

**The Association of The University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)
Executive Board Meeting March 28, 2024 Minutes
Held in person and Zoom**

I. Call to order. The Board meeting was called to order on March 28, 2024 by President Harvey Sterns at 10:00 am.

II. Welcome & Announcements:

Members attending: Harvey Sterns, John Heminger, Mary Verstraete, Robert Gandee, Ali Hajjafar (Zoom), Richard Milford, Cathy Edwards (Zoom), Diane Vukovich, Tom Vukovich, Dan Sheffer, Tom Nichols, Mel Vye, Martha Vye

Absent: Linda Sugarman, Connie Heldenfels, Carl Lieberman, Mary Schadle, Rita Klein, Kathy DuBose, Richard Steiner

III. Approval of Minutes: Two corrections were identified; The date in the header and in the Call to Order should be February 22, 2024 and the lunch food selections were swapped for the next two meetings. Dan Sheffer moved to approve the minutes as corrected, Martha Vye seconded the motion. The motion was Approved.

IV. Treasurer's Report: Richard Steiner moved to accept the Treasurer's report, Mary Verstraete seconded the motion. The motion was Approved.

February 2024

UA Account income: membership dues \$180.00; luncheon proceeds \$520.00.

UA Account expenses: Roller Coach & Tours deposit \$323.75, Aramark Catering \$460.00.

Petty Cash income: \$0.00

Petty Cash expenses: D. Vukovich for Metroparks deposit \$170.00

	UA Account	Petty Cash	Totals
Initial balance	\$12,148.62*	\$322.48	\$12,471.10*
Income	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
Expenses	\$783.75	\$170.00	\$953.75
Final balance	\$12,064.87*	\$152.48	\$12,217.35*
Final Balance			
February 2023	\$10,474.89*	\$395.38	\$10,870.27*

* These include dues payments for future years.

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V. Corresponding Secretary. It was reported that a “Condolences” card has been sent both to the Beyer and the Carrino families. A Get well card has been sent to Carl Leiberman who fell last week and had surgery.

VI. Committee Reports.

A. Programs: Tom Vukovich noted that we had a great presentation from Dan Sheffer about the birds and political climate in Cuba. A wonderful collection of goods and food for the Campus Cupboard was received from those attending.

Tom Vukovich reported that Jason Segedy and Brian Miner will discuss the plans for the Polsky Building on April 17th. Steak Tips will be served.

Tom reported that the Road Trip will be April 26 and the registration email has been sent. Attendees should arrive by 8:45 am and park behind the Martin Center.

B. Membership: Chair Mel Vye reported that we have 190 paid members, including 48 Life Members. The transfer of membership file to Development has been going really well. However, Claudia is leaving the University next week and her replacement needs to be brought up to speed. Hopefully, they will also be a great help to AUAR.

C. Political Action: Dan Sheffer mentioned that an article in the Beacon Journal reported that the balance at OCHER is still “Pro-traditional”. A “reform Group” wants to change the investment stock to index funds, however it is illegal to put everything into a single fund.

Dan commented that the level of trust within the Board is poor and the Advocacy Group in OCHER continues to write letters to the Board and Legislators.

There are many moving parts including an “Anti-Pension” push and a move to raise the employer contribution to the retirement funds, not only at the university level, but also at all public schools. Ohio is the second lowest in employer contributions and the highest in employee contributions.

Harvey Sterns mentioned that research has shown that many retirees do not have sufficient funds to support them through retirement.

Senators need to be educated and they need to take politics out of it.

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D. Benefits: There was no report. Diane Vukovich mentioned that the University of Akron Women's Committee sends out a list of events taking place on campus each month. She will find out if the person who creates the list would be willing to share it with AUAR.

E. Faculty Senate: Ali Hajjafar sent the minutes from the last meeting to the Board via e-mail.

He also mentioned that it seems like the University is working hard to get their finances in order.

Harvey Sterns noted that the President hasn't been attending the Faculty Senate meetings, just the Provost.

F. University & Community Service/Website: No report.

Dan Sheffer mentioned that we need to get people looking at the website.

G. Scholarship: No report.

Harvey mentioned that the Book Scholarship was awarded at the Black, Brown & Beyond Summit.

Diane Vukovich made a motion to increase the Book Scholarship to \$500, Mary Verstraete seconded the motion. Discussion ensued including the question of how we raise the extra money considering that we lose \$10-20 on each luncheon. It was suggested that we have a scholarship fundraiser and to advertise donating to the scholarship at all events. Then motion passed.

H. Newsletter: Martha Vye reported that the cost for the last issue of the newsletter were lower (\$1,025) since we modified who receives it. She mentioned that we could save \$140 dollars if they mailed it out "flat" but the Board agreed that was not a good idea.

Martha stated that the deadline for articles for the Fall issue was August 15, 2024 and that she had secured a commitment from Cynthia Capers to be interviewed for the Member Spotlight.

It was mentioned that in 2005, we included an article about the Audiology Department and the services they offered. It was agreed we should do that again.

VII. Old Business.

Ali Hajjafar mentioned that he would like to step down as the Faculty Senate Liaison but would be willing to be an At-Large Board Member.

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Dan Sheffer wanted to thank Tom Vukovich for helping with all of the communication with Quaker Square for the upcoming Retirement Seminar. He mentioned that he needed help with check in at the event. Mary Verstraete and Martha Vye volunteered to help out.

VIII. New Business.

IX. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 am.

Respectfully Submitted: Mary C. Verstraete, Recording Secretary

The next meeting of the 2023-2024 year is scheduled for April 25, 2024 at 10:00 am in the Infocision Board Room.

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Faculty Senate Meeting February 1, 2024

Chair Budd called the meeting to order. In her remark, she said: As we begin a new semester, I want to share a few reminders around student success. As faculty, you are often the first one to see signs that a student is struggling. They may miss class, be late turning in assignments, have below average grades or seem isolated from the other students - or they may come directly to you for help. At UA, we have many resources to help students, so many that it can be difficult to navigate them all. Referring a student to the Help a Zip program is the best way to match a student to the resource they need. Links to the referral page are found at the bottom of every daily Digest, at the bottom of UA's home page, and in My Akron. If a student begins missing class, sometimes a friendly email from you to see if they are doing okay will get them back in the classroom. If it doesn't, and you have a dedicated academic adviser, please alert them so they can find out if the student is having problems across multiple classes and intervene if necessary. All of you know this, but please continue to do your best to get feedback and grades to students as promptly as you can. It should go without saying, but students need to know their grades to be successful. OAA has shared with us that students are urgently requesting that faculty utilize the grade books in Brightspace. It's very easy to use, is highly adaptable to your personal grading methods, and there are training modules available for anything you're not sure of. Even if you aren't using Brightspace, please make sure to communicate feedback promptly in some other way, while being careful to maintain privacy. I am continuously impressed by the dedication and depth of care that the faculty of the University of Akron show their students. Thank you for everything you are doing to ensure the success of our students. The activity at the statehouse around Senate Bill 83 has gone quiet and it has been referred to the House Rules and Reference committee. We will, of course, continue to monitor it closely and keep you posted on how you can help influence its outcome should it move forward.

Secretary of Executive Committee reported: The Senate-EC met with Provost Wiencek and Senior Vice Provost Price. We discussed enrollment, vacant leadership positions, and goals for the upcoming year. The Senate-EC has also updated the senate by-laws and bring those for your review with a planned vote at the March senate meeting.

Provost Wiencek in his remark said: It's been a mild winter but two snow days. Enjoy report on changes to bylaws. It reminds me of my time here. Started in 2020, we've come a long way. Great strides towards collaborating and joining arms. Joint ventures between UC and FS, willingness to collaborate across those bodies. Looking at student affairs and thank you all for the deliberation and believe that has helped us move forward. Regarding Workday, students are progressing, and doing well there. Milestones happening on Feb 7. There is a mock semester event, sort of a walk in and have people show you various features of student module. Drop in event in BCAS. For more details contact OAA. Goal is soft launch in mid-March with go-live in April. Hopefully will go better this time. It won't go perfectly, can't anticipate every issue that happens. Very pleased with response of IT and now Enrollment Management. Don't be afraid to reach out if you have issues. Millions of people will be here for the eclipse.

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Different for us, going remote for that day is in the best interests of delivery and safety. Still awaiting some clarification for working remotely for staff. Look for some posts in Digest. Regarding enrollment, our focus is on recruiting and concern over FAFSA situation. Delay is longer than expected, pushed back to March and that's nebulous. Many students are making decisions based on loans and government assistance and that can have a cascade effect on schools. Our pattern will change because of that. Looking at confirmations to date, we have had a lot of software changeovers as well, so that customer side is going smoothly but data is going to two buckets rather than one. But we are up a healthy amount and are encouraged by numbers. Enrollment looking optimistic. Do want to shout out to the enrollment team and IT for all the TLC to the process, hitting the milestones and looking at all the software packages. Moving to SLATE and away from the three platforms we were using. Good access to data. Thanks to Steve McKellips and his team. AIC process is rolling out, have requests for funding and committee to meet and discuss benchmarks. Allocation will be more modest this year after last year's heavy lift. Regarding allocating resources, we already have asked all units to report to Provost. We may not fill some positions and move that money to other areas. Workgroups going on for PT Faculty and Faculty Senate has organized that, Course Evaluation Workgroup as well. Look forward to work from those committees.

In Committee reports, CRC brought 22 course proposals and 29 program proposals to the floor, and they were approved.

AAUP representative reported: AAUP will be reaching out about day in the life of faculty with BOT members soon and LMPC will continue to work on the workload policy and hope to finish up soon. OAA has posted workload policies on their website.

Graduate council representative explained proposed changes to GC bylaw. There were a lot of discussion on the issues. They were approved except one item regarding grievance which was sent back to EC for modification.

GSG representative reported: GSG has been very busy during the first few weeks of the spring semester. Last week, we held our January meeting with all of our members. Two highlights from this include, swearing in our Senator for the College of Engineering and Polymer Sciences, Julia Wood, and welcoming Dr. Bausch to introduce herself and the Graduate School to our members. In the coming weeks, GSG will be rolling out two Taskforces that will be open to all currently registered graduate students, these include Student Engagement & Success and Mental Health. The purpose of these Taskforces is to continue our work across campus and serving the needs of our constituents more efficiently by collecting student input. Upcoming, we will be working on our spring elections and collaborating with USG on programing.

USG representative mentioned that the Spirit week is February 19-23, and night at the museum on March 6. Also mentioned the bottle cap recycling in SU, and BCAS.

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UC representative reported that UC met in December and January and endorsed strategic plan and youth protection policy.