

## University Operations

Employee Relations Committee  
Tuesday, May 6, 2014 1:30-3:00  
Andy Holt Tower, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Present** Tom Anderson, Dan Berryman, Brian Browning, Robert Bryant, Marilyn Butler, Carlos Carrillo, Robert Dykes, Rick Gometz, Karen Hackworth, Mike Herbstritt, Dave Irvin, Mary Lucal, Jeff Maples, Rick McCarter, Randy Miller, Julie Monday, Megan Redmon, Ed Roach, Dennis Saben, Anthony Seabolt, Patrick Smith, Josh Smyser, Lisa Turner, Thelma Vandergriff and Mike Werley

**Absent** Rose Rita Cooper, Paul Fulcher, Eddie Golden, Sharon Jackson, Ed McDaniel and Frank Wren

#### **Welcome**

Mike Herbstritt, Human Resources, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### **1. Blue Cross Blue Shield and Pregnancy – Thelma Vandergriff**

**Q:** An employee's health screening results were skewed due to pregnancy. This employee was assigned a health coach. The employee appealed to have the inaccurate results removed from the file but the information could not be removed. The employee later found out that she did not need to do the initial health screening since she was pregnant. Can information regarding when screenings are not necessary be posted for employees to be aware? If posted already, where can it be found?

**A:** Dr. Herbstritt said employees with specific insurance questions/situations should contact Rob Chance, director of Payroll, at (865) 974-5251 to discuss appropriate steps for each individual case. More information regarding the ParTNeRship promise, including Frequently Asked Questions, can be found at <http://insurance.tennessee.edu/PartnerPromise14.htm> and <http://partnersforhealthtn.gov/>.

##### **2. UT Hospital Benefits – Lisa Turner**

**Q:** For the employees who have been here 20+ years, are they grandfathered into a benefit at the Hospital to have whatever costs that insurance does not cover written off or discounted?

**A:** Dr. Herbstritt said this benefit is still applicable for employees in the PPO plan. However, doctor fees are covered by the patient.

##### **3. Sick Leave – Marilyn Butler**

**Q:** Can supervisors require that employees save sick leave and join the sick leave bank? Is there a policy for how supervisors are to counsel employees with ongoing illnesses about things like the sick leave bank opportunity? Is there training available for supervisors on this subject?

**A:** Dr. Herbstritt said the university encourages employees to join the sick leave bank which is a benefit designed to help those who are dealing with serious personal illness or injury. Moreover, supervisors are encouraged to make employees aware of this and other benefits. Joining the sick leave bank is voluntary and employees are not required to become members of the sick leave bank. Sick leave bank training sessions are available through the Employee & Organizational Development Office each spring. Dr. Herbstritt also said employees that feel undue pressure to join the bank from supervisors should contact Human Resources to discuss. Mary Lucal, Human Resources, added that joining the sick leave bank should not be a part of an employee's annual performance review.

#### **4. Radiology Coverage – Randy Miller**

**Q:** An employee had an MRI and radiology done at the hospital. Should the radiology charges be waived?

**A:** Dr. Herbstritt said specific inquiries can be addressed by the Payroll office at (865) 974-5251.

#### **5. Sick Leave and Discipline – Josh Smyser**

**Q:** Employees have been written up for being out sick too much even though they have sick leave. Why does this happen and is there an official rule on this?

**A:** Dave Irvin, associate vice chancellor of Facilities Services, said this is the process for Facilities Services. In cases like this there is typically a pattern of sick leave abuse that developed before the write-up. Concerned employees may speak to Bob Caudill at 974-5107.

Ed Roach asked if employees are still required to turn in a doctor's note after missing 3 days even though they have a substantial sick leave balance. Mr. Irvin confirmed that is the procedure within Facilities Services. Mr. Irvin added Facilities Services is working now to establish clear guidelines for this and other matters.

#### **6. New Openings in Facilities Services – Mike Werley**

**Q:** Will there be any new openings within Facilities Services since there are several new buildings under construction?

**A:** Mr. Irvin said Facilities Services is working on funding strategies now to hopefully create some new positions.

#### **7. Steam Plant Changes – Mary Lucal**

**Q:** Is there any more information regarding the steam plant changes?

**A:** Mr. Irvin said the project is slightly ahead of schedule and under budget which is great. An announcement was made in TN Today that outlined the project. That article can be found at <http://tntoday.utk.edu/2014/04/10/steam-plant-conversion-project-begins/>. The project is designed to eliminate coal use completely by transitioning to natural gas. A successful conversion will lead to decreased amounts of emissions, less costly fuel oil delivery, and a better water treatment system.

#### **8. Merit Raises – Ed Roach**

**Q:** At the last meeting Chancellor Cheek spoke about the possibility of a merit raise. Are there any updates regarding possible merit raises?

**A:** Dr. Herbstritt said the Chancellor is still hopeful for a merit raise and funding strategies are still under review. More information will be shared with the ERC's as it becomes available.

## **Old Business**

### **9. Update on University Commons Project and Intersection Construction – Marilyn Butler**

Jeff Maples shared the Cumberland Avenue Project is on delay since there were no initial bids for the project. This will affect the changes to the intersection and improvements that were scheduled for June/July 2014. However, the University Commons Project is still underway and on schedule.

## **Announcements & Other Comments**

- ❖ Open enrollment for the sick leave bank is April 1 through June 30, 2014. The Sick Leave Bank is an important benefit designed to help employees who are dealing with serious personal illness or injury. For more information about the sick leave bank, visit <http://hr.utk.edu/employee-relations/sick-leave-bank/> or call 974-6452.
- ❖ July 1, 2014 Retirement Plan Changes

## **Distributions**

- ❖ Information sheet about July 1, 2014 Retirement Plan Changes
- ❖ Sick Leave Bank Applications

### **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, June 3, 2014, from 1:30-3:00

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

Submit agenda items to Julie Monday at [jmonday@utk.edu](mailto:jmonday@utk.edu) or 974-6452.