Towson University Retired Faculty Association Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, April 21, 2020; meeting held on WebEx.

Attending: Tracy Miller, Ron Matlon, Jim Anthony, Fran Bond, Ray Castaldi, Pat Alt, Florence Newman, Peggy Benner, Martha Siegel, Don Forester, and Jane Wolfson.

Absent: Annette Chappell, David Larkin, Ellie Hofstetter, and Jim Paulsen

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 by President Miller. One item, “Full WebEx privileges,” was added to the agenda.

1. Minutes from the March 10 Executive Committee meeting were accepted with revisions.

2. President’s Report (Miller)
   A. MTA benefits: Although some retired faculty members were able to receive a sticker that granted them free access to public transportation, others were not. Upon exploration, it was discovered that according to the Office of Human Resources, which provides the stickers, the state regulation creating this benefit did not include retired faculty (it also did not exclude us while it did specifically exclude other categories). The policy does not mention us as a category and since we are faculty, we should be included. Siegel will continue to explore this issue.

   B. The Provost’s brunch has been postponed until perhaps August/September depending upon when the University opens. President Miller does have a list of new retirees and will send them letters of congratulations and an invitation to join TURFA. This led to a brief discussion of the process of recruiting new members.

   C. For the TURFA fall lecture, the Executive Committee agreed that Fraser Smith was an excellent choice. While there is interest in inviting Carla Hayden to speak at a TURFA event, she had been recruited as a Guest Lecturer for a University wide lecture, which was cancelled. If this lecture is not rescheduled, we will try, again, to recruit her.
D. TURFA talks: One possible topic of interest would be how the new coronavirus pandemic has impacted the University. Miller will explore this as a possible theme.

E. WebEx access: Non-retired faculty have full access to WebEx and can initiate (host and schedule) meetings as well as attend them. Retired faculty cannot—but since we are faculty, we should be allowed the same access as non-retired faculty. The Provost’s Office has been in contact with the Office of Technology Services about this issue. There was discussion about whether hosting and scheduling should be to all retired faculty or just TURFA members and how these abilities would be ‘granted’ (i.e., individuals would request access when the need arose). We decided that our positions would be that all TURFA members should be eligible to ask for and receive full access to WebEx, i.e., we can host and schedule meetings as well as attend.

F. Membership payment in the time of COVID-19: Normally, checks are sent to the Provost’s Office or submitted at the Provost’s Brunch, membership information taken, and the check forwarded to the Foundation, but these offices are now working off campus disrupting the paper flow. Membership recruiting is currently delayed because of the need to formally vote on the redefinition of ‘associate member,’ which requires a change to the bylaws. The vote, by the membership, on bylaw changes will occur shortly. On-line payment is still not an option but giving the unusual situation this year, the possibility that we could get approval for on-line payment will be explored.

3. Treasurer’s Report (Castaldi)

A. Membership has not changed since last month, 24 new members this year, total membership 120. There were 25 members from 2018-2019 who did not renew this year.

B. Cash Account Balances = $5,725.18; Oral History Fund Project = $5,873.38; Research and Scholarship Fund = $610.00. After a brief discussion we realized that there was a delay between payment and debit posting, presumably due to COVID-19 created campus work arrangements.

C. The Proposed Budget for 2020-21 was approved and dues can remain at their current level. Approved budget for 2020-21 is attached.

4. Bylaw change proposal (Matlon). Matlon presented proposed changes to the bylaws as a result of the discussion at the March 10, 2020 Executive
Committee Meeting. He also included the rationale for those changes. The proposed changes were approved with minor editing and the final version is attached. These bylaw changes, along with the change redefining Associate Membership, will now be sent out to the membership for discussion followed by a vote to approve or disapprove.

5. Reports. Reports from Chappell (FACET), Paulsen (Events and Programs), and Larkin (Research and Scholarship and Graduate Dean Search) were submitted electronically and are attached.

A. Nomination Committee (Bond): Online election materials have been prepared to send to the membership (thanks given to Benner) and the material is ready to go out. The voting materials will be sent, mainly electronically, to all full members on about May 20 with instructions to return them by June 1. The entire election will be effectively online for the first time.

B. Online Information (Benner): Benner presented plans to make the website more accessible and user friendly. She also discussed planned expansion and reorganization of the TURFA Executive Committee Share Point site so that it could better serve us and provide a more complete history.

C. Senate (Siegel): Siegel brought us up to date about the changes being implemented on campus as a result of the sudden mandated change to 100% distance learning, i.e., student evaluations, student grading, Promotion and Tenure. We were informed that Towson University was a leader in implementing campus-wide changes in response to the pandemic.

D. Oral History Project (Forester): Forester reported that our videos were not yet up on YouTube, the long-term platform to host the videos was not yet ready, and that no additional faculty had been approached for additional interviews.

E. Legislative Issues (Alt): Alt reported that with the early adjournment of the Maryland Legislature, nothing had changed relative to the prescription plan.

F. The Advocate (Newman): Newman received commendation for the last edition of The Advocate. We briefly discuss strategies going forward since reporting on the Provost’s Brunch and TURFA activities would not work in as much as all events had been cancelled.

6. New Initiatives (Matlon): The Executive Committee was interested in exploring a possible connection with the Gerontology Program but cautioned that we
needed to be mindful of timing given the current level of pressure faculty were under because of the change in instruction. Meeting with some faculty to explore opportunities could be great. Similarly, the group liked the idea of obtaining the sum total of financial donations to the University from retired faculty and librarians. This information could help us demonstrate our importance and value to the University.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10.

Respectfully submitted by Jane L. Wolfson, Secretary of TURFA