

**The Association of The University of Akron Retirees (AUAR)
Executive Board Meeting, October 26, 2017
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium**

I. Call to order. The Board meeting was called to order on October 26, 2017 by President Neal Raber at 10:00am.

II. Others present included Bob Blankenship, JoAnn Collier, Cathy Edwards, Bob Gandee, Ali Hajjafar, John Heminger, Loren Hoch, Rita Klein, Ed Lasher, Carl Lieberman, Laura Moss-Spitler, Neal Raber, Pam Rupert, Dan Sheffer, Linda Sugarman, Frank Thomas, Martha Vye, Diane Vukovich and Tom Vukovich.

III. Excused: Mel Vye

IV. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the September 28, 2017 meeting were approved as corrected.

V. Treasure's Report. Bob Blankenship reported a balance of \$10,123.27 for September 2017 which compared favorably to the 2016 balance of \$7,436.56. Newsletter charges for printing only totaled \$1,423.14. We received dues of \$1,680 and \$72 in contributions to the scholarship fund. Luncheon costs for September totaled \$699.13 which was covered by \$736 taken in. The Treasurer's report was filed for audit.

VI. Corresponding Secretary: Martha Vye reported no mailings for October but will send a sympathy card to Janet Mealy on the loss of her mother-in-law.

VII. Committee Reports.

A. Programs. Neal thanked all who assisted him with the October luncheon when many board members were out of town. The speaker was well received.

Tom Vukovich reported that the notices for the November 8th luncheon have gone out. We will learn about the real first Thanksgiving at this event.

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Special Events: Diane Vukovich noted that we still need one more soup for the Soup and Chili Supper on November 3rd. Pam Rupert agreed to fill the need. White Elephants are also requested for the Bingo games following dinner.

Tom reported that the arrangements are finally set for Lobster and Suds on May 18th. We will enjoy this event at the VFW Post on Waterloo Road.

B. Membership. Frank Thomas reported that we now have 407 members on file. Paid memberships total 298. We have 57 new memberships and 52 who are not current in their dues. Another mailing has gone out to these members. Eleven members renewed after the previous mailing which was a very good return. Frank also reported a total of \$795 going to the Foundation so far this year.

C. Political Action. Bob Gandee had no report since there will not be another meeting until November.

D. Benefits. Linda Sugarman reported that the STRS open enrollment period for health benefits will be from November 1st to 21st. Linda also reminded members that the amount of the payment to Chard Snyder for Retiree Dependent insurance will increase starting January 1, 2018. The contract between The University and AAUP calls for a 1% increase in the share of the cost that the insured will pay each January 1 until 2020. Linda will try to get the exact figure for the 2018 premium.

Neal Raber reported on the POP5 response to the OCHER "5 Points" letter written by the President of OCHER. (See Appendix 1.)

E. Faculty Senate. Ali Hajjafar provided the following report on the October Faculty Senate:

At 3:00 pm. On October 5th 2017 Chair Rich called the meeting to order. In his remarks, he introduced Senators who were newly elected or re-elected since the September meeting. He reported that President Wilson has approved the amendment to the Faculty Senate bylaw passed by Faculty Senate last month and it has been sent to the B.O.T for action. He mentioned that the book of poetry (Leslie Harrison's The Book of Ending) published by the University of Akron press is one of the five finalists for this year's National Book Award. Professor Harrison teaches at Towson university of Maryland.

The Executive Committee reported that during the past month they have met three times including the meeting with the President and Provost. Topics discussed were: certification of elections, committee appointments, President Wilson's speech before the Akron Roundtable, academic review, the University's budget, enrollment, inter colligate athletics, the budget for Faculty Senate, the future of

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the former Center for Child Development building on Fir Hill, faculty hires, more flexible course scheduling options, and note taking service for accessibility.

The President in his remarks reported that the Provost is at an IUC meeting in Columbus discussing some matters including tenure policies, past-tenure review, bachelor's degrees at community colleges, and Western Governors University and competency based education. Therefore the Provost could not attend today's meeting. He updated some previous statistics and numbers. He said the overall undergraduate enrollment is down by 3.2%. We have approximately 22,500 students of which 19,500 are undergraduates. The graduate student population is down by 12.5% overall, but if you look at the number of paying students that we have year on year population is down by 25 students and that is 1% along those lines. As the result of the work done by the Graduate Council and Faculty Senate the University's expenditure on graduate assistants is down by \$9 mil. (\$32 mil. To \$23 mil.) . He said, we continue to focus on retention and recruiting. He plans to meet with every unit to encourage everybody to do the same. He reported on the efforts by the Dean of Wayne College to increase flexible learning offerings and offering more degrees on the weekends and online. Also he mentioned the Cyber Security degree offered by the College of Applied Sciences, a Risk Management Insurance degree offered by the College of Business Administration, and Master of Studies of Law offered by Law School.

The President reported that he and the CFO have received permission from B.O.T to look into the possibility of decreasing out of state tuition. He said at the present time out of state tuition and fees are about \$19,500; we would like to decrease it to \$15,000. This decrease allows us to look into their scholarships as well. He announced the return of baseball to The University of Akron and restoring women's lacrosse. The previous President had cut these two sport programs. He mentioned that the University is exploring the world of eSports. There are many universities around the country that already have eSports teams. He explained in detail the nature of these games and the experiments done by about 50 students from Honors College. Another issue that he talked about was the opening of International Center and its dedication. He said the center has four recruiters who have been traveling around the globe. He said we are seeing a lot of interest around the world. His last remark was concerning the development of free speech bill in Columbus and some other states in the country. The idea is to not allowing universities to disinvite speakers. This bill takes it one step further and says because oftentimes student clubs are the ones that are inviting folks to campuses and therefore it is unfair to ask all students to pay for speaker's expenses and fees of something that might be contrary to their ideology. As the result this might make the student activity fees optional. If this bill passes, it changes the budgetary discussions of the universities. There were a few comments and few questions for the president.

There were reports presented by the Curriculum Review Committee, Athletics Committee, Graduate Council representative, and University Council representative. A full transcript of the meeting can be found online at the Faculty Senate site.

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Bob Gandee shared some additional comments that had been made about the money dedicated to sports and noted that the President sees athletics as a recruiting tool.

F. **University & Community Service/Website.** Dan Sheffer reported that the web site was up-to-date.

G. **Scholarship.** Carl Lieberman reported that our scholarship awardee had missed the luncheon in October due to illness. He has committed to attend the November luncheon.

Carl has spoken with Sarah Chapmen concerning the figures in our scholarship account. She only had numbers up through July and they did not match the numbers that Frank had reported.

H. **Newsletter.** Pam Rupert is again collecting information for the spring newsletter. The next printing is planned for January. Tom Vukovich wanted to express his thanks to Richard Milford for writing the summary of the October speaker for the newsletter in Tom's absence.

VIII. **Old Business.** Neal read the letter that was sent to Leona Farris granting her Honorary Membership. (See Appendix 2.)

IX. **Comments.**

Tom Vukovich noted that the United Way Campaign will open within a few weeks for the University. Retirees will be included in this campaign.

Loren Hoch noted that this is the third year that the endowed scholarship in his wife's name has not produced a scholarship award. Concerns remain about not seeing the expected 4% growth in our accounts.

X. **Adjournment at 11:38am.**

Respectfully submitted:
Rita Klein, Recording Secretary

Next Executive Board Meeting:
December 7, 2017.
Alumni Conference Room, InfoCision Stadium

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APPENDIX 1

Retirees & Current Employees Working Together to Preserve Ohio's Public Pensions
132 Dorchester Sq. S STE 101, Westerville, OH 43081 • 614-426-4333 • popoffice@pop5.org

October 4, 2017

OPEN LETTER TO
Ms. Nancy Wardwell, President OCHER

Dear Nancy,

I was actually very surprised when I read your recent comments about Protect Ohio Pensions, Inc. (POP5). Weren't you the OCHER contact who had previously invited me to speak several times at your board meetings when I was the Executive Director of Public Employee Retirees, Inc. (PERI)? If so, I would have thought you would have extended me the courtesy of a phone call to explore the value of POP5 membership in order to avoid tendering a one-sided opinion to your members.

Properly stated, your recent email should have said, OCHER is not currently supporting POP5, because the current Executive Directors of PERI, ORTA, SERO, OP&F, and OHWPA told us not too. OCHER has not taken the opportunity to discuss the purpose for Protect Ohio Pensions, Inc with its Executive Director, Mr. Winegarner.

The following are my responses to your recent bullet points:

1. Are not all retiree associations redundant in some aspects? Have you ever considered that the more groups we have to represent our pension systems before the Ohio General Assembly the stronger our unified voice? When you say that PERI has long and wellwatched OPERS, you neglected to say that Bill Winegarner, the founder of POP5, was the man leading that association from 1993 to 2015.

2. You correctly stated that POP5 was conceived by a single individual. What you failed to provide was the reasoning and purpose behind the initiative. So here it is in a nutshell: As Executive Director of PERI I saw the mounting pressure to eliminate the public defined-benefit pension plans. There is big money behind the initiative. From my perspective, to counteract their efforts was going to require a massive effort from retirees and current workers to present their case before the Ohio General Assembly. Since the major efforts of our current retiree associations are to secure benefits for retirees and to watch over the operation of a pension system, there was a need for a new association, structured for current workers and retirees, whose total focus would be on preserving the Ohio defined-benefit pension plans.

You were incorrect in your statement that POP5 was developed by a single individual. If you will read my article in our first Newsletter <https://www.pop5.org/newsletters.html> it will explain our incorporation and development procedures and the men and women

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who participated.

3. You incorrectly stated that we “claimed to have applied for 501(C)(3) tax status.” This we never claimed. POP5, just like the other retiree association is a 501(C)(4) association, and dues are not tax deductible for any of them. I have attached a copy of our IRS determination letter for your review.

4. You stated two points about our Board which are accurate. Our board members are appointed and/or removed by the sitting board members, and yes, their terms are continual. These provisions were clearly stated in our incorporation papers and our IRS tax exempt application. The reason why these specific provisions were included was to ensure that the individuals on our board were retirees or current workers who wanted to preserve the Ohio public defined-benefit pension plans for all members. We only want board members who appreciate and understand what our pension boards are responsible for, and who have the courage to stand up for them.

5. You were correct in stating that our board was not complete, however our Vice Chair is a STRS retiree and our Corporate Board Secretary is an OPERS retiree. We are currently evaluating 4 candidates for the position of STRS Representative. You can read about the current board members, and their qualifications to serve, in sections of our first three Newsletters. <https://www.pop5.org/newsletters.html>

I would suggest that you would better serve your membership by not blindly responding to the insecurity of the executive directors of the existing retiree groups, but rather take the time to learn about Protect Ohio Pensions, before drawing any conclusions.

I would be happy to attend one of your board meetings to answer any questions you or your fellow board members may have about our association. Hopefully such a meeting would help you understand why we should be supporting each other for the benefit of all current and future Ohio retirees.

Sincerely,



William I Winegarner
Executive Director

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APPENDIX 2

October 5, 2017

Human Resources
Akron, OH 44325-4730

Dear Leona Farris:

Congratulations on your milestone birthday! It is my pleasure to inform you that the AUAR Board at their September 28 meeting voted unanimously to approve a motion awarding you complimentary lifetime membership in AUAR.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your membership in AUAR, reading our newsletters, and participating in our activities.

Sincerely,

Neal C. Raber
President AUAR