

**UWG Association of Retired Faculty and Staff
Online Meeting of the Coordinating Council
January 22, 2021**

Present: Meg Cooper (presiding), Anne Richards, Kathryn Grams, Francie Taylor, John von Eschenbach, Anita Thomas (attended briefly, technical issues), Alice Wesley, Diane Williamson. Also present were Therese Dingle and Terri Murphy representing Human Resources.

Absent: Bonnie Bar, Jimmy Drew, Bob Powell, Frank Pritchett, Sally Roberts.

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes: Meg called the meeting to order at 10:00 am, and with a quorum established, Kathryn Grams moved and Anne Richards seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2020, CC meeting; the motion passed.

Benefits Update: Terri Murphy (HR) provided the following information and will provide Meg with a summary for the next issue of The Rejuvenator:

- Accolade is the new vendor for Blue Cross/Blue Shield Anthem products; extended hours and a 24/7 nurse line are now available.
- Retirees below 65 can still participate in open enrollment until February 15 by contacting OneUSG at 1-844-587-4236; any changes in beneficiaries and the tobacco surcharge must be made by this deadline.
- For retirees 65+, the AON/USG Health Retirement Account (HRA) is available to those who have opted to participate. The \$2736/year allotment, which does roll over if unused, can be used to pay health insurance premiums or medical/dental expenses. Terri is available to help those with questions.
- Plans are under way to provide a mobile 2020 unit for eye exams similar in nature to mobile mammogram units. Active employees and retirees would be eligible to participate.

ARFS Website Update: Therese Dingle (HR) indicated that the HR website is being updated and migrated to a new platform, and once that is complete, the ARFS website will be updated and moved to the HR website; the ARFS website will contain photos of the CC members.

Benefits Fair Update: Due to the pandemic, the benefits fair was an online event involving the entire USG institutions, and there is no specific information regarding how many participated. Some feedback indicated the information was

“canned” with the site difficult to navigate. One possible option in the future might be to provide an area on campus where participants could get help in navigating the site.

Annual Reunion for 2019-2020 Retirees: There will be no in-person spring event for last year’s retirees as we had hoped; instead, we will move forward with the printing of the commemorative booklet and the engraving of the medallions (a new supply of medallions is due to arrive within the next week) in order to mail them to all involved; an email will be sent to the ARFS listserv indicating this news. There is some concern regarding the quality of the retiree photos already received, so Meg will send some of the photos to Pub & Print and work with Brooke Keener regarding what adjustments need to be made. The retiree booklet will contain both a message from Dr. Kelly (UWG president) and a message from Meg as CC president indicating the issues faced this past year which impacted the reunion. The booklet cover will need to be approved by UCM. Meg will work on compiling addresses for HR’s use in distributing the booklets and medallions.

Annual Reunion for 2020-2021 Retirees: A preliminary list of those who have already indicated retirement plans is being compiled, and interviews will be scheduled in the near future. No other plans have been made at this time.

Meetings of the USG Retiree Council (USGRC) and GA Higher Ed Retiree Organization (GA-HERO): Anne Richards provided a brief overview of her attendance at these meetings and indicated that meeting notes would be updated to the ARFS website at a later time.

A summary of the essential points from the October meeting of the USGRC is as follows:

- Emeritus status is under review by the University System of Georgia (USG), and Academic Affairs is proposing a review of the tenure process and the speeding up of new program approvals.
- Present at the Zoom meeting were representatives of both the System HR office and AON. A review is planned of the amount allocated each year for the HRA reimbursement. Also of note is the possibility of an OMBUDS specifically for AON concerns/assistance.
- Of concern are these issues that often lead to confusion/loss of funds:

(1) If a retiree alone is covered on a plan through AON and the retiree dies, the balance in his/her/their HRA account can be used to pay for medical bills as long as they are paid within six months of this death; any remaining funds

left in the HRA account at that point are returned to the USG. If a retiree and the retiree's spouse are covered on a plan through AON and the retiree dies, the balance of money in the deceased person's HRA goes to the surviving spouse. Subsequently, upon the death of this spouse, the balance in the HRA account can be used to pay for medical bills as long as they are paid within six months of this death; any remaining funds left in the HRA account at that point are returned to the USG.

(2) Those who opt to make independent arrangements with private insurance companies lose the AON stipend, available only for those who sign up for at least one provider for healthcare or a prescription drug plan through AON.

(3) It is essential that retirees fully investigate various plans offered with regard to cost of premiums, copays, etc.

(4) AON can notify a retiree if there is a low balance in the HRA account provided the user has opted in through the AON website for that reminder. The CC agreed that a better job is needed to make all aware of and fully explain the importance of maintaining AON connections.

- The USG's wellness products and program involving incentives (financial and otherwise) are handled at UWG by Holly Mostrom (HR). Therese Dingle (UWG HR) will provide a brief statement regarding wellness opportunities for the next issue of The Rejuvenator.

Information from the GA-HERO meeting and CC discussion points are as follows:

- Travel opportunities usually available for retirees have been curtailed due to the pandemic; options to replace the official travel opportunities include travel blogs, RV's, and other suggestions that make travel possible/enjoyable.
- In response to the frustration experienced by retirees having difficulty accessing their HRA funds, Clayton State University's Retiree Association sent out a survey asking for information on this topic.
- Knowing that UWG retirees may experience the same frustration, Meg and Anne are modifying the survey to be sent to our retirees through email, computer attachment, and even by phone. Meg will contact Continuing Ed regarding the possibility of a course for retirees to increase their tech savvy knowledge and will also search for free and available webinars on "technology for seniors."

- Several UWG departments (HR, Sociology, Mass Comm, Media, ITS) were identified as perhaps able to assist with Qualtrix survey options. Diane Williamson suggested that any survey go first to CC members for updates, thoughts, etc., before sending out to the entire list. Meg and Anne will include a cover letter explaining the reason for the survey.

Scholarship Committee: John von Eschenbach reviewed his update which was previously sent to CC members. He will send out an email to retirees regarding possible scholarship recipients and donation requests and will do a blurb for The Rejuvenator.

2019-2020 ARFS Annual Report: Kathryn Grams presented the report which was previously sent to CC members. A motion to accept the report (Meg) was seconded (Anne) and passed. Kathryn was thanked for her efforts, and she acknowledged the work of Mitch Clifton who wrote the first annual report while he was president. This report will be of value to HR in knowing what ARFS does since ARFS is now under its purview.

COVID-19 Update: Kathryn Grams, who serves on the local public health board, indicated that information regarding both testing and vaccinations changes quite often with information sent out as quickly as possible after it is received. Patience is essential. Rather than create an ad hoc committee to provide vaccination assistance for those without computers and/or transportation, the CC will attempt to identify steps/options that have already been determined by other groups and then offer to ally with those. Meg will follow up with the community contact person identified by Melanie McClellan.

The Rejuvenator Newsletter: A motion by Meg and a second by Alice to create an ad hoc Newsletter Committee with Meg, Anne, Kathryn, and Francie as members passed. The committee will be responsible for producing the newsletter with printing and distribution handled by HR. The first step will be to evaluate the various platforms that could be used to create the newsletter and then determine the best way to proceed passed. One possible option is to provide Pub & Print with the information and it creates the newsletter; another is to seek the assistance of retirees who may already have expertise in newsletter production from departments like COE Media and Mass Comm.

Ad Hoc Action Committee: The CC agreed that it is important for retirees to be kept aware of the campus reorganization plans, the strategic plan launched January 1, and the revised website and migration to HR; once these issues are more firmly

settled, additional information will be provided to retirees, and steps will be taken to ensure that the administration is aware of our interest and involvement. No ad hoc action committee is identified at this time.

Widow/Widower/Surviving Partner Committee: Discussion regarding the function and viability of this committee was tabled until the next CC meeting. Meg will follow up with a couple of specific people who may be interested in and/or helpful with this committee.

Other Business: There being no other business, Meg indicated she would send out a doodle poll or email in order to determine the best time and date for the next CC meeting to be held in approximately three months; at the next meeting, the nominating committee chaired by the past president will be selected and a review of potential future CC members will begin to take place.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Francie Taylor, Secretary