Policies for Membership Drives & Event Mailings
Discussion Paper

In order to give guidance to those who are preparing mailings for membership drives, events, and other purposes, there is a need for clear policies on when and to whom the ASURA mails.

I. Background:

We currently use a database and two listservs (e-mail distribution lists maintained on a server) for all ASURA mailings.

- The database contains records for all current members and for various other people whose names and addresses came from miscellaneous office records, including Corrinne’s Rolodex. These, captured mainly by Dave Scheatzle, are apparently a mixture of people who’ve had some sort of association, formal or informal, with the ASURA in the past.

- The listserv ASURET has all current members and again various other people who came from “somewhere”. The other listserv, ASURABD, is meant to be a mailing list that can replace the one Maxine uses for Board meeting and related business.

For last year’s membership drive, we mailed to everyone in the database in May, and to a list of new retirees obtained from Human Resources in July (I believe).

For this year’s events, we are mailing only to members, except that e-mail reminders will go out to the wider set of people currently in the ASURET listserv.

Proposed by Connie McNeill, 10/3/2008
II. Proposed Policy for Membership Drive Mailings

In April of each year, mail membership solicitation information to:
   1. All who have retired from ASU in the current and prior 3 fiscal years, to the extent that we can identify them and to the extent that we have functional mailing or e-mail addresses for them.
   2. All others (spouses of deceased members, associate members) who are current members or who have been members in the prior 3 fiscal years.

In July of each year, mail membership solicitation information to:
   1. Those who retired from ASU from April through June of the current year, i.e. since we last got a list from HR.
   2. Those included in the April mailing who have not sent in registration forms and dues for the current year.

Pro’s:
   1. Including past retirees will give us a larger pool of potential members than we currently are using for each mailing. Many retirees may be too busy when they first retire to want to consider membership, but may be interested after having been retired for a year or two.
   2. We would be in a position to reach past retirees who are not members with any urgent information, such as a potential change in retiree benefits. This might increase ASURA’s ability to influence outcomes.

Con’s:
   1. It would cost more in supplies and postage to mail to a larger group. Currently, mailing costs are picked up by the VP of Public Affairs, but we never know whether that will continue.
   2. We may have difficulty initially in obtaining the names, retirement dates, and contact information of retirees for the past 3 fiscal years. This would be a short-term problem, since we will grow our history over time, assuming HR continues to provide us with lists of new retirees.
   3. We will likely have a larger percentage of bad addresses than we currently do, since some addresses may be older, and since we’ll have more people whose addresses are changing as they move around. However, we do have good procedures for dealing with bad addresses.

Proposed by Connie McNeill, 10/3/2008
III. Proposed Policy for Event Mailings:

Initially mail only to current members. Make sure mailings are clear that members’ partners are welcome at all ASURA events (except that they cannot vote at the Annual Meeting).

At the organizers’ option, if an event is in danger of being canceled for lack of enrollment, send an e-mail reminder to the entire population for whom we have e-mail addresses.

Pro’s:
1. Makes sure that members have “first crack” at ASURA events.
2. Allows events which have been planned an opportunity to appeal to a larger population if necessary, and thereby not waste the effort put in by planners.
3. May increase favorable opinion of ASURA by non-members, and thereby encourage future registrations.
4. Avoids extra mailing expense for the non-members, since only e-mail is used for them.

Con’s:
1. The restriction of using e-mail only for non-member advertising may substantially reduce the population reached.
2. We may not want to dilute the value of membership by opening events to non-members.

Proposed by Connie McNeill, 10/3/2008