

Association of Retired Faculty and Staff (ARFS)
University of West Georgia
Coordinating Council Meeting, October 7, 2016, 10:00 am - 11:22 am
Conference Room, Alumni House
MINUTES

Present: Mitch Clifton, Frances Jackson, Denice King, Bruce Lyon, Debbie Novak, Glenn Novak, Anne Richards, Jan Ruskell, Martha Ann Saunders, Karen Smith, Linda Wagner. **Not present:** Jimmy Drew, Wanda McGukin (excused).

1. Mitch **called the meeting to order** at 10:00 am and introduced Denice King. Denice has been employed at UWG for 11 years, first in Business & Finance, and more recently as an assistant to Kevin Hemphill. She has been assigned some of Meredith Ledbetter's previous responsibilities.
2. The **minutes** for the meeting held 7-15-16 had been distributed online in advance of today's meeting. **MOTION** (Ruskell/Jackson): to approve them as distributed with two corrections. Bryce Lyon should be Bruce Lyon on page 1. And on p. 3, Bruce Lyon is a member of the Nominating Committee, but not its chair. Approved with these corrections on a voice vote.
3. Mitch distributed an **agenda** for today's meeting, and apologized for not getting it out a week in advance. The delay came about because the nature of so many items on it kept changing.
4. A discussion took place regarding the **September Reunion/Reception honoring recent retirees**. It was agreed that the event was a successful one. The summary of the evaluation of this event was distributed. It indicated that 31 of 35 people responding rated the meal/refreshments provided either Excellent, Very Good, or Good. 35 of 35 respondents rated the program Excellent, Very Good, or Good. In the open-ended question, several indicated how much they enjoyed seeing everyone and reconnecting with former colleagues. One person said this was the only recognition [he or she] received as a retiree at UWG. For the question, "Did the event make you feel more connected to West Georgia?" 31 of 35 people responded "Yes." Given the length of the evaluation, it was agreed that Council members would review it in greater detail and comment on it in further at our next meeting.

It was agreed that we need different name tags for this event. As Jan and others noted, the ones provided too readily fell off of several attendees. The friendliness of Amber (Sunset Hills Country Club host) and the Blue Coats was noted. Kevin was acknowledged for all he did in setting up the room and organizing the event.

Martha Ann reported that someone told her that this latest reunion was "the best one yet." It was agreed that having honorees sit together at the front of the room was an excellent idea. This not only made it easier for honorees to be seen, but also facilitated the process of getting a group photo at the end and made it easier for honorees to access the area where they received their medallion. It was agreed that the food was good. Karen's Treasurer's Report and presentation about the scholarship was much-praised and much appreciated, in part because it had the group laughing but also because it brought in between \$700-800 extra dollars for the scholarship. Bruce mentioned that he had heard a couple of comments to the effect that the program was too

lengthy. One person thought the business meeting should have come at the end, even though Coordinating Council members thought it was an extremely brief one. Anne noted that her own remarks had taken up 10 minutes and contained information she had presented in similar form at prior reunion/receptions. She wondered if this should be repeated at a subsequent program. Bruce said he thought those gathered on that occasion should hear what Anne said. The possibility was raised of putting many of her remarks into a brochure that could be distributed at the event. It was agreed that we would revisit this matter in the future. Mitch also mentioned that many retirees seemed delighted as they received their medallion at the event.

5. **Planning for next year's retiree reunion/reception.** It was agreed that we couldn't set a date for next year's reunion/reception until we know what the football schedule will be - in order to determine on which Saturday a home game will not present a scheduling conflict. The football schedule will likely be known by January, 2017, at which time we should proceed to check with the Country Club and President Marrero to establish a suitable date.

Mitch mentioned that we might want to revisit the matter of where to hold the reunion/reception. The total cost for this year's event was \$3,782 - for 120 persons in attendance. This amount included the cost of printing 300 Commemorative booklets and paying for the catering. It is not guaranteed that the university will foot the entire bill in the future, In part this depends on the cost. We might need to move the event to reduce costs (e.g., back to Z-6). Bruce Lyon said he thought the time had come for us to consider charging a modest fee for persons attending this event (with the exception of honorees and their guests). Denice noted that some people have the attitude that, if they pay something to attend, it must be good. If an event is free, some wonder how good it can be. She also didn't anticipate a huge drop in the number of persons attending. Frances suggested that we establish some requirement about the number of guests an honoree can bring along at no charge. Karen said she thought it reasonable to allow an honoree to bring one guest, or to limit the number of guests accompanying an honoree to four. It was noted that staff persons tend to bring more persons as guests than others.

Glenn said he thought \$10 might be a reasonable fee to ask attendees to pay. Debbie asked how such a fee would be collected in advance. Denice explained that it would be handled through the Alumni Relations office and would require an RSVP and a cut-off date for responses.

Glenn asked if any honorees who committed to attend the event had actually not shown up. Anne estimated that 3 persons who said they would attend did not, but 2 who hadn't RSVP'd actually appeared. Glenn noted that this was something to keep in mind - and a reason to always bring to the event all medallions and name cards for all honoree retirees.

Because Kevin Hemphill was involved in another meeting at the same time as the Coordinating Council met, it was agreed that we would hold off on considering a particular amount of money to be charged and determining how many guests an honoree might bring along until Kevin is available to discuss the matter with us.

6. **Next Coordinating Council Meeting.** It was agreed that it would be best for us to hold our next meeting in early January, since we won't be able to set a date for our reunion/reception until that time. We agreed to schedule such a meeting again on a Friday at 10 am on one of the

Fridays in January, 2017. Denice checked the availability of the Conference room and reported that it was available on either January 6, 13, 20, or 27. It was agreed to hold our next meeting on **Friday, January 20, 2017 at 10:00 am.**

7. Anne explained that the **next meeting of the University System of Georgia Retiree Council (USGRC) will take place on Friday, October 21, 2016 in Macon, GA.** She and Mitch are planning to attend. She explained that persons from HR who had assisted retirees in the transition to working with AON will be present at that meeting.

A discussion took place regarding **healthcare matters.** Debbie asked when open enrollment begins. She also reported hearing on TV that Express Scripts and CVS Caremark were dropping hundreds of drugs from their prescription drug plans. Bruce said he had received a formulary from Aetna for 2017 and understood he could check their website in September for 2017. Debbie said she didn't recall getting a notice about the open-enrollment period.

Jan noted that only those who are going to make a change in their plans need to know about when open enrollment is.

Mitch announced that HR might possibly schedule a general meeting to provide faculty with information during the open enrollment period. Anne reported that she has learned that HR provides a pre-retirement session for employed staff before they retire, but a similar session is not made available to faculty. Anne reminded the group that several individuals have said they would appreciate a meeting at which retirees shared their experience of the transition to AON.

Mitch explained that he didn't feel comfortable letting others know what decisions he made, because he didn't know if he made the right decisions for himself. He thought HR personnel might do better at such a meeting. Denice and Anne explained that people had questions and concerns about what is involved in going through the process of signing up for coverage with AON, not about the specific plan a given individual might have selected. HR personnel know less about this than retirees do. Karen said she thought a plan that involved collaboration between retirees now getting healthcare coverage through AON and HR personnel on campus might be the best approach.

Debbie asked if the "donut hole" was the same for all insurance plans. Response: Yes, because this is a Federal matter. Jan mentioned the "catastrophic" coverage provided by the USG but added that most of us don't fully understand it. Anne said that she learned from her Benefits Advisor with AON when she was likely to end up in the "donut hole" on particular prescription drug coverage plans and she signed up for the coverage she did to avoid that. Jan mentioned the story about the company that had raised the price of the epipen by a considerable amount. Debbie reported reading that all drugs were going up.

Jan announced that a workshop by Ray Dunlap, a Certified Financial Planner, will be held at the Neva Lomason library at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, October 11th. It is entitled "A Baby Boomer's Guide to Social Security and Medicare" and will explain how to strategically utilize these two government programs as individuals approach retirement. The workshop is open to everyone, but is primarily geared to those age 55 and older.

In preparation for the upcoming USGRC meeting, Anne reported that each retiree organization in the USG was asked to complete a **survey describing a variety of factors regarding the mission and purpose of their retiree organization, the officers of their organization, plans for the future, amount of money contributed to their institution, etc.** Anne distributed to all members of the Coordinating Council copies of the information provided about the University of West Georgia to the USGRC. She also circulated one copy of information provided by other retiree organizations. She said she expected attendees would get a more complete report of all USG institutions at the upcoming USGRC meeting.

It was noted that KSU's survey was not among the ones Anne had received, although, as Glenn mentioned, that group was among the early pioneers in organizing a retiree organization. Glenn said he thought the fact that the USGRC meeting was going to be held in Macon was a good idea because of its central location. He also asked if Wanda McGukin was still representing ARFS at the GA-HERO meeting (also to be held in Macon) scheduled for Friday, November 11th. Anne reported that Wanda is unable to attend that meeting but she is planning to go herself.

Given our commitments in the survey under "Plans for the Future," (i.e., increasing participation on the Coordinating Council of heretofore uninvolved retirees; holding pre-retirement sessions for persons approaching retirement and those becoming Medicare-eligible; creating a pre-retirement manual; and developing and distributing a survey to better determine retiree interests, concerns, expectations and willingness to provide financial support for some of the Association's activities) Anne said we will soon have to determine how best to approach 3 of the 4 of these commitments. So far as the pre-retirement manual is concerned, she reported that Frank Pritchett has already begun the work of putting this together in draft form, based in large part on the one already created at Clayton State University.

Denise reported that another Christmas gathering is already in the planning stage because of the great turnout at last year's gathering. Possible date: December 6, 2016. Santa is already lined up, along with Mrs. Claus. She also noted that the Alumni Association is planning another travel program. Last year's was to Ireland. Those planning the upcoming event are coordinating the timing with trips Leland and Gherry Gustafson are taking so the UWG program will not be in conflict with theirs. UWG is seeking Leland and Gherry's advice and looking at their website. The hope is to put something together that is not done too much. Since the trip is not yet planned, Denise invited retirees to let her know where they might want to go. A review is already underway to determine what worked and what didn't and to conduct research. UWG is reaching out to other institutions to see what they are doing along these lines. It has already been determined that river cruises are popular. At one institution Denise was aware of, 15 trips a year were being planned.

Jan asked if Denise was aware of the trips planned through the Chamber of Commerce. Three are scheduled for this year. Denise was aware of these and has been in touch with Suzy Montalto about them.

8. Committee Assignments.

Mitch asked if Coordinating Council members were happy with their committee assignments or if anyone wished to change these.

Anne explained that she had met with Kevin and April Duffie to attempt to deal with problems that have arisen in putting together the commemorative booklet distributed at the retiree reunion/reception.

Debbie, Jan and Denice agreed to meet about the Scholarship. Debbie said she had some money to turn over for the scholarship.

9. **Committee Reports.**

Scholarship Committee. Debbie asked about the possibility of setting up a jar at the travel programs to encourage people to contribute to the scholarship. Jan said this would have to be cleared with the Neva Lomason Library, and she would check into it. Karen mentioned that a lot of people had expressed surprise to her that it would only take contributions of \$35 each to fully endow the scholarship. As a result, they wrote checks for that amount.

Debbie suggested sending an email to current faculty and staff about the scholarship as they might be interested in contributing to it. Denice said she could distribute the request to staff.

Jan asked if more envelopes were available that could be taken to the Neva Lomason Library, for example, to use for additional fund-raising. Denice said there were.

10. **The Rejuvenator.**

Jan asked when the next issue of the *Rejuvenator* would be coming out. Denice agreed to check with Kevin to learn how this was done and when it had been scheduled for distribution in the past. Debbie explained that the president writes a column and solicits articles about other matters. Meredith formatted all this in the past. She also explained that it was posted on the ARFS website and also mailed to retirees. Glenn said this publication typically recapped the reunion/reception honoring new retirees, but it could also be used to promote any upcoming events (e.g., the program with Santa, travel programs, the garden party in the spring). It also might be a place where we could make any announcement about possible charges for next year's reunion/reception and where a report could be given about the USGRC meeting.

Other Business

Free Membership for use of the Gym on Campus. Debbie said she would like our group to approach President Marrero about the possibility of securing free membership for retirees for use of the gym on campus. President Marrero had announced free membership for current faculty and staff in the recent past. It was agreed that a lot of retirees might not go to the gym, but it would be a nice gesture to have the option. Jan suggested that a letter be written from the group to President Marrero about the matter. Mitch agreed to write the letter and then circulate it first to Debbie and then to all on the Coordinating Council for possible revisions before it went to the President.

MOTION (Lyon/Novak): to send a letter requesting free membership for retirees at the Campus Center exercise facilities.

Jan wondered if someone in our group should talk with Melanie McClellan about the matter, since Melanie had recently sent out an announcement that a walking track at a particular church in town could be used by interested faculty/staff at UWG.

Bruce said she was making this announcement as part of her role as liaison between the community and the campus, and wasn't the one who had the authority to address our request. Jan said she hoped that Melanie might be able to "put in a word for us" with Dr. Marrero.

Denice said that, because she understood student fees paid for the Campus Center facility, she didn't know what the President would say in response to our request.

Glenn asked if anyone had a sense of how many current faculty and staff use this facility. Although no one present knew the answer, it was mentioned that a card had to be swiped to gain entry to the work-out area, so the data is known somewhere on campus. No one at the meeting had heard any concerns raised, however, about too many taking advantage of this free membership. Debbie mentioned that retirees will have to have an ID card to use the work-out area, something that had been talked about in the past couple of years at our meetings. Debbie said she knew of someone who had come back to work part-time at West Georgia and was not able to join the gym free of charge. This same person saw that retirees could join the gym if they paid a fee. The part-time employee, however, would prefer to have a free membership. It was agreed that retirees were not likely to use the facility at peak times (such as late afternoons or evenings). Mitch said that, when he was a member, he saw few faculty there.

Denice said she was a firm believer in the notion that "It doesn't hurt to ask." She has seen a "swarm of students" there between 5-7 pm, but not in the morning when classes are in session. She suggested we consider asking for limited times when retirees could use the facilities for free, especially if there is a problem of there being too many people using it at a given time. She thought those overseeing this facility were trying to keep track of when their busiest times were.

It was agreed by consensus to support the above motion.

Other Perks

It was noted that retirees have received new hangtags so they can park on campus. The hope was expressed that we never lose this perk. It is definitely appreciated by all, especially in light of the knowledge that retirees on other campuses have to pay for this privilege. Debbie reported that, at UGA, there is a tiered fee based on how close a person wants to park to a particular building.

Involving Additional Retirees in the Coordinating Council's Efforts

Frances asked if anyone besides Jimmy Drew had expressed interest in becoming active in ARFS. Attention was then focused on the results of the survey distributed following the recent reunion/reception. Aside from those already involved with ARFS, eight other people expressed an interest in becoming involved: Bill Gauthier, Kareen Malone, Swain Harris, Daniel Flinn, Frank Pritchett, Rebecca Reeves, Paul Phillips and Diane Williamson. They also provided contact information (phone number and email address). Mitch agreed to make contact with these individuals (initially via email) to ask them what they have an interest in doing, and invite them to our next meeting so they can see what goes on. The email could also ask them if they prefer to discuss some of these matters over a phone call. It was noted that it is important to know if additional folks plan to attend our next meeting so we have sufficient chairs available. It is also possible we might have to consider meeting in a larger room. The individuals Mitch will be

contacting can also be informed through his email about our planned Christmas get-together and upcoming travel programs. Someone mentioned that Kevin would likely appreciate help with the newsletter.

Frances said she saw a lot of good potential in the group of those who expressed an interest in volunteering with ARFS and others clearly agreed with this statement.

Personnel Matters.

Denice was asked to clarify the responsibilities she and Kevin might have in working with ARFS in the future. She explained that a new supervisor (the Executive Director of Alumni Relations) has to be hired before decisions are made as to which individuals will be working with which groups. Kevin will definitely keep up with the ARFS website, but it's not yet clear who will be responsible for the *Rejuvenator* or who will be attending our meetings on a regular basis. Anne circulated a list of the candidates to be considered for the position of Executive Director of Alumni Relations and called attention to the open presentation scheduled for each candidate. Retirees will be invited to attend these presentation and Anne encouraged them to do so.

Mitch called attention to the number of Coordinating Council members whose terms expire in 2017. He also explained that Wanda had called him to say she was unable to attend today's meeting, but Jimmy Drew had not. He noted that some whose terms expire in 2017 have the opportunity (allowed in the bylaws) to re-up, but not all plan to do this.

Expanding Invitations to the Retiree Reunion/Reception

Glenn asked about the possibility of doing more to encourage current faculty and staff to support their retiring colleagues by attending this event. He wondered what the maximum number would be to accommodate more attendees at the Country Club. Denice mentioned that a larger space on campus might be found if necessary.

Anne reported that, in reading the minutes of the General Faculty Meeting, she discovered that not all retirees we recognized had been acknowledged at that meeting (because it was held in April and some retirees didn't make known their plans to retire until June). It was noted, however, that there might have been other celebrations in particular departments for individuals overlooked at that meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Mitch reminded Coordinating Council members that we agreed to hold our next meeting on Friday, January 20, 2017, at which time we will discuss, among other things, the evaluations of the 2016 Reunion/Reception in greater detail. He thanked all those who had attended and helped with this reunion/reception.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne C. Richards
Secretary