



Emeriti & Retirees Association

CONNECTIONS

Staying Connected to Our Campus Community

Newsletter #22 Fall 2023

Mission Statement

The Fresno State Emeriti and Retirees Association (ERA) consists of Emeriti professors, retired faculty, librarians, and administrators who support the continuation of scholarly and creative activities, maintain an active connection with the campus and use their expertise and talents as an ongoing resource for the University. ERA also seeks to advocate for the interests of its members.

ERA Executive Committee

President

David Ross
Foreign Languages

Vice President

Ron Johnson
Theater Arts

Secretary/Treasurer

Joanne Schroll
Kinesiology

Newsletter Editor

Robin Chiero
Curriculum & Instruction

State Council Representative

Dave Quadro
Communications

Member

Candace Egan
Media Communications &
Journalism

Member

Berta Gonzalez
Curriculum & Instruction

Member

Robert Mikell
Ethnic Studies

Fall Luncheon Information

Friday, November 3, 2023
11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Smittcamp Alumni House

11:30 – Social
12:00 – Lunch

Lecture and Performance
Provided by Acoustic Alchemy

Reservations Must Be Made
RSVP to David Ross at davidro@mail.fresnostate.edu
by October 27

(Note: If you have any dietary requirements,
please indicate in your RSVP)

If you know a current Ferper, or an Emeritus
or Emerita who is not yet an ERA member,
please consider inviting that person to attend.

We Look Forward to Seeing You in November!

ERA Updates

Our new ERA Website is live! You can learn more about the organization and its members, coming events and access digital copies of Connections and other resources of interest to our members and potential members. Check us out at <https://orgs.fresnostate.edu/erfa/>

ERA Executive Committee urgently requires one or two additional members. We meet twice each semester for planning sessions of one or two hours. If you would like to join us, please contact ERA president, David Ross, by email, davidro@mail.fresnostate.edu, or call 559-433-4764.

Celtic Alchemy



The Band

Celtic Alchemy is an acoustic trio comprised of Paddy Myers (lead vocals and guitar), David Sarkisian (guitar, mandolin, banjo, bass, and vocals), and Don Priest (assorted percussion and vocals).

In addition to our extensive Irish playlist, we also explore other musical genres, making our shows a mix of blues, country, a taste of jazz and a sampling of classic rock, plus our own versions of contemporary tunes by Mumford and Sons, The Dead South, The Decemberists, and a few others.

The Members

Paddy Myers, of Irish descent (“Me Mam’s from Tubergregan”), spent many Easter holidays in and around Dublin listening to Irish music in the local pubs. Now it’s in his veins. He has an extensive theatre background on numerous stages around the Valley, both in Broadway musicals and plays, which accounts for his unique storytelling ability. He also can be heard doing voiceovers for various companies on the radio.

David Sarkisian started playing guitar when he was 8 years old. Over the years he played in pit bands for various theatrical productions, learning a new stringed instrument when necessary, including banjo, mandolin, and bass. Seems he was destined to play in an Irish band. In November 2021, he answered the call from his long-time friend, Paddy Myers, and joined in the Celtic Alchemy merriment.

Every Irish band needs a priest, and we are fortunate to have “The Percussionator” Don Priest holding down the groove. An original member of the band, Don’s musical journey also began at an early age by sitting in on percussion with uncles and cousins at family gatherings, then playing drums and sax in high school. Now his assortment of drums, spoons, washboard and other ‘banging toys’ adds color and texture to our sound.

Our main goal is to have fun playing music and making sure our audiences enjoy themselves as we bring them along for the ride.

By Robert Mikell

The Second Chapter



FADE UP - To a view of the island of Ischia, off the coast of Italy north of Naples. Across a causeway is a rocky islet. High above sits Albergo il Monastero al castello. For the next seven days this 16th century former convent is the location where I will attend the Rocaberti Writers Retreat.

Finally. I’ve been waiting three years for face-to-face retreats to resume. I’m here to be mentored in screenwriting by Joan Lane who originally developed the movie, ‘The Kings Speech’. Due to the pandemic delay I’m no longer an absolute beginner and am bringing my fourth script, a TV pilot titled ‘Second Set’.

‘Second Set’ aptly symbolizes the second career in screenwriting I’ve embarked upon during my retirement. The creative outlet of screenwriting is highly stimulating and I’m enjoying the people I’ve met and travels to multiple retreats in Europe and the U.S.

If you’d like to hear more about my experience, then mark your calendars for the ERA’s Thriving In Retirement mini-conference on April 12, 2024, 8:30 am to 12:00 pm. I’ll be part of the Second Chapters panel where several retired faculty members will share their after-retirement endeavors. Look for more information about the conference and to register next spring.

By Candace Egan

New Face on Campus

The Emeriti and Retirees Association (ERA) had the opportunity to tour the new Resnick Student Union in last spring. During our tour, Dr. Kent Willis, who oversees 300 employees and staff and had been in his new position two months, came and met our group. We were happy to meet him. We hope this article provides you with a broader scope and perspective about the work in the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. Dr. Willis, a native from Texas, previously worked in the University of Texas system. He brings an extensive background in student services and higher education. The Student Affairs Division at Fresno State houses student service offices and programs that include enrollment, campus discipline, academic advising, migrant services, counseling, student activities and the two student unions.



We recently had the opportunity to discuss various topics, as well as ideas about collaboration with Schools and Colleges. Dr. Willis acknowledges the value and expertise of Emeriti and retired faculty. He recognized that retired faculty represent an enormous resource base for current students, stating that “Emeriti faculty are valuable partners to help propel the university forward and we welcome their input, ideas, and participation as key stakeholders.”

Among his priorities are staff development and reimagining the student experience. He said, “It is also my goal to roll out a new divisional plan with learning outcomes for student affairs and enrollment management that develops student affairs educators who understand the learning process and have the ability to support students and recognize faculty expertise as the lifeblood of a strong community of learners.”

Asked about ways to help the most vulnerable students who face numerous challenges, his immediate response was “We have already revamped the basic needs services under a newly-configured Office of Essential Needs. This office consolidates services like money management, food security, housing assistance, mentorship and general holistic case management. “

Dr. Willis’ views on the importance of transparency and accountability as related to students, faculty and staff safety measures are clear from his following statement: “As a member of the President’s leadership team, I share his commitment to creating a culture of accountability and transparent values. Building and maintaining a safe and supportive campus environment for all faculty and staff requires an all-hands-on deck approach. I believe that we’re moving in the right direction.”

When asked what contributions Emeriti and retired faculty can make to the Division of Student Affairs, his comment was as follows: “Emeriti faculty would be awesome guest lecturers, mentors and advisors to various initiatives like two of our new areas that have been added to the DREAM Success Center on campus. The two new centers focus on Black Student Success, and Southeast Asian Student Success. These centers join the existing Native American Initiative and the DREAM Success Center.”

He concluded his message to ERA members with: “It is my personal goal and commitment to the Emeriti faculty to be open to collaboration with ideas and constructive feedback. I believe it takes the entire campus community to create transformative student experience and would be wonderful to have guest lectures, advice and participation whenever and however possible. I am grateful to the ERA members and welcome feedback and ideas about building a strong and supportive Division of Student Affairs and Management that can propel students forward preparing them to engage meaningfully with faculty. “

By Berta González

ERA welcomes Emeriti Faculty & Retirees who joined CSU-ERFSA and the Fresno State Chapter in Spring and Fall 2023

Mary D. Barakzai
College of Health and Human Services
Professor of Nursing

Rose Marie Kuhn
College of Arts and Humanities
Professor of French

Susan Geringer
Craig School of Business
Professor of Marketing and Logistics

Ellen Lipp
College of Arts and Humanities
Professor of Linguistics

Tony T. Vang
Kremen School of Education and Human Development
Professor of Bilingual Certification and Multilingual Education

President's Report: Meeting with Dr. Schmidtke, AVP for Faculty Affairs

On June 14, 2023, Dave Quadro and I attended a productive meeting with Dr. James Schmidtke, Interim Associate Vice-President for Faculty Affairs. At this meeting we had an opportunity to share with him important background information concerning the Emeriti and Retired Faculty Association (ERA)'s previous relationship with his office, and to present our need for more timely information concerning those faculty who are beginning to participate in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) as emeriti, and those who are retiring without involvement in the FERP program.

By way of background, prior to the advent of Covid 19, we had a good working relationship with the Faculty Affairs Office. They paid for our mailings and, for a time, provided us with retiree list. After Covid, because of changes in administration and staff, we no longer had that connection until we undertook this effort to reestablish it.

At present, we must wait many months to obtain this information from the Office of the Chancellor via the system-wide, CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association (ERFSA) Office. We explained to Dr. Schmidtke how important it would be to receive the same information directly and much earlier from Faculty Affairs in order to bolster our efforts to recruit new members to ERA.

We were pleased that Dr. Schmidtke agreed to our request for a list of new participants in the FERP program as well as new retirees, to be provided at the end of each semester. He also agreed to provide a list of those on FERP and retirees from the past five years for our use in recruitment.

Near the end of our meeting, Dr. Schmidtke mentioned that he may wish to include a representative from ERA at new faculty or retiring faculty orientations in the future. As president of the ERA, I indicated that I would be available to assist in presenting our organization, as needed. It is encouraging to note that we should experience excellent cooperation in the future from the Office of Faculty Affairs.

By David Ross and Dave Quadro

Looking Back

Fall 2022 Luncheon

At our Fall 2022 luncheon we were treated to a delicious lunch and a wonderful presentation by Juan Felipe Herrera. It was also a good opportunity to catch up with other members of ERA.



Looking Forward

Save the Dates!

- Spring 2024 Luncheon on May 22. Details in the Spring issue of Connections.
- Thriving in Retirement Mini-Conference on April 12, 2024 from 8:30 am to noon. An interesting and informative morning with speakers, retirement resources and ideas, and opportunities for conversation and Q&A.

Become a Connections Contributor

- Do you have a suggestion for a future Connections article? Would you consider sharing your story in a future edition of Connections?
- Email robinc@mail.fresnostate.edu. I look forward to hearing from you!

Connections Staff

Writer/Editor – Robin Chiero

Graphic Designer – J.T. Garcia

Contributors-

David Ross
Candice Egan
Berta Gonzalez
Robert Mikell
David Quadro

IN MEMORIAM 2023 ERA- Fresno Chapter Members

Robert Kittredge
1969-1992 (23 years of service)
Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment
Management
Counseling and Psychological Services
Passed October 16, 2022

Rolland "Woody" Hurst
1968-1984 (17 years of service)
College of Arts and Humanities
Professor of Music
Passed January 16, 2023