

LIRA President Richard Grove interview in the Chelmsford Independent Feb 19, 2018

Please tell me about your role as president of the board of LIRA.

The board of LIRA coordinates work on curriculum, finances, publicity, newsletter, and scholarships. Each year LIRA awards four \$1500 scholarships to UMass Lowell students. I also work with our partners UMass Lowell Community Relations and Alumni Relations.

How and when did you get involved?

I joined LIRA in 2011 after I retired from Intel (and DEC). That first year I participated in the Great Decisions foreign policy discussion, the book group and a course on American labor history (and the 1912 Lawrence “Bread and Roses” strike). In 2013 I was elected vice president of LIRA and in 2015 president.

What is LIRA's main goal and what does it offer?

LIRA is the “Learning In Retirement Association” and our central focus is on **learning**. Our philosophy is to provide college-level learning experiences for all our members, regardless of previous educational background. Many of our classes are taught by members and some are taught by UMass Lowell professors. The eight-week spring semester runs from March 12th to May 4th. Classes include American history, role of the US Congress, a math survey, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, the story of the Bible, and Great Decisions foreign policy discussions. The Arts & Music program has visits to galleries, museums and the Boston Symphony.

You also present a course through LIRA, please tell me more about that.

I lead the Great Decisions foreign policy discussion which is offered every semester. We use a study guide published by the Foreign Policy Association of America. This spring we will discuss The Waning of Pax Americana, Russia’s Foreign Policy, China’s Geopolitics, and Media and Foreign Policy. The Chelmsford Library Friday lecture series will also cover these topics.

Where do participants come from?

We have 135 members of whom 46% live in Chelmsford, 17% live in Lowell, and the others come from 14 surrounding communities. Our members have diverse backgrounds as teachers, managers, scientists, engineers and medical professionals. All share a love for learning.

What do you think is most important for communities to know about LIRA?

We want to share the joy of continuing to grow in retirement, learning new things, exploring new domains and teaching. LIRA offers a rich curriculum for a modest annual membership fee. We welcome new members. Our summer (June-July) intersession programs are free and open to the public.

Why is LIRA's mission important and what are your hopes for its future?

In retirement you can explore new ideas and domains that you didn't have time for when you were working full time. There are more than 240 Lifelong Learning programs at universities across the country. We hope that LIRA will continue to be a vibrant growing community as we serve more retirees.

For those who want to learn more, how can they get in touch?

See the LIRA website www.uml.edu/Community/LIRA for information on LIRA programs, membership and newsletters. The March 1st newsletter will have spring semester course descriptions. You can register for the spring semester at the general membership meeting Wednesday March 7th.