

**The Association of The University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)
Executive Board Meeting, February 23, 2017
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium**

- I. Call to order. The Board meeting was called to order on February 23rd by President Diane Vukovich at 10:00am.**
- A. Others present included Bob Blankenship, Ali Hajjafar John Heminger, Rita Klein, Ed Lasher, Velma Pomrenke, Neal Raber, Dan Sheffer Linda Sugarman, and Tom Vukovich.**
- B. Excused: Cathy Edwards, Bob Gandee, Loren Hoch, Carl Lieberman, Laura Moss-Spitler, Pam Rupert, Frank Thomas, and Martha Vye.**

II. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the January 26, 2017 meeting were approved as corrected.

III. Treasure's Report. Bob Blankenship reported that our January 2017 balance was \$5,959.81. Last year's January balance was \$6,254.67 with the difference being the \$900 commitment to the bus company for our upcoming Road Trip. The recent newsletter printing cost amounted to \$1,413.34.

The February luncheon charges (50 reservations) were \$484.33 while \$514 was collected. The 50/50 raffle netted proceeds of \$32.50.

IV. Corresponding Secretary: Diane reported that in January Martha Vye sent a sympathy note to Roberta Martin (death of husband) and separate notes to Hank and Arlene Nettling to let them know they are in our thoughts. In February she sent a sympathy note to Randy Pelton on the death of his wife, Robin.

V. Committee Reports.

A. Programs. Tom Vukovich noted that the crowd in February was somewhat smaller, but the program and the menu were good.

Fliers for the March meeting have been sent out. There will be no separate vegetarian option in March as the main entrée is vegetarian. Tom noted that we have been averaging 6-7 vegetarian lunches each month. The speaker at the March meeting, Mandy Altimus Pond, is not requesting a donation for the Massillon Museum this time because we have given her permission to bring and sell her books at the meeting. Diane noted that there will be a very short business meeting at the March luncheon per requirements in our bylaws.

Tom and Diane will be absent for the March and April meetings. Board members were recruited to carry on in their absence.

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Tom has begun working on the programs for remainder of the calendar year. Dates for the luncheons will be September 13, October 11, November 8, and December 13. Everyone is encouraged to send Tom ideas for speakers. Tom, Diane and Neal will be renegotiating a new contract with Aramark, for food service.

Special Events: All arrangements have been made for the Road Trip on April 21st. Reservations are due by April 12th. Those members who must receive their notices via US mail should have already received the fliers for the March meeting, the Road Trip, and the information about nominations for officers.

The Brunch and Play event had a great turn out. Diane received 42 reservations for the brunch and 60 for the play.

B. Membership. In Frank's absence, Diane reported that our membership is currently at 333, which includes 23 new members. Our inactive members number 27 and we lost one active member (Robin Pelton).

C. Political Action. No Report.

D. Benefits. Linda Sugarman shared a few "Alerts" for Retiree Dependents. Most medical providers are used to Anthem as a primary insurer. Retiree Dependents on Medicare need to make sure that their providers submit any claims first to Medicare. If the provider submits to Anthem first, before going through Medicare, Anthem will reject their claim.

Retiree Dependents and active employees who use a retail pharmacy other than CVS will find that about once a year Caremark will reject their prescriptions telling the pharmacy the "refills are not covered." This is not true --- what it really means is that the insured needs to call Caremark and "opt out" of mail order or using CVS. When you call Caremark, they may not tell you this fact, but will try and convince the pharmacy customer to change to CVS retail or mail order. This is on the margin of being unethical.

Chard Snyder is very slow in posting checks. In addition, there have been some problems with payments made but notices sent that no payment has been received.

STRS will be changing some of their actuarial assumptions. How this will affect STRS or retirees is not known at this time.

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E. Faculty Senate. Ali Hajjafar shared the following report:

Linda Saliga chaired the meeting since Bill Rich was sick. She read his remarks for the Senate:

“I had planned to address, among other things, the impact of President Trump’s Executive Order entitled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” and the University’s response to it. I agree with and fully support the statement President Wilson issued on Sunday but, as he knows, I believe the University needs to go farther to assure International students (and faculty) that the University will protect the privacy of their immigration-related information and that, although the University will comply with all applicable legal requirements, neither its police department nor any other part of the University will otherwise participate in the enforcement of immigration laws”.

Later in new Business, a senator proposed a resolution regarding this subject and the Senate voted in favor.

The Executive Committee (EC) reported that they have met five times since early December and have met twice with the President and Provost. Among other things they discussed were the possible buyout, the state and importance of academic advising, the status of Dean searches, and the immediate future of the university relationship with Ernst & Young. They also joined representatives of AAUP, the University Council, and the Department Chairs for a presentation on the administration’s updated transformation plan. At their meeting with the President and Provost, the EC expressed disappointment with the BOT’s rejection of the Tiger Team recommendation that the shared governance bodies be represented on certain Board committees. They also discussed possible changes in undergraduate financial aid (scholarship) policy, the cost of intercollegiate athletics, possible changes in the allocation of stipends and tuition waivers for graduate students, and the status of the various dean searches.

The President in his remarks mentioned that Board of Trustees have appointed some board members to participate in the Faculty Senate and University Council meetings. The Chair of BOT and three other members were present in the meeting. President Wilson commented on five topics. First item was related to the enrollment which was down 8% in the fall and 6.7% in the spring semester. Applicants for next year are up 8-10% in comparison with last year at the same time. Seat deposits are up 40-50%. He said things are turning upward. He also noted that we have a small freshman class and we have to retain them. The new hires in the Admissions team will help. The Knight Foundation has donated \$250,000 for recruitment activities and \$17,000 to the College of Business for a recruitment program called “Unbox Akron.”

The second topic was the improvement of diversity. He said we have hired Jolene Lane from Columbia U Teachers College for the Office of Diversity and Community Outreach. She will start in April. There are a lot of diversity programs that are ongoing at the UA, such as Rethinking Race and the Black Male Summit and Symposium.

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The third topic was enhancement of International Programs and increasing the international student population.

The next item was the Governor's state budget which will be increased by 1%. However there will be a freeze on tuition and all fees. He even has included \$300 for text books as part of education cost. The President said that we don't know if this \$300 is per semester or per year.

The fifth topic was the UA transformation and its budgetary challenges. He said he is pushing all administrators hard. He thanked the Executive Committee of the Senate and University Council and the faculty for their cooperation. He said he needs the Faculty Senate to improve and adopt the Ernst and Young model for scholarship system. We want to know the biggest yield of students based on the award that we are giving. How is GPA and ACT impacting our yield? They have been able to model the retention rate of those students. He said the graduation rate is not what we want it to be. It is in the 40% range, while we want it to be in the 60-70% range. He talked in detail about how he expects a new upgraded scholarship system to work. There were a lot of questions and answers.

Provost Ramsier reported on the HLC visit that started on Valentine's Day and the possibility of meeting with them. He emphasized that the University has some issues and we have plans to overcome them. One of the issues involves graduate assistanceships. The Graduate Counsel has worked on this and they will present it to us today. He talked about the Federal Compliance review, which has asked for syllabi from certain courses from all modes of delivery to see if the learning outcomes are the same. What is important is the outcome but not the pedagogy. He said for this visit we are in better shape than he thought. He said his office is working hard to get the RTP letter out. They want to make sure that there is enough time for appeals. Also we are trying to recommend professional leaves as soon as possible. Almost half of the applicants will be awarded, which is higher than last year. 14 out of 30 are recommended to the BOT for their consideration. He also talked about the state budget and said there is a piece in the budget, which talks about competency-based education. The community college network in the state of Ohio has made a deal with Western Governors University to offer some kind of a partnership where they would recommend their students go to Western Governors, which is an online institution with competency-based programming, to finish their bachelor's degree. Apparently, the governor thinks that the state should support that somehow financially. The Provost disagrees with that, of course. So he did volunteer to be on the writing team. They presented a report, basically informative, to try to educate the Legislators about what is competency-based education and why they should fund our institutions to do it instead of somebody else. He also talked about the cost of books being part of the cost of education.

On the Committee reports, APC suggested a modification to the board rule regarding the withdrawal policy. CRC presented new courses to be approved. General Education Committee asked for the approval of some courses. There was some discussion regarding a report from Athletics Committee that because of participation in Bowls, the University has received 13.5 million dollars in national exposure while in reality, \$650,000 was split between the two teams. That in comparison to the expenses in travel is a wash. It is not real money.

Among other committee reports, the Graduate Council report was very important. The Graduate Council representative said that the Graduate School has been asked to cut 12.9 million dollars of

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their 31 million dollar budget. In comparison with 4 peer universities in Ohio, the council recommended four motions:

Motions Approved by the Graduate Council, January 30, 2017

- The Graduate School will no longer fund stipends for RAs.
- For community/industrial grants, the tuition waiver cannot exceed the value of the stipend and these students will be considered as in-state tuition paying students.
- Stipend and tuition waivers will not exceed the required number of credit hours. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will not exceed 120 hours if full-time status during the summer is necessary.
- The Graduate Council recommends that approximately 30% of the current funding will be maintained in support of a new model for terminal MS funding. This is subject to annual review of the funding.

In a special meeting on 2/9/17 for the discussion on these items, they received approval of the Senate.

F. University & Community Service/Website. Dan Sheffer reported that he will be updating the documents on Benefits on our website.

G. Scholarship. Diane reported that Carl Lieberman has spoken with Sarah Chapman concerning our endowment. Our current endowment value is \$103,404.35. We have received \$225.00 in recent gifts. Our projected amount available to award for next year is \$4,200. It was noted that Kim Cole, Director of Development, will speak regarding our endowed scholarship administration and fees at our April 27th board meeting.

Carl also has spoken with our recent scholarship recipient, Kimberly Robe. She is unable to attend one of our luncheons this spring as she has a class that conflicts with the day and time.

H. Newsletter. Diane reminded everyone to e-mail Pam with ideas for the next newsletter.

VI. Unfinished Business. Diane remarked that the Notice of Nominations was included with the March luncheon US mailing. Cathy Edwards will have Janet Mealy send the email Notice of Nomination early in March.

At the April meeting after nominations close, we will move to have Cathy Edwards fill the unexpired term of Dan Sheffer, Vice-President. If there are no other nominations Dan will assume the President-Elect position.

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The Board was reminded that there will still be two Members-at-Large positions to fill. We still have the unexpired terms of Stu Terrass (resignation) and Cathy Edwards (moving to Vice President). One Member-at-Large also assumes the role of Assistant Treasurer. Some names were offered in discussion. The new board will be announced at Lobster and Suds in May.

VII. **New Business.** Diane reminded everyone that our new HR contact is Janet Mealy, Assistant Director of Human Resources Information Services. Her e-mail is jmealy@uakron.edu. Her phone number is 330-972-2590.

VIII. **Adjournment at 11:25.**

Respectfully submitted:
Rita Klein, Recording Secretary

**Next Executive Board Meeting:
March 23, 2017.
President Elect, Neal Raber, will chair the meeting.
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium**