

Association of Retired Faculty and Staff (ARFS)
MINUTES
12th Annual Reunion and 2nd General Membership Meeting
Saturday, September 10, 2016, 11:30 am - 1:45 pm
Sunset Hills Country Club

1. After retirees and guests had time to mingle and socialize, **Mitch Clifton, Vice President of ARFS, welcomed those in attendance at this event.** He explained that he was presiding over today's gathering because Glenn Novak (current President of ARFS) and his wife, Debbie, were on a long-planned trip in celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary. He mentioned that Glenn had served as the President of ARFS for many years, and that he and his wife Debbie had both been actively involved in the development of the Association over the past 12 years and in the planning for today's program. [The audience erupted in spontaneous applause for Glenn and Debbie at this point.] Mitch then outlined the agenda for today's gathering and introduced Dave Fraboni, Vice President for University Advancement.

2. **Remarks. Dave Fraboni, Vice President for University Advancement, UWG.**

Dave commented that the get-together with retirees was one of his favorite events and seemed similar to graduation in several aspects. He said he was grateful to those who were in attendance and appreciative, also, for all they had contributed to the university. "The success the university has today," he stated, "was built on your shoulders," on "the engagement and support you provided when employed and all you continue to do as retirees." He mentioned meeting several in the room at various university activities and thanked them for their involvement. He acknowledged that part of the success the university enjoys comes as a result of the support the university receives from alumni and friends - and the community of retirees is a big part of that support.

Dave said he had heard that when the first major fund-raising campaign was announced with its goal of raising 50 million dollars, many laughed and considered this an unreachable goal. Yet today over 27.3 million dollars have been raised, in part because of the support and service so many retirees have given.

In closing, Fraboni asked persons in the audience to do one thing for the university - say University of West Georgia three times a day, not in the mirror, but in discussions with other people, letting them know their connection to the university and the work they continue to do. He then introduced President Kyle Marrero.

3. **Remarks: Dr. Kyle Marrero, President, UWG.**

Recognizing that he stood between attendees and lunch, President Marrero said his remarks would be brief. He expressed appreciation for the presence of all those attending today's reunion, including former president Sethna and his wife Madhavi. "It's because of all you," he asserted, "that the university is what it is today." He explained that leadership of an institution can inspire people to establish a direction for success, "but it's the people who make it happen and take your legacy to the next step."

He honored Dr. Sethna for his nineteen years as president of UWG and noted that he was still "looking good." "I'm at four," he commented, and added that he "didn't know if he himself could make it as long as 19." He reported that the capital campaign had a goal of bringing in 50 million dollars by December 31, 2020 and reiterated what Dave Fraboni reported, that it had now reached \$27.3 million.

He highlighted the university's current "record enrollment." UWG has a Freshman class this fall of 2332 and a total enrollment of 13, 311 - up 15% in the past four years. Coinciding with this he pointed out the record awarding of degrees and certifications, totaling 2442 last academic year and representing an increase of 8%. Meanwhile, the impact of the university on the economy of the region has gone from 418 million to 518 million in the past 4 years.

While these numbers give some indication of UWG's success, what makes the institution distinctive, as Marrero sees it, are initiatives such as the following:

(1) A cultural ideology known as "**Engage West**" that aims to foster the development of the "great people" hired through training that supports their becoming successful and schedules a Leadership Development Institute every 90 days to develop the leadership skills of administrators on campus.

Faculty and Staff have other opportunities for retreats. The university's goal is that all hires have an opportunity for a full, rich career of professional development and know they are a big part of the overall success of the institution.

(2) A **Carrollton/Carroll County Educational Collaborative** that will extend to 7 counties and involves UWG working together with two Superintendents (Carrollton/Carroll County) and West Georgia Technical College with the goal of having every 18-year-old high school graduate ready for academic success at either a technical college or other college/university. To further shorten the gap between education and attainment of a degree, it's easy to say "send us smarter kids," said Marrero, but this collaborative aims to address issues of kindergarten readiness and encourage initiatives from kindergarten through the later grades to insure that kids are able to come into institutions of higher education ready to succeed.

(3) "Thanks to Dr. Sethna's vision," President Marrero stated, UWG has become home to e-core. It began with 2000 students and is now serving 12,000 who pay \$169/credit hour and are using an open-source text. It's been such a successful program that the USG has asked UWG to offer **online coursework for 5-6 majors, delivered through the USG**. A Gates Foundation grant for \$750,000 was secured to develop, implement, and distribute this program. Because of its efforts in this area, UWG is now considered a leader in innovative curriculum delivery.

President Marrero announced that, in the next few months, as he makes presentations at civic clubs in the area, persons in the audience would likely hear him talk about the trajectory UWG is on and what it is expected to be like in 2020. He also spoke of this being an exciting time for the university as it is now ranked second in the nation for footfall.

In closing, he reminded the group that "We wouldn't be here if it weren't for you."

4. Following the President's remarks, **lunch was served** - a "Thanksgiving Theme" meal of ham, turkey, dressing (with gravy), mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, green beans, salad, rolls, and cherry cobbler. Vegetarian meals were also provided for those (2) who had requested them. Brandy Rodgers coordinated the sequencing of attendees as they went through the buffet line.

5. **ARFS: Who we Are/Background**

After lunch, Anne Richards provided a brief history of the development of the ARFS organizing, including how it was established for the following purposes in 2004 as a voluntary association of the university's retired faculty and staff:

- * To maintain social connections with university colleagues;
- * To foster continuous involvement between the University of West Georgia and its retired employees;
- * To support the intellectual, social, and physical well-being of retired faculty and staff; and
- * To continue to make meaningful contributions to the future of the University and to the academic community.

Anne reminded the group that membership in ARFS is free and invited retirees to involve themselves to the extent each might choose in monthly programs featuring the national and/or international adventures of traveling colleagues, service projects, parades, plays, and concerts. She encouraged retirees who had suggestions about other activities they'd like to see organized to let the leadership of ARFS know this. She also spoke about the newsletter (*The Rejuvenator*) which is distributed quarterly to the membership, and about connections our retiree organization has made with the national association of retiree organizations in higher education (known as AROHE nationally, and GA-HERO in its state-wide form). She announced that meetings of these organizations would welcome the attendance and involvement of all interested retirees. She also mentioned the establishment of the University System of Georgia Retiree Council (USGRC), composed of one official representative from each institution in the USG (with one "proxy member" as an alternate). The President of ARFS is our "official voting member" at this meeting, Anne explained and she, herself, would continue as the "proxy member" in order to take notes and keep the membership of ARFS informed. The purpose of the USGRC is to advise the Chancellor's Office and the Board of Regents on matters of consequence to retirees. Although Anne reported that this group has focused almost exclusively since its inception on the transition to a new healthcare system for Medicare-Eligible retirees, she explained that those associated with it hope, in the near future, to turn their attention to many other issues of interest or concern to retirees. She also reported that retirees who are approaching Medicare eligibility have expressed a desire to talk with persons who have already transitioned from the USG healthcare plan to working with AON and invited anyone interested in sharing some of their experiences of this process with them to let her know. She also encouraged participation of retirees in a University History Project, co-directed by Julia Brock (who attended today's gathering), information about which was provided on all tables. Launched by the Center for Public History, this project seeks to collect the stories of retirees about the rich heritage and history of UWG.

Anne informed the group that Meredith Ledbetter and Frank Pritchett in Alumni Relations had provided great help and support to our organization over the past several years. She explained that Meredith recently transferred to the Newnan Center where her work schedule is more compatible for a couple looking forward to bringing their first child into the world. And Frank was among today's retiree honorees as he has recently retired from his position at UWG. She announced that search processes were underway to identify persons who will take on the responsibilities both Meredith and Frank had in Alumni Relations and Denice King would soon take on some of Meredith's responsibilities. Frank's position has yet to be filled. Meanwhile, Kevin Hemphill (with some assistance from Danielle Tackett) has been gracious enough to assist ARFS in a **wide** variety of ways, including making this event possible and getting our newsletter in the mail. Kevin's contributions were applauded and then all of the above staff members were also acknowledged with a round of applause.

Anne invited retirees to take advantage of the information and services provided by ARFS, including a Widows/Widowers/Surviving Partners Committee chaired by Linda Wagner, the mission of which is to insure that such individuals continue to remain connected to the university community if they so desire. Anne also encouraged retirees to take advantage of some or all of the benefits available to retirees, such as a courtesy parking hang tag, eligibility to purchase membership to utilize all facilities in the Campus Center, a copy of the current academic year's faculty and staff directory (along with a listing in it if they choose), eligibility to check out books from the Ingram Library, and reduced rates on West Georgia Theatre Company performances. She also mentioned that efforts are ongoing to look into the possibility of securing other benefits as well.

6. Mitch Clifton then convened the second official meeting of the General Membership of the UWG Association of Retired Faculty and Staff. Mitch reminded the group that, in accordance with the Bylaws, a Nominating Committee had been established and had come up with a slate of candidates to serve as officers (2016-2018) and At-Large Members of the Coordinating Council. In accordance with ARFS Bylaws, the slate was circulated online in advance of today's meeting, and copies were also distributed on each table at today's meeting. This slate read as follows:

Officers:

President: Mitch Clifton (term 2016-2018)

Vice President: Jan Ruskell (term 2016-2018)

Past President: Glenn Novak (term 2016-2018)

Secretary: Anne Richards (also Co-Chair, Program/Events Committee) (term 2015-2017)

Treasurer: Karen Smith (term 2015-2017)

At-Large Members of Coordinating Council:

Jimmy Drew (term 2016-2018)

Frances Jackson (term 2015-2017)

Bruce Lyon (term 2015-2017)

Wanda McGukin (UWG Director, GA-HERO) (term 2015-2017)

Debbie Novak (Scholarship Committee) (term 2015-2017)

Jan Ruskell (Travel & Scholarship Committee) (term 2015-2017)

Martha Ann Saunders (Co-Chair, Program/Events Committee) (term 2015-2017)

Linda Wagner (Widow/Widower/Surviving Partner Committee) (term 2015-2017)

Mitch then asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none, he called for a motion to be made on the slate. A **MOTION** was made and seconded (?/Karen Smith): **TO ACCEPT THE SLATE AS PRESENTED.** There being no questions, concerns, or discussion on the motion, a voice vote was taken and the motion passed with all votes in the affirmative.

Mitch introduced Karen Smith, who provided the **Treasurer's Report** and the report regarding the **UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship.** Karen reported that the organization had no funds of its own, making the Treasurer's job an easy one at this point. She also reported that the UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship had secured \$16,655 in donations and pledges but couldn't be awarded until it reached the required endowment of \$25,000. In an impassioned plea, she encouraged retirees to utilize envelopes on their tables and consider making donations needed to achieve our endowment goal. [Editorial note: Her comments brought in an additional \$710 - bringing our current cash value total to \$17,365.00]

7. Recognition of Retirees

The following current retirees were recognized individually.

Daniel F. Bakos

Donna M. Davis

Joan L. Faulkner

Kaye Ferguson

Dan Flinn

J. Swain Harris

Louis E Howe

Barbara Kendrix

Paul Luken

Kareen Ror Malone

H. Franklin Pritchett, Jr.

Gail G. Reid

Rebecca McCain Reeves

Steve A. Rich

Madhavi Beheruz Sethna

Todd Slate

Diane R. Williamson

Cathy Wright

As they came up to the front of the room, Mitch Clifton and President Marrero presented them with their medallions. Retirees were also given the opportunity to address the group and several chose to do so, sharing aspects of their experience over the years at West Georgia College and the University of West Georgia, including the changes they had seen taking place and the meaningful relationships they had developed with others on campus. Anne explained that retirees who were unable to join us for today's presentation would receive a medallion and commemorative booklet following today's gathering.

8. Closing Remarks.

Anne expressed appreciation to the Blue Coats who served as ambassadors during this event (Daija McElwee, Megan Landers - driving the Gold cart), Tiffany Ramroop, Janieria Dupree, and Carly Williams. She thanked Wanda (and Grant) McGukin and Martha Ann Saunders for assisting with Registration; Bernie Wong for his musical performance, and Steven Broome and Kayla Smallwood for taking photos of honorees and attendees at this event.

Mitch encouraged retirees among both faculty and staff to attend Coordinating Council meetings and to join fellow retirees in planning activities and events. He also called for a round of applause for Vice President Dave Fraboni's and President Marrero's presence at today's meeting and for the West Georgia Foundation for providing today's luncheon.

Tom Carrere asked for the opportunity to speak. He expressed his appreciation for the Ingram Library and touted its fine resources. He also expressed appreciation for the fact that the library is open round-the-clock for those who might wish to come out at all hours to look something up or just spend time in using its resources.

9. **Adjournment.** The gathering was adjourned at 1:45 pm. A photo was then taken of Retiree honorees.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne C. Richards, Secretary (ARFS)