

UWG ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY AND STAFF (ARFS)
Coordinating Council Meeting MINUTES
Neva Lomason Memorial Library
March 22, 2024

Present: Anne Richards (presiding), Meg Cooper, Micheal Crafton, Patricia Durrough, Rolanda Farmer, Kevin Hibbard, Cecilia Lee, Sally Roberts, Anita Thomas, John von Eschenbach, Alice Wesley, and Ex-Officio Members MaKena Burns and Lauren Niedringhaus

Absent: Ann McCleary, Frank Pritchett, and Francie Taylor

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes: Anne Richards called the meeting to order at 10 am in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Neva Lomason Library. Minutes from the January 19th Coordinating Council meeting were approved (M-Kevin Hibbard, S-John von Eschenbach).

Lauren Niedringhaus (Human Resources) Update: Lauren is still working on determining what might be available for the 2024 Retiree Reunion in terms of health care resources. The new UWG Wellness program mobile van is an option, but there would be a charge of \$25 for each person, covering expenses associated with vaccines. Asked about ARFS paying this cost, MaKena Burns noted it would depend on the total costs associated with the reunion. There was a question if there would be no charge for the other services provided if the vaccine wasn't included. Lauren is looking into a lot of options, including Tanner's mobile mammography van and services from the Health Department. It was mentioned, however, that those on Medicare receive many of these services free of charge, so might not see the van as that helpful.

There was some discussion about UWG's shift from Google to Microsoft in response to a question from Kevin Hibbard. This will have implications for those using UWG emeriti email. The timeline for transition is uncertain. Lauren offered to get some information we can put in *The Rejuvenator*.

Lauren has a lot of new retiree names to give us. She no longer asks upcoming retirees if they want to join ARFS; she simply puts them on the listserv and lets us talk to them about ARFS when we contact them about the annual recognition of retirees. Meg Cooper encouraged Lauren to send us names and contact information as those are available since it will soon be time to contact new retirees about the 2024 reunion.

Lauren reported that she has talked with 5 or 6 retirees who inadvertently lost their HRA benefit from the USG when they signed up for an insurance plan offered to them as a better deal than the one they were getting from Alight without realizing they had to use at least one Alight-offered health or prescription-drug plan to be eligible for the allotment for healthcare given by the USG. We will put something in the upcoming issue of *The Rejuvenator* to alert retirees about this matter. As Meg noted, not all retirees use computers or have the ability to understand the processes involved in handling USG healthcare funding.

Also discussed were broader needs of some retirees for support and assistance using Alight. We had earlier considered providing some kind of support, perhaps through communication or “call trees.” And there is some interest in providing support. Lauren said she thought she could provide space for helpers to meet with retirees who want support and could benefit from problem-solving sessions. Meg Cooper will go back and look for information obtained earlier related to handling liability issues. Lauren will check with Kristi Carman in Legal Affairs about the kind of assistance we can provide fellow retirees.

Anne mentioned that it has been reported at USGRC meetings that not all retirees are using HRA funds. Perhaps this is the result of some not realizing they gave up these funds when they signed up for a plan outside of Alight. Meg noted that the USG and Alight should know which individual retirees are not using their HRA funds.

2022-2023 ARFS Annual Report: The full report and appendices had been distributed electronically to Council members. The report was approved by the Council (M-Kevin Hibbard, S-Micheal Crafton). Anne will distribute it to appropriate UWG administrators and request that it be posted on the ARFS website.

2024 Annual Retiree Reunion Planning: It was agreed that the 2024 annual event, including the retiree reunion, recognition of retirees, and ARFS business meeting, will be held on Saturday, October 26th in the Campus Center. MaKena already has space reserved and will ensure that we are not displaced again. Other aspects discussed were:

- Catering will be done by Dine West.
- Technology support is important (e.g., microphones).
- The new Clear Bag policy is being revised. The reunion will probably not fall under this policy.
- We would like to include something interactive, like a UWG trivia contest, with tables competing.
- We may include a Medicare representative as a speaker.

- MaKena will contact Special Collections regarding presenting something related to UWG thru the years.
- Instead of a break between the reception/reunion itself and the presentation of other information, it was thought advisable to start out fully explaining the structure of the event and encouraging people to come and go as they wished.
- We could include some information related to community volunteer opportunities this year (having focused more on university volunteer opportunities in the past), perhaps via a panel.
- Since it is the 20th anniversary of ARFS' founding, we are planning to recognize those involved in its development and have a birthday celebration, complete with a birthday cake.

The Programs/Events Committee, which has responsibility for the annual reunion in conjunction with MaKena Burns in University Advancement, would welcome additional members. There are many components involved, so committee members can decide how they want to participate. Contact Meg Cooper if interested.

Retiree Legacy Scholarship: John von Eschenbach reported that he has been in touch with Amanda Stitt. At this point, we don't know the number of applicants for our scholarship, when the application deadline is, or when the decision will be made as to a recipient. or when the decision will be made. John will check with Amanda next week and let Anne know if there is still time to announce the availability of the scholarship in the next issue of *The Rejuvenator*.

GA-HERO Meet-Up: The Georgia Association of Higher Education Retiree Organizations is planning a meet-up in Valdosta on June 7th. In addition to the opportunity to interact in person with individuals from retiree organizations in various institutions of higher education in Georgia, some additional opportunities for activities/sightseeing will be set up over the weekend. For example, on Saturday, June 8th, the opening performance of the Peach State summer theatre will be "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee."

Emeriti Policy Development: Issues continue. The Faculty Development Committee passed a recommendation that all identified as faculty emeriti be included in the list in UWG catalogs in perpetuity, so we should be able to get people who were removed put back on the list. A separate list of those deceased would accompany this list. However, this recommendation is still sitting at the

Senate level, so it probably won't happen this year. There have been other issues at the System level as well. Policy information on emeriti status adopted by the Board of Regents in April of 2023 was still being worked out months later and hadn't been available in official BOR documents until just recently. There are still additional problems related to the ability to get emeriti email addresses for emeriti at West Georgia since westga.edu email addresses are closed out upon retirement. Another issue going forward is also the lack of timely decision making regarding granting (or not) of emeriti status by the UWG president.

Content for *The Rejuvenator*: the annual retiree reunion, including pictures and results of the election of Coordinating Council members; Cecilia Lee's statement and lovely poem; an alert about going through Alight to select insurance plan(s) in order to maintain the HRA benefit from the USG; a reminder to check with the USG to make sure contact information is current (especially for those who changed to personal email addresses after westga email accounts were closed); the Clear Bag policy when it is updated; updated cybersecurity information from Mardel Shumake; travel programs from the Alumni Office (MaKena will send in this information); information regarding the change from Google to Microsoft.

Additional Matter: Some retirees miss getting information from the University. In addition, there are access issues (access denied to resources that could be helpful for many retirees). Retirees sometimes feel isolated from UWG when this occurs. MaKena offered to explore possibilities for giving retirees additional information by forwarding to the ARFS listserv some of the email she receives.

Next meeting: July 12, 2024 seemed a good choice for a next meeting. Anne will contact all members of the Coordinating Council to see if this is a workable date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meg Cooper, substitute Secretary