

Association of Retired Faculty and Staff (ARFS)
University of West Georgia
Coordinating Council Meeting, January 19, 2018, 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Conference Room, Alumni House
MINUTES

Present:

Mitch Clifton, Jimmy Drew, Kathryn Grams, Swain Harris, Denice King, Bruce Lyon, Debbie Novak, Glenn Novak, Linda Picklesimer, Bob Reeves, Gail Reid, Anne Richards, Martha Ann Saunders, Karen Smith. **Not present:** Jan Ruskell (excused); Dan Flinn (unexcused).

1. Mitch **called the meeting to order** at 10:00 a.m. and explained that Denice King would be joining today's meeting after it began because she had to take her daughter to school later than usual due to the inclement weather opening time.

2. The **minutes** of the meeting held September 29, 2017 had been distributed on line in advance of today's meeting. **MOTION** (Lyon/Saunders): to approve them as distributed. There being no additions or corrections noted, they were approved on a voice vote as distributed. Mitch thanked Glenn for taking the notes and mentioned that they had been helpful to him in dealing with various issues since this last meeting occurred. He then asked for a volunteer to take notes for today's meeting. Anne volunteered to take today's notes.

3. **Location and date for next Annual Reunion.** It was pointed out that we cannot set the date for the next reunion until we know two things: what the Football schedule is and whether the President might be available to attend. It was agreed, however, that we would want to hold it (as we have done in the past) sometime between late August and early September. Mitch sent out an email in advance of today's meeting, proposing that we consider changing the venue for this event from the Sunset Hills Country Club back to Z-6. Shared concerns that led to his proposal: attendees (including the President) had great difficulty parking this year at the Country Club due to multiple high-attendance events taking place there simultaneously, we almost reached the capacity for number of dining tables that can be accommodated at Sunset Hills, and it took a long time to get everyone served a meal. Linda explained that all those she spoke with about the event said they really liked the fact that it was held at the Country Club and preferred it to Z-6 for various reasons, including its ambiance. Another option might be the Campus Center ballroom, but that would require arranging for golf carts because of the distance between it and available parking. It was also noted that, if we considered instituting a fee for former retirees (excepting honorees and their guests) to attend this event, many would likely object to paying \$10 (or even some other "nominal" fee) for a meal at Z-6. Several others on the Council agreed with these points. Bruce mentioned that other ways of reducing the number of dining tables needed included charging a nominal fee for former retirees and/or limiting the number of guests that honoree retirees could bring to the event. Gail said that "aesthetically," Z-6 is more cave-like and, when she planned other events in the past, attendance went up when an event was re-located to the Campus Center Ballroom. Swain shared examples of disparaging remarks made about Z-6 in the past. It was noted that DineWest is now in charge of catering and that some of these remarks may no longer be relevant.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed by consensus to again host this event in 2018 at the Country Club. Linda proposed that we coordinate with Sunset Hills more directly so far as the timing of our event is concerned. Mitch mentioned that we could ask them to look at their long-range schedule to insure that major events do not occur at the same time. Swain suggested that we speak to Parking & Transportation at UWG to see about arranging for a shuttle. Attendees could park at Watson Hall (depending on what else is going on at the UWG campus on our particular date) and be shuttled over to the Country Club (although it was noted that, given the current size of our shuttle buses, it might be difficult to get attendees right to the front door of the Country Club, but they could be dropped off fairly close to it). Mitch proposed that we ensure that a parking space is reserved for President Marrero since this past year he had to park at a private residence in order to get to the event on time.

Mitch mentioned that, in the future, if the attendance at our event continues to grow, there remains the potential problem of the Country Club running out of space for accommodating us for this event. Anne noted that, in the near future, planned changes to the area surrounding the Campus Center Ballroom will eliminate the need for people to traverse the present distance required to get from parking areas to that venue.

Mitch noted various ways that could address the problem of it taking so long for attendees to get their meals, e.g., simplifying the menu, eliminating the salad bar, substituting a pre-mixed salad or cup of fruit and placing this (and perhaps a dessert) at each place-setting ahead of time, and setting up two serving tables (which persons could access on either side, equaling 4 lines). It was agreed that attendees would likely prefer the availability of salad to a fruit cup.

Linda suggested that Sunset Hills be contacted to find out what dates they have open for this event and where extra parking spaces might be designated if all the spaces in the regular parking lot are taken.

Once Denice arrived at today's meeting, she explained that she had explored cost differences between the Country Club and Z-6 and determined it would cost \$500 less to hold the event on the campus as it would avoid a 20% tip required at Sunset Hills. She asked why the group had decided to go back to the Country Club and the above conversation was reiterated. Denice also reported that 169 persons had registered in advance for our 2017 reunion, but only 134 actually showed up on the day it took place. This left us paying for 35 no-shows.

It was agreed that the room where the reunion took place was pretty crowded and, as a result, there would not be room to set up two separate food tables (with attendees accessing these from either side). Swain mentioned that part of the problem was that, when the salad bar ran out of food, persons in line simply stood in place waiting for it to be replaced instead of moving on to get the rest of their meal at that time and coming back for salad afterwards.

Denice agreed to check with the Country Club to find out when we can schedule our event there without overlapping with another high-attendance event. She will also ask about ways of facilitating attendees getting their food more quickly (including setting tables with the salad in advance), parking options, etc. It was agreed not to pursue the idea of setting a dessert on the table in advance as most people prefer to choose their own dessert.

4. Update on current retirees. Anne distributed a preliminary listing of retirees she has received paperwork for at this point. They include Laura M. Bennett (University Police), Michelle Byrne (Nursing), Meg Cooper (Literacy & Special Education), Barry C. Harwell (Golf), Bobby Powell (Physics), Hema Ramanathan (Learning & Teaching), Pricella Reese (Custodial Services). She said she had also been informed that both Chris Aanstoos and Daniel

Helminiak (from Psychology) will be retiring at the end of June, 2018. She reported that all information needed to honor Michelle Byrne was gathered by mistake last year before it was realized that she wasn't retiring until August. So far as the In Memoriam section is concerned, the following persons are now included: Homer Coker (Education), Leland Gustafson (Economics), Margaret Hughes (Ingram Library), J. Mark Miller (former Dean, College of Business).

5. Do we want a first-quarter edition of the Rejuvenator? If so, what content?

It soon became apparent that a LOT of information was thought relevant for inclusion in a first-quarter edition of the Rejuvenator. For example:

- * A possible rescheduling of the tour of the Visual Arts building.
- * Information about how to award and apply for the Retiree Legacy Scholarship
- * Information about the new Health Center to be built on the campus
- * Completion of renovation construction on the Biology Building
- * Information about how to reach Continuing Education to learn of what is being offered through that office. [Bob Reeves agreed to write this up.]
- * Information about the upcoming AROHE meeting (to be held October 7-9, 2018 at the Emory University Conference Center). [Editorial note: the AROHE site now clarifies that the cost for attendance at this event is \$275 per member - which UWG retirees are part of - so long as that amount is paid by August 1, 2018. This covers a Sunday open house, reception, banquet; continental breakfasts, lunches, breaks (Monday and Tuesday); Wi-Fi and self-parking.]
- * Possible workshop on our YSA/HRA
- * Alumni Weekend (to be held the first week in March, 2018 - on the 2nd and 3rd)

NOTE: See also #8 below (pp. 5-6) and #10 below (pp. 6-7) for additional issues to be addressed in the next issue of the *Rejuvenator*.

Mitch requested that individuals having information about any of these items for inclusion in the newsletter take responsibility for writing up something for the *Rejuvenator* and send it to both him and Denice. Given the information thought to be relevant to retirees, it seemed best to get this issue out in the next couple of weeks, so the earlier contributors can get this material in the better. Anyone writing up information was asked to use email to get their contribution to Mitch and Denice.

It was agreed that we will put this issue out in an on-line form only for those who are part of our listserv, and in paper form for those who are not. Mitch asked if others in the group who are on the listserv might want a paper copy as well. Only Debbie Novak asked for this since she is keeping an archival record of our newsletters.

6. Publicizing and Awarding the Legacy Scholarship.

Debbie noted that several questions have occurred to her about how the availability of this scholarship and the means of awarding it will be publicized. What procedure do people follow who might want to apply for it? What are the deadlines for making application? When do they begin and end? When is someone notified if he or she wins the scholarship? Denice explained that all scholarships now go through a campus-based on-line system. Students interested in making application for a scholarship put their information into a common database and then the system matches criteria determining their eligibility for given scholarships with that information.

A link to the system is managed by Wendy Cooley (in Development/Advancement). A Scholarship Committee (in Admissions) then makes the determination of which students will be given which scholarships. Denice said she could put an eye-catching presentation of this information in the next issue of the *Rejuvenator*. It was also mentioned that we hope to honor the student recipient of this scholarship as a guest at our annual reunion. Swain pointed out that it is important to spread the word about the criteria for eligibility associated with a particular scholarship to keep others apprised of its existence.

7. **Committee Assignments.**

a. Kathryn Grams (earlier) and Karen Smith and Jimmy Drew (today) volunteered to assist with the **Programs Committee** to help Anne and Martha Ann in compiling information needed for the commemorative booklet. Anne explained that we will be ready to move ahead with the work involved as soon as we know the date for the annual reunion. Currently, it is anticipated that approximately 30 retirees will be identified by June, 2018.

b. A discussion took place regarding the **Widow/Widower/Surviving Partner Committee**. Someone asked what this committee's responsibilities were. Anne explained that when Linda Wagner chaired this committee in the past she wrote to all those identified as being widows/widowers/surviving partners to invite them to a get-together at her home and indicated that she hoped they could jointly determine what would be most helpful for them and/or persons experiencing a similar situation. All contacted (most of whom had lost spouses/partners years earlier) indicated that they had already found adequate support in the community and/or were presently working and could not attend. As a result, in her capacity as chair of this committee, Linda simply took responsibility for sending notes of condolence to those who lost a partner.

Mitch mentioned that the reason this committee was made a part of ARFS in the first place was because retirees in other places had found it a relevant and meaningful one. And while it might not have been needed or desired by persons we know to date, it might prove to be more significant in the future. Also, someone who chairs this committee might become aware of other ways in which it is worth sustaining.

Someone explained that when Chester Gibson died, his wife, Faye, wanted to be sure she was included on the ARFS listserv afterwards, in order to keep informed about insurance matters, etc. Anne stated that one of Linda's reasons for serving on this committee in the first place was that she discovered following Don's death that the University simply ceased all communication with her (including that from Development and Advancement) because Don had been the primary contact in prior years. The question was then raised as to whether Gherry Gustafson might want to be included in our listserv so as to continue to get information about ARFS activities and USG insurance matters since Leland's death. This led to the question: Do we need someone to coordinate things like this?

Denice suggested that the ARFS President send a letter or card at the time of a retiree's death expressing sympathy for a spouse/partner's loss, followed by a letter asking about future interaction/contact this individual might wish to have with the university. Mitch asked Coordinating Council members to consider whether they might wish to take on such responsibilities by serving as chair of this committee.

Swain Harris recommended that both a retiree and his/her spouse/partner be put on the ARFS listserv at the time of retirement. Anne explained that this could easily be arranged by simply asking about it when we collect other information for the commemorative booklet. Debbie thought this might result in redundant information going to a particular household, but many noted that just because information goes to one person in a household, it isn't necessarily shared with another.

c. Scholarship Committee. Bob Reeves and Linda Picklesimer agreed to assist Debbie Novak and Jan Ruskell with this committee. The job of this committee essentially involves publicizing the availability of the scholarship. As Denice explained, to avoid any suggestion of favoritism, all decisions regarding recipients of the scholarship are made by a committee in Admissions that gives careful consideration to fairness in the overall distribution of scholarship monies. The system is designed to match students with all scholarships for which they are eligible.

Denice reported that Allyson Bretch, formerly of Admissions, has taken T.J. Peele's place in Development and Advancement. T.J. left after being offered a more lucrative job. Allyson asked Denice if ARFS might be willing to have the Foundation insert some plugs in the *Rejuvenator* to encourage retirees to participate in the Annual Giving drive. It was agreed by consensus that this would be fine.

d. Nominating Committee. (Bruce Lyon, Debbie Novak, Glenn Novak, and Jan Ruskell currently serve on this committee and Mitch serves in an ex-officio role). It was agreed that a sufficient number of Coordinating Council members are handling the work of this committee. Glenn thanked members of the Coordinating Council for agreeing to serve on the Council and reminded all in attendance that they will be asked for suggestions before next year's annual reunion and business meeting to determine the slate to be presented at that time. Debbie recommended that persons on the Council go ahead in advance to talk with others to learn if they might be interested in serving.

Mitch thanked those who had volunteered for various committee assignments today.

8. Reschedule of Tour of Visual Arts Building?

In light of the fact that only 3 (all members of the Council) signed up for this tour, a discussion took place regarding whether this tour should be rescheduled. Denice noted that retirees had indicated on past evaluations that they would like more opportunities to get together and she added that it seems a good idea for other reasons as well to work toward building a network of retirees who meet regularly. The tour had been proposed as an alternative to the type of "Garden Party" events that were organized in the past, which attracted a very small turn-out yet cost a considerable amount of money. It was noted that the limited interest in the tour might have been due to the time it was scheduled (in December, when there are so many other competing activities) or the fact that many have already taken this tour.

Denice mentioned that there are several events taking place on campus on a regular basis, which we might be able to inform retirees about and invite them to attend together, e.g., the 2018 Juried Student Art Show (taking place in the Bobick Gallery January 18th - March 1st). Dates for this event, and for other plays and exhibits open to the public, could be listed in the *Rejuvenator*. Information could be gathered from departments on campus and several

highlighted in the *Rejuvenator*, including the Alumni Awards event. Debbie noted that arranging for persons to simply attend a play together might not give much time for interaction unless a reception or get-together for a meal is involved as well. It was also suggested that we provide links (and phone numbers for those who don't use a computer) for persons wanting information about the Football schedule, and Fine Arts events. Gail Reid mentioned the series of "Next Night School" lectures that take place in various locations in the area (such as Serenbe, the Newnan campus, or in Carrollton). The one coming up is being held in Newnan. Meg Pearson will be talking on the topic: "Bull-Baiting, Bears, and Beheadings: A Shakespeare Story."

It was initially suggested that, instead of re-scheduling the Visual Arts tour, arranging something around one of the "Next Night School" lectures might be more appealing. It was agreed that it is a good idea to invite retirees to events where receptions are already scheduled, or where a reception can be cancelled if a sufficient number of persons do not confirm their intention to attend. After considerable discussion, it was agreed to:

- (1) invite retirees again to tour the Visual Arts building, to determine if there is interest in conducting this tour at another time;
- (2) invite retirees to a "Next Night School" event that is accompanied by a reception we plan. Gail Reid and Mitch agreed to work with Denice in planning for this. Gail also suggested that, immediate after attending a play, ARFS might be able to arrange for retirees to have an opportunity to speak with either the director or actors in a scheduled talk-back.

9. Date and Location of Next Coordinating Council Meeting.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Friday, March 23, 2018 - during Spring Break. [Editorial note: Denice later confirmed that the Alumni House Conference room is available for our use on this date.]

10. Questions, comments and discussion about OneUSG and Aon. A possible HR workshop or meeting on Aon?

A discussion took place regarding inconsistencies and errors retirees have found in their HRA reimbursements and accounts being handled through Aon. Kathryn Grams, Bruce Lyon, Debbie and Glenn Novak, and Susan Ingle (whose husband retired from GA Tech) have all found disturbing discrepancies and errors. Anne Richards had questions about her reimbursements and account, but was able to resolve these following conversations with two different individuals at Aon. In the process, she learned, however, that it can take between 30 and 90 days before Aon catches up with a premium increase. Frustration was expressed about how many Aon representatives came across as "inept" or uninformed about basics of the reimbursement process, how much time it involved to get a given problematic matter resolved, how representatives promised call-backs and corrections that never materialized, and that phone numbers for persons named as those likely to be able to resolve particular problems were not only not provided to retirees but retirees were told these numbers could *not* be provided to them (even when they specifically asked for same). It was also mentioned that a representative of Aon had explained that particular questions could only be answered by other personnel (seemingly outside of Aon itself) that were responsible for handling specific matters. Anne explained that Karin Elliott, Associate Vice Chancellor for Total Rewards at the University System of Georgia, has repeatedly expressed her commitment to holding Aon accountable for providing quality service to retirees and has responsibly acted on this commitment on several occasions. In the past, in

order to resolve matters, Karin has requested the names of retirees having problems, a means of contacting them, and the names of the Aon representatives the retirees dealt with, if they know this. She then personally took up their issues with Aon representatives. Anne also mentioned that, when hearing Aon representatives speak at the November meeting of the USG Retiree Council meeting, she became aware of the fact that the company is divided into a considerable number of circumscribed sub-sets or sub-entities.

Debbie mentioned that she initially thought a workshop might be needed to better inform retirees about how to check their accounts (to be sure, among other things, that monies that should be rolled over from one year to the next are actually rolled over). It was finally agreed that providing information about such matters in the next issue of the *Rejuvenator* might be a better idea. Debbie agreed to write up an article for the newsletter about this, summarizing information she has already provided ARFS members on line, and Anne agreed to write something to add to this indicating that retirees having problems should contact her and she, in turn, will channel concerns and complaints received to Karin. Anne mentioned that she not only feels she can email Karin about these things, but also sees Karin in person at two USGRC meetings annually and also at Board of Regents meetings she attends on occasion as a representative of the GA Conference of AAUP.

11. Other Business

a. A discussion took place regarding problems retirees have had with bank accounts they maintain at the **Bank of the Ozarks**. In particular, it seems that when retirees have arranged for their accounts to make bill payments on designated days, they can not always count on deposits (such as those related to HRAs or otherwise) being credited to their accounts in a timely manner. Apparently, local employees of the Bank of the Ozarks can not do anything about the problem because policies about how such things are handled are made elsewhere in the company. In contrast, local employees at Bank of North Georgia or United Community Bank are authorized to handle such problems.

b. Debbie reported that our **ARFS website needs to be updated**. It does not have a current photo of retirees honored at our last reunion, among other things. In addition, the lengthy information about how to secure membership in the Campus Center not only needs to be updated but would ideally be embedded via a link in the text so as not to distract from other items or take up so much space. Denice explained that updates needed for this should be clarified and forwarded to Kevin Hemphill.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am

Respectfully submitted,

Anne C. Richards
Volunteer Secretary for the Day