

## University Operations

Employee Relations Committee  
Tuesday, November 4, 2014 1:30-3:00

### **Meeting Minutes**

Andy Holt Tower, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

#### **Present**

Tom Anderson, Anthony Aparijo, Dan Berryman, Brian Browning, Robert Bryant, Marilyn Butler, Rick Gometz, Mike Herbstritt, Dave Irvin, Mary Lucal, Jeff Maples, Jim McCarter, Rick McCarter, Ed McDaniel, Randy Miller, Lori Ownby, Jonathan Ramsey, Megan Redmon, Ed Roach, Debbie Robinson, Dennis Saben, Josh Smyser, Lisa Turner, Karen Valero, and Mike Werley.

#### **Absent**

Carlos Carrillo, Rose Rita Cooper, Robert Dykes, Eddie Golden, Paul Fulcher, Sharon Jackson, Anthony Seabolt, Patrick Smith, and Frank Wren.

#### **Welcome**

Dr. Mike Herbstritt, Executive Director of Employee Relations, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### **1. Cleaning Schedule Issues – Lisa Turner**

**Q:** There have been issues in Andy Holt Tower with the schedule for removal of garbage and refilling of soap dispensers. Is this scheduled to be done only once a week? What are the cleaning schedules for these buildings?

**A:** "Private offices generally receive a thorough cleaning once a week (if trash needs to be emptied more often it can be set outside the door and we'll take care of it ) public areas including restrooms, labs , classrooms, entrances , halls etc. are cleaned daily . The reason for doing it this way is to provide more time during the week for professional custodial activities such as stripping and refinishing floors, cleaning carpets, scrubbing restrooms and locker rooms, etc. without driving up the overall cost of cleaning the buildings. For Andy Holt Tower, if there are issues during the day a daytime employee at McClung Museum can be sent. Employees can contact me directly at 974-2054." Gordon Nelson, Assistant Director of Building Services.

Dave Irvin, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services, added that the situation in question should never have happened at Andy Holt Tower. Any office for a Dean level or above employee is cleaned daily unless a request is made for weekly cleaning. This is due to the fact that they are considered public areas due to the traffic they encounter. The "One Call" number for Facilities Services is (865) 946-7777. A call to this number should have handled the issue. Facilities Services is sorry that there was an unsatisfactory experience for these employees.

## **2. Smoking Area – Marilyn Butler**

**Q:** A constituent has requested a sheltered area for employees to smoke at the Communications building that would allow them to avoid inclement weather. Would this be possible?

**A:** Jeff Maples, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, stated that he would be opposed to this due to the precedent it would set. It could lead to demands across campus for similar shelters at other buildings. Dave Irvin agreed and added that with the construction occurring on campus this project would be low priority in comparison aside from the main objection.

## **3. Kingston Pike Building – Marilyn Butler**

**Q:** What are the plans for the Kingston Pike building entrance reconstruction?

**A:** Mr. Maples answered that this will take place toward the end of phase 1 of the Cumberland Avenue 2-phase project.

## **4. Contractor Issues – Ed Roach**

Ed Roach reiterated concerns regarding contractors in Henson Hall and added concerns regarding Clarence Brown construction. Mr. Irvin encouraged Ed to bring specific issue to his attention so that he could follow up with the appropriate supervisors on these issues.

## **5. Phone Policy – Ed Roach**

**Q:** What is the policy regarding the \$50 per month payment for employees who give their personal cell phone number for work calls?

**A:** Mr. Irvin answered that such a policy is in place. There are forms that the non-exempt employee and the department must fill out before this can be implemented. Once these forms are in place the payment is effective the following month. The payment is processed through payroll. This means it will be taxed, but that is unavoidable because of IRS regulations. This enhancement was made possible due to reduction of Facilities Services desk phones and an augment to the Facilities Services budget by Vice-Chancellor Cimino. If an employee signs up for this payment the department can contact them via their phone during work hours and outside of work hours. Calls and text conversations longer than a short call request to come in to work require compensation for non-exempt employees as they are off the clock. Rick Gometz asked which employees would be involved in this program. Mr. Irvin answered that each Facilities Services Director has a list of those employees in their area that will receive this cell phone allowance. For employees with smart phones emails may be sent as well. The Archibus system may be used in the future as a means of sending work orders directly to employees' smart phones. Ed Roach voiced concerns on behalf of a constituent regarding privacy. Mr. Irvin stated that the University will have no access to the employee's phone records, only the ability to contact the employee. This is exactly the same as the current situation.

Tom Anderson voiced concerns regarding extent of expectation and responsibility attached to this program. Mr. Irvin answered this concern by stating that employees will not be on call 24/7. That is also why both the employee and his manager must sign the required form prior to the employee receiving the allowance. Mr. Maples stated that the purpose of this program is to enable more efficient communication.

## **6. Merit Raises – Ed Roach**

**Q:** Are there plans for merit raises at all this year?

**A:** Mr. Maples answered that the process has begun to implement merit and equity raises. Departmental recommendations for merit raises are due December 1<sup>st</sup>. Chancellor Cheek worked against a hard budget to make these raises available to reward best performance in Knoxville employees. Performance reviews will be assessed at the departmental level to decide who will receive these raises. The raises will be effective January 1, 2015. Mr. Irvin stressed that Chancellor Cheek is to be thanked for working to see these unpopular raises approved on the state budget level. The process is in the early stages with director meetings planned for the near future. The raises will be dollar amounts, not percentages. New employees will not be eligible. Dr. Herbstritt followed up by stating that at the recent system HRO meeting in Nashville; Knoxville was the only campus discussing raises of any kind. This is thanks to Chancellor Cheek.

## **7. Elections – Josh Smyser**

**Q:** Where is HR in the process for the upcoming ERC elections?

**A:** Dr. Herbstritt informed the group that the online nominations process has begun for the ERC groups that are participating electronically. The initial email requesting nominations has been sent. The nominations will close November 7<sup>th</sup>. Nominees will receive an email notifying them and giving them the opportunity to review the eligibility requirements and accept or reject the nomination. The election process will follow. This new electronic system is easier to use and will allow for more efficient communication regarding the election process. Julie Roe, Employee Relations Counselor, will follow up with the Facilities Services groups regarding in-person elections. Nominations and paper ballot elections will take place the same day. Paper ballots will be used in place of show of hands at all elections this year. The representatives and alternates will be announced by the end of these sessions. Please contact Employee Relations (Jonathan Ramsey- 974-8299, [jramse17@utk.edu](mailto:jramse17@utk.edu)) if there are questions regarding the election process. More information will be coming regarding the dates and times for these elections. Dr. Mary Lucal, Director of Employee Relations, reminded everyone that following the elections an orientation will be held for the newly elected, or re-elected, representatives and alternates. Dan Berryman, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, informed the group that the event will take place January 21<sup>st</sup> from 8am-12pm in the Plant Biotech Building. It was announced that due to this event there will be no January ERC meeting.

## **8. Professional Development – Anthony Aparijo**

**Q:** Are the Skillsoft online classes through EOD available to all employees? Are professional development classes held during working hours an option? What should an employee do if they feel someone is being held back from moving forward in their professional development?

**A:** Mr. Irvin answered that supervisory approval is required for Skillsoft or in-person classes to be taken during work hours. Professional development is encouraged in all employees. If it is felt an employee is being unfairly held back in their position or kept from opportunities to develop employees should contact his/her supervisor's superior or contact their Director directly with specific instances. If they still have concerns they can then contact Mr. Irvin.

#### **9. Cherokee Trails – Anthony Aparijo**

**Q:** Will the Cherokee Trails acquisition create new positions for Facilities Services?

**A:** Mr. Irvin answered that while this is a UT System location UTK has an arrangement to oversee the maintenance. As this development grows more employees may be required.

#### **10. Career Ladder – Rick Gometz**

**Q:** Where in the process is the Career Ladder program? There have been concerns over issues with initial enrollment and the process.

**A:** Mr. Irvin stated that the program has been approved by HR, and it is has been submitted to Vice Chancellor Cimino for review. The process is moving forward. If approved, this will be retroactive to July 1. Post Meeting Note: Vice Chancellor Cimino has approved all of the Career Ladder recommendations. All are now being processed.

#### **11. Melrose Hall – Dennis Saben**

**Q:** When will Melrose be closed permanently?

**A:** Mr. Irvin answered that the portion that meets fire code will remain open. The rest of the building is targeted to be cleared out by the summer.

### **Old Business**

### **Announcements & Other Comments**

- ❖ Dr. Herbstritt informed the group that the schedule for the ERC meetings will change in 2015 from the calendar year to the academic year. Meetings will not be planned for June, July, or August. Mr. Irvin stated that Facilities Services will continue their regular departmental meetings through the summer as usual. Mr. Maples encouraged everyone to contact him with issues during this time. HR is available as well during this time to assist with any questions or issues that may arise.
- ❖ Employee Engagement Survey (EES) – Dr. Lucal announced that the EES kicked off yesterday. Already the participation rate is at 13% system-wide. Dr. Lucal recognized that the Operations ERC represents a large number of employees across campus. The representatives were asked to encourage their constituents to participate in the survey. This is an opportunity for employees to voice their concerns and opinions about the university.

Mr. Irvin notified the group that events are planned for employees that do not have internet access available to participate through paper surveys. Wednesday, November 12, from 6-8:30am and 4-6pm at Facilities Services. Surveys will be available along with refreshments. A similar event will be held at the Steam Plant Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> from 7-9am and 4-5pm. Notification will be sent via email and bulletin board postings regarding these events. Mr. Berryman and other HR personnel will be present at the events. Mr. Berryman informed the group that Dr. Lucal is the project lead for the survey system-wide. Modern Think is the third party that is conducting the survey and will receive all the information. Reminders will be sent every Monday until the end of the survey and those that complete paper surveys will continue to receive them because the paper surveys are not tracked by the software utilized by the online survey tool. Please disregard those reminders if you submitted your paper survey. Mr. Maples encouraged the group by stating that when he completed the survey it only took the 20 minutes as advertised. Results from the survey will be available in the spring. Changes will be implemented based on the results of the survey. The 2011 survey results led to the Chancellor visiting each of the ERC groups and having more events like quarterly lunches for new employees. Supervisor training including compensation training was another result.

- ❖ Mr. Maples announced that enrollment is expected to grow for the Knoxville campus. The undergrad enrollment is expected to grow from 21,500 this year to 22,000 next year. An estimated increase of 2% per year is being reviewed. A capacity study is underway currently to prepare for growth. More information will be available in future. Mr. Irvin stated that growing enrollment means greater use of buildings on campus. This translates to more custodial and maintenance work around campus.
- ❖ West Campus Development – Mr. Irvin updated the group regarding the plans for this development and its progress. Shelbourne will be demolished by the end of the semester. The first new dorm is scheduled to open in the fall of 2016. Between 2016 and 2019 the entire Presidential area should be replaced. A substantially larger dining hall is included in these plans. This project has been given a budget of \$235 million.
- ❖ The Operations ERC Holiday Luncheon is scheduled for December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11:30 to 1:00 in the Executive Dining Room of the University Center (on the second floor).
- ❖ Mr. Berryman encouraged everyone to get to the polls and vote in the midterm elections today.

### **Distributions**

- ❖ Minutes
- ❖ Employee Engagement Survey flyer

#### **Next Meeting**

Holiday Luncheon  
December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11:30 to 1 in the Executive Dining Room of the UC.