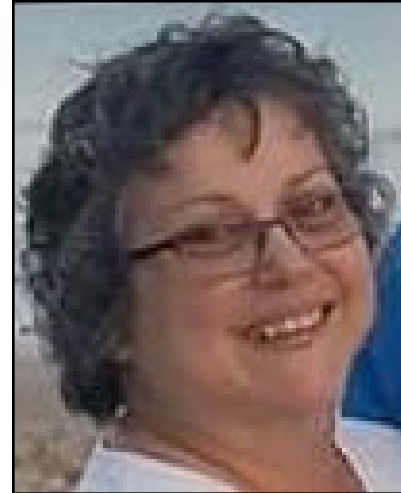




Meet
Denise Niese
Executive Director
Wood County Committee on Aging

via Zoom on
March 8, 2021

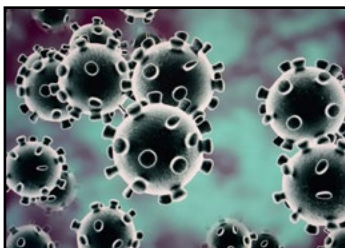
Join at 12:00 p.m. for informal
conversation
Talk begins at 12:30



Denise Niese has served as the Executive Director of the Wood County Committee on Aging since 2005. WCCOA is a self-incorporated non-profit, established in 1975 to serve the needs of older adults throughout Wood County, Ohio. With an annual budget of \$2.8 million, services include: 7 Senior Centers, congregate and home delivered meals, medical transportation, health assessment, and wellness programming. Before her employment at WCCOA, Denise was employed for 18 years by the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio as a Program Director. She has a BA in Management and Organizational Development with a minor in Gerontology.

An advocate for older adults, Denise is the Past President of the Ohio Association of Senior Centers, and served as Treasurer for the National Council on Aging/National Institute of Senior Centers Delegate Council. Denise has received several awards for her work, most recently, the 2018 Muriel Bertsch Award from the Ohio Association of Senior Centers.

Active in her local community, Denise served 4 terms (16 years) as an elected school board member of the Northwood Local Schools, serving 8 years as President. She also serves on the advisory committee for the Woodhaven Healthcare (County operated nursing home), Wood County Job and Family Services, and the Ohio Association of Senior Centers Board, and is a member of the Bowling Green Noon Kiwanis Club where she served 5 years as treasurer. Denise is also a past member of the Wood County Community Health Center (FQHC) Board where she served as President.



In this unprecedented year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BGSURA board decided it is not advisable for our members to gather for our usual luncheons with speakers. Thus we had arranged for our first two speakers to meet with us via Zoom at the usual time we would have had a luncheon meeting, on September 14 and November 9. The board decided on October 8 that we will continue with Zoom meetings for the two scheduled dates in the spring--March 8, 2021 and May 10, 2021 as the pandemic doesn't appear to be ending anytime soon.

Milt Hakel has graciously offered his assistance to anyone who needs help getting set up to use Zoom. Contact him by email at mhakel@bgsu.edu or by phone at 419 819 0936.

REPORTS

Update on Classified Staff Council (ASC)

A report was not available for this newsletter.

Update on Administrative Staff Council (ASC)

by Laura Waggoner Arnold, Observer for BGSU Retirees Association



Laura Waggoner Arnold retired from Registration & Records.

October 1, 2020 meeting (held via WebEx)

Guest Speakers: Human Resource's Suzi Saunders and Dr. Lisa Dubose from the Professional Development Opportunities and Employee Assistance Program. They discussed the BRIDGE Trainings and the IMPACT Solutions Program. The Bridge Program is the application used by BGSU for faculty, staff, and students, to administer employee compliance, professional development, and user training, both in-person and online. This system allows employees to search out training content without intervention and allows administrators to push content to certain populations. The IMPACT Solutions Employee Assistance Program offers confidential support to BGSU full-time faculty and staff, and certain family members, with access to a variety of services including unlimited phone consultation 24 hours a day, as well as legal, financial and identity theft recovery assistance, and child and elder care referral assistance.

Chair Report: Jordan Craven, ASC Chair, met with President Rodgers. Dr. Rodgers indicated the following: he received a 6-year contract extension and redirected his bonus to Diversity and Belonging efforts and student scholarships; Enrollment and retention are up for Fall 2020 – specifically e-campus and online learning; Decrease in first year undergraduate students, specifically students of color and first-generation college students. Trends have shown that private universities have done better during the pandemic because they are still offering in-person classes; public institutions have lost Pell-eligible and first-generation students to private universities. Dr. Rodger indicated that the Life Design program is going to be the BGSU brand moving forward.

November 5, 2020 meeting (held via WebEx)

Guest Speaker: Konnie Nicholson-George, Sr. Human Resources Representative to discuss Open Enrollment for Benefits. Konnie reminded everyone to make sure they look at the life expectancy beneficiaries.

Chair Report: Jordan Craven, ASC Chair, met with President Rodgers. Dr. Rodgers provided clarification on the following: campus "hibernation" Dec. 28-31; if an employee is expected to be working, they should have already been notified. (campus ops, bursar, reg and records, building maintenance, police, are among some staff who will need to work): Wellness Days during spring semester are for students only (business as usual for employees).

ASC Student Scholarships: Three changes for ASC Scholarships were approved moving forward: Open up to International Students for Consideration – 35 to 2; Change in GPA Requirement – 27 to 7; Change the essay prompt – 29 to 1

Public Safety Advisory Committee: All police officers will have body cameras by January 2021; All officers have been carrying Tasers since August 2020.

Parking Committee: Lots A, Q, & 21-added a total of 60 faculty staff spaces and 67 commuter spaces; Lots 3 and 4-smoothed out entrances to avoid accidents; Camera installation in Lots A, C/16, G, Q, 1, & 21-newly installed or upgraded; LED lighting project in campus lots –project to be complete by Thanksgiving; Parking lot counter technology-lot 21 is testing site for app to let students/staff know how many spaces are available; PayByPhone application is being used more than Kiosks.

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BGSURA Newsletter

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(419) 372-9696
www.bgsu.edu/retirement
E-mail: retirees@bgsu.edu
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Benevolence **Jan Peterson**
Bylaws
Database **Paul Lopez**
Membership **Jim Corbett**
Nominating **Cliff Boutelle**
Program **Ellen Dalton & Stan Lewis**

OBSERVERS

Admin. Staff Council **Laura Arnold**
Classified Staff Council **Pat Wilhelm**
Faculty Senate **Ellen Williams**

NEWSLETTER EDITOR **Ellen Dalton**
352-7230, edalton@bgsu.edu

Basketmaster

REPORTS

BGSU Faculty Senate meeting December 1, 2020 via WebEx prepared by Ellen Williams

Highlights from the December meeting included:

- Ken Borland (Chairperson pro tempore) welcomed Senators and expressed regrets from Senate Chair Christopher Frey for being unable to preside at today's meeting. Borland thanked Senators for efforts to adapt to responsibilities during this COVID pandemic. He reminded Senators of the next Senate meeting on February 2, 2021.
- President Rodney Rogers noted that we all need to think of what BGSU might look like in a post-COVID world. He invited faculty to attend a forum on December 2nd "Reinventing Higher Education in the Shadow of COVID-19", a presentation by the Educational Advisory Board (EAB). President Rogers noted that we could use the information from EAB to evaluate/reorganize our BGSU Strategic Plan to enhance opportunity for us to remain a competitive force among residential campuses. Rogers noted that enrollment was up this fall, primarily driven by graduate part-time enrollment in our online eCampus graduate programs. The undergraduate freshman class was a smaller class than we have had in recent history.
- Provost Joseph Whitehead stated that there are a number of sources being used to discuss the future of the university including: EAB landscape for higher education; Public and Land Grant Universities Association; Council of Academic Affairs; and bi-weekly meetings he holds with the Deans to gain their perspectives. He invited faculty to attend professional development trainings on improving instructional strategies, being held December 14-18th. He applauded faculty, administrative staff and classified staff for contributions they have made to keep our educational programs going strong at BGSU during the COVID Pandemic.
- Chief Health Officer (CHO) Ben Batey acknowledged Jessica Bankey and the Medical Laboratory Science students for their roles in supporting rapid testing for COVID for faculty, staff and students. He noted that the BGSU strategy to reduce COVID spread has been to "dedensify the residence halls" and "limit the number of visitors on campus." Batey shared that no cases of COVID-19 have been traced back to a BGSU classroom setting.
- R. Harrison Carter, Undergraduate Student Government President, requested faculty members to refrain from setting due dates for major projects, curriculum and heavy workloads close to Wellness Days in Spring Semester. Since Spring Break has been canceled, students will be given 4 Wellness Days throughout Spring Semester to help students with academic and mental health stress.
- A new Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration (College of Health and Human Services) was approved.
- A new Doctorate in Physical Therapy was approved.
- Two new minors in English were announced: "Word and Image" and "Writing". □



Dixieland Jazz on Wednesdays

Ray Heitger announces that his Dixieland jazz group is on hiatus until further notice.

Reminder: No dues are being collected this year.

Dues will be collected later this year for the 2021-22 year.

PASSINGS

For the period August 25 - December 31, 2020. Photos are included when available.

- ◆ **Glenn Beard**, 78, died November 21, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. A sheet metal journeyman, he served BGSU as Maintenance Repairman in the Campus Operations Department.
- ◆ **Marianne Bedee**, 80, Lecturer Emeritus of Mathematics, died November 18, 2020, in Huron, Ohio. She taught 35 years at the Sandusky County Schools and later retired from the BGSU Firelands Campus.
- ◆ **Orlando Behling**, 87, Professor Emeritus of Management, College of Business Administration, died November 10, 2020, at his winter home in Belleair, Florida. During his 18-year tenure at BGSU, he was named Distinguished University Professor.
- ◆ **James Bissland**, 83, Associate Professor Emeritus of Journalism, School of Mass Communication in the College of Arts and Sciences, died October 14, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. He retired after 20 years of service to the institution.
- ◆ **Josef Blass**, 75, Professor Emeritus of Math and Statistics, College of Business Administration, died October 02, 2020, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Born in a Soviet Labor Camp, his family returned to Poland at the end of WWII. Josef later immigrated to the United States and earned his doctorate degree.
- ◆ **Don Bright**, 90, Professor Emeritus of Vocational Business Education, College of Business Administration, died August 28, 2020. A resident of Bowling Green, Don was a very active member of the First United Methodist Church and well known for his cooking for their dinner theatres.
- ◆ **Richard Conrad**, 79, died on August 28, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. A native of Wood County, Ohio, he initially taught at the University in both the Computer Science Department and the College of Education. He retired from the University as Director and Assistant Vice President of Computer Services and Telecommunications.
- ◆ **Emil Dansker**, 90, passed away on December 5, 2020, in Mason, Ohio. He served the University as Professor of Journalism, School of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Dansker was set to receive a congressional gold medal for his civil air patrol service during WWII. He will now receive this prestigious award posthumously.
- ◆ **Doris Geiger**, 97, passed away December 10, 2020, in Oregon, Ohio. A resident of Bowling Green, Ohio, she served BGSU as Manager of the Pheasant Room in the Student Union. She took pride in her position and in serving faculty, staff, students, and visitors to the University.
- ◆ **Maxine Hudson**, 93, died on December 8, 2020. She retired from BGSU as Secretary to the Dean, in the College of Technology. Prior to her university employment she operated Carl's Restaurant, in Cygnet, Ohio, and taught Business Education in area high schools.
- ◆ **Stu Keeley**, 79, passed away from the COVID-19 virus on December 2, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. A Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences, he retired after serving the University for 40 years. Stu was married to Barb Keeley, also a BGSU retiree.
- ◆ **Sandra Sue Lewallen**, 80, died on October 1, 2020, in Findlay, Ohio. A custodian, she retired from the Campus Operations Department.
- ◆ **William McGraw**, 90, died December 9, 2020. A professor of Theatre/Humanities, he also served the institution as Dean of BGSU's Firelands College.
- ◆ **Phyllis Pickering**, 88, passed away on September 18, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. She retired from BGSU as Administrative Secretary, in the Department of Student Affairs.
- ◆ **Vernice Ringer**, 98, died on November 27, 1920, in Medina, Ohio. A clerk in the Office of Registration and Records, she retired from BGSU in 1988. Her late husband, Elton Ringer, also retired from BGSU.
- ◆ **Joseph 'Sharpie' Sharp**, 63, died on December 4, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. Following in footsteps of his late father, Glenn Sharp, he retired from BGSU as BGSU Athletic Equipment Manager after a 30-year career at the university.
- ◆ **Edgar Singleton**, 94, Professor Emeritus of Physics, College of Arts and Sciences, passed away on December 30, 2020 in Sylvania, Ohio. Hhe was a "prolific" maker of beautiful stringed instruments in his home workshop.

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PASSINGS

◆ **Eldon Snyder**, 90, Professor Emeritus of Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences, passed away on November 14, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. Eldon was an active member of BGSU Retirees Association, having served on its Board of Directors, and attended most luncheons and social activities.

◆ **Lois J. Sonnenberg**, 92, died on October 10, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. After retiring from teaching and serving as a county vocational education consultant,

she joined BGSU as Assistant Director of Adult Learner Services, in Continuing Education, International and Summer Programs. Her late husband, Otis Sonnenberg, also retired from BGSU.

◆ **Della Gladys Wyrick**, 89, died on December 11, 2020, in Bowling Green, Ohio. She retired from BGSU after 27 years of service, for Food Service and Custodial Services, in the Campus Operations Department. □

				
Glenn Beard	Marianne Bedee	Orlando Behling	James Bissland	Josef Blass
				
Don Bright	Richard Conrad	Emil Dansker	Doris Geiger	Maxine Hudson
				
Stu Keeley	Sandra Sue Lewallen	William McGraw	Phyllis Pickering	Vernice Ringer
				
Joseph J. 'Sharpie' Sharp	Edgar Singleton	Eldon Snyder	Lois J. Sonnenberg	Della Gladys Wyrick

REPORTS

Administrative Staff Council *continued from page 2*

December 3, 2020 meeting (held via WebEx)

Guest Speaker: Andy Alt, Associate Vice Provost, Academic Affairs, discussed the new Life Design Program at BGSU. Life Design offers a way to approach ambiguous and complex problems with dynamic and emerging solutions. It provides a set of tools for exploring and building multiple possible futures in an uncertain and changing world. It promotes agency, self-efficacy, and intentional decision-making. It encourages the creation of meaningful, balanced, purpose-drive lives.

Inspired by the Life Design programs at Tulane University, Stanford, and Johns Hopkins, BGSU hopes to provide a framework for redefining undergraduate student success. We hope to align and integrate work across divisions and empower each student to build their college experience with intention and purpose.

The initial launch of the program occurred during

the 2020-2021 academic year with 1,000 students. It is expected that by 2022, all undergraduate students will be participating. The current Life Design Coaches are David Denison, Greg Dickerson, Gabe Dunbar, Katrina Heilmeier, Darrell Hunter, and DeVona Smith. Additional Life Design Coaches will be needed as the program expands. These coaches begin by teaching 6 BGSU 1910 classes and will workwith/be a mentor to these same students through graduation. There will be no more than 300 students to 1 coach.

Chair's Report: Jordan Craven, ASC Chair, provided a brief recap of the meetings with Sheri Stoll, President Rodgers and with Human Resources. \$800,000 was received from the CARES Act and will be put back into the pot. This money may only be used to directly support students via Residence Life, Parking, Dining Halls, PPE, etc. BGSU is still waiting to hear what funding they will receive from the State. □

GOLDEN BOOK AWARD

This year we were able to provide a \$1000 award to Emily Hickman, a senior Aviation Studies major in the College of Technology with a 3.65 GPA.

We usually collect contributions for the Golden Book Award fund via donation baskets at the luncheon tables. If you'd like to donate to our book scholarship, there are two options. You may send a check payable to BGSU Foundation Inc., Attn: Gift Processing, 1851 N. Research Dr., Bowling Green, OH 43403. Please designate the fund, the BGSURA Golden Book Award, on the memo line of your check and in an enclosed note.

You may also donate conveniently online at the following link: https://myziggy.bgsu.edu/ccon/new_gift.do?action=newGift&giving_page_id=0 . When prompted to select a fund for your gift, please type in BGSURA Golden Book Award.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE LAST PROGRAM OF THE 2020-2021 PROGRAM YEAR

May 10, 2021

The Richard A Maxwell Sport Media Project: An Academic and Professional Collaboration

REPORTS

News from PERI (Public Employee Retirees Inc)

Highlights from the Legislative Reports by John Gilchrist in the PERI 4th Quarter 2020 and 1st quarter 2021 Newsletters (prepared by editor Ellen Dalton):

January begins the 134th General Assembly in Ohio with newly elected senators and state representatives. Legislative proposals that did not pass during the 133rd General Assembly in 2020 died and must be reintroduced in this new General Assembly.

The House, led by Speaker Robert Cupp of Lima, will have 64 Republicans and 35 Democrats. The Republicans in the House have enough members to override a governor's veto if they all vote together. Current law requires a three-fifths majority to override, which is 60 of the 99 representatives.

The Senate is led by Senator Matt Huffman, also from Lima, who leads the Republican caucus with 25 members. The Democratic caucus has 8 members. Like the House, the Republican Senate has more than the needed 20 members to override a governor's veto.

With the beginning of this new General Assembly, it may be timely to review PERI's approach to legislation and legislative initiatives. PERI has consistently opposed any proposed legislation that would create an unfunded liability for the OPERS system. PERI will continue to oppose bills that attempt to use the retirement system to further some social, political, or personal agenda. Some legislators who offer these proposals do so believing that the funds held by the retirement systems is taxpayers' money and this justifies their use to advance a particular agenda. PERI believes that moneys in the retirement systems are not public funds. PERI contends that while public employees are paid with tax dollars, once earned and deposited into the retirement systems they became private funds held in trust to be used exclusively to provide retirement and disability benefits. PERI will continue to oppose actions to change the current defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans.

[ED NOTE. Defined contribution plans are similar to a 401K or IRA in that the retiree's benefit would be based on what has been contributed to their account by them and their employer plus investment earnings. The individual, or their financial advisor, would be responsible for making investment decisions. Benefits could fluctuate with the financial markets. In a defined benefit plan such as OPERS, the benefit is based on age, years of service, and an average of highest salaries. Investment decisions are made by the retirement system and the aim is to keep the benefits consistent.]

However, PERI is supporting a two year COLA freeze. (COLA = Cost Of Living Adjustment) Members ask how PERI can support the proposed two-year COLA freeze when PERI's mission is to protect and preserve pension and benefits. The freeze is necessary to reduce the current \$24 billion unfunded liability of the OPERS system. Background for this liability will be addressed below. The COLA benefit is an expensive one and is one of the last factors that can be changed to reduce the unfunded liability. OPERS presented PERI with a number of options to address this issue including a three year COLA freeze. PERI countered with a two year freeze and this is what was agreed to as being the least financially harmful to retirees of the possible options. There is a big benefit to OPERS proposing their own solution to the financial issue, as the legislature is likely to accept it. Leaving it to the legislature for a solution, who knows what they would come up with.

[ED NOTE: Here's some history about the COLA. The COLA benefit was created by legislation passed in 1970 and through the years, the COLA was increased by legislation. Initially the COLA was tied to the Consumer Price Index and for some retirees it still is. In 2013, legislation was passed to fix the COLA at 3% for current retirees who retired before January 7, 2013.]

Often overlooked with this issue is the connection with health care benefits. While pension benefits are guaranteed by law, health care benefits are
continued on page 8

We will not publish a membership directory this year since we don't have updated information.

REPORTS

not. A recent survey of OPERS members, both retirees and actives, reported that more than 90% want OPERS to continue providing health care benefits, even at reduced levels. The OPERS board supports ongoing meaningful health care benefits as long as funds are available to support those benefits. In the current financial situation, projections indicate all of the employer contributions will be needed to reduce the unfunded liability.

The safeguards for retirement systems in Ohio that work to ensure that they don't run out of money to pay pension benefits:

---the requirement that OPERS amortize unfunded pension liabilities in 30 years or less

[Ed Note: What does this 30 year amortization mean? The amortization period is defined as how long it would take OPERS to pay off the unfunded liabilities (another word for commitments). As best I understand it, the model on which this is based takes into account the mix of present retirees and their benefits, future retirees and their benefits, current contributions being paid by employees and employers, and growth of and income from the investments managed by the pension plan. By law the crunch point is when the amortization period gets to 30 years--then action must be taken.]

---OPERS must annually prepare a valuation of pension assets, liabilities and funding requirements and submit to the Ohio Retirement Study Council and others

---Employers must pay contributions to the fund in a timely manner

---the Ohio Retirement Study Council which advises

and informs the state legislature on all matters relating to the benefits, funding, investments and administration of the five public employee retirement systems

---the OPERS board and staff must uphold their fiduciary duty to manage the fund solely in the interests of the actives and retirees

---the PERI board strives to protect the financial resources and integrity of the retirement systems while responsibly attempting to secure maximum benefits for our members.

Why the \$24 billion unfunded liability? From the OPERS update in the 1st Quarter 2021 PERI Newsletter:

To put it simply, enhancements to the benefits retirees have received over the years were not adequately funded. To cover the funding shortfall in the past, the system benefited from having about three or four active members supporting each retiree. Today our active members to retiree ratio is down to 1.3 active members per retiree. Thus the funding for pension benefits and health care payments relies heavily on investment returns. Remember the days when you could earn 8% interest on a bond and maybe 4% on a savings account? Today bonds earn about 2% and saving accounts earn a fraction of 1%.

Changes like these contributed to the unfunded liability which was about \$23 billion at the end of 2019.

For more information see the OPERS update in the PERI 1st Quarter 2021 Newsletter 2021. □

Interesting facts from OPERS

Oldest member (as of 2019) 108

of OPERS members over age 100 (as of 2019) 99

If anyone knows where to find the analogous information for STRS, please let me know. E.D.