

## GA-HERO

### Georgia Association of Higher Education Retiree Organizations Executive Committee Meeting/Board of Directors Meeting

2:00-3:00 pm

Held remotely on Zoom

Minutes

April 3, 2024

**Present:** David Boyd (Valdosta State University), Mitch Clifton (University of West Georgia), Missy Cody (Georgia State University – Co-President), Gray Crouse (Emory University – Treasurer), Dave Ewert (Georgia State University), Donna McCarty (Clayton State University), Marilynne McKay (Emory University – Co-President), Carol Pope (Kennesaw State University, webmaster), Anne Richards (University of West Georgia, Secretary), Ed Rondeau (Georgia Tech).

1. Marilyn McKay opened the meeting about 2 pm and turned the meeting over to co-president Missy Cody to discuss plans for the upcoming Meet-up in Valdosta on June 7.

2, Missy Cody expressed excitement about the meet-up and sees it as an opportunity to bring in some of the units in south Georgia that haven't attended GA-HERO meetings in the past. She reported that David Boyd had lined the group up with a lot we wouldn't otherwise know about, said she would go over a couple of things, and then ask for suggestions.

The meeting in Valdosta will be our first big meeting in a couple of years. When the last meet-up was planned in Cartersville, the group had less than a month lead-time to set things up for it. Having more time now means we can give more information in advance and, potentially, make it possible for more persons to join us. Missy said she was in the process of creating an "alluring" invitation to distribute to members – something that can go out on email and likely also be printed. Hopefully, it would contain a link to registration for the meeting. David Boyd sent her a prototype of the invitation and it will also go on the website, which Carol Pope maintains. The plan was to get something publicizing the event soon that could be updated at a later date as new information became available.

Donna McCarty mentioned that the retiree association at Clayton State is holding their annual retiree welcome brunch a week from Monday. She said she would love to make an invitation available at that time, so the sooner it would be available the better.

Missy Cody explained that Carol had done a prototype mock-up of the invitation which she hoped could be finalized over the weekend. It wouldn't take long if she had all the needed information. Missy also reported that she and Carol would meet after today's meeting and put together an invitation that listed all of the major draws. One is that GA-HERO will have a bank of seats at the opening of the local theatre and the reception prior to it. The Valdosta Visitors' website also mentions a **First Friday** event that takes place in downtown

Valdosta. The main street in Valdosta has restaurants and shops and bars and live music available on this evening. A lot of our membership has not been out and about with one another that much. This is an informal way to get together.

David Boyd reported that a lot of work done in Valdosta has made it a more attractive downtown than in the past. He also explained that “downtown” Valdosta is the section around the old Court House. It consists of Main Street, Hill Avenue (going east) Paterson (going south) Central (going west) and Ashley (going north).

Marilynne McKay said, in picking a hotel to stay in, it would be nice for one to be within walking distance of the campus. David explained, however, that hotels would be about a couple of miles walk from the campus – more suitable for younger persons to walk there than for most retirees.

Three hotels closest to campus will be listed in David’s invitation. The aim is to make this “more than a meeting.” It is hoped that people will want to come to it for the meeting content, while being welcomed to the VSU campus, and having it also be something of a vacation. Ideally, people will block off June 7-8-9. Marilynne also said there would be an effort made to have everything about the meet-up in print so Ed Rondeau could distribute it at the upcoming USGRC meeting (this coming Friday). People need to know the date. Retirees have full lives and the plan is to be on everyone’s calendar and make it possible for them to car pool if they want to do this. The invitations will have the links for registration and subsequent updates as plans are further developed.

Carol Pope sent a copy of the invitation to Marilynne during the meeting, and it was sent on to others via their email during the meeting so they could share what they thought of it.

Missy Cody explained that David Boyd was the on-site organizer, Carol Pope was the “creative one,” and she herself was the “lynch pin” to coordinate things.

Gray Crouse mentioned that, in the past, we charged individuals for lunch as a way to bring in monies for our operations. He reported that the GA-HERO account at present has only \$650 in it. He explained that it would be wise for us to work out a way to get some income as this amount will otherwise eventually disappear. Potential sources of income are to ask for donations (which are not tax deductible), or charge something for these meetings (e.g., an extra \$5 or \$10). We do need some source of income.

Missy Cody noted that we will have a \$50 expense for providing the Zoom piece for this meeting. We do have decent parking, however.

The first piece of homework for the group was to immediately look at the invitation and send comments about it to Carol and Missy. It won’t include everything, but it will alert all to our having the meeting and a few things related to it. And we want persons to share this with their retiree groups. She also said she hoped to see Coastal College of Georgia,

Georgia Southern, Albany State, and Georgia Southwestern retirees at this meet-up. We'd like to see more institutions than those we typically see. Dennis Marks gave her the name of someone who will send information to Albany State University (ASU) – and he said he will be back from New York to attend this event.

As per the most recent draft of the invitation, the meeting in June will start at 11 am. Since some might be driving from Atlanta, this seems a better time to start than 8:30 am.

Carol Pope: Do we want to have coffee and welcome those who come earlier than 11?

Marilynne McKay: We could meet for coffee or breakfast on June 6<sup>th</sup>. What if we added a 10:30 am gathering-time with coffee and pastries and informal networking for those who arrived early?

Carol Pope: Those who are early may not feel they are without something to do.

Missy Cody: We can add this to the website.

Donna McCarty: I'm planning to come the night before. A group might want to get together and have dinner then.

[Discussion ensued about adding a Thursday night get-together to the program and it was decided to let early-arriving attendees dine informally and have a more organized plan for dine-arounds on Friday evening.].

Missy Cody: At the AROHE meeting at Emory in Atlanta, Dorothy Zinsmeister and I put together a way for people to go to restaurants together. We got clearance for their using individual checks. We sent out a list of restaurants and asked people if they wanted to go. If we had six at one restaurant, we made reservations for them. We used "SignUpGenius." It was very handy. We could put on the invitation that this happens.

Gray Crouse: I would suggest we do this and get to know folks we don't know but could get to know.

Missy Cody: Think about doing that on Friday. If people are coming from RO's who have not participated in the past, it's nice to have a host or hostess to introduce you to the organization. Maybe Thursday would be good for people to get to know each other and get together. Friday is our time with other people.

Gray will send me the information about SignUpGenius. It worked well last time. People who didn't know each other got together. Having this makes it more likely people will stay after our initial meeting.

For meeting registration, David, is it ok if I get together with you sometime later this week to get a meeting registration form?

David Boyd: Yes. And there will be a lunch cost. When I first worked with a catering group, they gave me a meal estimate. I thought it would probably be better to get box lunches from the area. The cost from the caterer was kind of exorbitant – more suitable for a sit-down dinner, not what we wanted for lunch.

Marilynne McKay: We might also get a bid from the VSU caterer if they have box lunches. Would you have time to check on this, David, and get an approximate price? And then we can round the price to have extra money to cover the cost of Zoom (\$50).

Missy Cody: Carol and I will work on the invite, send something out for comment and ask you to respond back.

Donna McCarty: Is the Peach State Summer Theatre definite: Will it happen? If it's definite we should make that known on the invitation.

David Boyd: For a group of 10 or more, the price would be \$25 a ticket. A block of 30 seats has been set aside for this. The theatre owner would like to know a definite count by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Gray Crouse: I think this is good to roll in with the cost of the meeting. It's a more definite reservation. If we have more than 30 who want to go, we might get more seats.

Missy Cody: I'm not sure we're able to handle the money. It may be better to have the theatre handle this. One person is kind of excited for us to incorporate this. And, since it's opening night, they plan a reception.

Donna McCarty: This should definitely be on the invite.

Marilynne McKay: This and a mini-weekend vacation and mention of the First Friday event I think should be on the invite.

Carol Pope: In my role working with retirees, I've learned I have to send things out in every form and frequently. This is the first thing: Save the Date. It has the main information to generate interest. But, in a week or two, we can send other information with more information and details. This first invite I thought should be very simple and the same information should be on the website. Some can't open documents so it should be in prose. A big attraction will be the two parties. The first on Friday – the reception. Inviting them as well to the meeting.

David Boyd: Which method is best to have onsite? Registration for lunch and theatre or should people order their own tickets with GA Hero? People from VSU can be part of the

GA Hero group. If we go over the number set aside, the theatre may add to the group. But the owner wants to know when a definite count will be available.

Donna McCarty: I'm a little concerned some won't stay over Saturday night. They might have things to get back to. Some may bring a spouse or friend and want to go as well. I think because we have a block of tickets this might be something to announce. We do the work for them. We will have done background for them.

Marilynne McKay: It's nice to have a deadline for when they want us to decide.

Missy Cody: The invitation should specify that tickets are in a block available on Saturday and need to be purchased by May 10. Can you check on this David?

David Boyd: Yes.

Do we want to collect the money or just have them say they want to be part of this?

Gray Crouse: We have a PayPal account, usable on line. But it can't be used on site. So it's better if payments are done in advance. I think we can put something on the website to handle payment.

Donna McCarty: We had PayPal for a group of heads of psychology. We put it on our website and it worked really well.

Gray Crouse: How do you get it on the website?

Carol Pope: I looked and it's not so easy. Our website is not commercial in nature so is not secure. So they would not let me put it on there. I can try again, but I'm not hopeful.

Missy Cody: This is something we need to work out.

David, what do you think about a speaker from VSU?

David Boyd: I mentioned our HR person or Dennis Marks did, maybe to talk about how they have been helpful to us in retirement and in dealing with Alight.

Ed Rondeau: It would be delightful to have someone who understands this.

Donna McCarty: Is there someone who really understands Alight? A lot are confused about the reimbursement accounts. The process is still confusing to people. Maybe we could bring someone from Alight and someone from the system to address this? Or perhaps you know someone better.

Missy Cody: Remember, this is not the Retiree Council of the USG. GA Hero includes Emory, which has nothing to do with Alight. This is a party.

David Boyd: Maybe others could learn something from our HR.

Missy Cody: You have space on campus. A lot of our institutions are not able to accomplish this. I'd like to not make it just university-system focused. An HR person talking about different components of retirement might be nice, however.

Donna McCarty: What about something that happened historically in your area? An historical program could be entertaining and educational.

David Boyd: I can talk to a guy in our historic society. Doc Holiday practiced dentistry here for a time. There was a time when a circus elephant was murdered here. I think the sheriff had to shoot it because it was tearing things up. I think the person at our Historic Society could do a meaningful presentation.

Missy Cody: That sounds great.

Marilyn McKay: We need to invite Mercer.

Missy Cody: There is a second homework assignment. Once we have edits, we will work on the content. Then please reach out to those in your own RO and colleagues at other institutions to encourage them to come. I will focus on inviting College of Coastal Georgia, ASU, and Southwestern.

Marilynne McKay: I will focus on Mercer.

Carol Pope: There's also Savannah State, and Armstrong.

Missy Cody: Georgia Southern is not that far away. They did participate at the AROHE meeting at Emory.

Gray Crouse will send me software for SignUpGenius. He put the URL for this in the chat.

Marilynne McKay: I want to mention that there was a very nice obituary recently for Anne's husband, Fred Richards. It was beautifully done. I'm so sorry. He was absolutely one of a kind. Can I share this with others?

Anne Richards: Certainly.

Marilynne McKay: So let's get this in shape for sharing with others. We have only one meeting before we do this. So it's up to all of us to get to our RO's.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne C. Richards,  
Secretary