

**The Association of the University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)  
Executive Board Meeting, October 23, 2014  
Alumni Office Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium**

**1. Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order by President June Burton at 10:10 a.m. Others present were Bob Blankenship, Frank Thomas, Bob Gandee, Loren Hoch, Pam Rupert, Dan Sheffer, Ed Lasher, Linda Sugarman, Hans Zbinden, Diane and Tom Vukovich. Absent with notice were Carl Lieberman, Hank Nettling and Neal Raber. The minutes of the September 25, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

**2. Treasurer**

Bob Blankenship reported an available balance of \$7,876.41 as of September 30, 2014. This compares with a balance of \$7,034.15 on September 30, 2013. It was moved to accept the report, subject to audit.

**3. Committee reports.**

**A. Programs.** On Friday November 7 we hold our pot luck Soup and Chili supper at the traditional location: Goodyear Heights lodge.

On the Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. luncheon: we will hear two speakers from the MAPS Air Museum in North Canton.

On Thursday November 13 we will hold an AUAR Scholarship Fundraiser: a WineTasting and Hors d'oeuvres event at Riverside Wine and Imports in Kent.

On Wednesday December 10. Our luncheon program will be performances by The Western Reserve Masonic Community Players. It was moved to increase The luncheon and program cost to \$13 for this event only. The motion passed.

**B. Membership.** Frank Thomas's membership chart as of October 22 shows 292 paid up members; 64 retirees on the chart have not made a membership payment. Discussion from the floor was in agreement to remove such retirees from our membership chart. Further discussion from the floor made note of the fact that staff personnel retire at various dates throughout the year.

**C. Political action.** No report.

**D. Benefits.** Linda Sugarman reported that the Retiree Dependents should have received their information on Health Benefits from the University of Akron Human Resources office. The open enrollment period for 2015 is until November 14. This year the form is a little different, as the University is requiring a response even if the Retiree Dependent has no change to their coverage. For Retiree Dependents age 65 or older, the monthly premium will be \$41

**E. Faculty Senate. Faculty Senate Meeting Oct. 2, 2014**

In his opening remarks, Chair Bill Rich was quite critical about the delay in the

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**3. Committee Reports (cont.)**

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authorization of faculty searches. He said, "In our September 4th meeting, the Provost was asked when these decisions would be made. He replied that he hoped to have them all made by Friday of the next week, which was September 12th. it's now October 2nd. To my knowledge no such searches have been

authorized. The President has said that as much as possible the decisions about which full time faculty positions to fill should be based on the planning and budgeting process that will conclude during the spring semester. Year after year full time tenure track positions have gone unfilled. Year after year the academic programs in certain departments and schools have withered as a result. The quality of those programs has suffered as have their reputations. Consequently, student enrollments have declined, as students have sensibly opted to pursue their education elsewhere. The morale of the faculty who teach in the programs and care about their quality also has suffered. The plain fact is that at a university the quality of its academic programs matters. If the quality of its academic programs declines, its reputation suffers, enrollment and completion rates decline, and so do its revenues. When these things happen, the university goes into a downward spiral."

Continuing he said, "In a perfect world all decisions about which full time faculty positions to fill would be determined by a thorough university wide planning and budgeting process. We do not have the luxury of living in that world today. I'm hopeful that our current president will be able to move us closer to that world than we have ever been. In the meantime, however, we must deal with the world in which we now live. There are some faculty positions that any reasonable planning and budgeting process would tell us must be filled. As to those positions, there's no reason to wait until the spring and there are good reasons not to." In his remarks, President Scarborough reported on his first 90 days. He said, "As you will recall, what I hoped to accomplish in the first 90 days is what hopefully any good new rookie person needs to do, and that is to listen a lot. So I have had the opportunity, actually 75% of my schedule has been just meeting people for the first time and getting to know their thoughts, their aspirations for the university both internally and externally. The next 90 days is really to spend time with the colleges, each individual college over the next 90 days to complete a process that will allow me to get to know the university from

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the college level to the institutional level. The process is fairly straightforward.

That is to envision a series of approximately five meetings. The first meeting is with the college leadership. I sit and listen for about an hour and a half, listen to the college leadership talk about the college, the composition of the faculty, the issues that they face and the goals, the marketplace, what's happening with enrollment.

They will also hand me a great deal of material to read, which I've enjoyed doing. Then once through the material, we schedule a second meeting. And this time I do a little bit more of the talking. I say okay, based on what I heard you say and based on what I read in the materials that you provided, here's what I heard. Now, did I get it right? Are these the issues that are important to you? Is this what's going on? At that point in time I will also share some thoughts about, have you thought about doing this? Have you thought about doing that? And in that case I usually will do what one would predict and surprise them with a few questions.

Next we schedule a third meeting. After the third meeting, there should be some coming together, a meeting of the minds in terms of a shared vision of where the college is going and should go. And at that point, if the college has already not done so through its own process, we then schedule an all faculty meeting within the college. We explain the process, the issues that were discussed, and the proposal for a shared vision of moving forward and then we ask for a general feedback from all faculty within the college. Based on that, I would say that 75 percent of the time that I've done this in the past, the college faculty give it the thumbs up.

But for the 25 percent of the time when that does not happen, a second meeting is scheduled so that we take the feedback from the first meeting, we usually form some type of task force of the college faculty and the college leadership, and we work through what is a proposed reaction to the feedback, through an amended plan or a rationale for why the feedback was not followed. And a second all faculty meeting is scheduled, is held, and in every case we are now at a point where there's an agreement of where the college should head. Now, that's critically important because if all of that gets done by December the budget process for the following fiscal year begins January."

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**3. Committee Reports (cont.)**

**E. Faculty Senate. Faculty Senate Meeting Oct. 2, 2014(cont)**

Senator Bouchard had a question for the President. She was concerned because of a rumor and asked, "Did you know that the Dean of the Graduate School is talking about starting this year a full five year thorough academic program review that would include bringing in outside people, doing the full kind of, you know 10 years' worth of data analysis?" She explained that it was a very poor time for such a review and it would cost too much when the budget was strained. She also said, "So I'm just, I'm urging you, slow it down. You are the only one that can do it." She also mentioned, "And the reason I bring this up with you is as you know the Dean of the Graduate School does not report to the Provost.

He only reports to you." In his response, President Scarborough said that he agreed 100% with Senator Bouchard and he felt that the Dean of Graduate Studies should report to the Provost.

President Scarborough concluded his remarks saying, "One of the common principles of strategic management is to build on one's strength. To leverage existing strengths. To create an identity for the institution where the average person on the outside says, oh, well, my son or daughter's interested in this program. Everyone knows that Akron is where you go to do this. And not every program needs to enjoy that popular reputation, but we need enough in the areas that will draw the sufficient numbers of students that we need to make the collective enterprise work."

Provost Sherman then spoke and reported on enrollment. He said, "Overall freshmen enrollment, held relatively steady at 4,131 students compared to 4,177 students last year which was only a 1.1% decline. This was a significant improvement from the declines in previous years, which were 8.6 and 9.4.

Eligible students entering fall 2013 have been retained at a rate of 67.5 percent, up nine percent from the previous year. Student credit hours of instruction were down 2.5 percent where a four percent overall decline had been budgeted."

In response to a question,

Provost Sherman mentioned that approximately 150 students have been enrolled without paying the \$45 application fee and the collection process is underway. In light of the touting of 18,000 applications, Senator Lillie asked the Provost to explain what was meant by *application*. If an application was submitted without the accompanying fee, he wanted to know if it was included in the count. Provost Sherman could not answer that inquiry. Comparing the number of applications

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with previous years when fees were paid would be a false comparison. Chair Rich opined that it would also not be entirely honest. Much of the remaining portion of the meeting dealt with the approval of course proposals, all of which had passed the necessary steps before final approval by Faculty Senate.

Senator Ducharme wanted two courses on *Death and Dying* proposed by College of Applied Science and Technology to be referred back to committee. He claimed that the Philosophy Department had objections. Though the arguments went back and forth and took up an inordinately large amount of time, the crux of the matter was that all objections were to have been submitted during a previous two week period. Fortunately, his motion on *Death and Dying* DIED with a tie vote of 22 to 22.

The rest of the meeting dealt with routine committee reports. The Athletics Committee report notified the Senators that the committee was dealing with a protocol for recognizing concussion symptoms of student athletes.

*Bob Gandee  
Neal Raber*

**F. Community Service.** No report.

**G. Scholarship.** No report.

**H. Newsletter.** The winter 2015 edition of our AUAR Newsletter will come out at the end of this year. Pamela Rupert noted that the highlighted feature will be Tom and Diane Vukovich's August trip in Russia.

We take note that Dr. Marion Ruebel, President Emeritus of the University of Akron, passed away September 28, 2014.

The Board meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

**Hans Zbinden,** recording secretary.  
**Next Executive Board Meeting is Thursday, December 4, 2014.**  
**Alumni Office Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium.**