

The Association of the University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)
Executive Board Meeting, October 22, 2015
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium

- 1. Opening Remarks:** The Board meeting was called to order by President Diane Vukovich at 10 A.M.. Others present were Bob Blankenship, Frank Thomas, Stu Terrass, Neal Raber, Bob Gandee, Pam Rupert, Loren Hoch, Rita Klein, Tom and Diane Vukovich and Hans Zbinden. Absent with notice were Cathy Edwards, Ed Lasher, Carl Lieberman, Laura Moss, Velma Pomrenke, Dan Sheffer and Linda Sugarman. The minutes of the September 24, 2015 minutes were approved as written.
- 2. Treasurer:** Bob Blankenship reports a balance of \$7,279.32 as of Sept. 30, 2015. This compares with a balance of \$7,876.41 for September, 2014. It was moved to accept the report, subject to audit.
- 3. Committee Reports:**
 - A. Programs.** Tom Vukovich reported a fine attendance of 45 guests at our October 14 Luncheon. Our annual Soup and Chili Supper takes place on November 6, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. at the Goodyear Metro Park. Next on our schedule, we will gather for the monthly luncheon on Veterans Day, November 11 at 11:30 a.m. at Quaker Station. Speaker will be our own Veteran, Frank Thomas, sharing with us "The Last Days of the Korean War and Beyond." Final activity of the year will be our Holiday Party Luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 9, at Quaker Station. Getting us into a holiday mood will be Galen Karriker, the University's Assistant Director of the University Bands.
 - B. Membership.** Frank Thomas reports that our active membership for October stands at 289 active members, 61 inactive, totaling 350. However, he talked with Katy Selzer and she has another four renewals giving us a total of 293 paid and 57 non-paid, for a total of 350 member on the file. Our Scholarship income, based on contributions from May to September, stands at \$2,798.00.
 - C. Political Action.** No report. There was no OCHER meeting in October.
 - D. Benefits.** Linda Sugarman reports that retire dependents should be receiving open enrollment materials from the benefits office. The benefits office has received three inquiries from this committee as to what changes are planned for retiree dependent insurance and when open enrollment will take place. The benefits office has been unable to give us any information.
 - E. Faculty Senate.** Neal Raber made the following report. Chair Rich began the meeting by remarking that he had attended a conference of Faculty Senate Chairs on the escalating costs of MAC athletics. UA is the third highest in athletics spending for the schools in the MAC, only exceeded by E. Michigan and Buffalo. He then expressed dismay that the administration had approved filling 55 faculty positions with only 1/3 tenure track positions. He mentioned that among other things non tenure track faculty do not have job security and as a result do not have academic freedom. The cost of hiring 55 faculty members around 4.5 million dollars, is less than the savings from the faculty vacancies occurring in the past year. None of the 10.4 million dollars set aside for new initiatives was used for new faculty hiring. He mentioned that a second round of position approvals was promised to be announced in November, and that does not allow for searches to begin in time to hire the best qualified candidates.

E. Faculty Senate(cont.)

President Scarborough started his remarks by informing the Senate that he currently is focusing on branding the Honors College and is in the process of cultivating a donor. The day of the Senate meeting was the day the ABJ published the article about the anti-gay remarks President Scarborough had made when he was president of the Student Association at the University of Texas at Austin. So he continued his comments by somberly saying to us that that morning he had remembered the lesson he had been taught by a great professor about the difference between cognitive conflict and affective conflict. Cognitive conflict is a team driven debate of the issues by those with different competencies, where affective conflict is personal and away from the issues and is both negative and destructive. He said that he recalled this because he spent last year in cognitive conflict, but this year there has been a movement on campus to affective conflict and he has seen the destruction caused by it. He asked that we pull together to keep the debate constructive and that we not draw ourselves into darkness. Senator Bouchard began the questioning by asking if he had gotten the figures as to how many freshmen were attracted to UA by the reduced cost of the general education courses. He responded that of the 192 freshmen who signed up for the courses, 128 paid after the April 15 announcement of reduced costs. Senator Bouchard wanted to know if the courses would eventually be offered as blended as advertised rather than online. Scarborough said that he hoped so, but at Toledo it took a year to offer, teach, and improve such courses. He said that online better serves the high school students who take the courses. At that point Senator Nofsinger said that data had shown that the only students that were successful with online courses were college juniors and seniors, not high school students. Scarborough responded that dual enrollment students would be the better prepared high school students.

Senator Sterns wanted to know what UA plans to do about the public concern with the affordability of higher education especially in light of the Governor's task force looking into the cost of higher education. Scarborough said that the publicity concentrated on the sticker price of college and not the actual cost a student pays when scholarships and other financial aid are taken into consideration. He said that 60% graduate with debt less than a new car.

Senator Lillie wanted to know how much LeBron James paid to have the College of Education named after his foundation, because the public believes he gave a massive amount. Scarborough said that he promised to make 5 commercials and that was valued at 8 to 10 million dollars apiece. He went on to say that UA was responsible for the last portion of the tuition for each student and it would be 5 years before the first student arrives on campus. He told us that it was not a huge financial commitment and that LeBron is a wonderful partner who really cares about his kids. He said that he really doesn't know him that well and if the media outlets believe he made a large contribution, he does not see any reason to change their perspective. Senator Lillie then wanted to know who decides the criteria for the admission of his kids. He asked, "Would it be LeBron and UA and would it be different from others?" To which Scarborough said, "Yes, but there

E. Faculty Senate(cont.)

was not enough time to work out the details before the announcement was made. The criteria has remained open, because LeBron takes a personal ownership for these kids and he wanted to make sure that whatever criteria we select, it is appropriate for the children he has invested so much in.”

Senator Klein in her question said that on more than one occasion, Scarborough had stated that he wanted to attract well prepared, well-resourced students to the Honors College. She said that translates to white students. He responded that the financial package made available is for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Senator Coffey began his question by explaining that studies show that students who take courses from tenure track faculty are overwhelmingly more likely to graduate. He continued by saying that UA would have to hire 100 more tenure track faculty to have the same ratio to students as we had in 1999. He said that he did not like hearing from President Scarborough, “the national trend is the national trend.” Scarborough responded that we cannot be different because we cannot afford the gold standard. Senator Coffey then said, “There is not one single reason every single one of the 55 positions shouldn’t be tenure track. Not one. They then would help with the profile of the University.” He concluded by saying that he was not being affective, because his comments were evidence based.” (The senators applauded when he finished his comments.) President Scarborough countered by saying that the literature is not consistently in one direction on the issue. He said the issue comes up every month at his book club, and if Senator Coffey is so passionate about the issue, he should join the club and talk about it for 3 hours every month.

Senator Allen said that we are out of whack with our competitors like K.S.U. and Cleveland State when it comes to the ratio of tenure track professors to students. Scarborough said that we are at the national average and we are 10% below the national average for lecturers. Allen said the comparison includes community colleges in the statistics.

Scarborough said CAST and Wayne are our community colleges and that you have to ask, “What are the other schools not doing in order to be better in the area of hiring tenure track faculty?” Senator Bouchard said that hiring 100 tenure track faculty would be an exciting and different use of the 10.4 million dollars set aside for new initiatives. It would move us away from the “lead standard” at UA.

Senator Scotto from nursing angrily made the comment to the President that if the administration had been more transparent in the past so that faculty would not have to discover goings on through the media, that we could be more cognitive than affective. He responded that we need to trust each other and work as a team. Senator Lillie next said, “When the structure of university governance is respected by the administration and the BOT, affective discussion would happen in committee and not in the Beacon Journal.” He continued by saying that the planning body UC is ignored and shared governance is just given lip service. Change coming from top down leads to push back. Hearing comments from the President such as, “We talked to your representatives,” is not shared governance. President Scarborough responded by saying there is a disconnect between those who think shared governance is working and those that perceive that trying is not succeeding.

E. Faculty Senate(cont.)

He said that members of the BOT thought that coming to Faculty Senate to hear comments about the rebranding of UA was a historic example of shared governance. Senator Lillie mentioned that that was the first time in 15 years that a member of the BOT had contact with the faculty. Scarborough said that he needs to hold a summit and have participants get in a room for two days and discuss shared governance on campus. President Scarborough finished by saying that he would have to find a facilitator for a discussion on shared governance.

Provost Sherman had brief comments, which would have been better left unsaid. He said that when asked in the community how things are going at UA, he responds, "Classes are being held and faculty are teaching and everything is fine." He then would make his usual comment to them that applications are up over the last three years showing that students want to come to UA.

The meeting ended with the approval of the Center for Data Science, Analytics, and Information Technology after much discussion and in spite of the opposition lead by Senator Bouchard. The proposal presented by Rex Ramsier for the Academic Policies Committee stated that the overall vision and the mission of this center are to establish a distinctive position of leadership for UA in the areas of data science, analytics and information technology. To realize this, we will create specific and actionable goals and plans by fully engaging our stakeholders, i.e., our faculty, students and community partners This proposal seeks approval for the structural elements of the center. The operational elements of the center will be determined using a collective, collaborative process that fully engages our stakeholders.

Senator Bouchard felt that the proposal was too skimpy and said it indicates that the center is not sure of its mission. She said the rationale deals with a very specialized area called Big Data and Director Garzia comes from Microsoft with a background in software production, not Big Data. She objected to the fact that the director, Mario Garzia, had been hired without a search and that some of the work of the center was already being performed by what is left of the Development Office. Dr. Garzia was present to answer questions. He said that he has friends in Big Data and he did Big Data for many years. Assoc. Provost Ramsier mentioned that Dr. Garzia had moved her from Seattle to be the director. In the end, it passed. We adjourned at 5:07.

F. University and Community Service. Website. Dan Sheffer is continuing to update our website.

G. Scholarship. Carl Lieberman lets us know that the value of current assets in our scholarship fund for the period ending on September 30, 2015 will not be available until November. Recent gifts for the quarter ending on September 30 amount to \$1445.00.

H. Newsletter. For those members who are preparing reports, please submit them to Pam Rupert. In addition, Pam would welcome suggestions for the Interview section of the Newsletter. Jim Sage was suggested. Pam will contact him.

4. Unfinished Business. In our concerns with the "UA situation," President Diane Vukovich reported that Larry Burns, University Vice President for Advancement, has not responded yet to unanswered questions which arose during his hour long discussion and visit prior to

4. Unfinished Business(cont.)

our Executive Board Meeting of September 24, 2015. President Vukovich indicated that she will be getting in touch with him.

5. New Business. None

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Hans Zbinden, recording secretary.
Next Executive Board Meeting is December 3, 2015
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium.

Minutes (63)