

**The Association of the University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)**  
**Executive Board Meeting, March 24, 2016**  
**Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium**

- 1. Guest Speaker:** Prior to our Board Meeting, William R.Kollman, Director of Alumni Relations,spoke to our group. The fact that Mr.Kollman and Chris Franz are now the only "members" of an Alumni Association, identifies his purpose before us and that is: to focus attention toward our alumni (of whom there are about 138,000) who now receive virtually nothing. One of many activities in his planning is to use our University Band for parading purposes on Homecoming Weekends. He shared many ideas with us and answered questions.
  
- 2. Opening Remarks.** The Board meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. by President Diane Vukovich Others present were Bob Blankenship, Stu Terrass, Neal Raber, Laura Moss, Linda Sugarman, Velma Pomrenke, Rita Klein, Tom Vukovich and Hans Zbinden. Absent with notice were Loren Hoch, Pam Rupert, Frank Thomas, Ed Lasher, Dan Sheffer, Cathy Edwards and Bob Gandee. The minutes the February 25, 2016 meeting were approved as written.
  
- 3. Treasurer** Bob Blankenship reported a balance of \$4,878.42 as of Feb.29, 2016. This compares with a balance of \$6,736.87 for February, 2015.It was moved to accept the report, subject to audit.
  
- 4. Committee Reports**
  - A. Programs.** Tom Vukovich reviewed the 3 coming programs.
    - 1) April 13 Mandy Pond, the archivist at the Massillon Museum, will discuss "The Titanic and the End of the Edwardian Era." A short General Membership Meeting will follow the presentation.
    - 2) Our annual AUAR Road Trip on April 22 will take us to the town of Warren , Ohio. Highlights are Millionaires Row, lunch at the Saratoga Restaurant, tour of the Packard Museum, finishing with a visit to the Country Porch Winery.
    - 3) On May 20 we will enjoy our annual Lobster and Suds dinner
  
  - Tom informed us that the Food Service organization that provides our monthly luncheons. Aramark will impose two new features on serving our retirees group. There will be a substantial Room Charge and our members will no longer be permitted to bring a brown-bag-lunch.
  - B. Membership.** Nothing more to report at this time.
  - C. Political Action.** No report.
  - D. Benefits.** Linda Sugarman made the following report.

Through the tireless work of some of your AUAR representatives and the help and support given to the retiree dependents by AAUP, retire dependent insurance has been retained for at least the next few years.The continuation of the Retiree Dependent health benefit is included in the tentative contract between the AAUP and the University. AUAR learned in February that the University of Akron was trying to eliminate

**D. Benefits . (cont.)**

Retiree dependent benefits for all retiree dependents, even though this benefit was a lifetime promise included in the faculty manual and reiterated when individuals retired. Action was taken by both AUAR and AAUP upon learning of this morally reprehensible proposal by the University of Akron administration

Diane Vukovich spent a long day mailing out emails to all University retirees for whom emails were available asking for input and any documentation they may have. Other AUAR members provided documentation of what they had on the retiree dependent health benefit, reviewed faculty manuals, and provided affidavits attesting to how this awful proposal would affect them. There was complete support from the AAUP. In the end the University included the continuation of the retiree dependent health insurance benefit in the tentative union contract.

STRS: The estimated life of the health fund has dropped. We probably can anticipate that there may be changes in the plan beyond what has already been announced.

**E. Faculty Senate: March 3<sup>rd</sup> Neal Raber**

In his opening remarks, Chair Rich said that he had transmitted to Jonathan Pavloff, Chairman of the University's Board of Trustees, the no-confidence resolution adopted by the Senate in its February meeting along with a letter taking strong exception to his public characterization of the resolution as a collective bargaining tactic. He went on to say, "I subsequently met with him for two hours, at his invitation. We spoke frankly and openly. I conveyed the concerns of the faculty about the directions in which the President and the Board of Trustees have been leading the University and about the state of shared governance. He explicitly accepted my assurance that the resolution was sincere and not a collective bargaining tactic. He assured me that the Board of Trustees strongly desires to engage with the University's internal constituencies through its shared governance mechanisms, including the Faculty Senate, and he would like to foster a closer relationship between the Board and the faculty leadership.

We agreed that he, as Chair of the Trustees, and I, as Chair of the Faculty Senate, should talk regularly, which has not occurred in the past, and that members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee should meet from time to time with members of the Board of Trustees."

Chair Rich continued by reporting that confirmed admissions of full-time first-year undergraduate students were down 35 percent from the same time last year. He finished by saying, "I urge all faculty members to do all they can to promote student enrollment and to refrain from actions that might discourage enrollment."

President Scarborough then circulated a one-page summary of the items that his office is

### **E. Faculty Senate: (cont.)**

currently focused on. While it was being circulated, he mentioned that the EXL Center, the Center for Experiential Learning, Entrepreneurship and Civic Engagement had been launched. He mentioned that the previous day in Washington, D.C., The University of Akron hosted the Ohio Birthday Party and Event at which relationships with our federal legislators and members of the Ohio delegation attending the event were cultivated. It was attended by over 400 people, so it was a nice event for the University and good relationships were enhanced. He continued by mentioning his appreciation to David Gordon for his willingness to serve as Special Advisor to the President for Faculty Affairs. He also invited the faculty to join him at the Kent State basketball game the following night.

Next, he went through the list of priorities on the handout which included the following items: strengthen satellite campus structure, ask the governor to appoint new Board members (two of those seats are currently vacant and one additional seat will be vacant on June 30<sup>th</sup>), finalize the collective bargaining agreement, get the Bylaws of the University Council finalized before the end of the academic year, develop the 2016-17 operating budget, fill the positions in the current search process (Chief Diversity Officer, General Counsel, Provost and Vice President For Academic Affairs, Dean of Engineering, Director of Facilities and Construction), identify what facilities projects need to be completed during the summer months, and lastly, updating the strike contingency plan. When asked about appointing a faculty member to the Board, President Scarborough said that with faculty and students being voting members, there is the problem of conflict of interest. He said that perhaps a retired faculty member may be a better choice. In an answer to another question, he said that the refund of the 4.1 million dollars of facility fees would be dealt with in the 2016 – 17 operating budget, and would have to be offset by deferred maintenance and by reversing the persistent enrollment decline.

When asked to share his opinions about the issues raised in the no confidence resolution, President Scarborough responded, “Well, in fairness to the, I think to the document itself, it probably deserves a response that would be more than what I could provide at this standing today. Any attempt to do so might even diminish the weight of the issues that were raised in the document, and in light, I might suggest it would be best to try to do that with the Executive Committee before trying to do it with this full body.”

In response to a question about the enrollment decline, President Scarborough said that there is a concern with the financial condition of the University, especially in the readership area of the Beacon Journal. He said that he is making over 50 calls a week to prospective students who have been admitted, but have not put down a deposit.

### **E. Faculty Senate: (cont.)**

Personalized emails have also been sent to such prospective students. They are being told to not look at the sticker price of a college education, but to go ahead and meet with a financial counselor to put together a financial aid package. President Scarborough denied that the freshmen being admitted have significant lower composite ACT scores, in spite of being contradicted on that matter by Chair Rich.

A final question dealt with the decrease in financial support of University patents to which President Scarborough replied that the return on investment was too small to continue the legal fees, but that Nathan Mortimer should be consulted about this budget decision.

Next Interim Provost Ramsier reported that currently 34 tenure-track faculty positions have been approved and 107 non tenure-track positions. He argued that the ratio of tenure track to NTT has not been changed, because almost all of the NTT positions are to replace visiting positions. Chair Rich contradicted him on this, saying that it had changed if you look back more than one year. Much of the rest of the question and answer period with Ramsier dealt first with the required plans to spend carry over grant funds, and whether the international exchange program is shut down or on hiatus. Ramsier said that they are looking into agreements with institutions, because we are sent many students from some institutions, who come here free of charge, and we are not sending any students to them.

The next order of business was the election of Chair Rich, Senator Bouchard, and Senator Saliga to the Provost Search Committee. In the ensuing weeks since this meeting concluded there has been an email affirmation to postpone the search until next academic year.

Next, David Gordon, Dean of the College of Health Professions, addressed the Senate about his new position as Special Advisor to the President for Faculty Affairs. He said that he was willing to bridge the gap between the grumbling faculty saying the administration is off on its own track and not listening to them. He would like to identify goals and help with the communication gap.

Senator Bouchard said to him, "I appreciate you coming and talking to us, but I'm a little bit disturbed because we have a body for faculty to communicate with administration, it's called Faculty Senate. And why I'm a little bit disturbed -- this body came up with a full list of very carefully reasoned and thought-through concerns in our no confidence resolution, to which we have received no answer. And I think that for the President to have sent you as his representative sort of puts you in a tough position,

**E. Faculty Senate: (cont.)**

because you are kind of caught between the person we were trying to talk to about these very serious issues and the person who is not responding to this body.” Senator Mitchell added, “It’s really puzzling to me that the response of the President to the idea that there’s not enough communication is to delegate that task to an administrator to talk with faculty. This is a body, to which he is supposedly conversing and he refused to answer questions about the vote of no confidence, so I’m really puzzled. We told him we need to work on these issues, and the response is, what do you need to work on? I’m very puzzled by this whole thing.” To which Dean Gordon replied, “So if I can be frank, I’m a bit puzzled by this as well.” Chair Rich added, “One of the things the President may have recognized is his own weakness in this area and may be trying to supplement.”

Senator Huss said that he saw this as another way for the President to say that he has gotten faculty input on an issue and then go ahead with his own decision avoiding the procedural ways for approval.

The discussion ended after Senator Otterstetter quoted Dean Gordon as saying that if this doesn’t work, he would get out of the position and move on.

Ironically, the last item on the agenda was the report of the University Council representatives. The Board had returned the bylaws for UC approval after they had been changed by the Board’s outside consultant. The revisions made by the consultant have changed UC so radically that they are totally unacceptable. They came up with a system that is run by the Provost with no independent chair and an Executive Committee chosen by the Provost. The elected members would go from 35 to 18. There are 7 committees, one of which is a new Academic Affairs Committee. Everything academic is supposed to go through Faculty Senate, so this committee is an attempt to get rid of Faculty Senate.

There is an ad hoc committee of UC to look at these revised bylaws and indicate changes which must be accompanied with rationale required by the Board. The changes made by the consultant were not accompanied with rationale. This is a good indication about how the Board feels about shared governance and maybe gives us insight as to why Scarborough survives. It also says something about the credibility of Pavloff. The meeting adjourned at 5:21 pm.

**F. University and Community Service / Website.** No report

**G. Scholarship.** Carl Lieberman reported that the value of our Scholarship Fund, as of December 31, 2015, is \$94,383.

**H. Newsletter.** Discussion from the floor focused on various details connected with the printing and mailing of our Newsletter.

**4. Unfinished Business.** President Diane Vukovich made note that the Nominations Report was sent to our membership on March 18<sup>th</sup>. To close our meeting, we were informed that for the planned advertisement in the Beacon Journal, we have the signatures of 1,025 Advocates who support the University of Akron. As it turned out, this was a full page Advertisement in the Beacon Journal on Friday, March 25, the day following this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

**Hans Zbinden**, recording secretary  
**Next Executive Board Meeting is April 28, 2016**  
**Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium**  
**Minutes (67)**