UC Berkeley Emeriti Association

Annual Report to CUCEA, 2025–26

Board activities, September 2025 through September 2026

Officers and Board

Rick Van Sluyters became President in July 2025, succeeding G. Steven Martin, who continues as Immediate Past President. Fiona Doyle serves as First Vice President and Treasurer, Keith Gilless as Second Vice President, and Barbara Gross Davis as Secretary. The Executive Committee comprises the president, vice presidents, treasurer and Angy Stacy and Lee Friedman, chairs of the Emeriti Academy and Emeriti Representatives committees (respectively). It is anticipated that Martha Olney will succeed Fiona Doyle as Treasurer.

The Board met four times during the year and will continue to meet four times annually. Berkeley had 1,082 emeriti faculty as of July 1, 2026, across 64 units.

Programs

Four Saturday lecture-luncheons were held: David Ackerly, Dean of the Rausser College of Natural Resources, on the future of California; Philip Stark (Statistics) on the trustworthiness of election outcomes; Susan Hyde (Political Science) on how threats to democracy affect international relations; and Jan Engelmann (Psychology) on the evolution of human intelligence. Attendance held up well, and no-shows have largely ceased since registrants were told they are liable for the cost if they do not appear.

As a pilot of a different format, the Association replaced its third spring event with a field trip to the UC Botanical Garden in May, attended by 49 members and guests. The Board judged it a success and is considering further excursions, while affirming that lecture-luncheons remain the core of the program. Five are scheduled for 2026–27, and the Association has joined the other Berkeley retiree organizations in sponsoring private curator-led tours of a Berkeley Art Museum-Pacific Film Archive exhibition.

Best Practices for Emeriti Inclusion

The Association's principal accomplishment this year was the production of a report entitled "Best Practices for Emeriti Accommodation and Inclusion in Departmental, School, and College Activities." This grew out of a 2025 survey by the Emeriti Representatives Committee that found wide variation in departmental practices, some of which did not align with university guidelines. The report sets out 25 recommended practices in areas such as space, voting, recognition and related matters, and leaves each unit to decide which to adopt. It is posted on the Retirement Center website and is being presented to the Council of Deans and in the training program for new deans and chairs. CUCEA has expressed interest, and we would be glad to share it with colleagues on other campuses. Coverage remains a concern: only 30 of Berkeley's 64 units currently have an emeriti representative.

Grants and Awards

The Emeriti Research Grant program is supported by an annual campus allocation of $50,000 and income from the Harry and Jane Scheiber Emeriti Research Fund. The fall call drew 38 applications, all funded at $1,000, and a second round followed in the spring; the committee is considering raising the award. Professor Steven Shortell (Public Health) was named Emeritus of the Year and Professor Alain de Janvry received the Constantine Panunzio Distinguished Emeritus Award; both were honored at a ceremony in September attended by the Chancellor.

The Emeriti Academy

The Academy continued to expand its student engagement work. Its "Choosing My Major" project was featured in *California* magazine, and the associated seminar enrolled 18 students. With the Transfer Student Center, it hosted panels on office hours and on research, after which eleven students were matched with emeriti for one-on-one coaching. It also held a dinner for first-generation transfer students, took part in the Educational Opportunity Program's Power in Community Day, mounted two graduate-student panels, and supplied reviewers for the UC grant program for assistant professors.

Legacy Project

This project records hour-long video interviews of emeriti faculty, each conducted by a faculty colleague. Nineteen interviews are now posted on the Retirement Center website. A pilot joint-conversation format, in which two emerita psychologists interviewed each other, worked well and will likely be repeated. Each interview costs about $1,000 to produce; departments have contributed $18,000 to date. The committee is also consulting UC Davis, whose program has recorded more than 525 interviews since 1993.

Health Benefits and Retiree Services

Rehired retirees. Berkeley is now in compliance with the federal rules that were the subject of last year's concern. Retirees rehired within 26 weeks of retirement who meet the eligibility criteria are offered faculty and staff coverage, and retiree medical enrollment is then suspended.

Survivor benefits. Survivors have waited up to six months for benefits to which they are entitled, where CalPERS pays within about thirty days.

Durable power of attorney. It is recommended that retirees file a UCRP Special Durable Power of Attorney with the Retirement Administration Service Center, since a general power of attorney may lack the necessary authority.

Security and access. A UC health insurance database held by a third-party vendor was breached, and the notices sent out did not clearly identify UC. Emeriti still lack a dedicated contact for resolving insurance problems.

Coverage. Premiums will rise for 2027 while plan offerings remain unchanged, and dental coverage remains unsatisfactory. In the comprehensive review of the health care program in 2027, the hope is for the retention of multiple plan options, including both Medicare Advantage and traditional Medicare.

Finances

Annual operating expenses are approximately $26,000, and the Association is in sound financial condition, holding some $75,000 across its research grant, Association, Legacy Project and bank accounts as of September 30, 2026. Reduced administrative support from the campus has required the Association to help fund Retirement Center staffing, to which it contributed $23,356 for 2026–27, drawn largely from the spring Big Give campaign.

Age-Friendly University Designation

UC Berkeley was recognized during the year as an Age-Friendly University by the Age-Friendly University Global Network, the second UC campus to do so after UCLA. It is co-led by the Berkeley Retirement Center and OLLI@Berkeley and should strengthen the integration of older adults into teaching, learning and research.

Matters of Systemwide Interest

Memorial resolutions. The Office of the President will no longer archive or accept memorial resolutions and has indicated that campuses should take responsibility for their own. Berkeley accounts for roughly half of all such resolutions and Davis for about a quarter, so the change falls unevenly. Berkeley has appointed a point person to determine where resolutions should be archived and whether common standards are needed.

The Eleventh Campus. The eleventh triennial survey drew 1,403 respondents systemwide and found that UC emeriti taught at least 1,810 courses, published more than 3,600 journal articles and donated over $136 million to the University during 2021–24. Berkeley has adopted CUCEA's Qualtrics summaries in place of independent analysis by the Retirement Center.

Other matters. The Association supports the joint CUCEA and CUCRA initiative to secure permanent email access for emeriti and staff retirees. Berkeley will host the joint fall meeting of CUCEA and CUCRA on October 28 and 29, 2026.

Work in Progress

Two initiatives continue into the coming year: a UCBEA Handbook modeled on the UC Davis manual and a review of the bylaws to align them with current practice.

Richard Van Sluyters
President, UC Berkeley Emeriti Association
October 18, 2026