UGARA Council Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2017


Chair Mark Eason called the meeting to order at 2:02 P.M. He introduced the new council members: Ruhana Neal, Marilyn Huff-Waller, and Henry Hibbs.

Tom Eaton moved and several members seconded approval of the March 13, 2017 minutes. The minutes were approved.

Committee Reports:

Treasurer: Tom Altman was absent, but submitted his report in writing: our current balance is $12,876.01. New members were filled in on the history of the treasury by Chair Eason.

Benefits: Nancy McDuff has checked the Board of Regents web site; the most current agenda is from its March meeting. The site is still behind in posting minutes; their next meeting is April 18. Nancy referenced the TRS web site: http://www.trsga.com/uploads/Legislative%20Update%2004_04_17.pdf, which contains bills that have a direct impact on employees and retirees. These bills were introduced in the 2017 legislative session and will go through the legislative process as described on the website. These bills include: HB218, which introduces the opportunity to switch retirement options between ORP and TRS to those hired after 2018 within five years of their employment; HB418, which establishes international teaching credit; SB293, that changes the rules of retire/rehire so that the employer must pay both the employer and employee benefits contribution; HB633, that would allow TRS retirees to retain TRS benefits.

Travis Jackson stated that TRS contributions will be increased as of July 1.

Tom Lauth reported on the April 7 USG Retirees Council meeting; his written report is attached.

The One USG initiative was introduced at that meeting. Travis circulated a copy of the letter that is to be sent to USG retirees. Retirees will have to re-register debit information for their USG health benefits (life insurance, dental, vision) between June 26 and July 9, 2017. Council members expressed concern that there would be confusion about differentiating USG and AON benefit responsibilities and that the dates for re-registration are coming up very soon. Also, those who do not receive insurance benefits through USG units will not receive a letter, which may lead to further confusion. Tom Eaton suggested that information be placed on our web site; the consensus was that this is a good idea. Paul
Kurtz asked Travis to write a letter to put on our web site and Facebook page; Travis agreed.

AON has been sold to another company, Blackstone, which has been described as a more technically proficient company.

Tom Lauth also reported that USG Council members expressed concern about local HR offices being separated from retiree information. Local HR’s will keep data through January 2019. He stated that the Chancellor thinks the new system will be more efficient.

New challenges include the state legislature being interested in taking responsibility for setting tuition rates instead of BOR; this would necessitate a constitutional amendment. The Chancellor is against Campus Carry. There is the potential loss of legislative funding for the USG share of financial support of health insurance benefits.

Old Business:

Lacy Wilhoit distributed a script and phone contact list for the retirees reception; lists were distributed to members who will make the calls.

Mark Eason sent a thank-you letter to Juan Jarrett for arranging the presentation on One USG for us.

Web page IT changes: Lacy will obtain information from Marcus Jennings.

New Business:

Tom Landrum led an expression of appreciation to Mark Eason and the outgoing council members for their service, as well as to Tom Lauth for his service on the USG council.

Maureen O’Brien, who represents the Staff Council on our council, will retire this summer; a new representative is needed.

The next council meeting will take place on Monday, September 11, 2017 at 11:00 A.M. in the Wray Nicholson House conference room. Meetings will take place on the second Monday of the month.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Freda Scott Giles, Secretary