MINUTES

UUP VETERANS COMMITTEE- May 13, 2016

Members in attendance: William Borgstede, Justin Culkowski, Clifford DaVis, Ray Gleason, J. Thomas Hogle, Michael Knee, Will Meyer, Kevin Moriarty, David Scholl, Kathleen Southerton.

Also attending: Guests: Kelly Keck, Celine Mell, Yvette Gedeon, Amanda Merritt, Bob Kasprak.

The meeting was held at the Spring DA at the Hilton Hotel in Saratoga Springs. The meeting was called to order by Justin Culkowski at 1:30 p.m. All present were asked to introduce themselves and this was done. As is the custom, the membership list was passed around the table and members signed it and updated contact information as needed. A new member is Will Meyer of Stony Brook.

Minutes of the last meeting were distributed and time was allowed for the members to read the minutes. All action items in the Minutes were reviewed. All who were assigned tasks fulfilled their responsibilities. The minutes were accepted as written with no changes.

Kathy Southerton noted the Special Order for Gina Doty was to be presented at the DA. Since Gina would not be at the DA, her Special Order is now framed and will be sent to Plattsburgh. Kathy will present the Special Order honoring Gina at the DA. ( Note: Due to a fire at the Hotel and an electrical outage in Saratoga, the Special Order was not presented due to a cancelation of the DA so this presentation will be done at the Fall DA.)

Cliff DaVis commented on the presentation by the representative from the ERS at the last DA. He noted it would be very helpful to get a representative from the ORP to make a presentation regarding enhanced retirement benefits for ORP veterans. (We do not know if there is anyone from SUNY representing ORP in general and no conclusion was reached as to who or how we could get such a representative. If anyone has an idea about this, please contact the co-chairs Borgstede and Culkowski.)

Ray Gleason shared the status of the bill treating all veterans in ERS like those who served during periods of war. The Governor had vetoed the bill even though the Assembly and Senate had passed it. It is not dead but will need support from our members to go forward again. He noted there is an Advocacy Day on May 24th in Albany and he indicated members could sign up for this via the UUP website.

Celine Mell was introduced as the UUP Legislative Advocacy Professional, replacing Rob Trimarchi. She noted there are many Advocacy Days coming up and also noted these are listed on the UUP website. She introduced Yvette Gedeon who is also working on advocacy issues.

The regalia cords and the process for acquiring them was discussed. J. Culkowski stated that UUP had spent about $500 to buy 100 cords and sent out a message to Chapter presidents indicating their availability. J. Culkowski noted it was previously resolved by the Veterans Committee that buying the cords was to be the responsibility of the Chapters. Nevertheless, Lynn from the UUP staff handed J. Culkowski approximately 40 cords, which represented those remaining from the original 100. Tom Hogle stated “we” could distribute the cords. J. Culkowski indicated he was not interested in personally being responsible for this so he asked who on the Committee would do this. No one volunteered. At that point Tom Hogle stated he would offer cords at the DA if given the chance. Further, J. Culkowski volunteered to submit an article to be placed in the “VOICE” stating how the cords could be purchased. Tom will get a picture taken of himself at the DA for use in this article. ACTION: J. Culkowski will submit an article for the “VOICE” and T. Hogle will get a picture taken for the article and offer the cords at the DA.

J. Culkowski called attention to the Resolution regarding retirement benefits for ORP veterans. It was read at the meeting. Kathy Southerton noted the final “resolved” lacked a true action item for UUP. It only indicated UUP would “support” the effort to get this enacted. Tom Hogle noted a similar resolution like this one was abruptly dropped by UUP some years ago. Ray Gleason noted in his work as liaison to the Executive Committee, it would not be wise to significantly change the Resolution as the original was approved without change by the Executive Committee. After much discussion, a revised final “Resolved” was written with a request that this resolution be on the legislative agenda for UUP. ACTION: J. Culkowski will seek out Eileen Landy and Fred Kowal to get their approval for this revised “Resolved.” ( Immediately following the meeting, J. Culkowski spoke to Fred Kowal and Eileen Landy and they stated that insisting this be part of the legislative agenda would not be proper protocol and that this was up to another committee (Outreach) to enact.)

The fundraising for a veteran’s charity was discussed. At this DA, Eilleen Landy and Doreen Bango had acquired donations from Delta Dental and Davis Vision as incentives for the Veterans Committee’s fundraising activities. J. Culkowski praised the members for assisting at the Veterans Table. ( Note: The final tally for this DA was $307.00 for Disabled American Veterans, nearly twice the amount received at the last DA for Fisher House.) The Committee voted to support Fisher House at the next DA and to seek some sort of incentive prize for donations.

Ray Gleason stated that UUP’s Executive Committee is looking at all committees to consider whether they should continue, stay ad hoc, or become permanent. Many reasons were shared why this committee should be “permanent.” Bill Borgstede shared that he and J. Culkowski attended a meeting the night before where President Kowal had explained this situation and that a report is required from all committees by May 25, 2016. This report will be done by the co-chairs and reasons shared why this committee should become permanent.

Guest and fellow veteran, Bob Kasprak, asked the Committee to seek funding for a memorial wreath for the New York City Veterans Day Parade. The amount sought was $300 for a wreath indicating it was from UUP. David Scholl moved this be done, and Bill Borgstede seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously. ACTION: Bill Borgstede will request these funds and work with Bob to get this done.

Cliff DaVis moved that the meeting be adjourned and Kevin Moriarty seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Co-Chairs: Justin Culkowski and Bill Borgstede