

**The Association of The University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)
Executive Board Meeting December 8, 2023 Minutes
Held in person and Zoom**

I. Call to order. The Board meeting was called to order on December 8, 2023 by President Harvey Sterns at 10:00 am.

II. Welcome & Announcements:

Members attending: Harvey Sterns, Rita Klein, John Heminger, Mary Verstraete, Linda Sugarman, Richard Steiner, Robert Gandee, Dan Sheffer, Ali Hajjafar(Zoom) , Richard Milford, Kathy DuBose, Diane Vukovich, Tom Nichols, Mel Vye, Martha Vye, Tom Vukovich

Absent: Connie Heldenfels, Carl Lieberman, Tom Nichols, Mary Schadle, Cathy Edwards.

Harvey noted that we need to take action to increase our membership. Bob Gandee moved to approve the agenda; Rita Klein seconded the motion.

III. Approval of Minutes: Three corrections were identified as typos by the Secretary and corrected. Martha Vye moved to approve the minutes as corrected, Diane Vukovich seconded the motion. The motion was Approved.

IV. Treasurer’s Report: John Heminger noted that we haven’t purchased or given out the gift cards yet. Also, he will not be at the December luncheon. Richard Steiner will check people in and receive the payments. Dan Sheffer moved to accept the Treasurer’s report and Richard Steiner seconded the motion. The Motion passed.

October 2023

UA Account income: membership dues \$237.00
 UA Account expenses: Aramark Catering \$294.22
 Petty Cash income: \$0.00
 Petty Cash expenses: \$0.00

	UA Account	Petty Cash	Totals
Initial balance	\$12,304.04*	\$160.38	\$12,464.42*
Income	\$237.00	\$0.00	\$237.00
Expenses	\$294.22	\$0.00	\$294.22
Final balance	\$12,246.82*	\$160.38	\$12,407.20*
Final Balance			
October 2022	\$9,619.70	\$238.68	\$9,858.38

* These include dues payments for future years.

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V. Corresponding Secretary. Linda Sugarman reported that she sent a “Get Well” card to Glen Atwood. Carl Lieberman is home and she will send him a card.

VI. Committee Reports.

A. Programs: Tom Vukovich noted that we had 32 attendees at the Soup & Chili supper on November 2nd. Everyone attending paid the \$5 fee. The total expenses were \$206.63 so we were in the negative by \$46.63, Everyone agreed that the location at the Goodyear Lodge is perfect and cost efficient.

The December Lunch will be the Holiday celebration and Robin Roseberry will provide the musical entertainment. Her fee is \$300 and we will not be recording it.

Tom Vukovich reviewed the November Lunch and noted that the talk by Hilary Dunn was well received and some new people attended the lunch.

The new year’s calendar is set through April:

February 21 - Rochelle Sibbio will speak about Habitat for Humanity of Summit County

March 20 – Dan Sheffer will give a talk on Birding in Cuba and other places

April 17 – Jason Segedy will discuss the plans for the Polsky Building

Reservations have been made with Aramark for the Fall 2024 lunches on 9/18, 10/16, 11/20 and 12/18.

Tom and Diane will be out of town 4/28-5/19 so the Road Trip will be April 18 or 19 or 26. Lobster and Suds will be on 6/7.

Rita Klein reported that we collected 259 items for the Campus Cupboard at the November Luncheon and we received a thank you from Zip Assist.

Mary Verstraete made a motion that we do a second collection in the spring. Richard Steiner seconded and the Board approved the Motion. The collection will be at the March luncheon.

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B. Membership. Mel Vye indicated that we currently have 172 paid members, 46 of whom are Life members. Membership Status will be printed on the mailing labels of the Spring Newsletter

C. Political Action. Bob Gandee and Dan Sheffer reported that OCHER met last Tuesday. Lynn Hoover was announced as the Acting Director of STRS after Bill Neville was asked to step down due to a single, anonymous letter accused him of staff harassment. Lynn is a CFO and has been in STRS for over 20 years.

A rework of Senate Bill 83 is slated to be voted out of Committee this coming week. The bill still contains language that is very detrimental to faculty rights to bargain for issues such as tenure, workload, course evaluations and retrenchment policies. As this issue progresses we will keep the membership informed and supply information on contacting state legislators and the Governor.

Another discussion at the OCHER meeting focused on employee versus employer contributions to the retirement systems. Public employee groups feel that employer contributions should increase, as it is only at 14% currently, which is on the low side for state systems where Social Security was not collected. Employees also currently contribute 14% which is on the high side for similar institutions. A proposal from STRS to the state legislature will be submitted to increase the employer contribution to 18%, over the course of several years, ½ percent increase per year. OCHER approves of this action but feels it should also apply to OPERS. OPERS will also be submitting a proposal.

D. Benefits. Linda Sugarman reported that the University is changing how they will assign UA IDs to individuals who reactivate their status. They will be assigned new IDs and not regain their previous ID. This will not affect retirees.

E. Faculty Senate. The report from Ali Hajjafar on the November 2nd meeting is attached. Harvey Sterns noted that all of the Urban Studies program was eliminated and there was no debate. He stated that we need to ensure that the Senate continues to operate correctly. There were no questions for Ali or Harvey.

F. University & Community Service/Website. Dan indicated that all updated meeting minutes are posted.

G. Scholarship. Rita Klein indicated that she heard from all three scholarship recipients and they will all be attending the December Holiday lunch. Linda Sugarman mentioned that we need to contact Financial Aid in January or February to determine the amount available for next year's award and to remind the University scholarship committee of our requirements. It was noted that one of this year's recipients had a GPA of 4.0 and those students are not in our targeted group.

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H. Newsletter. Martha Vye reported that the Spring newsletter is coming along and the deadline to submit anything is 12/15.

VII. Old Business.

Harvey Sterns and Rita Klein will purchase and send, via campus mail, the \$10 Starbuck gift cards.

Recruitment of a President-Elect – The Ad Hoc Reference Committee has not yet met to review the By-Laws to determine whether we should have a VP versus a President-Elect, currently a 6-year commitment. Linda Sugarman has joined the committee. Harvey will convene a meeting in January.

The planning committee for the Retirement Seminar has selected April 3rd as a tentative date. Quaker Station will be the site of the seminar and Aramark has been contacted. It will cost \$500 for the Ballroom and \$150 for the other rooms as long as it is co-sponsored by AUAR and Ocher. A buffet luncheon was confirmed with Aramark at the same price as our lunches. Thus, a \$20 fee for attendees will cover the costs. OCHER wants to include representatives from OPERS, STRS and SERS. The Seminar will be directed to all retirees, as well as those employees who will retire in the next 1-2 years.

The committee will be requesting input on what type of seminars AUAR would like to have offered. Dan will call a meeting in January for the committee to meet.

VIII. New Business.

Harvey Sterns reported that some of the AUAR Board members met with Paul Levy on 11/16 and that the meeting went very well. The discussion included IT issues, sharing of information regarding campus events, the 60+ program, ticket discounts, lectures series and parking. Paul ensured he will maintain communication with AUAR. The Board discussed a need for the parking waiver to include new retirees. Tom Vukovich would contact parking to check.

Tom Vukovich made a motion to approve a higher budget of #300 for the singer who will perform at the December luncheon. Richard Steiner seconded the Motion and it passed.

IX. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 am.

Respectfully submitted: Mary Verstraete, Recording Secretary

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**The next meeting of the 2023-2024 year is scheduled for January 24, 2024 at 10:00
am at the Infocision Board Room**

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Faculty Senate Meeting October 5, 2023

Chair Budd called the meeting to order. In her remark after explaining the rules of engagement at the meeting, she said: I welcome Luke Smith, with us today from the Board of Trustees. Today, the Academic Policies Committee brings a resolution to clarify and increase the scope of the portfolio-based prior learning policy. The impetus for the proposed changes is data showing the significant number of adults in this region who left university to enter the workforce before completing the necessary credits to earn a degree. The policy has been adjusted to include prospective students, including those who are not currently enrolled. Offering these individuals, the chance to have faculty evaluate on the job training or experience as part of their remaining credits may be the nudge, they need to return to complete their degree. As the rationale states, this is a way to link university with community by demonstrating that we value on the job training and experience and have the expertise to translate such experience into curricular content. Currently, many online institutions offer opportunities for credit through prior learning assessment, but they don't offer the rich and supportive university experience that UA does. As the proposal states, the academic department or school determines whether an applicant's prior learning corresponds to course outcomes and demonstrates appropriate academic rigor, keeping oversight for this process with the faculty. Our willingness to evaluate experience for credit will give us a recruiting advantage over other Ohio universities who haven't yet adopted similar strategies. Senate Bill 83 is still an active bill under consideration by the Ohio House Higher Education Committee and has a hearing this Wednesday. It has been revised multiple times, but in the words of Sara Kilpatrick, Executive Director of the Ohio Conference of AAUP, "SB 83 remains a sweeping piece of legislation that proposes an unprecedented level of political interference and micromanagement into the affairs of Ohio's public colleges and universities."

The most recent version of SB 83 includes not only a ban on the right to strike, but also prohibits faculty from bargaining over subjects like tenure, retrenchment, workload and course evaluations. It's clear that the bill seeks to remove any power the faculty have to advocate for fair working conditions. At UA, the faculty and administration have worked through the years to create a contract that may not be perfect, but that we can agree on and that meets our particular needs. We've also worked hard to improve shared governance, and while that isn't perfect either, we've made huge strides. Whatever your feelings about unions, we've come too far and accomplished too much as an institution to have that careful work replaced by a one size fits all mandate. Please know that your voice makes a difference, and use it to keep telling our legislators that not only is this bill unnecessary, but it will also make it harder for us to retain and attract the quality faculty we need to advance this institution. I emailed you all a few minutes ago with links to some quick and easy ways to communicate with legislators respectfully and professionally. We know that faculty voices are making a difference, or the bill would have already been implemented. Keep pushing back, keep stating your opposition. I'm pleased to report that Provost Wiencek has enthusiastically agreed to form a joint senate/administration working group to look holistically at improving conditions for the

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PT faculty. The working group is currently being formed and will likely begin its work in late fall. I hope that together we can create procedures and policies that are fair and transparent, and that will help us keep the talented and hard-working part-time faculty who do so much for our students and this University.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, President Miller can't join us today, but he did ask me to let you know that he is giving his State of the University Address next Tuesday, October 10 in the Student Union Ballrooms. Doors will open at 3:45 p.m., and the speech will begin promptly at 4:15 p.m.

The Secretary of Executive Committee reported: This past month, the work of the Senate Executive Committee included the following three items.

First, to improve the part-time faculty experience, the office of the provost and the senate EC will establish a working group. This group will be tasked with considering the part-time faculty experience from a holistic perspective to identify creative ways to support and reward their service to UA.

Second, the EC discussed the changes to graduate assistantships and expressed the need for increased communication and clarity around future changes with a focus on the timeline and impacts on faculty.

Finally, the Senate-EC brings the following item for approval: Graduation list approval resolution.

Chair Budd called for debate on the motion; none ensued. The resolution passed unanimously.

Neither President nor Provost attended the meeting, therefore no remark from them. In committee reports, the motion brought by APC regarding the portfolio-based prior learning policy described in the Chair's remark was approved. CRC brought forward the motion to approve seven program proposals and twenty course proposals. With no debate, the motion passed unanimously. CCTC submitted a written report.

Akron AAUP reported: The Akron-AAUP extended thanks to the Board of Trustees and President Miller for the 2% raise which will be reflected in October paychecks. Special election ballots were sent via email. Members should anticipate a Zoom invite from Senator Bisconti for a chapter meeting. Akron-AAUP is hosting a day in the life of a faculty member with Trustee Carter visiting campus; contact Senator Bisconti if you would like to participate. Upcoming events include a liaison meeting, a full chapter meeting, and the day in the life of faculty member.

GSG representative reported: GSG is working on filling executive board and senator positions and is working with the graduate school to plan professional development events.

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USG representative reported: USG is busy planning events for the semester including the first-year speaker series, a workshop with the speaker, the student leader summit, UAPD meet and greet, and an internal USG retreat focused on team building. USG continues to focus on recruiting students to committees.

University Council Representatives reported: University Council meeting agendas are similar to those of faculty senate in that we hear reports from the chair of UC, the president of the university, the provost of the university and the standing committees. We also get brief reports from the groups that are represented on UC (CPAC, SEAC, FS, Chairs, Deans, USG, GSG). The UCEC is actively involved in the strategic planning process. At the last meeting we elected the Vice Chair, got an update on the strategic plan document being developed by faculty fellows, and heard from Dr. Sangganjanavanich about student mental health. At October's meeting next week all UC committee members are invited to attend to be welcomed to UC.