

**UWG ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY AND STAFF (ARFS)**  
**Coordinating Council Meeting MINUTES**  
Neva Lomason Memorial Library  
**January 24, 2026**

**Present:** Anne Richards (presiding), Meg Cooper, Rolanda Farmer, Cecilia Lee, Jerry Mock, Francie Taylor

**Absent:** Micheal Crafton, Ann McCleary, Patricia Pinkard, Mike Renfrow, Clois Reese, Sally Roberts, Erma Shooks, Trish Wells, Ex-Officio Members

**Call to Order:** Anne Richards called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 pm.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the July, 2025 Coordinating Council meeting and the minutes from the 2025 retiree reunion and ARFS general business meeting (October, 2025) were approved (M-Jerry Mock, S-Francie Taylor).

**Committee assignments:** Committees as identified in the ByLaws were reviewed.

- Council members in attendance agreed to serve as follows: Jerry Mock -- Scholarship Committee; Meg Cooper, Rolanda Farmer, Anne Richards, and Francie Taylor -- Programs/Events Committee; Meg Cooper, Rolanda Farmer, and Anne Richards -- Newsletter Committee. The Widow/Widower/Surviving Partner Committee is inactive at this time. Membership on the Nominating Committee is partly designated and partly volunteer; committee membership will be established later.
- Meg Cooper will send out an email to Council members with a brief description of committees and a request for those interested in serving to let her know, then will share that information with Micheal Crafton.

### **2025 Annual Reunion**

- Meg shared some summary information related to this year's event. We had 56 attendees, counting UWG personnel. There were 48 registrants, most of whom registered via phone/email instead of through the Alumni portal. As with other years, we had a few no-shows and a few walk-ins. Nine retirees (of 22 being honored) attended and received their medallions from Micheal. There was a nice slideshow that had been prepared by UWG personnel. Catering was well done. ARFS, Alumni Travel, and Library Special Collections had display tables. The photo booth was a big success. Most Council members participated and some supplied materials for the event at their own expense. There were issues with planning and implementation, with the central component of the planned program (with which other components were to be connected) not materializing and last-minute shuffling of the agenda. Other issues were the early departure of lots of attendees, an incorrect organizational name displayed for most of the event, and problems with photography (e.g., early departure of the professional photographer, lack of a few requested pictures).

- Feedback had been requested from Council members. Suggestions included not having the in-person ceremony anymore, piggybacking with another Alumni event, arranging the agenda differently to try to avoid so many early departures, having Alumni plan the entire event, and not relying on UWG personnel for program planning. There was lots of discussion. Consensus at the end of the discussion seemed to be that we will continue the event for the time being, we will not piggyback with an Alumni event but will plan the reunion program ourselves, we will re-order the agenda to have the medallion presentation at the end, and we will need to specifically attend to certain matters instead of assuming they will be taken care of (e.g., photography, signage). Ideas to better engage both retirees and other members of the UWG committee were also discussed.

### **2026 Annual Reunion**

- Alumni and Constituent Relations had submitted four possible dates for scheduling of the 2026 retiree reunion and recognition of retirees. November 7th was selected as the best option.
- Meg Cooper and Anne Richards had met in November with Michelle Bell, Assistant Director of Employee Relations and Benefits, and Hope Cole, Benefits Specialist and the “new Lauren,” from the Office of Human Resources. We shared a new “ARFS form” developed to get information from retirees, and portions of it were going to be incorporated into an electronic form/database to be completed by future retirees (Smart Sheet). Photographs (if available on the UWG website) were also going to be obtained from this system. However, in follow-up it turned out that the ARFS form was given to upcoming retirees as an option to complete and only one had been submitted so far (which we still have not received). We don’t know at this point what happened with incorporation of information into the Smart Sheet or sharing of results. Meg will follow this up with HR. The new ARFS form was distributed to attendees at the Council meeting.
- We are planning a panel discussion for retirees (see below) and may want to include something like this in the 2026 reunion event. We had earlier discussed community volunteer opportunities as a central theme for a reunion program, with a panel of retirees and information about or representation from community agencies recruiting volunteers.

**Meeting with UWG president:** tabled since Micheal Crafton was not present. Anne Richards mentioned that emeriti status for one retiree is still being pursued at this level of UWG administration.

**Next issue of *The Rejuvenator*:** We will cover the 2025 reunion. Anne Richards reported that we have several things pertaining to what people are doing in retirement. We need to again remind retirees receiving the HRA benefit from the USG that this is dependent

upon their working through Alight for health and/or prescription drug insurance. Rolanda Farmer will work on some kind of game or puzzle.

**Annual Report:** Micheal Crafton is working on this. Meg mentioned that we are still having issues getting invoices from Alumni regarding expenditures for the reunion. (Anne Richards noted that HR pays for the ARFS brochure and *Steps to Retirement* brochure, with Alumni handling other expenditures.)

**April USGRC meeting:** The next meeting of the University System of Georgia Retiree Council will be held on Friday, April 24th at UWG (Campus Center ballroom). We were not sure at this time whether other individuals can attend, but if so it would be a great opportunity to learn more about Alight and how our health benefits work. (UPDATE: Anne Richards checked, and individuals who are not part of the USGRC may attend the meeting as observers, but cannot vote or contribute to the discussion.)

### Other

- Anne Richards briefly discussed **GA-HERO** (state organization – Georgia Higher Education Retiree Organizations) **and AROHE** (national organization – Association of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education). GA-HERO is regrouping to become active again.
- **Retiree panel – what it’s like in retirement** (aimed at future retirees): We had discussed this in the past, and all agreed it would be a good idea. We decided we would plan to have this event in March. Meg Cooper will contact Melanie McClellan, who apparently has been involved in similar endeavors and has expressed interest in working with us on this. Meeting attendees volunteering to be panel members were Rolanda Farmer, Cecilia Lee, and Jerry Mock. Other UWG retirees suggested were Alice Wesley and Mitch Clifton. We want to balance the panel in faculty-staff and female-male, if possible. Eddie Duffey was also suggested as someone who could address physical fitness in retirement. We discussed inviting someone from HR in case a question comes up that can be better addressed by that office.
- We discussed the need for **information for caregivers of retirees** (e.g., children, other family members, whoever holds power of attorney) regarding the insurance system and what to know and do if the retiree is not capable of handling information themselves. Maybe someone could speak to this at the 2026 retiree reunion.

**The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, March 27th.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meg Cooper, Secretary