

University Operations

Employee Relations Committee

Tuesday, March 5, 2013, 1:30-3:00

Johnson Animal Research and Teaching Unit (JARTU) Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

Present Anthony Aparijo, Tom Anderson, Dan Berryman, Brian Browning, Marilyn Butler, Robert Bryant, Robert Dykes, Eddie Golden, Rick Gometz, Karen Hackworth, Mike Herbstritt, Deborah Higgs-Thomas, Dave Irvin, Mary Lucal, Jeff Maples, Rick McCarter, Ed McDaniel, Erin Miller, Randy Miller, Julie Monday, Claudine Nagel, Megan Redmon, Ed Roach, Gary Thomas, Lisa Turner, Thelma Vandergriff, Mike Werley, and Cecil Woody

Absent Rose Rita Cooper, Joe Gardner, Troy Grant, Sharon Jackson, and Patrick Smith

Welcome

Mike Herbstritt, Human Resources, welcomed everyone to the meeting and distributed Code of Conduct posters and pens. ERC members were encouraged to spread the word about the updated Code of Conduct. For more information on the Code of Conduct, visit <http://www.tennessee.edu/code/>.

New Business

1. Election for Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) Representative from University Operations ERC – Mike Herbstritt

Dr. Herbstritt shared that the ERAB addresses items affecting employees state-wide. There are ERAB representatives from all state-wide campuses and institutes. The former ERAB representative was Tom Anderson. More information on the ERAB can be found online at <http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/employeerelations/erab.html>.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Herbstritt called for nominations for the ERAB representative. Robert Dykes nominated Tom Anderson, and Mr. Anderson accepted. After a vote, Tom Anderson was elected as the ERAB representative for University Operations during the 2013-2014 term.

2. Long-Term Campus Parking Plan – Tom Anderson

Q: The rumor is that the long-term plans for campus include eliminating all the street parking on Volunteer and/or on campus entirely. This idea raises concern among employees regarding parking on campus. The lots aren't enough by themselves to handle all the parking needs of students, employees and visitors. Taking this significant amount of available parking away could be disastrous. Currently Facilities Services employees have to park either at the baseball field when the primary lot is full or on Volunteer Boulevard nearer to work. A number of employees choose not to pay the parking fee and would be negatively impacted by this plan. In addition, employees have parking concerns

about day-time events, such as swim meets, etc. What is the long-term parking plan, and does it include moving all parking to the perimeter of campus?

A: Jeff Maples, senior associate vice chancellor of Finance & Administration, said there is no current plan in place to eliminate street parking on/near campus. Mr. Maples said UT is planning to request ownership of more city streets over time. Volunteer Boulevard is not included in the initial plan to request more parking. Several review boards must view/approve such a request, and it will take months before a street acquisition is completed. Dave Irvin, associate vice chancellor of Facilities Services, added there are long-term plans for parking and moving parking to the perimeter, but those discussions are in the preliminary phase. The campus beautification plan/process also will play a role in any parking plans.

3. Plumbing Problems in Graphic Arts Building, Men's Restroom – James Golden

Q: The toilet and urinal do not work in the men's restroom located in the Graphic Arts Building. These issues have been reported several times, and there have been ongoing problems for 6-8 months. What is the status of this repair, and what can be done?

A: Dave Irvin will contact Plumbing Services to follow up and will include a response in the final minutes. Megan Redmon asked what the average response turnaround time is to be expected for plumbing repairs, etc. Mr. Irvin said Facilities Services are increasing efforts to recognize and respond to requests in a timely manner so that employees know the request has been heard. They are moving to an electronic work-order system and responses should be within 24 hours.

*After the meeting Dave Irvin confirmed the issue was repaired on March 5, 2013.

4. New First Transit Bus Service; Route to Kingston Pike Building – Megan Redmon

Q: Can the enhanced UT bus service that goes to Sorority Village or the Knoxville downtown trolley service include the Kingston Pike Building in their loops; if not possible on every loop, maybe every other or some other frequency? With the road construction on campus and decreased parking availability, it would be beneficial to be able to have a mass transportation option for travel to campus and additionally to the Conference Center. For the Conference Center, this would also help mitigate the cost to UT of parking stickers for the garage.

A: Jeff Maples reported that historically the trolley service stopped at the Kingston Pike Building. Several complaints were submitted stating the Trolley Service was causing a delay and traffic jams. Mr. Maples had Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) report how many people used the trolley for that stop on a given day. Usually less than 20 people used the service in a week. At that time, the stop was removed. Presently, the route to Sorority Village and the Agriculture campus cannot take on an additional stop. The extra stop would prevent the service to run in a timely, 15-minute sequence.

Mr. Maples also reported that with the new Wal-Mart/Publix development the City of Knoxville will also look at current traffic routes and timing of traffic lights.

5. Healthy Choice Vending Machines – Megan Redmon

Q: Could we have more healthy choices in the vending machines, such as skim milk, apples, or bananas?

A: Jeff Maples said this issue has come up in the past. To install these all over campus would increase food waste as many healthy choices perish quickly. However, if a specific building would like a healthy choice vending machine, one may be installed on a trial basis. Ms. Redmon shared that the question came from employees in the Kingston Pike Building. Mr. Maples said there has been discussion about adding a snack shop to the Kingston Pike Building, which may be a better solution. Mr. Maples will follow-up at a future ERC meeting.

6. One-day Parking Pass for Lot 30 – Megan Redmon

Q: Can vendors buy one-day parking passes for lot 30 from the visitor booth at Circle Park?

A: Jeff Maples said sales and service permits for vendors are available to purchase and use over a period of time. A one-day pass could be arranged with Parking & Transit Services, and the appropriate permit made available at the visitor booth on the day needed. Karen Hackworth, Parking & Transit Services, will forward more information to Julie Monday, Human Resources, to share with the ERC regarding this process.

7. Kingston Pike Building Pothole – Marilyn Butler

Q: The pothole in the incoming side (i.e., turning in from Cumberland) continues to worsen. I believe it was originally dug to do some testing, but was never adequately patched. Can this be fixed?

A: Mr. Maples said this area will be updated with the renovations to Cumberland Avenue and addition of the Wal-Mart/Publix development. This repair will be part of the final plan with the groundbreaking slated to be March 6, 2013.

8. Conflicting Signage near Metron Center Way – Marilyn Butler

Q: There is conflicting signage on the way out down Metron Center Way—the white street sign to the right indicates the middle lane is for both left and right turns, whereas the (faded) painted arrow only indicates a single direction. She's seen numerous near misses of vehicles pulling out due to this confusion; can the incorrect signage (whichever it is) be corrected?

A: Mr. Maples said this area will be updated with the renovations to Cumberland Avenue and addition of the Wal-Mart/Publix development. This change will be part of the final plan with groundbreaking slated to be March 6, 2013. Also, Metron Center Way is a campus-owned street.

9. Unscheduled Closing – Karen Hackworth

Q: I have received an agenda item from the supervisor that oversees the Volunteer Hall Public Pay Garage concerning the last unscheduled administrative closing (UAC) from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on 1/25/13. This supervisor has an employee who is scheduled to work second shift (3-11 p.m.) at the exit booth at the Public Pay Garage on White Ave.; this employee qualified for 2.0 hours of UAC (3-5 p.m.).

The question: During the time he/she would have normally come in to pick up the petty cash from a bookkeeper, the main office was closed; the employee could not work his/her normal shift. Would this employee qualify for more than 2.0 hours of UAC since there was no way he/she could work the normal scheduled hours due to the closure?

A: Mr. Maples said communication efforts will be enhanced during an unscheduled administrative closing moving forward. Dr. Herbstritt said each department must define which employees are essential in the case of an unscheduled administrative closing and what that means to the employees. In this case the employee may only receive 2 hours of UAC. Dave Irvin added that new policies will be communicated next week to Facilities Services employees regarding essential services.

Old Business

10. Inclement Weather Policy for Various Shifts

At the February 5, 2013, meeting it was asked if affected employees could receive pay for the unscheduled closing in the particular instance on January 25, 2013? *What is the status of this request?*

The university was closed between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., and employees whose shifts fall outside of that time will not be paid for the unscheduled closing.

Ed Roach asked how the announcements will be made for those essential services.

Mr. Maples said the announcement will be posted on the web and through internal e-mail. Supervisors will be informed of the expectations, and employees may contact their supervisors for additional clarification.

Dr. Herbstritt added that the UT alert system is a great way to stay informed on current issues. The UT alert system is an automated text message that sends priority messages regarding closures and emergencies on campus.

Mr. Maples said the UT alert system is limited as to how many characters can be used in a text message; however, as much information as possible will be included in the alerts.

Employees who fall under essential services are encouraged to also contact supervisors for added confirmation in the case of unscheduled closings and/or inclement weather.

To register for UT alert and to learn more, visit <https://www.utk.edu/utalert/>.

Announcements & Other Comments

- ❖ Rick McCarter said on Lower Drive at the corner behind Ferris Hall, there is a sharp curve. Tractor trailer trucks get stuck there often. Mr. McCarter asked what could be done to make more space on the street. Jeff Maples will follow up on this concern and report back.
- ❖ Dr. Herbstritt discussed the proposed pension plan changes. Only employees hired on July 1, 2014, or later will be affected by the changes. Current employees enrolled in the retirement program will not be affected.

The Tennessee Treasury Department is recommending legislation to reform the pension plan, and it applies only to state employees, higher education employees and K-12 teachers hired after June 30, 2014.

TCRS is a well-funded pension plan. The proposed changes will only apply to employees hired after June 30, 2014, and will ensure the continued financial strength of TCRS.

For additional information about the proposed pension reform, please go to the Treasury TCRS website at www.treasury.tn.gov/tcrs under the tab "Proposed State & Teacher Plans."

One concern mentioned by employees is that the new hybrid plan for new hires will require the state to pay less money into the new plan and that this will weaken the current defined benefit plan in which you are a participant. It will not weaken the current defined benefit plan. The current defined benefit plan in which you are a participant and the new hybrid plan will be accounted for separately and also each plan will be separately evaluated by the actuary. The independent actuary will continue to calculate the annual amount of money the state must pay to the current defined benefit plan to properly fund it. Nothing will change about this. And, every Governor and every General Assembly since 1972 has each year fully funded the amount calculated by the actuary as necessary to fund the plan. This is one of the key reasons why the TCRS is so well funded versus many other public pension plans.

Dr. Herbstritt also shared a hybrid plan summary sheet that provides a good comparison of the current plan and the one proposed to go into effect in June 2014. This document will be distributed with the final minutes.

- ❖ Dan Berryman reminded the ERC there is an important deadline approaching for University of Tennessee employees who participate in the state of Tennessee's ParTNers for Health insurance program and who have not yet completed the online Well-Being Assessment (WBA).

All members and their covered spouses enrolled in the Partnership PPO must complete the online Well-Being Assessment (WBA) by March 15, 2013. If you do not complete the requirement by the deadline, you (and your dependents, if applicable) will be transferred to the Standard PPO in 2014.

How to Take the WBA

* Complete it online. You can access the assessment at:

<https://partnersforhealthtn.embrace.healthways.com/healthways/login>

What to Do Next

* Once you have completed your WBA, look at your results and set up your Well-Being Plan.

* Complete ONE wellness activity by July 15. Activities include participating in a quarterly online wellness challenge, completing three action items in your online Well-Being Plan and receiving and reporting an age-appropriate preventive service. Find out more about the wellness activities at

www.partnersforhealthtn.gov/your_health_options/promise_wellness_activity.aspx

* If you are identified as an at-risk member or as a tobacco user, complete other requirements when contacted by Healthways. Participate in case management if BlueCross BlueShield, Cigna or Magellan directs you.

If you were hired after January 1, 2013

* You and your covered spouse must complete the online Well-Being Assessment and obtain a biometric health screening within 120 days of your coverage effective date.

* Use the checklist at

http://www.partnersforhealthtn.gov/documents/new_hire_promise_flier.pdf to keep track of your requirements.

If you have questions about the Partners for Health insurance program, please call 1-888-741-3390 or email partnersforhealth@healthways.com.

For more information about Partners for Health, visit www.partnersforhealthtn.gov.

Anthony Aparijo asked what employees with limited or no computer access can do to complete the assessment. Dr. Herbstritt said those employees can contact the Payroll Office at 974-5251 for assistance.

Deborah Higgs-Thomas asked what steps employees who are removed from the plan should take to get back in that plan. Dan Berryman said employees who fail to complete the 2013 Partnership Promise requirements will be moved to the Standard Plan beginning January 1, 2014. Those employees can switch back to the Partnership Plan during open enrollment in fall 2014 and would be enrolled back in the Partnership PPO effective January 1, 2015.

- ❖ Gary Thomas asked if there is a general policy that addresses how sick leave may be used. Dr. Herbstritt said this is on a case-by-case basis. Specific departments may also internal guidelines for calling in and requesting time off.
- ❖ Dr. Herbstritt shared it is once again open enrollment time for membership in the Sick Leave Bank. The Sick Leave Bank is an important benefit designed to help employees who are dealing with serious illness or injury. Open enrollment is April 1 through June 30, 2013. To inform UT employees about eligibility requirements and how the bank works, the Office of Employee & Organizational Development is offering three training sessions:

The Sick Leave Bank and You

April 23, 9:00-10:30

May 14, 9:00-10:30

(All sessions take place in Room 218, Conference Center Building)

Register online <http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/eod/registration.html> or call (865) 974-6657.

For more information about the sick leave bank, visit <http://hr.utk.edu/employee-relations/sick-leave-bank/>.

- ❖ ERC Training Session: The Role of the Representative/Alternate
Friday, March 22, 2013, from 1:30-3:30
University Center, Shiloh Room

Distributions

- a) February 2013 Employee Assistance Newsletter
- b) February 5, 2013 Minutes

Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 2, 2013 from 1:30-3:00
Thompson Boling Arena Dining - Conference Rooms C & D
Submit Agenda Items to Julie Monday at jmonday@utk.edu or 974-6452.