The UCR Emeriti Association has had a difficult half year despite a number of minor achievements. Our focus, working closely with the UCR Retirees’ Association, has been on establishing a retirement center with director, comparable to what other UC campuses have gained, but we have had a singular lack of success. We initially requested a full-time director with a sizable retirement center (with support from Human resources, which provided an elaborate proposal modeled largely on UCB’s center). The Chancellor showed no interest, proposing rather that we raise the quarter-million dollars plus to rehabilitate an ancient structure on campus. The problems with this were (1) the building was too small to provide more than an administrative center and would require a sizable addition to provide a room for lectures, meetings and social activities (bringing the total to more than half a million dollars), and (2) the campus has a long history of treating its emeriti and retirees even worse than it treats its faculty and staff. Given this history—and the lack of administrative support we have without a retirement center director—it boggles the imagination to suppose we could generate the warm feelings among emeriti and retirees to generate sizable donations.

Under these circumstances, we came back with a proposal to begin with a part-time director and the use of a small office that the head of Human Resources indicated she would provide us without charge. The amount of our request was thereby reduced from about $200,000 to $50,000.

Following a spring 2018 meeting of the entire 8-member UCREA Board of Directors with the newly appointed Provost, Cindy Larive, we did have a moment of hope. Provost Larive had been appointed on an interim basis from the faculty following a faculty uprising in the late fall of 2016 that led to the resignation of the Provost the Chancellor had
brought in from Florida. The Chancellor appointed Prof. Larive on an interim basis with an intention to undertake a national search for a new provost, but liked her work sufficiently to forego the search and remove the “interim” part of her title at the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year. Provost Larive had earlier indicated her support for UCREA, mentioning that she herself expected to become an emerita in the future. At her meeting with the UCREA Board last spring, she indicated sympathy with our (reduced) proposal, and asked us to provide her with a more detailed expenditure plan for a three-year trial period. At that point we felt that it was just a matter of time until our proposal was accepted formally, and we even began asking a retiree if she might be interested in being the founding director on a part-time basis.

When three of us (Bob Daly, UCRRRA President, Doug Mitchell, UCREA President-elect, and myself) met in July with Provost Larive, however, we received the bad news that UCR lacks the funds to support our proposal; we are quite certain that it was the Chancellor who axed it. Provost Larive did, however, indicate support for our efforts in various ways. She offered to have her personal assistant spend 2 hours per week helping us, and arranged for us to meet with the heads of University Extension and the lifelong learning institute to explore ways in which they might support us (and she herself attended the meeting). We already have 2 hours per week from someone in Human Resources, but the additional support is making it possible for us to resume our quarterly newsletter, Tower Talk, emailed to emeriti and retirees (beginning next month) and to begin revamping our web pages. Meanwhile, discussions with the Dean of Extension and the head of the lifelong learning institute are continuing.

We were also pleased that the April 2018 CUCEA/CUCRA meetings at the Mission Inn were reasonably successful, thanks to the efforts of most of the UCREA and UCRRA board members. Without a center director to take the leading role, the meetings required a large-scale
collective effort. During the current academic year, we are planning to make a redoubled effort to convince the UCR administration to accept our proposal. While the Committee on Faculty Welfare was a strong supporter, we believe that the Executive Council, its staff counterpart, and the Academic Senate as a whole could be much more assertive in their support. Moreover, we are now in the midst of our “Virtual Eleventh Campus” survey, led by Doug Mitchell, and we plan to include the results when we next approach the Provost.

Victor D. Lippit
President, UCR Emeriti Association