

***The Association of the University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)  
Executive Board Meeting, September 24, 2015  
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium***

**1. Opening Remarks:** Our Executive Board is expressing extreme dismay and concern about the changes being made at the University. Board President Diane Vukovich has invited Larry Burns, University Vice President for Advancement, to our Sept. 24 Board meeting to answer the AUAR Board's questions concerning endowed scholarships. This meeting with Dr. Burns took place before the morning's Board meeting; discussion lasted for more than an hour. Accompanying him were Matt Akers and Christine Curry.

Our Board meeting was then called to order by President Diane Vukovich at 11:05 A.M. Others present were Bob Blankenship, Frank Thomas, StuTerrass, Bill Beyer, Neal Raber, Bob Gandee, Pam Rupert, Laura Moss, Carl Lieberman, June Burton, Loren Hoch, Linda Sugarman, Ed Lasher, Velma Pomrenke, Rita Klein, Tom Vukovich, Hans Zbinden and guests, Louise Kuhns Harvey (President of The University of Akron Women's Committee), and Leslie Bain (President of The University of Akron Women's Club). Absent with notice: Cathy Edwards and Dan Sheffer.

The minutes of the August 27, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

**2. Treasurer** Bob Blankenship reports a balance of \$8,677.01 as of August 31, 2015. This compares with a balance of \$9,243.11 for August, 2014. It was moved to accept the report subject to audit.

**3. Committee Reports.**

**A. Programs.** Tom Vukovich was pleased to report that our September 9<sup>th</sup> luncheon had 70 attendees. The guest at our October 14 luncheon will be Scott Swaldo, telling us about his family vineyard.

**B. Membership.** Frank Thomas reports that our active membership for September stands at 272 members, an increase of 31 from the August reading.

**C. Political Action.** No report.

**D. Benefits.** Linda Sugarman reports that on September 16, Sarah Kelly received a letter from me reminding her that two months ago a letter was sent to retirees that included the statement "that retiree dependents would be picking up a larger share of the cost of their insurance." At this point we have not heard anything about what that increase would be. Sarah hopes UA open enrollment will be conducted at the same time as STRS and Medicare conduct their open enrollment.

**E. Faculty Senate, Sept. 3, 2015 Neal Raber**

After the preliminary remarks by Chair Rich mentioning what had transpired during the summer and telling us that the administration had promised to announce in September the faculty hiring's for the coming year; the meeting was turned over to President Scarborough. President Scarborough started with a PowerPoint presentation that stuck on one slide throughout his comments. That screen was a graph showing how enrollment had fallen from 29,699 in 2011 to 25,109 in 2015. He pointed out that the annual debt service was 7% of the budget, or 36 million dollars. Because his PowerPoint presentation was distributed to all of

us by email, I will not go through much of the rest of the presentation other than by reminding you that he said, “We eliminated administrative costs in significant ways—something the faculty has recommended for many years.” He continued by showing us the two minute TV commercial that would be launched over the Labor Day weekend on the CBS Morning Show. He remarked that if you know anything about marketing, the commercial would be followed by others layering onto the theme.

Senator Bouchard asked the first question of Scarborough. She mentioned that she had previously told him that she would ask the question. She wanted to know two things. Why did the reduced cost General Education courses become 100% online, when initially they were advertised as blended, and how many new students actually enrolled because of the cost reductions. He responded that there were 698 registrants. 33% were new students, guests and transfer students. Because of the short time span before announcing it and implementing it, there was not enough time to develop blended courses. Also, he said that they were not promoting enrollment because Community College Presidents did not like it and large enrollment was not desired by them until they were sure they could do it well. Senator Bouchard said that she would be anxious to see the pass rates, because the last time UA put freshmen in online courses, they flunked out in droves. Senator Sterns inquired about the planning process for the Graduate School.

Scarborough said Honors College and Graduate School, because of new leadership, were still in the process of developing their strategic plans. Later, Sterns also asked why Scarborough had ignored University Council, especially when it came to the committee that could have advised him about E. J. Thomas Hall. He responded by saying that he did not come to UC because their bylaws had never been approved. (Remember the BOT has refused to act on the new bylaws for UC for longer than a year.)

Senator Lillie had another question when he wanted to know why no students with disabilities were in the commercial. Scarborough reminded him about the layering coming in future commercials and that all the students in the first commercial except for the two standing on the top of the Polymer Building were actual students. Senator Landis wanted more in the commercials about co-ops and internships. Scarborough responded that it was a glaring omission and he mentioned more would be coming in the layering process.

Senator Quinn asked for specifics about the money set aside for special initiatives. He did not get any specifics in the response. President Scarborough had a pat answer referring to the College Strategic Plans and adding that ultimately the BOT makes the final decisions. Finally, the room came alive when Senator Coffey from Political Science loudly spoke out during a question about the money spent on the name change, which, he said, was not as much as that spent on the President’s house. He said there already is an Ohio Technical College. It does automobile repair. He continued by complaining about the \$11 million dollar cost of a new entranceway. He also complained that marketing could not offset the over

2,000 views of the You Tube parody mocking the administration of UA. He continued by

pointing out that only 13% of the budget was spent on tenured faculty, and students come to university for the faculty. Scarborough counseled us that we need to do our own research and critical thinking, because half of the media reporting was not true.

Next Senator Scotto complained that nursing brings in some 16 million dollars, yet, did not appear in the commercial. She continued by asking why we have to rely on Devil strip and You Tube to find out about such things as the proposed \$11 million to be spent on the Gateway to Nowhere. President Scarborough responded by saying that when he was given the golf cart tour of UA, he jotted down, "Where do you arrive at this university?" He said that he has a fresh set of eyes and was not here 15 years ago to know what had been done on the entranceway. He said that he asked to have the entranceway priced out for submission to the state under the Capital Improvements portion of the budget along with the deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed. He said that this is not part of the academic portion of funding, but is part of the Capital Funding Request for the state. He then said that somebody knew about the list and a reporter used an open records request to put it on the web and the reporter opined that Scarborough wanted to have it built. He said that he hadn't even seen the plans yet. Scarborough then asked Senator Scotto if the picture is different with real information. She loudly responded, "No!!"

She continued by asking for an explanation for using the company Academic Partners for an online RN to BSN degree. She said that the nursing faculty had no input. He said that he thought that the College of Health Professions had input and to his surprise, they supported it. Senator Scotto replied, "They don't have to deal with it. The School of Nursing does." Scarborough retorted that he was told that the School of Nursing was part of the process, and he wouldn't expect every nurse to be for it.

The heated discussion continued with Senator Howley. He began by asking about the Trust Navigator coaches. He said that their web site blog talks of "The Art of Manliness" and has a video "The Economy in 30 Minutes." He wanted to know why it was selected.

President Scarborough said he relied on a successful program at Central Michigan University that showed it was a strong return on investment. He calls it intrusive advising. He said that Trust Navigator under a different name was already planning to be on campus and was registered as a student organization offering success coach services at a fee to students. Since he wanted to make sure that the service was available to all students, not just the ones who could afford it, they decided to outsource it and put it out for bidding. He also felt that because of the short timeframe for implementation and for better accountability outsourcing was the route to go. "The committee chose Trust Navigator and he took it to the BOT to evaluate, something that is not normally done." He continued by saying, "Every time I get a report, at least to date, it has been positive. Now, I'm surprised by that. I'm skeptical of that. I'm worried about that. I don't believe this is going to be flawlessly implemented. Any new start-up, whether done internally, externally, always has hiccups that you try to work through. We're watching it very carefully. Students have been most dissatisfied with the general advising in general for decades. I have one study that shows that the number one reason why students leave a university is not academic or financial. It is because no one seems to care!"

The next question came from Senator Shastry. He wanted to know why funds in his

grant account had been moved to another account so that permission to use \$1500 for travel had to have the signature of Scarborough. President Scarborough in his answer made the comment, "It is a big challenge for us to just be honest with you." He explained that in order to recruit faculty and to retain faculty with grants promises were made to them. He claimed that the cost of the promises far exceeds the ability to meet those promises today. He continued by saying, "How do we honor those promises without endangering the University? How do we - we're not looking for an either or, the University or honor – it is how do we find a solution to this dilemma."

He went on by explaining that they would honor start-up funds, but moneys that were promised in the past and weren't spent now become part of this huge carry forward commitment that if everyone spent, we would be in real trouble. So they took \$500,000 out of the 10.4 million strategic initiative pool to provide everybody at least a small dollar access to go to a conference, etc. Anything that requires a major draw has to go through a special process to amend the University's budget. So no matter what the faculty member had in his or her grant/promise account, it would be reduced to \$1600.

With the time becoming late, President Scarborough recommended that if a faculty member had a particular issue that is burning a hole in their mind, there is nothing wrong with E-mailing him saying, hey, can we get together? He said, "I would much rather you get real accurate information from me than, you know, the Angel Strip or whatever it is."

At that point Senator Braun asked for and received a follow-up question. He said that the money that the University was taking was grant money brought in by the faculty member and was not University funds. It should not just be taken away. President Scarborough argued that the money provided to the University from a grant was insufficient for supporting the research infrastructure, so they needed to retain more and his argument is closer to reality than the one that says it belongs to the principal investigator. He finished by saying, "We have to work together to make this decision work. There is no intention to take the money away, but there is an intent to manage this money so that it allows us to regain our breath, financial breath, before we make all of these moneys available to people."

Senator Huss wanted to know if there was anything that Scarborough could explain about the case involving Dean Rickel and the fabrications on his application. Scarborough said that there were three presentations that were listed with incorrect information. When it was brought to our attention, we notified him, and yes, it was a mistake and we immediately posted it. Scarborough claimed that it wasn't really consequential to the hiring process. It was not someone trying to portray a peer reviewed article that wasn't peer reviewed. Scarborough said that he did not deem it nor could he find any evidence that it was intentional. He did not elaborate as to how hard he had investigated, but he did shift the blame to the messenger. He said that he fears that this constant attack has more to do with Dean Rickel's non-traditional academic background.

Anyway, Chair Rich said at 4:50 pm that it was time to conclude the question and answer session with Scarborough. The Senate needed time for elections of officers.

**F. University and Community Service.** Dan Sheffer sent the following report to President Vukovich. Updates for October are ready to be posted on the website.

**G. Scholarship.** Carl Lieberman reported that scholarship recipient, Abigail Callahan, would be joining us at the November luncheon. Recipient, Kimberlee Trowbridge, cannot join us

this semester due to a conflict with her class schedule. Carl will contact her again during Spring Semester.

**H. Newsletter.** Pam Rupert noted that the Fall 2015 AUAR Newsletter is now in circulation. Discussion focused on the Address and Postage page: the upper left corner tells us that the sender of the Newsletter is The University of Akron (printed in its customary format, font and heavy blue color); directly beside it is printed: Ohio's Polytechnic University (in a new format, font and light blue ink). Resulting discussion was one of annoyance.

**4. Unfinished Business.** On the subject of the UA situation update, President Vukovich shared with us a letter addressed to her, Tom, Neal and all AUAR's from Dr. Russell Davis, Professor Emeritus Real Estate. Dr. Davis' very brief message was a Thank You for our Sept. 12, 2015 letter to the UA Board of Trustees. He stated that he believed that our letter "served as the tipping point to prompt Scott Scarborough and the BOT to declare no name change now or ever".

The meeting closed at 12:20 P.M.

Hans Zbinden, recording secretary  
Next Executive Board Meeting is October 22, 2015  
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium

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