Report and Recommendations
of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Faculty Retirement
(25 February 2018)

Executive Summary

Appointed in August 2017 at the request of the Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement, this ad hoc subcommittee was charged to look at ways to improve pre-retirement planning by faculty and to encourage continuing participation by retired faculty in contributing to the University of Washington (UW) community.

The subcommittee comprised four emeriti, three current faculty, and the director of Retiree Relations. In addition to meetings with various UW faculty and administrators, the subcommittee also consulted colleagues at other peer institutions and reviewed materials in an effort to identify what might be best practices in regard to faculty pre-retirement planning and post-retirement engagement.

Our report to the Chair of the Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement and the Chair of the Faculty Senate offers fifteen recommendations under three headings: A) information and resources for retirement planning; B) transitioning to retirement; and C) continuing participation of retired faculty.

The recommendations in A address matters such as distributing an annual letter to all faculty clarifying the various retirement options available to faculty; appointing a panel of retired faculty to provide confidential, personal consultation to colleagues; coordinating information on various UW websites; restoring a representative of the Provost’s Office as a regular member of the Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement; reinforcing the need for chairs/deans to document their regular meetings with senior faculty; and seeing that information about supplementation (for those eligible for it) is made available to faculty before they retire.

The recommendations in B call for a single online portal designed specifically for faculty and spelling out in detail their options as they consider retirement, including their vested right to partial reemployment; and ask the Provost to examine the possibility of making the VRI option a regular, predictable part of faculty retirement planning.

The recommendations in C address the need for a clearer articulation in the Faculty Code of the specific benefits and privileges of emeritus faculty as members of the University Faculty; call for a formal notice of such appointments when they are made; request the Secretary of the Faculty to publicize the opportunities available for retired faculty to continue their service to the various parts of shared governance; and encourage local units to involve their retired faculty in their collegial and social activities.
Background

The members of the ad hoc subcommittee were:

- Charles Chamberlin (Librarian Emeritus, University Libraries)
- Pat Dougherty (Director, Retiree Relations Office)
- Patricia Moy (Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs)
- Mary O’Neil (Associate Professor, History)
- Gerry Philipsen (Professor Emeritus, Communication)
- Mícheál Vaughan (Professor Emeritus, Comparative Literature and English), Chair
- Lea Vaughn (Professor, Law)
- Doug Wadden (Professor Emeritus, Design)

The ad hoc subcommittee on faculty retirement planning was established in August 2017 by the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) at the request of the Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement (FCBR). It was charged to “look into options for improving the access of faculty to information about and guidance in pre-retirement planning, in particular related to matters of pensions and healthcare coverage, with the goal of encouraging and enabling the continuing participation of retired faculty in contributing to the University community.”

The subcommittee has met a number of times since its initial organizational meeting on 11 July. We met, in order, with the following individuals:

- Chuck Sloane (UW Ombud)
- Cheryl Cameron (Vice Provost for Academic Personnel)
- Tanya Eadie (Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel)
- Sandra Archibald (Dean, Evans School)
- Robert Stacey (Dean, Arts & Sciences)
- James Jiambalvo (Dean, Foster School of Business)
- Greg Miller (Associate Dean, Engineering)
- Amy Hawkins (Executive Director, Total Benefits)
- Gerald Grohs (Benefits Consultant, Total Benefits Office)
- Neil Hawkins (Emeritus Professor, Civil Engineering)

On January 17-18, the subcommittee also sponsored a series of meetings, public presentations, and other events with two colleagues from UCLA: Carole Goldberg (Jonathan D. Varat Distinguished Professor of Law and former Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel) and David Lopez (Emeritus Professor of Sociology and currently UCLA’s Faculty Retirement Liaison). Subsequent meetings to discuss the subcommittee’s report and recommendations were held in late January and in February. In addition, ad hoc subcommittee members met or communicated with individual colleagues, both retired and those at “retirement age” (however loosely defined), and have thereby gathered useful, if anecdotal, information about the situation facing retired colleagues and those thinking about retirement.
We gathered information from UW, other institutions and public resources on the ad hoc subcommittee’s Google drive and this information we have examined and discussed with a critical eye to identifying and articulating “best practices” that we might consider as a basis for our recommendations, as best suited to the UW’s situation.

**General Conclusion:** In view of the absence of mandatory retirement for faculty as well as the current age-distribution of tenured faculty, the University of Washington as a whole--and individual members of its faculty--would greatly benefit from facilitating retirement (pre-)planning as an identifiable, and more easily managed, stage in faculty development. By ensuring that clearer and fuller information about the financial, medical, psycho-social, and collegial aspects of retirement are made available to faculty, the University would provide continuing opportunities and incentives for long-serving faculty to approach the next stage of their academic careers in a more thoughtful and fruitful way. Our specific recommendations will, we are convinced, have important benefits for the University as well: by enabling well-informed decisions about retirement, the University would, we believe, be able to plan for and open up positions now held by senior faculty for junior colleagues who will maintain and advance the achievements of their senior colleagues and continue the growth and excellence of the University of Washington. In addition, implementing these recommendations will encourage the continued involvement of retired faculty in the life of the University and demonstrate for junior faculty the continuing arc of a faculty member’s career at UW. It would also create in our active retired faculty a currently untapped, rich resource for the advancement of University programs.

In moving toward these conclusions, the ad hoc subcommittee has focused on identifying potential ways to improve faculty “access” to “information about and guidance in pre-retirement planning” and has done so with respect to three separate temporal categories where improvements may be made:

A. by generating more robust and consistent resources and general information for faculty about the UW retirement plan (UWRP) and about other aspects of retirement planning;

B. by improving access to informed, personal assistance for individual faculty while they are in the process of transitioning to retirement (or considering doing so in the near-term); and

C. by identifying some additional ways the UW might continue to draw upon and engage the active participation of retired faculty in service to our larger community.

**A. Information and Resources for Retirement Planning**

Details about faculty retirement plans should be readily available to colleagues at all points of their career. Since they participate in a defined contribution plan their future income depends on well-informed decisions about their contributions and the extent to which the University matches those contributions. Having access to financial advisors is crucial, but advice ought to extend beyond the financial and the institution should provide access to clear and stable statements about the various options faculty have at important stages of their careers. Some of these stages are already well marked: at age 35 faculty members’ (matched) contributions to their pension accounts rises from 5% to 7.5%; and at age 50 they may choose the option to increase the (matched) contribution to 10%. (We understand that the
FCBR is discussing making this latter an opt-out rather than opt-in choice, and we would applaud that as an improvement.) While there may be reasons why colleagues would decline their increased contribution to their pension funds, the benefits of the increased contribution and match should be made clear to everyone. During the remaining years of a faculty member’s career, however, there are no formally established points at which crucial financial (or other, retirement-related) decisions are directly engaged. The option to make additional contributions to the Voluntary Investment Plan (VIP) or to shelter some income in tax-deferred ways are available to those who seek them out. Nevertheless, we believe that encouraging colleagues to keep in mind their eventual retirement is a positive contribution to their well-being, and the university should be proactive in providing such encouragement.

There are, of course, rich resources about benefits and retirement options available in published documents on the University’s web pages. Faculty do have access to their options with respect to contributions to their pensions and health care. Clear explanations of these options are readily accessible, since details about the features and options under the UWRP are maintained on the UW Human Resources (HR) webpages: http://hr.uw.edu/benefits/retirement-plans/uw-retirement-plan/.

In addition, pertinent information about the vested reemployment option (for up to 40% per year for up to five years after retirement) is also available to future retirees once they know where to look for it: i.e., on the webpage maintained by Academic Human Resources (AHR) (https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/working/retirement/working-after-retirement/). However, we note that this retirement option is not mentioned on the HR page mentioned above, nor on HR’s “UWRP: Preparing to retire” page (http://hr.uw.edu/benefits/retirement-plans/nearing-retirement/uwrp-preparing-to-retire/), nor on Fidelity’s linked page on the UWRP’s details (https://nb.fidelity.com/public/nb/uw/planoptions/plandetails?planId=71809&option=planBasics).

It is unfortunate that these present resources at UW, especially those available through administrative offices and their webpages, are neither as complete nor as well coordinated as they might be. As a result faculty are often confused or become anxious when they first begin to think about their retirement. This lack of close coordination between HR and AHR (and Fidelity) points to the further absence of any single stable, well-known, central resource that provides a coherent entry point for access to the manifold details of faculty retirement, and particularly any that consider broader, and more personal, aspects of retirement planning. A more coordinated and focused web-page entry point, or “portal,” for those interested in faculty retirement procedures and options is clearly needed.

For example, information about other options for faculty planning their retirement--e.g., the availability of the occasional Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI) offerings; the existence of individualized retirement transition agreements--are even less accessible on public resources. The availability of the VRI, for example, is only declared when a decision has been made centrally to announce its availability and it is communicated directly to eligible faculty and their administrative officers. This practice impedes the ability of faculty and their academic units to engage in the rational long-term planning required for retirement.
RECOMMENDATION (A.1)

Request that the Provost distribute, annually, a letter to all faculty who are active retirement-plan participants, outlining in detail all the available options for late-career faculty, including planning resources for future retirement and pointing to online and other resources that are available for consultation.

Rationale: Since administrative colleagues are actively, and quite properly, discouraged from introducing the topic of retirement with individual faculty, lest such discussions appear to be exerting pressure or breaching age-discrimination statutes, the most obvious way of raising the issue of a faculty member’s retirement plans is not available. The unfortunate effect of such a “Don’t Ask” policy is that many faculty are ill-informed about their options. Also, many faculty respond by adopting a “Don’t Tell” policy of their own: treating retirement decisions as fully private, even secret, with the result that their colleagues are unable to engage in their own longer-term (and even shorter-term) planning for their programs. As a result, conversations about, and even preliminary thinking about, retirement are long postponed and, even, never occur until an individual faculty member delivers the required notice to the chair/dean one quarter before the effective date of retirement. This state of affairs is dysfunctional for all involved.

One easy means of countering the deleterious effects of such a “Don’t Ask” policy is to ensure that there are more regular communications from the Provost/Deans/Chairs to all faculty inviting them to meet with their chair/dean to discuss retirement options. An annual letter from the Provost to all faculty would be an efficient and effective way of reminding colleagues that considering the details about retirement ought not be postponed indefinitely, and that resources are readily available to assist colleagues in planning for such an event. Such a letter would articulate the various options and other considerations that would impinge on any decision to retire, and point to the availability of online resources and financial advisors (i.e., Fidelity) and others who can provide more detailed and trustworthy personalized information and advice. It would detail the workshops and seminars available from HR and UWRA.

An example of this kind of annual “retirement planning memo” is the one provided to all University of California academic personnel: e.g., that from UCLA’s Vice Chancellor, Academic Personnel: https://apo.ucla.edu/archive/vice-chancellor-memos/2016-17-retirement-planning-memo.

RECOMMENDATION (A.2)

Ask the President to appoint a panel of experienced retired colleagues who would make themselves available to those contemplating retirement for confidential consultation and information about their options and the process of transitioning to retirement as a UW faculty member. This faculty panel might reasonably be placed under the supervision of the Secretary of the Faculty.

Rationale: Since faculty often may be hesitant about going public about their plans to retire, and administrators and staff are chary—and rightfully so—about asking individuals if they are thinking about retiring, even enrolling in HR workshops and seminars may seem to some too “public” a declaration of “intent.” Identifying experienced retired colleagues no longer in the “chain of command” to serve as a
confidential resource for individuals who are considering retirement would provide a collegial ear and voice that would be able to assist them as they negotiate their approach to retirement, providing resources and information about their available options and required procedures.

Much of the information is of course available on webpages (or, like the “retirement checklist,” in a linked PDF). However, the information is sometimes incomplete and often uncoordinated and scattered (as we have noted above). Some faculty have even expressed their willingness to pay for assistance in negotiating the bureaucratic maze leading to retirement.

As already noted, chairs and deans are properly hesitant about introducing questions about their retirement plans with individual colleagues, for fear of breaching legal (or other) boundaries. Furthermore, as the focus groups with chairs conducted in connection with the 2014 ACE/Sloan survey by the Office of Academic Personnel revealed, a number of chairs frankly acknowledged that they lacked “training and knowledge about retirement options and how to discuss these options with faculty members.” If experienced administrative colleagues suffer from a lack of information and “how to discuss [available] options with faculty members,” one can be sure so do many of the faculty who are considering retirement. And when individual faculty may be uncomfortable about introducing the topic with those above them in administrative positions, for fear of (un)foreseen repercussions on their remaining years, the problems are compounded. Consulting colleagues (whether already-retired or not), or the UWRA, may provide some assistance or referral, but neither of those sources can carry the “official” weight of the UW and, thereby, help allay faculty members’ uncertainties and anxieties. More clear and secure official resources would be welcomed, as would access to a collegial, confidential individual consultant.

Faculty, as they begin to think about whether and when they will retire, would benefit from having personal access to knowledgeable colleagues who can provide trustworthy and confidential information and guidance toward negotiating the intricacies of the UW bureaucracy. Some, of course, talk with colleagues here and elsewhere, with their family, with financial advisors inside and outside the University setting. But some faculty clearly remain quiet, even secretive, about the fact that they are thinking about retirement, for fear that admitting their plans might affect their reputations, duties and responsibilities in their home units. Others, of course, are more confident and open about their plans, but it would be unwarranted to assume that all, or even that most, fall in this category.

Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the process of transitioning to retirement would be much enhanced, and attendant anxieties and uncertainty lessened, by providing senior faculty with access to informed and confidential consultation with colleagues outside the administrative hierarchy of their units. Consulting these colleagues would allow faculty to draw on the experience and know-how of individuals that would permit them to feel the institution’s concern for them personally as they approach for the first time the threshold of retirement, with all the ‘identity’ questions—who will I be when I retire?—that hover around this transition. For some faculty, retirement qualifies as a “near-death” experience of sorts--or perhaps a second adolescence where “Who will I be when I grow up?” offers challenges and attendant anxieties. Just as the UW works effectively and personally to facilitate the on-boarding of new faculty, it could do a lot more to assist and support established colleagues in a more personal way as they transition to retirement.
RECOMMENDATION (A.3)
Revise current UW retirement information (webpages, podcasts) to articulate coordinated access to the various components of, and available options for, retirement planning available at UW. Provide clear links between HR and AHR pages that deal with various aspects of retirement options and retirement planning.

Rationale: Unit administrators such as deans and department chairs do not, as far as we have been able to determine, regularly take any active role in raising retirement issues with their colleagues as a group, and are actively discouraged from introducing such matters in discussions with individuals because of potential legal risks. They may, of course, respond to requests that come from individuals. But not all administrators are well-informed about these issues and faculty are not always comfortable with raising them, either because they have not been encouraged to do so or because they are concerned about the possible responses to such an inquiry. As a result, faculty who are thinking ahead to retirement in this era of non-mandatory-retirement lack clear access to neutral, trustworthy, and confidential resources (beyond the financial and medical). Such information should be provided and there are a number of ways to do so, through letters, email, and web-based resources.

RECOMMENDATION (A.4)
Retirement options and procedures should result from discussions by and with the faculty and should be defined as a distinct stage of a faculty member’s career and incorporated into the Faculty Code.

Rationale: It may be worthwhile to consider articulating the existing retirement options in the Faculty Code rather than leaving them as administrative policies that are not well publicized nor well understood as rights available to faculty. These should be matters aired prominently in the FCBR and Faculty Senate, and asking the Faculty Senate to consider legislation dealing with these issues would give prominence to the gaps in our shared understanding of the various options and the required procedures.

RECOMMENDATION (A.5)
Request that a representative of the Provost’s Office/AHR participate as a regular member of the Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement (FCBR).

Rationale: As the faculty body charged with primary responsibility “for all matters of policy relating to faculty retirement, insurance and benefits,” the FCBR needs to assert its place in discussions of faculty retirement matters. In recent years, the discussions and actions of the Council have focused for the greater part on the “benefits” portion of their charge. The President’s delegate to the Council has been limited to the Vice President of HR, and the absence of any recent continuing involvement from the Provost’s Office (AHR) has meant that even when retirement has been discussed it has been largely limited to the practicalities of pensions, medical programs, and Social Security, and the Council has not addressed broader collegial and personal matters associated with continuing membership of emeritus colleagues in the University faculty. This has had the unfortunate effect of narrowing and delaying the
range of the Council’s discussions, recommendations, and actions. Regular participation in FCBR discussions by AHR (as indeed had been the case in the not-too-distant past) would enable the Council to fulfill its mandated responsibility “for all matters of policy relating to faculty retirement....” In addition, this would ensure that collegial and personal issues beyond the fiscal and practical could be more regularly and directly considered by the FCBR, and it would provide a forum for continuing deliberations about proposed AHR actions that fall within the Council’s purview. It is striking to us that, for example, decisions about offering retirement incentives (such as the VRI) have reportedly not been discussed at the Faculty Council that is charged with considering such matters of policy.

**RECOMMENDATION (A.6)**

*Restore and publicize the availability of the option for faculty to arrange mutually beneficial “individual retirement transition agreements”; and articulate in more detail the kinds of adjustments permitted, the length of the “time line for retirement,” who may negotiate such agreements and on what grounds, and by whom, they may be approved.*

**Rationale:** Not widely known, or made use of, the UW has allowed individual faculty to negotiate “individualized retirement transition agreements .... whereby a tenured faculty member with a vested right to partial reemployment voluntarily agrees to forgo that right and to set a definitive and irrevocable time line for retirement in exchange for adjusted workloads and responsibilities before retirement that facilitate the fulfillment of career-culminating activities.” (quoted from Cheryl A. Cameron and Rhonda Forman, “University of Washington Retirement Transition Options For Tenured Faculty,” in *Faculty Retirement: Best Practices for Navigating the Transition*, ed. Claire A. Van Ummersen, et al. [Sterling VA: Stylus, 2014], p. 203). Although 63 colleagues (of the 349 faculty) availed themselves of such individual agreements in the period 1999-2007 (Cameron and Forman, p. 210) few faculty are aware of the option for these individualized retirement transition agreements. Indeed, aside from the article in Van Ummersen’s collection, there seems to have be no public notice of the option. For example, it appears nowhere in current UW webpages or policy statements: a search on the UW Website for “individualized retirement” (on 2 February 2018) pointedly reports ‘No Results.” Where has this option gone?

There is a rather indefinite reference to “some phased-out structure” and (unspecified) “several options available to faculty to reduce or end their active involvement with the University” in the AHR webpages [https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/actions/adding-updating/emeritus-retiree-appointments](https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/actions/adding-updating/emeritus-retiree-appointments). But the option “individualized retirement transition” option has been used in the past and its *ad hoc* nature may well militate against its usefulness by raising questions of equity and favoritism when one becomes aware of a colleague’s having taken advantage of the option. It does, however, offer an attractive option for individuals who wish to transition gradually toward retirement and regularizing the parameters of such individual arrangements would be advantageous.

Providing clear guidelines about when and to whom these arrangements would be available is essential. (A useful model may be found in the negotiated contracts in the UCLA “Pathways to Retirement” program: [https://apo.ucla.edu/faculty-retirement-resources/pathways-to-retirement](https://apo.ucla.edu/faculty-retirement-resources/pathways-to-retirement).) That said, it may be that simply “daylighting” this option would mitigate against charges of favoritism as it becomes more generally known
and discussed among faculty. Similarly, it is unclear who has the authority to approve these agreements, though presumably a dean (and probably the Provost) would need to approve such an arrangement before it could be effected. In any case, such details need to be clarified and publicly articulated as well.

RECOMMENDATION (A.7)

Request that the Provost draw the attention of administrators and senior faculty to the existing requirements of Faculty Code Section 24-57.C and D and emphasize the importance of documenting multi-year plans and goals for both individual faculty and their units. Such regular conferences will, quite naturally, open space for discussions of retirement options and possible timelines.

Rationale: Since the Faculty Code constitutes the “contract” between individual faculty and the University, it provides in the required “regular conference” between department chairs and their senior faculty and thereby provides a context in which individual faculty must regularly discuss their “career goals” with the head of their academic unit. The Faculty Code mandates such a conference “at least every three years” for Professors (see: Procedural Safeguards for Promotion, Merit-Based Salary, and Tenure Considerations—Section 24-57.C). It further specifies that “[t]he purpose of the regular conference is to help individual faculty members plan and document their career goals.” Those “career goals” would include consideration of the individual’s trajectory of teaching, research and service in the context of the department’s prospects and its own stated goals. Such conferences provide occasions for an individual faculty member to broach the topic of retirement, whether full or phased-in. Indeed, faculty members in these conferences would naturally at some point indicate retirement as among their future plans and provide the chair/dean an opportunity to point to the options available to the faculty member. Furthermore, since the plans and goals discussed in these conferences are documented and they will become “part of the faculty member’s record for subsequent determinations of merit.” They will provide occasions, at the next “regular conference” for discussing retirement and the kinds of pre-retirement planning faculty should consider.

RECOMMENDATION (A.8)

Ask HR/AHR to provide on their Retirement web pages the Supplementation Plan formula, so that faculty may have access to this information for planning prior to their retirement.

Rationale: The status of pension supplementation has been a recurrent topic for discussion at the FCBR (and FCRIB, its previous incarnation), and elsewhere (the Regents, President’s Office, AHR). It has also been removed as an option by State Legislative action for those employees who were hired after 30 April 2011. As faculty consider the financial aspects of their future retirement, it would be useful to them to know whether they potentially will be eligible for such supplementation, and to do their own estimate of how much it might be, even if the final determination can only be made after the date of actual retirement. While the actual determination can only be made by the UW after one has retired, faculty colleagues should have the opportunity to incorporate their estimate of possible supplementation into their planning for retirement. This formula, forms of which are available on-line at several state public institutions,
should be posted with the disclaimer that any calculation done in advance of retirement is only an estimate and that factors influencing the final calculation will only be known and considered following an individual’s retirement, as determined by designated authority of the Total Benefits office. Washington State University in its Retirement Plan provides their faculty with the statutory criteria and the formula for computing whether one may receive supplementation: https://regents.wsu.edu/meeting-materials/200901F-9Plan.pdf.

B. Transitioning to retirement

Late-career faculty—those approaching retirement—need clear access to all the necessary steps they must consider as they proceed toward retirement. The HR’s “UWRP: Preparing to retire” web page (mentioned above) itemizes when one can retire and what steps should be taken as one approaches retirement. However, the first item on this list—“Set a target retirement date”—immediately offers a challenge that frequently is fraught with anxiety and concern. And the absence of any mention there of reemployment, or other options, contributes further to the potential for confusion or misinformation.

The available HR-sponsored workshops and seminars provide a great deal of information. The three-hour “Retiring from UWRP: An Overview” workshop is regularly offered by HR (though often quickly oversubscribed and only offered “live” in Seattle) and provides the kind of practical information pre-retirees need in a straightforward checklist of sequenced (and overlapping) steps. This list provides details, from the need to inform one’s chair to the range of external issues that need to be addressed in the month before retirement, but it is almost exclusively directed toward practical issues: institutional rules and deadlines, financial planning, Social Security, Medicare, et al. Negotiating these practicalities is itself often a challenge for faculty, many of whom have spent their years at UW benefiting from, and dependent on, the expertise and personal attention of professional and classified staff who have insulated them from such practical bureaucratic concerns. When retirement appears on the horizon that attention and experienced help are either no longer available, or are the source of awkwardness.

As an essential component for any preparation for retiring, the checklist (in a two-page PDF) is usefully available via a link on the “UWRP: Preparing to retire” web page; is also more prominently shown on the University of Washington Retirement Association (UWRA) “Resources for retirees and pre-retirees” web page. Greater prominence should be given to this checklist. However, for faculty (and others) there is more to planning retirement than meeting deadlines and assessing practicalities like those in the checklist. This includes reemployment, individualized retirement transitions, and the Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI).

RECOMMENDATION (B.1)

Provide a clear, easily and directly accessed, online portal designed especially for faculty that spells out the various options available to them and the specific requirements for each.
Rationale: The availability of the option to be rehired for up to 40% and for up to five years after retiring is fairly well known to faculty, although even otherwise well-informed faculty are less than fully clear about the specific details and constraints on such re-appointments. For instance, some faculty report that they have been told that such reemployment offers are exclusively intended for instructional purposes, yet they are also aware that colleagues have been frequently rehired under this program to perform other essential duties, e.g., administrative or managerial; research. Similarly, it is unclear whether this option requires one or two quarters “in residence” to meet the 40% requirement.

The “Partial Reemployment Policy” section of the “Working after Retirement” page on the Academic Personnel Website opens with the following statement:

State of Washington law permits a faculty member to be reemployed up to 40% time, after retirement. The University of Washington has, by policy, granted to tenured faculty members the prerogative of requesting reemployment. By policy, the University has vested in tenured faculty members the right beginning at age 62, to be reemployed up to a maximum of 40% time for instructional and/or research purposes for five years after the date of retirement.

Lower down in this same section appears the following:

Arrangements for instructional, research, or other designated duties of reemployed retired faculty members are to be made by agreement between the Department Chair/Program Director or Dean of undepartmentalized College, and retiring faculty member.

Similar references to “State law” and “University policy” are made on the “Retiree rehire” webpage under HR Operations (http://hr.uw.edu/ops/hiring/retiree-rehire/), and it also links the reemployment rights of tenured faculty to the AHR page quoted above.

RECOMMENDATION (B.2)

Include in the Faculty Code a clear, stable account of the options faculty have at the time of their retirement. At a minimum this should spell out the parameters of the reemployment option, the individualized retirement transition arrangements, and the VRI.

Rationale: There is nothing in the Faculty Code that mentions the retirement options for faculty, including what is acknowledged to be the “vested” right to reemployment. And there is no statement of the underlying “policy”—indeed there is virtually no mention of faculty reemployment aside from the notice (in Section 21-32.A) that “retired faculty” are accorded voting rights while “serving on a part-time basis.” A search of the UW Policy Directory (including AHR Policies) produces no clearer articulation of the underlying “policy.” The Faculty Code would appear to be a prime location for such statutory matters.

As far as state law is concerned, we have found little relevant beyond RCW 28B.10.420.2(d), which does state that part-time reemployment “shall not exceed forty percent of full time employment during any year.” However, since it says this applies to faculty who retired “not later than the end of the academic
year next following their seventieth birthday” (420.1), we might question whether this is still in force, since the federal statute against mandatory retirement became effective for tenured faculty in 1994. Nevertheless, this RCW section remains, it would appear, unrevised, since it remains in the RCW with its 1979 language.

Even if this recommendation were not adopted, the conditions of the faculty member’s “vested right” in partial reemployment should be more clearly articulated, as should other, alternative arrangements that are available.

Indeed as our conversations with deans indicated, there may be need for a serious reconsideration and re-articulation of that reemployment right in light of the shift to ABB budgeting that leaves the funding for such reemployment to the deans. As the ACE Sloan funded survey revealed, a number of deans felt there was a “[n]eed for ‘new’ rules for reemployment now that funding is coming from units.” These might include greater specificity about what exactly reemployment could entail and what requirements individual units might define as meeting the “up-to-40%” limit. In the case of the VRI, redefinition of the rules governing the awards might entail local authorization of such awards rather than the current “universal” availability. (On the last, see B.4 and B.5 below.)

**RECOMMENDATION (B.3)**

Consider asking the Provost to request the Regents to revise their 2010 action to make the periodically available VRI a *regular* option available to all faculty retirees. Funding a tax-free medical expense account will not only enhance the health-care options for faculty retirees, but will also encourage more thoughtful planning for retirement.

**Rationale:** This recommendation specifically addresses expressed interest by retirement-age faculty in another, more recent “incentive” that has functioned well to induce faculty actively to consider retiring: the Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI). Its acknowledged success was noted by Vice Provost Cameron in her meeting with us and upon reflection we have concluded that it should be made a regular part of our faculty retirement plans. Our *ad hoc* subcommittee members felt strongly that the VRI should be offered on a regular, yearly basis. Making the option a standard one will enhance the ability of individual faculty to plan earlier and thus make longer-term discussion of replacement options available to colleagues in their home units. Making this a regular option associated with faculty retirement will require revisiting fundamental features of this option and its relationship to the reemployment right.

On March 18, 2010, the Board of Regents approved the administration’s recommendation of an “alternative retirement benefit available to all eligible tenured faculty who elect to forego their vested right to partial reemployment upon retirement.” The Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI) makes available a “tax-free medical expense account” and addresses directly faculty members’ “uncertainty and concern regarding health care costs,” which was reported as an “influencing factor” in the decisions of a number of eligible faculty “to dela[¥] their retirement plans.” The health savings account (HSA) has been “administered as a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) under rules established in the Internal Revenue Code.”
The Regents’ action established the following procedure:

The VRI option will be available only when the Provost announces an open election period, at which time eligible faculty members can declare their intent to retire during a specified interval of time and elect this alternative retirement benefit. Upon retirement of a participating faculty member, a VEBA account will be established and receive a lump-sum contribution from the nine or twelve month state-funded position that is vacated by the tenured faculty member. The contribution will amount to 25% of the five year value of the state-funded 40% reemployment, except that there will be a minimum contribution of $25,000 and a maximum contribution of $100,000.

In the background to that motion, it was further noted:

The option is modeled after a program already available to librarians, professional staff, classified non-union staff, and contract classified staff at the time of retirement. For these retirees, the VEBA account is funded by 25% sick leave cash-out, a program authorized by the Board of Regents in 1999.

The Provost has authorized this option to retiring tenured faculty six times since 2010 after consultation with the Board of Deans and Chancellors. Its attractive inducement of a funded HSA account has encouraged a number of faculty to retire sooner than they might have otherwise. It has proved a very attractive incentive by enhancing the health-care coverage of our retired colleagues. The funds made available through the VRI has provided faculty with welcome additional resources for their retirement years, and after the repeated offerings faculty approaching retirement have begun to expect its being announced again. The popularity of the incentive indicates (we believe) that for those faculty (and perhaps others) the post-retirement reemployment option has become a less attractive incentive for those approaching retirement. As noted above, this sort of VEBA account has been regularly available to retiring librarians and non-academic staff as a partial buy-out of their accumulated, unused sick leave. Since faculty do not accrue sick leave (or vacation time), this has not been regularly extended to them.

However, since getting the VRI is dependent on faculty’s waiving their vested interest in the 40% reemployment option at retirement—nott o mention their forgoing the vested property value of their “tenure”—the VRI would appear to be not only an attractive but a cost-effective option. After all, an HSA at 50% percent of a annual faculty salary computes to equal approximately 25% of the salary that would be expended to pay faculty members for 5 years at 40% of their salary (to say nothing of benefits and ancillary space and staff costs). Though only an occasional offer with direct and important health-care benefits, faculty (and some deans) have looked forward to being able to avail themselves of the VRI, and it may be time to consider adding it to the standing options for those negotiating retirement.

The success of recent offerings of the VRI and conversations with retirement-age colleagues regarding the most recent offering make it clear that the VRI is often a decisive inducement for faculty to consider and to advance their plans for retirement. Indeed, it is so attractive that some have recently delayed or postponed their retirements while they waited expectantly for the announcement of the next VRI offer.
As an incentive to consider retirement it has proven effective, and faculty who might otherwise avail themselves of the up-to-40% reemployment option choose the VRI instead, especially when their reemployment might entail taking on large new teaching assignments. Since a similar option is a regular part of retirement for other UW staff, it would be reasonable to extend it to faculty. In view of this, the UW should seriously consider how to make this a regular option for faculty and provide them with an attractive inducement that already exists as a regular feature for other UW retirees.

A pair of ancillary points may also be worth mentioning in this context. First, from conversations with a few deans, it is clear that the costs of funding the VRI are unevenly distributed across schools and colleges at any given time, and their support for offering their faculty the incentive is impacted by local budgetary pressures and the age-distribution of their faculty. As long as the VRI remains an across-the-board offer extended to all retirement-eligible faculty on the decision of the Provost, it might be wiser to recommend that the Provost consider ways to address these local budgetary pressures. Perhaps the costs of paying for the VEBA HSAs could be shared by central and local budgets, or the Provost might be able to make bridge funds available if needed to cover exceptional local costs, perhaps (if necessary) spread over a three- to five-year budget cycle. This could reduce the need for extended discussions and negotiations occasioned by the differential impact on the budgets of individual deans and chancellors, which might make them hesitate to support offering the VRI to all faculty because of local budgetary concerns.

Second, and alternatively, if central funds are not used to reduce the cost of the VRI health savings account to individual schools/colleges/campuses, serious consideration might be given to removing the across-the-board requirement, permitting individual deans and chancellors to avail themselves of this option when they judge that encouraging retirements in this fashion would be beneficial to their units, and the attendant costs would be within their budgets.

C. Continuing participation of retired faculty

The third stage—encouraging and enhancing post-retirement activity in the UW community, and beyond—is, in part, the responsibility of the UW’s Retiree Relations office, and of the UWRA. The latter is, of course, a privately funded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and through its staff and board provide a range of social and educational events and other opportunities for engagement by retired UW staff and faculty, not limited to its dues-paying members. Through UW Encore it guides and encourages UW retirees toward continuing involvement in and engagement with UW programs and units, and in the larger community. General information about UW retiree privileges and opportunities is detailed in the Retiree Privileges brochure, available online through the UWRA web site and also as a printed document, updated annually: http://www.washington.edu/uwra/?attachment_id=1236.

What is less clear, however, is the degree to which the Provost’s office of academic personnel takes responsibility for working with/for this growing body of UW faculty.
RECOMMENDATION (C.1)

Define more clearly in the Faculty Code and publicize what the benefits and privileges are of emeritus faculty as continuing members of the University Faculty.

Rationale: Emeritus faculty remain, officially, members of the University faculty (FCG Section 21-31) and while they no longer are given voting rights (or UW paycheck) they do retain certain benefits and privileges as members of the faculty. As reported in the Academic Personnel web page regarding “Emeritus and Retired Faculty Titles” (https://ap.washington.edu/ahr/working/retirement/designations/)

“Retired/Emeritus status provides substantial privileges to the University faculty member, including continuation of Library borrowing privileges, access to University email accounts, discount prices on University productions and museums, among others.” While the practical benefits to retirees are specifically enumerated, the vagueness of “among others” deserves attention, especially those that accrue to those with an emeritus appointment. It is not clear exactly what those privileges are and some clarification (perhaps in the Faculty Code) should be articulated. And, at least, it should be made clearer what roles these members of the faculty may play as continuing members of the University faculty, and (in that regard) what services and recognition they might expect from the Provost’s (or Dean’s) office. A useful model for a web page delineating the privileges and benefits of being emeritus can be seen in this example from the University of California, Berkeley:


RECOMMENDATION (C.2)

Ensure that formal notice of appointment as emeritus is sent to faculty members when it is approved by the President. This should be accompanied by a document articulating the benefits and privileges discussed in the preceding recommendation.

Rationale: Once appointments are approved by the requisite procedures, it is usual for official notice to be sent to the appointee. Even though their appointments are the result of faculty votes and approvals by department their chair, their dean, and the President, those appointed to the emeritus title are not regularly informed that they have been so appointed.

RECOMMENDATION (C.3)

Encourage the Secretary of the Faculty to publicize more broadly the opportunities for retired faculty to serve on Faculty Councils and on other committees of the University and its constituent units; and advise retired faculty of other opportunities as they become available.

Rationale: One denominated role for retired faculty is to serve on our Faculty Councils, and the UWRA has for a number of years recruited and nominated candidates to serve on these important bodies of faculty governance. It ought not, however, be the sole responsibility of the UWRA to seek out and encourage such collegial service; it should also be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Faculty and the leadership of the Faculty Senate to publicize to and recruit such retired faculty members to serve, as they do with other
members of the faculty. Also, emeritus faculty are eligible to serve as Conciliation Officers (FCG Section 27-41.A) and as members of the Adjudication Panel (FCG Section 28-33.B). Their experience and neutrality may be especially beneficial in dealing with cases involving collegial dispute.

**RECOMMENDATION (C.4)**

Initiate programs to encourage academic units to involve their retired faculty in the life of the units, not simply by including them in social events but also drawing on their accumulated experience and wisdom in other ways.

**Rationale:** The UW Retiree Relations office is overseen by the Associate Vice President of Alumni and Constituent Relations, who also serves as Executive Director of the Alumni Association. As Associate Vice President, he reports to the Vice President for University Advancement. The evidence of retirees’ philanthropic participation in contributions to the UW is impressive, well beyond the participation rates of current faculty and staff. It is clearly in the best interests of the UW to maintain (and expand) that channel of support and increasing the University’s openness to continued meaningful engagement is also beneficial to the retirees themselves, as it may be for their colleagues and students. Many retired faculty remain in the Seattle area and welcome their continued connection to the UW: they value their access to parking on campus and their inclusion in events sponsored by the departments, schools, colleges and the UW at large.

But retired faculty often wish to avail themselves of opportunities for other sorts of collegial engagements—serving on departmental committees, mentoring younger faculty, advising students, offering lectures or other presentations in a colleagues’ class, to mention a few. Retired faculty would also welcome opportunities to interact in less-structured ways with colleagues and students and efforts to provide space for such interactions would we welcome. We realize of course that providing individual office space would be prohibitively expensive in the constrained geography of the University, yet identifying shared, communal spaces suitable for temporary personal use might provide an attractive alternative and encourage and support personal engagement by retired faculty. These could be provided by departments or larger units, or even by the three UW campuses, along the lines of “commons” areas currently available to students in the Libraries and the HUB.

The UW Encore program (managed by UW Retiree Relations) has made efforts to identify and publicize opportunities for similar engagement for faculty and other retirees (e.g., the Husky Leadership Certificate) on campus and off. Complementing (or broadening) this program through outreach to academic units would open up additional opportunities for retired faculty to continue their long relationships with the colleagues and with the institution at large. These engagements will enhance the lives of our retired faculty and contribute to the life of the University as a whole. At virtually no cost to the institution the University can draw upon the accumulated expertise and wisdom of retired colleagues for service to the larger academic enterprise and the collegial workings of shared governance.