

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. 10/18/2024 and the roll called of institutions.

A presentation was made by Tracey Cook, Chief Fiscal Officer/Treasurer, USG

- Reviewed functions of her office, which manages Fiscal Affairs and Shared Services for all 26 institutions and the System Office.

A presentation was made by Joe Strong, Associate Vice Chancellor, Total Rewards

- Shared relationship of Aon and Alight to USG. Alight operates the Medicare plan exchange for the System. Aon is a healthcare plan consultant, focusing on risk. Aon utilizes benchmarking to compare USG healthcare benefits for active employees (and pre-65 retirees) to those of comparable employers.
- Healthcare expenses continue to rise, as will costs to USG and plan participants.
- Employee premiums and plan design changes for plan year 2026 were reviewed.
- The HRA contribution for post-65 retirees remains at \$2,640.

A presentation was made by Karin Elliott, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

- Reviewed a request made by the Senate Appropriations Committee to compare the USG health plans with the State Health Benefits Plan with an eye to possible combination to save money. The report is due in December 2024.
- Members acknowledged a difference in choice for post-65 retirees with the State Health Plan, which provides only Medicare Advantage Plans.

A presentation was made by Dana Nichols, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Ms. Nichols outlined several ongoing initiatives within her area of responsibility:

- The USG will hold a summit on artificial intelligence, involving the president of Georgia Tech and CIOs from around the state.
- Her office is updating the list of Degrees and Majors Authorized (DMA)
 - UGA has approval for a school of medicine to address the shortage of doctors in the state.
 - The Georgia Literacy Project aim is that pupils read on the mastery level by third grade. Nichols wants to embed the “science of reading” in all disciplines, including secondary math and physical education.
- Discussed any efforts for the AAUP to lift sanctions on the USG. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Council to engage with the AAUP.
- As it’s difficult to recruit new members in the retiree organizations because retirees no longer use their institutional email accounts, it was proposed to strengthen the partnership between retiree organizations and the USG by allowing retirees to opt into connecting with their institution’s retiree organizations through the USG benefits system.
 - This will be reviewed by the system office to determine if a system process can be made available to collect retirees e-mail addresses and allow for retiree organizations to contact them.

A presentation was made by Mat Burkley, Claudia Taber, and Rob Swarczewski of Alight Retiree Health Solutions

- The Alight representatives discussed key issues facing retirees utilizing Alight services during the coming year:

- The Inflation Reduction Act closed the “doughnut hole” in 2025 and reduced yearly maximum out-of-pocket expenses for prescription medicines to \$2,000.
- Social Security will provide a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment for 2025, with simplified benefit statements.
- Medicare Advantage plans now cover 54% of the eligible members.
- Responding to concerns about rural residents finding providers, the representatives said all plans meet minimum CMS expectations of provider availability.

USG Staff Council representative could not be present and the USG Faculty Council representative reported the group has not met yet this fall.

Discussion ensued regarding the following matters of ongoing business:

- Changes to the General Education Core raise issues of advising capacity at some institutions
- The post-tenure review policy. Michelle Brattain, Chair, USG Faculty Council reported the group was successful in its proposal that the termination process includes a faculty review.
- Inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence by students. Faculty seek constructive use of AI.
- The continued rise is cost of benefits
- Discussed “spousal surcharge” when a faculty/staff spouse has access to insurance elsewhere as part of retaining faculty and staff.

Committee reports were received from:

- Retirement Advisory and Investment
- USG Well-Being Funding Review
- USG Communications Committee and USG Open Enrollment Communications Committee

In other old and new business:

- Discussion ensued about future meeting dates and the efficacy of in-person versus online meetings.
- The Spring meeting at Clayton State University will be hybrid. In-person meetings help develop persons for leadership roles.
- A nominating committee will present candidate(s) for chair-elect at the Spring meeting. Those interested may contact Ed Rondeau (edmond.p.rondeau@att.net)

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Persons interested in further detail on any of the matters referenced in the above summary of USGRC minutes may contact any member of the USGRC, contacts listed elsewhere on this website.