

UGARA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wray Nicholson House Conference Room

Monday, Jan 11, 2016

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Present: Simon Aderibigbe, Tommy Altman, Ruth Bettendorff, Freda Scott Giles, Travis Jackson, Ed Kanemasu, Marcus Jennings, Tom Lauth, Sharron Thompson, Arthur Tripp, and Brahm Verma.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Lauth. Arthur Tripp was welcomed to the UGARA meeting and was introduced as the new assistant to President Jere Morehead.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 9 meeting were approved.

Committee Reports

- **Treasurer's Report.** The current balance \$15,068.91. The complete report is attached at the end of the minutes.
- **Benefits.** Mark Eason was not able to attend the meeting, but provided a report to Lauth. Eason has spent time looking at the minutes of The General Assembly House and Senate Retirement Committees as well as The Board of Regents as he monitors all issues associated with UGA retirees. He intends to continue this pursuit with tenacity in the coming year. However, because the Board does not always meet monthly and since minutes are not posted until they have been approved at the subsequent meeting, there could be a gap between an action taken and the minutes being publicly posted. The House and Senate Retirement Committee met on May 7, 2015 to decide which fiscal bills would be forwarded for actuarial study. TRS had four bills. None of these bills were forwarded, dying in committee and are not being considered during the current fiscal year. Eason is monitoring new bills for 2016.
- **Retiree Reception.** Lindsay Copus was not able to attend today's meeting, but assured Lauth that the retiree reception planning was on track. Altman reported that he and Copus had reviewed the timeline and stated that everything is on or ahead of schedule for the event, particularly since Pat Allen has been confirmed as the speaker. Altman and Copus will meet informally with Arthur Tripp at a later date to apprise him of President Moorhead's role in the reception. Altman also reported that Copus will have a draft invitation available at our next meeting for the UGARA group to review.
- **Communications Report.** Sharron Hannon was unable to attend today's meeting, but provided a report that as of the beginning of January, the UGARA Facebook page currently has 171 likes: 68% who are women and 28% men (4% unidentified). While most followers are in Georgia, there were several from out-of-state. The most widely read post of the past year reached almost 800 people and was associated with the dollar amount approved by the Regents reimbursement for health insurance (HRA amount).

Old Business: None

New Business

Update on UGA HR Retiree Health Enrollment Process and Retiree Insurance Information Center. Travis Jackson stated that USG is extremely disappointed with Aon's service and pressure has been put on Aon to improve. Jackson gave a report stating that 99.4% of all system-wide Medicare eligible retirees have enrolled. The USG has decided that those who did not enroll will stay on the USG plan through the month of January and Aon is working with these individuals to get them enrolled as of February 1. There is a list of roughly 130 USG non-responders (about 35-40 are UGA retirees). Certified mail was sent to the non-responders, many of whom addresses were not up-to-date and phone numbers have been disconnected. There will be a continued effort to reach these individuals and as these individuals attempt to get medical or

pharmacy benefits, it is likely the retirees will attempt to contact UGA and/or USG when they realize they are not covered by insurance. The Retirement Insurance Information Center will be kept open through the month of January. Jackson asked for suggestions regarding how to communicate with UGA retirees that the Center will remain open through January since it was previously stated it would close in December. It was expressed that this information should appear on the Human Resources website. He reported that there was a significant drop in walk-ins during December with a spike again during the first week of January with many questions about the HRA. There have been some issues with retirees getting their HRA set up, but those problems are slowing down. The staff has come up with a very good step by step guide for the HRA process that Jackson will share with the Council members. There has been some discussion about keeping the Center property until Fall so that the Information Center could potentially re-open during the next enrollment cycle. Hiring retired UGA employees to work at the Center has been considered a success and some may continue for a few more months at the Human Resources Office on campus.

Dot Cofer was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted a list of written questions which Jackson addressed:

- *I am sending you an e-mail expressing concern over the health insurance options ... mainly the prescription drug coverage ... that was staggering in the fixed income my husband and I are currently living within.*

Jackson: There are a large number of prescriptions that are not covered by Medicare Advantage and Medigap plans because Centers for Medicare Services (CMS) has not allowed those prescriptions to be included. He pointed out that even if we had stayed with the current plan, we would have run into this problem because it is a CMS (Medicare) decision and not a USG decision. USG has a catastrophic HRA in place so that when you reach \$4,850, the prescription will only cost 5% and the institution will be absorbing the remaining costs. USG is working with pharmacy providers on an appeal basis and if an individual has a non-preferred prescription and your physician says you have to have this drug, then they will work with you to get this on the preferred list. This will be on a specific individual case and not for broad range use.

- *They have not called me or taken out my insurance premium. Am I really insured? They sent a card but the letter had me paying too little.*

Jackson: We must direct the retiree back to their insurance provider on issues regarding premiums and bank drafts because we have no information on the processing of bank drafts by the companies. The key is if a retiree has an insurance card, then they have coverage. We do know some employees have not had their premiums taken out as of last week.

- *I have military insurance (Tricare) which covers health and drug insurance. I understood the adviser to tell me I could take the drug insurance with Aon and pocket the rest each month. Was she wrong? This looks like I have 2 policies but the Army plan (Tricare) furnishes 100%. Do I pocket the rest of my USG allowance?*

Jackson: Tricare does not coordinate with Medicare and there is no need to have a supplement Medicare plan. Nonetheless, many Tricare members were advised by Aon to pick up a pharmacy plan so that the retiree would have access to the USG HRA account. The answer to the question is “No, you don’t get to pocket this HRA allowance, but you do get to utilize it. If you have medical expenses over and above what is covered by your Tricare plan (i.e., non-covered dental care, eye glasses, etc.), then you can use the HRA, but you can’t simply withdraw money from the HRA. The money doesn’t become yours until you have allowable expenditures.”

Jackson continued with his report stating that after February 28, retirees who are not enrolled cannot come back into the USG plan. It was pointed out to Jackson that at a previous meeting, the UGARA Council was told that retirees who did not enroll by early 2016 would have a break in coverage, but would have one additional opportunity to enroll during open enrollment Fall 2016. Jackson will confirm that there has been a

change in the USG policy from what was previously conveyed since the Fall 2016 (final opportunity) deadline was reported in previous UGARA minutes.

Verma requested that a statement of appreciation be sent to President Morehead for his effort to provide the Resource Center for retirees. Lauth stated that appreciation had been expressed on several prior occasions and that it would be done again.

Jackson was asked what was being done for upcoming retirees to ensure they received information. As been reported previously, he responded that an "Intent to Retire File" is being sent to Aon on a weekly basis. Aon is reaching out to employees three months from retirement date, when that retirement date has been given to Human Resources in advance. Unfortunately, many employees don't give three months' notice for their intent to retire. In this case, it is possible that there will be a lapse in coverage for the Medicare eligible retiree. For retirees not yet 65, a file is sent to Aon 11 months prior to their 65th birthday.

- President's Report. Lauth had three things to report.

- (1) *Speaker for the Retirees Reception*. While Pat Allen has agreed to speak, we don't yet have a title or a topic. Lauth will work on getting that so that the invitation can be finalized.
 - (2) *Letter written to the Chancellor to follow up on our meeting of October 12*. The letter was in response to UGARA's meeting with a small group of UGA retirees who had questions regarding the change in health insurance that the Council could not answer. The letter has been sent, but Lauth has not yet received a response. The Chancellor informed Lauth that he had the letter that he would be getting back to him. It is anticipated that the enrollment process has occupied much of the time of the HR office of USG and Lauth stated he wouldn't be surprised to get a response sometime later this month. If not, Lauth will follow up.
 - (3) Lauth was to explore the possibilities with the Institute of Gerontology about any interest the Center might have in conducting research regarding issues related to the impact of insurance changes on UGA retirees. Currently, there is no permanent director of the Institute, so Lauth contacted Dean Williams of the College of Public Health. Lauth now anticipates having a meeting shortly with the interim director of the Institute to talk about what UGARA might like done and what the Institute might be interested in doing. While most research projects undertaken by the Institute have external funding, UGARA is not in a position to fund a study and there would likely be limitations in what might be done. UGARA's interests are not very specific at this point. Because Lauth anticipates a meeting within the next few weeks, he asked for clarification from the Council about what potential areas of interest. These might include a discussion about the transaction costs (not only in financial, but human costs, i.e., anxiety) caused by this change in insurance, satisfaction with the change, and how retirees might manage their affairs better. Information from this study would then be shared or disseminated to retirees. However, interest in potential Institute of Gerontology programs that might be beneficial to retirees such as "how to manage their personal wellness" was also viewed as an interest area. Verma also shared his interest in both the College of Public Health and The University of Georgia's potential service role in preparing people for their senior years (not only for the individual, but for the family member, impact, medical intervention, acceptance...). It was agreed that Lauth would meet to discuss our interests as well as that of the Institute's interest in participating, costs for an Institute study, and then explore source of support for a study. The Office of the Vice President for Research and USG are two potential sources.
- UGA Representation on USG Retirees Council. UGARA's current system is that the past chair of UGARA will be the UGA Representative on the Retirees Council and the sitting chair would be the alternate. Initially, the UGA Provost was asked by USG to identify such a representative and UGARA's plan was legitimized by the Provost. The question was asked whether we needed to formalize this plan by either a change in our by-laws or through a discussion with the Provost about future representation. One potential problem with the current system is that if a UGA representative is elected to an office on

the USG Council, then that individual has to stay on as representative for an additional year. An additional issue is that the USG Council requires that an officer has had to have been on the Council for the past year. It was decided that UGARA would reaffirm our policy that we currently have in place and that there would be communication with the Provost on an annual basis regarding what our policy is and who we would recommend as the UGA representative so the Provost could approve or reaffirm that choice. Verma stated that the next USG Retirees Council meeting will be on March 3 where one focus will be on the a report tabled at the last meeting that included the following recommendations: (a) improving communication throughout the University system, (b) the establishment of retiree councils at all institutions, and (c) having liaisons with institutions' faculty and staff councils so that current employees will know issues facing retirees. One issued raised is that the UGARA chair is elected by fellow Council members, but if we are to be a voice of retirees, the question was raised about the selection process for the future. Perhaps this group should evolve into a reorganized structure and this should be discussed at future meetings.

- Posting UGARA minutes. Thompson reported pdf files would be forwarded shortly to the web person so that minutes from the August-November meetings will appear on the web page.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Monday, February 8, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharron C. Thompson, Secretary

.....
UGARA Treasurer's Report
January 7, 2016

The UGARA account balance is currently \$15,068.91. This total has been revised to include the payments for the Athena Web Design invoices that were in question at past meetings.

Submitted by Tommy Altman, UGARA Treasurer