EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

March 17, 2021

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Present: Richard Branda, Stephen Cutler, Mary Jane Dickerson, Alan Gotlieb, Michael Gurdon, Dwight Matthews, Beth Mintz, Jack McCormack, Lee Thompson, Judith Van Houten, Mara Saule

Absent: none

Call to Order: Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 2:02pm

1. Minutes of February 17, 2021, approved as submitted
2. RFAO Board Meeting
   a. Faculty Senate Report (Mara Saule): The meeting scheduled for March 15, 2021, was not held because of a video conference technical issue. Information regarding commencement was provided, indicating that it will be held on May 20 and 21, 2021, at the Virtue soccer field. There will be platform speakers but no guests or faculty.
   b. United Academics Update (Beth Mintz):
      i. It appears that the contract talks are approaching agreement and the provisions to drop software access will not be included.
      ii. There were continuing concerns expressed about UVM retrenchment and consolidation as it might affect loss of faculty positions, programs cuts and recruitment of students, and about a lack of transparency in the process.
      iii. There has been a petition circulating indicating no confidence in the administration, but its dissemination using UVM IT is being discouraged.
      iv. Chair Gurdon sent a letter to RFAO members via listserv informing them that members can receive information from UA directly if they op-in at info@unitedacademics.org. That office will then compile a group list. This involvement would be open to any members who have some interest. Not only former UA members, but also College of Medicine retirees who were outside the bargaining unit, and even former administrative staff. It is unknown how many responded.
   c. Discussion of Further Experiences with Vermont Blue Advantage
      i. Another zoom conference with members was urged to address various problems being encountered by members and whom to call for information about our specific plan.
      ii. There has been confusion about deductibles and copays and a sense that members are not getting accurate information about these from the reps in Michigan. Because many members are elderly they cannot carefully watch these costs and advocate for themselves.
      iii. From the responses RFAO has had from members, it is clear that VBA call center personnel need additional training about our specific plan. The
Board would like to know when it will happen and when this communication problem will be resolved.

d. Summary Findings from Software Access Survey (Chair Gurdon)
   i. Chair Gurdon surveyed RFAO members regarding their use and need for access to software for their continuing academic and scholarly activities. There were 40 respondents. Eleven research-based analytic programs were noted but all but one (EndNote) was listed by less than ten members. EndNote use was less than twenty. It appears that the cost to UVM of adding retired faculty use of these software packages should be low.
   ii. Although students, staff and faculty have access to myUVM, many retired faculty do not. This is a problem for retired faculty who need access to continue their academic activities. It was suggested that Simeon Ananou be invited to a future board meeting to discuss further.

e. Response from Cate/Prelock. Richard Cate responded promptly that he would follow up to Chair Gurdon’s letter but would have to confer with the legal office and others. Chair Gurdon will contact him again and mention the software access survey results.

f. Revisions to RFAO Constitution needed. Chair Gurdon noted that sections of the Constitution need to be brought into compliance with our current practices. The sections on meetings and elections, term limits, and a definition of an administrative officer should be looked at again. Judy Van Houten and Steve Cutler volunteered to review the document and bring suggestions for revision to the Board.

g. Nominations for Board replacements. As noted at our last meeting, Fred Curran and Jeanine Carr have resigned from the Board. Several names were brought forward and these candidates will be contacted to assess their level of interest in serving. At this meeting Mary Jane Dickerson said that she is considering resignation after many years of faithful service on the Board.

h. New Business. none

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36pm

The next meeting is scheduled for: April 21, 2021 at 2pm

Respectfully submitted, Richard Branda