Towson University Retired Faculty Association Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes

Tuesday, August 18, 2020 - 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. online via WebEx.

Attending: Jim Anthony, Pat Alt, Peg Benner, Fran Bond, Ray Castaldi, Janet DeLany, Don Forester, Ellie Hofstetter, David Larkin, Tracy Miller, Ron Matlon, Florence Newman, Jim Paulsen, Precha Thavikulwat, and Jane Wolfson

Absent: Jim Dilisio, Martha Siegel

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by President Matlon.

2. Minutes from the July 21, 2020 meeting were accepted as submitted.

3. President’s Report (Matlon)
   A. Platforms for conducting TURFA electronic meetings. Towson University license agreement precludes use of Zoom by TURFA. Thus, TURFA will continue to use WebEx to conduct virtual meetings and program. WebEx is to be upgraded in September to include operating features similar to Zoom. On August 11, 2020, Cyndi Caravello, OTS Training Manager, provided WebEx in-service training to TURFA members who presented or who will present virtual events in July and August 2020. Christine Tennies will serve as OTS liaison to TURFA during its virtual program and events.

   B. TURFA Retiree Volunteer Service Project: Student Tutoring. To date, 18 retired faculty have volunteered to serve as tutors. The names of these faculty will be forwarded by the Provost Office to Department chairs. The department chairs or faculty members will contact the retired faculty volunteers to request their tutoring assistance for specific students. Ron Matlon will compose and send letters of appreciation to all faculty retirees who volunteered. Near the end of the semester, he also will design feedback forms for tutors, students, and faculty whose students used the tutoring services. Other retired faculty members have volunteered to serve as mentors for transfer students, with the goal of assisting them with transitioning to university academic life. Jhane Cummings, New Student and Family Programs Coordinator, will contact these faculty to match them with transfer students.

   C. Covid 19 testing on campus. Towson University Health Center, under the direction of Dr. Matthias Goldstein, has established procedures for retired faculty to request free COVID-19 testing to be able to return to campus in compliance with current COVID 19 safety procedures. The testing request needs to be for on-campus activities, not for non-campus functions, nor for retired faculty’s family members. Procedures are posted on the TURFA webpage and on the Towson University webpage at https://www.towson.edu/healthcenter/. Retired faculty should schedule an appointment and complete the necessary forms posted on the Health Center website prior to testing. Retired faculty should inform Kameron Crump (kcrump@towson.edu) prior to going onto campus. Retired faculty who wish to go to their academic departments should contact their department chairs prior to doing so.
D. Member donations. To date, TURFA members have donated $500 for research and scholarship, the oral history project, and the general fund.

4. Membership Report (Wolfson). As of August 18, 2020, the total number of paid TURFA members = 98. Four of these are new members. Thirty-two members joined electronically. The others joined using paper checks. The advantage of an electronic application is that it allows for immediate update of contact information. The number of 2019-2020 TURFA members who have not yet rejoined = 26. The number of TURFA members who have not rejoined over the past three years is approximately 72. Ron Matlon will request Ray Castaldi to provide an update of the names and contact information of the non-returning TURFA members from the past three years. Ron Matlon will ask the Executive Committee members to assist in contacting these people beginning September 2020 to (a) encourage them to rejoin and (b) ask them what TURFA could do to better support retired faculty.

5. Treasurer’s Report (Castaldi) – The Towson University Foundation has not yet responded to TURFA requests for a disbursement update. The below account balances may be adjusted once this information is provided.
   - Account balance = $3820.18
   - Oral History account= $6073.38
   - Research and scholarship account = $640.

6. Reports

A. TURFA fall lecture and TURFA talks (Miller). The following fall events are scheduled. Tracy Miller will speak with the Alumni Association regarding strategies to record the events and the quality of those visual recordings.
   - August 25, 2020 at 12:30 pm via Zoom- Civil Rights in Maryland, part I by Fraser Smith (author of Here Lies Jim Crow: A History of Civil Rights in Maryland) and Professor Donn Worgs from Political Science. The event is co-sponsored by TURFA, the Alumni Association, and Osher.
   - September 23, 2020 at 12:30 pm via Zoom- Civil Rights in Maryland, part II by Fraser Smith (author of Here Lies Jim Crow: A History of Civil Rights in Maryland) and Professor Donn Worgs from Political Science. The event is co-sponsored by TURFA, the Alumni Association, and Osher.
   - October 21, 2020- The Holy Shroud by Gary Vikan, author of The Holy Shroud and former director of the Walters Museum. The presentation will focus on the Holy Shroud around 1200 AD.

B. Programs and Events (Paulsen)
   - July 31, 2020 event. Several TURFA members were able to present their videos or PPTs about their gardens via WebEx. WebEx technical difficulties prevented the successful presentation by several other members. As a result, a WebEx workshop was offered on August 11, 2020 to correct these difficulties- see 3A above.
   - August 21, 2020. Five TURFA members or partners of TURFA members will present videos or PPTs on retirement hobbies and interests.
   - Date TBD- repeat Garden workshop
   - Jim Paulsen sought EC feedback about the following ideas for future programs:
     1. Virtual video tour of a local vineyard, virtual video tour of the newly renovated Enoch Pratt Library, virtual video of a political debate between
two members (Republican vs. Democrat), virtual video of cooking demonstration

ii. Discussion between members concerning topics of interest such as: Prescription drug issue, virtual education versus in-person education, university curriculum, what should students know when they enter a university

C. Public Relations Committee (Miller). The committee is investigating the purchase of merchandise for TURFA, without the need for a logo. Tracy Miller is contacting potential speakers for TURFA events including Vernon Hurte, the Vice President of Student Affairs, and the new CLA and COFAC deans. The Public Relations committee will submit its annual report to Ron Matlon in approximately one week.

1. Online information (Benner)
   o TURFA Website- Recent postings to the TURFA website include links to TU COVID-19 Masking Policy and TU COVID-19 Testing Information.
   o SharePoint Website
     • Most agendas have been posted on SharePoint.
     • Presidents’ monthly letters have been posted and placed into one large folder, “Presidents Letters to Membership,” are embedded in sub-folders labeled “July 2018-June 2019,” “July 2019-June 2020,” and “July 2020 – .”
     • Next month a folder and subfolders will be created for Committee Reports.

2. The Advocate (Newman). Florence Newman is drafting the fall issue of the Advocate. She will include a summary of the garden and the hobbies/special interest programs and write an article based on a survey asking TURFA members to share what they have learned during COVID-19. To complete the fall Advocate, she requests the following:
   • Committee chairs to provide her a summary of their committee activities
   • Recommendations for whom to interview for the Focus on article.

D. Oral History Project (Forester). The TURFA Executive Committee agreed not to move forward with any new in-depth oral history interviews until the COVID -19 is ameliorated. When they begin again, retired faculty in colleges not yet represented should be considered. Potential new directions for oral histories might include:
• short clips of a number of people addressing a common topic
• interview with Bob Caret and Jim Fisher regarding the transition of Towson University through the years
• meeting with Alumni Office to ascertain what formats and types of oral histories would be of interest to alumni

E. Research and Scholarship (Larkin). No updates

F. Emeritus Status and Faculty Rights and Privileges Task Force (Siegel). No updates

G. Gerontology Program (Alt/Bond). No updates. Pat Alt will contact the new gerontology program director, Allison Kabel, regarding potential opportunities for TURFA members to share their expertise in gerontology courses.

H. FACET (Thavikulwat). No updates. The next FACET meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2020.

I. Graduate Dean Search (Larkin). The search for the Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies is ongoing. Some decision should occur near the end of September 2020 after completion of the budget review. Four candidates remain interested in the position. Currently, Dr. David Ownby serves as the interim Graduate Dean.

J. Senate (Siegel/Anthony). Because of late changes to the draft proposal on sexual assault, the Faculty Senate moved the discussion about it to the September 2020 meeting.

K. Legislative Issues (Alt). The General Assembly’s law ending drug coverage for retirees that was passed in 2011 was supposed to go into effect in 2018. A lawsuit was filed resulting in an injunction which is still in force until the Federal Court reviews it and decides on the outcome. Current and retired employees are represented in this class action suit. This court case could take another 3-4 years. There have been over 2,000 class action forms submitted to date.

Ken Fitch, founder of the Rx Drug Coverage Group and the members-only We Matter group, hosted a virtual discussion on August 10, 2020 to advocate for the reinstatement of State supported drug coverage for retirees. Deborah Hill, the attorney for the lawsuit, was also on the discussion. The car rally occurred on August 11, 2020 in Annapolis, despite the hearing which had been scheduled that day being cancelled.

Ken Fitch requested retirees to contact Bill Ferguson, Maryland Senator, to draft a bill to reinstate drug coverage for retirees. He believes it is a legislative, not a judiciary issue. In response, Ron Matlon requested Pat Alt, Jane Wolfson, and Tracy Miller to work with him to draft a succinct and clear summary of the issues for TURFA members with a call to action.

M. Health insurance benefits for spouses (Wolfson). The taskforce will contact the Maryland Department of Budget and Management to investigate medical insurance coverage for spouses/partners of retired faculty once the retired faculty member is deceased. Currently, most state medical insurance plans connect such coverage to an annuity. Challenges exist with transferring the annuity to the surviving spouse, which is required for the spouse to continue to be eligible for insurance.
N. College of Education (Bond). In July, COE faculty participated in two workshops on racism conducted by Leah Cox, Vice President of Inclusion and Institutional Equity, and Shaunna Payne Gold, Assistant Provost for Diversity and Inclusion.

6. New Business
   A. TURFA's role in counseling those contemplating retirement (Siegel)- discussion moved to September 15, 2020 TURFA Executive Committee meeting

7. Next meeting - Tuesday, September 15 - 1:30-3:30 p.m.

8. Meeting adjourned at 3:18 pm.