

SUAA Board Minutes
March 7, 2024
Zoom Meeting

Members present: Richmond, McLean, Brown, Rock, Barker, Pano, Dallinger, Werling, Melz-Jennings, Jones, Downin, Farr

The meeting was called to order by President McLean at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

1. The secretary's February minutes were approved as corrected. Dallinger/Farr.
2. The treasurer's report included the review of several documents and was approved. Downin/Brown.
3. Survivors' Assistance- No report.
4. Membership- Farr announced that membership reminder postcards are being addressed this coming Monday. DPS will mail them. There are 38 members who have membership that has lapsed. We currently have 481 members in the Western Illinois University SUAA organization.
5. Social- A SUAA Business meeting date announcement came out in the WIU daily email yesterday.
6. SURS Board Update- Rock has sent notes from the last State SURS Board meeting to our local board members. Motion was seconded and passed to send a Newsletter in March urging our WIU members to vote in the coming State SURS Board Elections. We will be supporting Steve Rock as a candidate. Information about his professional career will be included in the newsletter.
7. Publications- Barker reviewed the upcoming newsletter.
8. Foundation- Brown identified professional and undergraduate scholarships offered by the SUAA Foundation. The Foundation is in the process of reviewing the bylaws. They discussed fundraising options for the scholarships.
9. Networking- No report.
10. Legislation- Pano reviewed information about the proposed State of Illinois State budget presented by the governor. The budget had 52.7 billion dollars in costs and 52.9 billion dollars in income. He identified a 2% increase of income for higher education. Student map grants have been increased. Higher education continues to be underfunded. Long term funding for pensions was identified.

Program- The guest speaker was Gary McKnight from McDonough District Hospital who reviewed the current challenge of working with Aetna Insurance Company. Seventy-five percent of the medical business for the hospital is Medicare and Medicaid. The remaining twenty-five percent are private insurance patients. Aetna has been reimbursing the hospital at a very low rate.

On August 20, 2022, Aetna asked the hospital for another discussion meeting. No progress was made. On January 20, 2023, Aetna still could not find the hospital's name or account in their databases when contacted by the hospital's medical staff. Pre-authorization requests have been granted at a snail's pace. At this point, MDH contacted an official at the State of Illinois Central Management Services for help. All this effort took several years of phone calls, emails, and letters to Aetna. Most communication went unanswered by Aetna. With the State of Illinois becoming involved in this problem, movement was made.

Aetna has finally agreed to split Medicare and Medicare Advantage into 2 different contracts with MDH. This process will take 60-90 days. Currently, it takes nurses several hours on the phone to obtain authorization for a procedure. McKnight fielded questions from our board members.

12. Announcements/Old Business/New Business- McLean announced the PSA video is moving slowly. They still need more photos. He would like to invite the new state SUAA Executive Director to speak at our April 9 Annual Meeting. McLean has sent out copies of revised by-laws to board members. He requested input. He recommended that the Ad hoc committee for by-laws be kept as it is currently. A motion was made to move forward on the by-law changes. Farr/Brown

A slate of officers for the coming year was identified: President- Farr, Vice President- Melz-Jennings, Secretary- Richmond, and Treasurer-Brewer. It will be presented at the annual meeting in April. Program for the annual meeting was discussed. The problem of obtaining a list of employees that will be retiring this year was discussed.

13. Motion was made to adjourn. Pano/Brown

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Richmond
Secretary