Minutes
UGARA Meeting
February 19, 2020

In attendance: Nancy McDuff, Tom Jackson, Henry Hibbs, Brenda Keen, Griff Doyle, Keith Herist, Alton Standifer, Anna Gray, Anne Sweaney, Ken Schroder, Travis Jackson and David Matthews-Morgan.

Henry Hibbs called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. in the DAR conference room in the Administration building.

The minutes from the January 15 meeting were reviewed and a motion to accept the minutes was made. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report: Anne Sweaney indicated that the current balance is $11,339.16 with no changes since the last report.

Communications Report: Tom Jackson was asking about a link to a webinar about pre- and post-65 employees who are planning to retire. David Matthews-Morgan said that he would get the link to Tom and will put it on the UGARA website as well.

USG Retiree Council Report: Nancy McDuff said that the next meeting of the Council is in April. The Retiree Council has decided that institutional councils will determine who their representative is. The UGARA nominating committee will make a recommendation to the UGARA board regarding this representative along with three new members of the board.

Benefits Report: Hugh Ruppersburg emailed Henry his report. He indicated that House Bill 109 contains significant changes to retiree pensions. The bill is still in committee and passage is uncertain, with significant opposition. Travis Jackson said that four changes are proposed. First, the cost of living adjustment (COLA) would be annual at 3% instead of semi-annual at 1.5%. Once the COLA is changed, it would be easier to eliminate it in the future. Second, anyone hired after June 2019 would not be able to use sick leave credits toward retirement. Third, the retirement amount would be based on the highest five years of salary instead of the current two years. Fourth, there would be a hybrid approach to calculating the retirement salary with a lower than 2% per year of service amount coupled with a defined contribution approach. The legislature said that the USG would not be required to pay TRS back when the funding levels dropped because USG was not notified that they owed the money. This may have an impact on current retirees’ pensions.

President’s Office Report: Alton Standifer indicated that next week there would be a ceremony naming the College of Education after Mary Francis Early. President Morehead is also spending time in Atlanta to discuss the benefit issues that have been discussed.

Website Report: David Matthews-Morgan said that other than approved minutes from previous meetings and the webinar link, the website should be current. Tom Jackson indicated that Alton Standifer’s name needs to be updated in the list of board members. Henry and Tom suggested that a link to the UGA master calendar be placed on the UGARA website. David said he would put it in the sidebar on the home page.

Reception Report: Anna Gray said that she is working with Lindsay on the April reception. They have the paper and email invitations ready to go and just need the list of retirees with their contact information to send them out the first week of March. It was agreed that an email invitation would be sent out to those dues paying, lifelong UGARA members. Based on feedback from Lindsay at last month’s meeting, she appears to have a database of those lifelong members. They are working on all aspects of the reception including a photo booth with Hairy Dog, pictures with the president, a band, catering, etc. Since Mahler Auditorium is so large, they are planning to configure the room to be as intimate as possible. The suggestion from last month’s meeting is to have a table containing information from groups like the Athens Council on Aging and OLLI as well as a place for the refrigerator magnets. Henry suggested that UGARA board members serve in the role of active host, interacting with the participants in a personal way. The retirees will be reminded that a group
photo will be taken after the formal remarks so they don’t leave too early. A link will be placed on the UGARA website pointing to the collection of pictures of new retirees with President Morehead.

The UGARA nominating committee would like a list of retirees within the last five years to identify three new board members to replace the three rotating off the board. Travis said he would generate a list to send to the committee. He also asked if satellite campuses (e.g., Griffin, Tifton, Gwinnett, etc.) were represented on the UGARA board. Nancy said that it would be easier to identify potential members if those campuses had their own retiree association.

Due to COVID-19, the next meeting is Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 1:00 P.M. as a Zoom virtual conference call.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
David Matthews-Morgan, Recording Secretary