consideration in the Ohio legislature would affect STRS. At the federal level, some proposals would affect what STRS pays for Part D after the catastrophe level is reached. Officials look at issues which affect what plans pay in costs because eventually increase in costs that the plan pays could lead to premium increases for retirees.

Reports from Retiree Associations

Kent State: Provost has become new President after a national search. Enrollment is down due to decreases in international students. Out-of-state enrollment is up, however. Enrollment is strong at the seven regional campuses. College Credit Plus does not seem to be hurting the regionals, despite their being in somewhat rural locations. The university has a \$12 million budget gap and anticipates reducing it by $\frac{3}{4}$ with a hiring freeze. The university is nevertheless increasing needs-based scholarships by \$2 million. The retiree association is in limbo with no one willing to assume executive committee roles.

NEOMED: Campus in growing, including the creation of a STEM school. The retiree association is working toward an endowment for scholarships.

OCHER's Role in Supporting Retiree Associations

OCHER President Steve Howe is eager to have OCHER use some of its budget to support weak retiree associations. There was discussion of how this could be accomplished. One idea is to create regional retiree association meetings, perhaps starting with universities in the northeast part of the state. There was also discussion of inviting representatives from different universities to participate in particular OCHER meetings. Another idea is to sponsor an international travel program in which retirees from all universities could participate. Ohio State has sponsored international travel programs by itself and notes that alumni association programs are more expensive to travelers because the alumni association programs want these programs to make a profit. Overall, however, retiree associations may benefit by partnering with alumni associations.



President Nellis speaking at the Emeriti meeting November 21



Slide from President Nellis' presentation

All of President Nellis' slides from the Emeriti meeting can be found at <https://www.ohio.edu/emeriti/news>

One hundred years ago
Christmas 1919 with the Newton Baker family



Quiz for historians

Who was Newton Baker ? (easy to answer with Google)

Identify son Jack's Christmas present. (easy tech history question)

What was the make and model of Jack's present? (Yes, a much more difficult question.)

What could Jack listen to in December 1919? (Equally difficult question. Answers available at or after the December 19 luncheon)

(Picture courtesy of National Photo Company collection – Library of Congress)