

RAQnews



President's Report

This year's AGM marked RAQ's 17th birthday and we have much to celebrate. RAQ's accomplishments this year were possible because of many months of effective advocacy by the Council, especially the Membership and Communications chairpersons (Donna Lounsbury and Elaine McDougall), whose work with Queen's representatives has successfully resolved several ongoing issues.

Our greatest achievement has been the production and distribution of new Queen's Retirees ID cards in partnership with Human Resources at Queen's. Since the University, some years ago, discontinued its long-standing practice of allowing staff and faculty to retain their employee cards upon retirement, these new cards are now essential to access most of the discounts and deals that current faculty and staff enjoy (and we anticipate negotiating for even more benefits and privileges in the coming year). As well, through RAQ's efforts, all retiring faculty and staff will now be able to retain their @queensu.ca email addresses if they wish.

It has also been a year of change. Our new Office Administrator, Cheryl Descent, has taken on additional duties, including revising RAQ's procedures in line with Queen's new financial and information requirements. We restructured the Nominating Committee membership and process giving Council greater flexibility in encouraging recent retirees to become involved (see page 3). Our new Council (below) very much looks forward to working with you, and on your behalf.

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Meet Your New 2019-2020 RAQ Council L to R: Marianne Lamb (RAQNews Editor; Assistant Webmaster), Donna Lounsbury (Membership Chair), Diane Kelly (Vice-President), Doug Boyd (Secretary), Eleanor Rogers (President), Bill Forbes (Treasurer; Pension & Benefits Committee Chair), Joan Stevenson, George Hood, Cheryl Descent (Administrator), Greg Lessard. Absent: Elaine McDougall, Sandra Olney (Events Coordinator).

Pension and Benefits Report

By the beginning of April, all RAQ members receiving a Queen's pension should have received in the mail a package containing a brochure entitled, "Proposed Transition to the University Pension Plan Ontario" for former members, retired persons & other persons who are non-employee members of the Queen's Pension Plan (QPP), and three Schedules (numbered 4, 5 and 6) (Schedules 1 – 3 were for Queen's employees). The brochure and Schedules 4 and 5 offer detailed explanations of what joining the University Pension Plan (UPP) would mean for us.

Here we can offer three answers to the question we are most often asked:

WOULD JOINING THE UPP AFFECT MY PENSION?

Short answer: **NO**.

Longer answer (courtesy of Bill Forbes): There is **NO IMPACT** on your pension. You will continue to get increases based on the excess interest approach in the QPP. Further, being part of a larger (\$10 billion) pool of assets should result in additional investment opportunities not available to smaller plans. (Emphasis added)

Still longer answer (courtesy of Steve Millan, Associate Vice-Principal, Human Resources): One of the central pillars of this process is the government's requirement that the past service benefits for pensioners (QPP) must be the same as in the new plan (UPP). This corresponds to the Pension Benefits Act generally which provides that accrued benefits can't be reduced once earned. In other words, **past service benefits (including indexing) for pensioners under the QPP are required to be replicated following conversion**. (Emphasis added)

For employees paying into the QPP at the time of conversion to the UPP, only future contributions into the UPP (as invested) will be administered under UPP rules; their pre-conversion assets in the QPP will be invested by the UPP but will continue to be administered according to QPP rules.

Based on everything we have seen about the UPP and its impact on us, the RAQ Pension & Benefits Committee sees no reason for our members and other retirees to object to joining the UPP. **We recommend that you DO NOT MAIL BACK Schedule 6 (the "I object..." form)**. If we do nothing, we are assumed to be voting to accept the proposed change.

QPP NEWS

Bob Weisnagel reports that the March investment return for the QPP was + 1.5%, bringing the cumulative results for the seven months of the current pension year into positive territory (+ 0.39%). Bob notes "returns for April look solidly positive" but details will not be available until late May/early June. As of publication, May's markets are volatile. March results are posted at <http://www.queensu.ca/humanresources/news/monthly-pension-update-20190510>.

BENEFITS NEWS

Queen's Human Resources Department has sent out a Request for Proposals to insurance providers who might administer the Queen's benefit package (including retiree benefits). When those proposals are received, HR will share the relevant details with us for our views.

As always, the Committee welcomes questions, comments, and information about problems from members of RAQ, which we will bring to our meetings with senior administrators of Queen's.

*RAQ P & B Committee: George Brandie (Chair), Chris Chapler,
Bill Forbes, Bruce Hutchinson, Sue Miklas & Joyce Zakos*

RAQ Membership News

The 2018/2019 Nominating Committee was chaired by Bill Leggett, Principal Emeritus. With several open spots on the RAQ Council, the committee had a challenging mandate which they conducted with diligence and energy throughout the late fall and early winter. Their task was to find new Council members with strong leadership skills, a willingness to make a serious contribution to RAQ's mission, a dedication to Queen's – and as we light-heartedly pointed out to Bill and his team early on, the additional quality of youthfulness should not be overlooked given RAQ's priority of attracting new retirees to RAQ.

The following three Queen's retirees (in reverse alphabetical order!), recommended by the Nominating Committee and approved by RAQ Council at its March 25th, 2019 meeting, were confirmed unanimously – and with a resounding ovation - at the Annual General Meeting in April:

Joan Stevenson

Professor Joan Stevenson was a full professor in biomechanics and ergonomics at Queen's University before retiring from the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies. She was the Director of the School for 5 years and then the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board for 11 years. Over her academic career she led numerous research teams on projects such as the biomechanical evaluation of spinal mechanics, development of ergonomic assistive devices for industry, and creation of objective measurement tools.

Diane Kelly

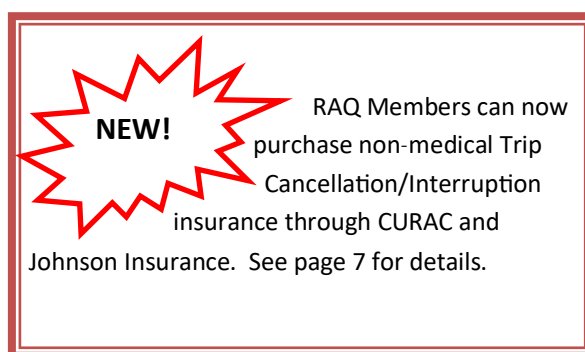
Diane received her BA and LLB from Queen's University and studied as well in the US, earning a Masters in Spanish from Middlebury College and pursuing a PhD from the University of Virginia. After her law degree, Diane joined

the firm of Cunningham Swan in Kingston. In 2007, Diane became Queen's full time in-house counsel. Since retirement in 2014, Diane has been active in the community as a volunteer. She served as a member of the board of the Kingston General Hospital during the period of integration with Hotel Dieu and is currently a member of the board of the 1000 Islands Playhouse and a member of the University Hospitals Kingston Foundation Capital Campaign.

George Hood

George comes from a family of Queen's graduates and is himself a graduate of Queen's (Arts '78, MPA '81) as well as a graduate from Western. From 1998-2006 George was Vice-Principal (Advancement) at Queen's University, and successfully ran the largest capital campaign in the university's history. Prior to this, he was Associate Vice-Principal (Research) at Queen's University and Director of the Centre for Resource Studies. He was also Skelton-Clark Fellow in the Department of Political Studies. Before joining Queen's, George spent more than a decade in senior positions with the Government of Saskatchewan. He is currently writing his fourth book and developing a sailing centre for Kingston.

Donna Lounsbury, RAQ Membership Chair



Welcome to New RAQ Members

Maxine Clarke (School of Medicine, Paediatrics); Geoffrey Hodgetts (School of Medicine, Family Medicine); George Hood (Advancement); Audrey & Richard Hunt (Biomedical & Molecular Sciences); Roberta Lamb (School of Drama & Music); Katie Legere (ITS); Shelagh McDonald; Marjorie Peart (Smith School of Business); Diane & Patrick Martin (School of Computing)

President's Report *(continued from page 1)*

Another significant development has been the strengthening of our ties to the University through the Queen's/RAQ Partnership, which now includes three Council members as well as Deputy Provost Teri Shearer and Associate VP Finance Steve Tanner. In a show of support for RAQ, the Provost's office has increased our annual base funding. Ongoing activities include the development of a RAQ Policy Handbook, a review of our Constitution to be undertaken by Diane Kelly and the production of a RAQ archive, possibly with the support of the Queen's archivist.

Our Council meeting following our very well-attended AGM was an energetic and imaginative discussion of priorities for the coming year. Increasing membership is top of our list since the larger our membership base, the greater our capacity to advocate on your behalf. Part of an upcoming membership campaign will be to increase the relevancy of RAQ to its members and to the University.

If you were lucky enough to hear our current RAQ Bursary recipient, Alison Quinn, speak at the AGM, you know what a difference our contribution has made in the lives of the award winners. The original amount of our bursary runs out in three years, so we will be encouraging ongoing contributions to this fund so that we can continue our legacy.

There are many people to thank for what they have done to bring us to this exciting point in our history. Outgoing Council members have given many years of service to RAQ: David McLay, a loyal and dependable member; Sue Miklas, our constitutional expert and member of the P & B committee; and Patrick Oosthuizen, who has served as Vice President, President, Past President, and RAQ Senate Observer, a role he'll continue to have as an ex-officio member of Council. Cherrilyn Yalin has been RAQ's secretary for 10 years, taking and distributing minutes and reports, acting as the keeper of archives, reminding us of meetings and other responsibilities, and keeping us in order. I am especially appreciative of her personal support and for her many suggestions that have helped make RAQ a successful organization.

George Brandie will retire from his position as Chair of the RAQ Pensions and Benefits Committee on July 1st. George has been a stalwart supporter of RAQ in many projects. He has been our CURAC representative for years, our liaison with Collette Travel, and has been a source of counsel and guidance for all Council members.

The individual reports of the current committee chairpersons presented at the AGM indicate how engaged and energetic Council members are and how hard they've worked to enliven and strengthen RAQ. We're grateful to them for their loyalty and appreciative of their willingness to continue.

Finally, we recognize the work Cheryl Descent, our Office Administrator has done in every aspect of RAQ's operation: she coordinates RAQ's association with Financial Services, with Human Resources, the Provost's Office, the University Club, and with our members. She also supports the work of all the Council officers and committees.

We are proud to celebrate another honour for our founder and Honorary President, John Meisel. Queen's has dedicated the wrought iron gate between Dunning Hall and Richardson Hall to Professor Meisel, who is "one of the university's all-time great professors," and whom Peter Newman once called, "a national treasure."

New and exciting ideas about progress and change will be our focus in the coming year, and I believe we have an excellent group to implement them. I hope you are as enthusiastic as I am about the possibilities and that you will help to make them a reality.

Eleanor Rogers, RAQ president

Annual General Meeting

More than 65 members attended the RAQ AGM on April 29th at the University Club. The conversation was excellent, the luncheon was wonderful (and at a new low price!) and the speakers were inspiring.

Dr Barbara Crow, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science (right) was RAQ's keynote speaker, and she focused on the many ways in which RAQ Members can continue to contribute to university life and Queen's continued improvement. While this is a time of difficult challenges for the University due to budget cut-backs, Dean Crow outlined her strategic plan for the Faculty and their many accomplishments to date.



Alison Quinn (below left, and some of her work below centre and right), BFA and BEd candidate, is this year's RAQ Bursary recipient. In a heartfelt talk, Alison spoke to the many challenges of being a mature student (parenthood, finances, coordinating full-time studies with a partner who is working full-time, and commuting to name a few!). She also described her personal struggles as a youth with mental health issues, and the difficulties related to poverty, mental health issues and substance abuse which are faced by many students. Alison noted that RAQ's bursary has helped to ease her own financial obligations somewhat and now she is in a position to pursue her goals: to continue her art practice and to help youth develop through engagement with art.



Art courtesy of Alison Quinn. Centre right: The Good Wife's Guide (print, waterless lithography); far right: Composite Fragility (painting, oil).

A New Honour for RAQ's Founding President, John Meisel

The black, wrought iron gate located between Dunning Hall and Richardson Hall was recently named in honour of one of Queen's great professors, and the first President of RAQ, John Meisel. Professor Emeritus Meisel, who first arrived at Queen's in 1949, was one of Canada's most influential political scientists. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1989, and in 1999 was promoted to Companion, the highest grade in the Order. Professor Emeritus Meisel continues to serve as RAQ's Honorary President. More information on the dedication, and Professor Emeritus Meisel are at:

https://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/gate-named-honour-john-meisel?utm_source=e-queens-gazette_optin



RAQ Members Giving Back

Bruce Hutchinson is InSPIRED!

Having been raised on a small farm in Ontario, and coming from a family engaged in community organizations, I find reward in working with groups of people to achieve measureable goals. In my work at Queen's as Director of University Research Services and Associate VP (Research), I found great pleasure in helping groups of researchers work together on multidisciplinary grants in a number of different fields. So, when I retired, I knew I wanted to do more work with groups of people on projects that built community....in this case on the reimagining of the historic building, Sydenham Street United Church, as a community hub serving needs beyond its traditional role as a place of worship. This iconic building is now known as "The Spire".

Like many mainline churches, attendance at Sydenham Street United is not what it used to be – yet this heritage building has been serving the community in many ways since 1852 and contributes to Kingston's viability as a tourist and business destination. Although the congregation has a clear mission, it became obvious that something different needed to be done to be sustainable in the long-term and to continue to operate as a beautiful and viable space that contributed beyond the congregation and would serve as a genuine community hub.

In 2013, the congregation tasked a group of congregants plus members of the community outside the church in imaging a role for this heritage building as a hub serving many groups, including the congregation. In other words, the congregation wanted to intentionally share the building with the community. For many years, of course, groups have been using the building – a self-help group and Kingston Choral Society since the 60's, Cantabile Choirs for over 20 years, Kingston Canadian Film Festival for over ten years and others – but this would be an explicit invitation to the community to share in the use and support of the space.

While the building had been kept in good condition, there were improvements that were required to bring it up to modern standards. The building has only three levels,

with kitchens on two of these, but we needed to improve accessibility and add more washrooms to serve the up to 850 people using the performance hall/sanctuary. We conducted a successful feasibility study to determine if we could raise \$1,000,000 or more for this building project. We also asked people what name they would want to have for the renovated building. The Spire was the one chosen. Hence "The Spire" and the organization "Friends of The Spire Inc." were born!!



The Spire Today

Since the fall of 2017, Friends of The Spire have raised close to our goal (\$700,000 from congregants and \$300,000 in private donations and grants from federal, provincial and private foundations), installed an elevator, installed 16 washroom stalls (including an accessible washroom on the main and upper levels) and raised funds

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Member Information & Upcoming Events

JUNE 18, 2019

Lunchtime Guest Series at the University Club

Topic and speaker (CHANGE!) *Eroding the presumption of innocence: bail and pre-trial detention in Canada*
Dr Nicole Myers, Queen's Sociology

Time: noon. Cost \$15 pp (includes lunch).
To reserve, contact Valerie at
admuclub@queensu.ca, or 613-533-2846.



Upcoming RAQ June Events

JUNE 21, 2019 *rain or shine!*

Pot-Luck Picnic at Queen's Biology Station—Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre.

Meet and Greet: 11:00 a.m. Lunch: 12:00 noon; cost \$10.

To register for the Picnic, contact Cheryl at RAQ@queensu.ca, or 613-533-6986.



NEW! CURAC offers RAQ members Trip Cancellation/ Trip Interruption Insurance

CURAC (College and Universities Retiree Associations of Canada) has just (April 2019) signed an agreement with Johnson Insurance to make Johnson's new Trip Cancellation/ Trip Interruption Insurance available to individuals affiliated with CURAC. RAQ has been a member of CURAC since its founding, so this offer is now available to RAQ members.

This policy is NOT medical insurance and is not offered through Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO). If you are already paying for RTO's Extended Medical Insurance, you already have the Travel Insurance/Cancellation coverage

included in that plan. For those who already have out-of-province medical insurance, Johnson also offers an excellent stand-alone trip cancellation & trip interruption insurance. This insurance covers \$12,000 per person per trip for an unlimited number of trips per year at an **annual premium of \$88** to cover an individual, a couple or a family. Extended family members or friends of CURAC members are also eligible to enroll. This insurance may be attractive to individuals who have existing trip cancellation/interruption insurance with lower limits than they would like. This new plan also covers lost, stolen, or damaged luggage.

I recommend that you carefully read the details of what this plan covers (and does not cover) before deciding whether this plan is for you. If you decide that it is, then download, print, complete and mail in the Application Form. Please note, this is Group Insurance, so where the form asks for "Name of your Employer / Association", enter "CURAC – Retirees' Association of Queen's".

The PDFs for the Details and the Application Form are available at <https://www.queensu.ca/retirees/deals-discounts/travel-trip-cancelation-insurance> (under the "Deals & Discounts" tab of the RAQ website).

George Brandie, RAQ CURAC Delegate

The Spire *(continued from page 6)*

to complete accessibility from the street at the William Street door (scheduled for completion this year). In addition, Friends of The Spire Inc. has incorporated, received charitable status and is engaged with raising funds for capital and maintenance improvements to, and participating in the administration of The Spire. An endowment fund has been established at the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area, the income from which goes to support maintenance projects at The Spire. As one of the community members on our board says, “it is so satisfying to have our dreams for the building be validated by grant issuers and other donors. We are definitely on the right track with re-purposing and visioning for this building”.

That “right track” has resulted already in an average of about 1,000 people visits per week. People of all ages, backgrounds, and convictions gather to celebrate the arts, to sing, to act, to dance, to find safe harbor and to learn together. During this past December alone about 10,000 people in choirs, rehearsals, and other groups participated in activities in The Spire. Contributing to that number were some sold out events for Christmas concerts attended by Kingstonians of many walks of life. In addition, The Spire hosts more than 20 not-for-profit organizations. A sincere thank you to all who have donated, talked about and attended functions at this flourishing site – The Spire.



As The Spire continues to transform and open its doors to ever-broadening uses and people, it has a renewed life as a welcoming place to gather within our community and an even stronger beacon of hope, inspiration, and joy.

The Spire - a rewarding project achieved by a relatively small number of very committed people!!! Please check out The Spire web site at <https://www.thespirekingston.org>, find us on Facebook, or attend an event held at The Spire. If you would like more information, or to find out how to contribute to the sustainability of this landmark heritage building, you can contact me directly at bruce@thespirekingston.org.

Bruce Hutchinson, RAQ Member and Chair, Friends of The Spire Inc.

Photos of The Spire by Jennifer McKendry

Join Us!

RAQ Membership is Important—We Are Stronger Together! Start or renew your RAQ Membership today. Download the Membership Form from our website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/retirees/> or contact Cheryl Descent at RAQ@queensu.ca

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