

# University Operations

Employee Relations Committee  
Tuesday, February 3, 2015 1:30-3:00  
Hodges Library, Room 605, Conference Room

## ***MEETING MINUTES***

### **Present**

Tom Anderson, Jeff Barnes, Brian Browning, Robert Bryant, T.J. Cansler, Rose Rita Cooper, Ashlie Czyz, Robert Dykes, Carmella Ford, Rick Gometz, Holly Harmon, Mike Herbstritt, Dave Irvin, Sharon Jackson, Chip Kain, William King, Kayla Kirkland, Debbie Lane, Charlene Laughlin, Mary Lucal, Jeff Maples, Jim McCarter, Rick McCarter, Ed McDaniel, Kelly Mihalik, Randy Miller, Christie Myers, Lori Owenby, Sammy Parcell, Ed Roach, Debbie Robinson, Julie Roe, Dennis Saben, Alica Shamblin, Josh Smyser, Karen Valero, Mike Werley, Tim Widener, and Cecil Woody.

### **Absent**

Kyle Botica, Deborah Cody, Joe Gardner, Eddie Golden, Troy Grant, Deborah Higgs-Thomas, Beverly Johnson, Megan Emily Redmon, Janet Miles, Anthony Sharp, Patrick Smith, Kevin Summitt, Lisa Turner, Crendel Wees, Mark Wagner, Frank Wren, and Jimmy Yarber.

### **Welcome**

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

### **New Business**

#### **1. Introduction of Attendees**

- a. Dr. Mary Lucal, Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources, introduced two HR attendees. Ashlie Czyz is serving as Interim Director of Employee Relations and Recruitment. Alica Shamblin has been hired in a new position as HR Generalist with duties in Recruitment and Employee Relations. They will be attending some ERC meetings going forward.

#### **2. Finance and Administration Update – Jeff Maples, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration.**

- a. The Tennessee state legislature is currently in session. The Governor's state of the state address will take place soon. There is a possibility that state employee salaries could increase due to increased revenue, but the revenue trend may not continue. While UT has the ability to increase revenue through tuition increases the state is encouraging smaller increases to tuition at this time. The science building project at 13<sup>th</sup> and Cumberland may receive capital project funding with a possible early fall construction start date.
- b. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Melrose Avenue have both been transferred from the city of Knoxville to UT by the city council.
- c. There are several beautification projects underway across campus. Progress is being made, but there is still much work to do.

- d. The Cumberland Avenue project is preparing for another bid. After little response to the first two bids, the project is being revised. The project will not now be carried out in two phases. There will be no planned break for football season in the project. It will be a 2 year project. It will begin at the Alcoa Highway exchange and move east. Summer 2017 is the project goal. The University Commons will need to close for 2 weeks during construction. Dr. Herbstritt asked about the Kingston Pike Building entrance project and how these changes have affected the plan. Mr. Maples answered that once the road construction has progressed past the entrance the Kingston Pike Building project will commence.

### **3. Facilities Services Update – Dave Irvin, Associate Vice Chancellor of Facilities Services.**

- a. New Student Housing and Parking Garage/Volunteer and Lake Loudoun is well underway. The Parking Garage will be completed in August 2016 and the Residence Hall/ dining will be completed by January 2017.
- b. The West Campus construction project has moved forward with the demolition of Shelbourne Towers. The next two buildings are expected to be completed and open in summer 2016. The Apartment Residence Hall will be the next building to be demolished. The new dining facility should be open fall 2018. Overall, 7 buildings are involved in this project and the last is slated to be up and running by 2019.
- c. The new Facilities Services Building should be ready for move in March 2016.
- d. There are currently \$10 million in landscaping projects currently underway at UT. One major project is restoring Second Creek into an outdoor park including an exterior classroom, seating and picnic areas. On the Hill surrounding Middle Drive a new pedestrian oriented plaza will be developed near Perkins Hall. A Circle Park plaza project surrounding the Torchbearer will commence soon. All of the projects are expected to be completed before the fall semester.
- e. The Institute of Agriculture and Facilities Services has been awarded a grant for rain gardens to assist in Stormwater management. There will be 4 such gardens created around campus with an emphasis on native plants.
- f. Additional surface parking will be attempted in the Caledonia area.
- g. Potential future Garages are being investigated to determine potential costs and funding strategies.
- h. There is \$1.5 billion in construction planned or underway across campus.

### **4. Parking – Rick Gometz**

- a. Will parking be increased with these construction projects? Will there be public parking added during the work-week?

Mr. Maples answered that the parking garage attached to the new dorm will have around 300 non-commuter spaces at the top. The rest of the garage will be a mixture of commuter, faculty, and staff parking. This garage will have around 1,000 spaces. It will not have public parking during the work-week, but public parking spaces will be made available in existing parking once the Student Union Building is open.

### **5. Contracted Services – Mike Werley**

- a. It has been reported that state legislators are considering contracting out facilities work.

Mr. Irvin responded that UT is advocating keeping these services in-house. Mr. Werley asked if some announcement could be made that might ease concerns over this issue. Mr. Irvin responded by stating that the President and other administrators at UT are working to keep these services in-house. Dr. Herbstritt added that recent RFPs have been made but did not meet UT's needs. In-house has been the preference. Mr. Maples added that services would be cut significantly if the work were contracted out.

Dr. Herbstritt went on to state that campus is looking great thanks to the hard work of the Facilities Services employees.

## **6. Employee Assistance Program – Dr. Lucal**

- a. This benefit is managed by Magellan and is available to all UT employees. It provides services for the employee, their spouse, and dependents. This completely confidential service provides up to 5 counseling sessions per separate incident, financial counseling, 1 free legal consultation per year, and more. Please distribute the flyers being handed out to your work areas.
- b. Alica Shamblin, HR Generalist, will be the main contact for EAP going forward. Her contact information is as follows: 974-4540; [ashambli@utk.edu](mailto:ashambli@utk.edu). HR can be contacted in general through the Call Center line (888-444-8847). If you need further EAP flyers for your constituents please contact Jonathan Ramsey (974-8299; [jramse17@utk.edu](mailto:jramse17@utk.edu)).

## **7. Facilities Services Policies – Tom Anderson**

- a. There have been concerns with aspects of the new Facilities Services leave and essential personnel policies.

Mr. Irvin shared with the group that these policies have been discussed and shared with Facilities Services employees and their ERC representatives. There is a meeting between Facilities Services Administration and the FS ERC representatives set for February 10<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will allow for more nuanced discussion of aspects of the policies. Dr. Herbstritt stated that these protocols are specific to Facilities Services and do not affect employees campus wide. Tom Anderson raised concerns over language in the leave policy that involves disciplinary action following a number of absences and how the excused or unexcused nature of the absences affects this. Mr. Irvin clarified that documentation can be required following 6 absences in 1 year. He stressed that the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm in the Facilities Services conference room would provide a better opportunity to discuss the policy.

## **8. Early Retirement – Ed McDaniel**

- a. Is it true that there is a bonus available for early retirement?

Dr. Herbstritt answered that there is no such bonus available for early retirement. If an employee has questions regarding their retirement status please direct them to John Gushen, Director of Benefits and Retirement (974-6050; [jgushen@utk.edu](mailto:jgushen@utk.edu)). Benefits and Retirement can run the numbers for any employee considering retirement. Consultations with this office are confidential.

## **9. Sick Leave Bank Use – Ed Roach**

- a. If an employee is a member of the Sick Leave Bank (SLB) can they only receive time once a year?

Dr. Herbstritt answered that an employee who is a member of the SLB can receive a maximum of 720 hours (90 days) of time from the bank per serious health incident per year. To request SLB time an employee must be near the end of their accrued leave, but they can submit a request earlier if the health condition is scheduled or expected. They can only use the SLB time once all their accrued leave is exhausted. SLB open enrollment occurs April through June. This benefit can be a lifesaver if a catastrophic health condition occurs. Julie Roe, Employee Relations Counselor, explained that pay from the SLB is based on the employee's salary. With SLB time in place benefits will be maintained through pay. This benefit is only available for the employee's own serious health condition, not for care of a family member. Elective surgeries are not covered. Dr. Herbstritt went on to say that as an employee's regular pay status is maintained they will continue to accrue leave at their normal schedule.

This leave is used as accrued before SLB time is claimed. This is based on state guidelines. Members of the SLB are also eligible for donations of sick leave from fellow employees. The donating employee does not have to be a member of the bank, but the receiving employee must be a member of the bank. The member must also have been approved for time from the bank to receive donated time. An employee must have at least 160 hours of sick leave to donate. The minimum amount of sick leave that can be donated recently changed from 80 hours to 40 hours. Contact Employee Relations if you have any further questions regarding the SLB or to request forms. You can contact Julie Roe (974-6452; [jmonday@utk.edu](mailto:jmonday@utk.edu)) or Jonathan Ramsey (974-8299; [jramse17@utk.edu](mailto:jramse17@utk.edu)). Ed Roach asked if FML could be used alongside SLB time. Dr. Herbstritt answered that having FML in place is preferred for employee's requesting SLB time.

Randy Miller stated that an employee in his department had requested SLB time and received only one day from the bank. Dr. Herbstritt remembered the employee in question. There were donations of sick leave lined up from fellow employees. The SLB awards 8 hours (1 day) in such cases to provide eligibility to receive sick leave donations. Mrs. Roe followed up by informing the group that the employee can request further time if needed once the donations are exhausted. The amount of time given can also depend on the medical documentation the employee must provide. The employee can receive a maximum of 720 hours (90 days) of sick leave donations. Dr. Lucal asked the representatives and alternates if they felt their constituents and co-workers are aware of this benefit? The group responded negatively. William King stated that communication is an issue with this benefit. Mrs. Roe stated that mailings go out to all employees not currently in the bank before the open enrollment. There is also training available through Employee and Organizational Development:

"The Sick Leave Bank and You

Are you prepared for the unexpected? Would you like to know how to prepare? The sick leave bank is a wonderful benefit whose members are eligible to apply for additional sick leave in the event of a serious illness/injury. How do I become a member? What does this benefit include? Why even bother to enroll? This session will answer these questions and more so register today!" (974-6657; <http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/eod/registration.html>). Ashlie Czyz, Interim Director of Employee Relations and Recruitment, stated that the Sick Leave Bank is mentioned as a benefit in new employee orientation. Kelly Mihalik informed the group that HR gave presentations informing UTPD employees of this benefit before the last open enrollment at the department's request.

## **10. Computer Access – William King**

a. There are issues of accessibility for some Facilities Services employees in certain areas of campus. Are there any plans to ease this problem?

Mr. Irvin responded that there is a new computer lab in Berry Hall (near Neyland Stadium). He went on to state that once the department begins distributing tablets this issue will be greatly eased.

## **11. Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) Representative Election – Dr. Herbstritt**

a. The ERAB is a UT system-wide advisory organization that meets with the President quarterly. UT Knoxville is represented through each of the ERC groups and the ESC and Institute of Agriculture. The next meeting will be March 4<sup>th</sup>. We will be holding an election during this meeting for the University Operations representative. Only representatives can serve in this capacity, not alternates.

- b. The issues that should be addressed to this group affect employees system-wide. An example of such an issue is the health coaches through the insurance.
- c. Tom Anderson, the current ERAB representative for this group, stated that the meetings are informational regarding the system. The President is very involved in the meetings. Wages, funding, and ParTNership insurance are common issues. This is a chance to bring issues to the attention of the administration. They address the issue or take them on to the state as appropriate.
- d. Dr. Herbstritt followed up by explaining that issues brought to the ERAB are answered by administrators for the area concerned. They attend the meeting as they are able to speak to the issue.
- e. Dr. Lucal encouraged the group to nominate people for this representative role. It is a great opportunity to meet employees from across the system and learn about other campuses. An example of this was a question raised by Martin regarding the TN Promise program and how it would impact the system overall compared to its impact on certain campuses.
- f. The floor was opened for nominations: Mike Werley nominated Tom Anderson. Tim Widener seconded the nomination. The group re-elected Tom Anderson as ERAB representative for another term. Contact Tom with any issues you feel might be appropriate for the ERAB meeting March 4<sup>th</sup> as soon as possible.

## **12. Disciplinary Action and Leave With Pay – Robert Dykes**

- a. Can disciplinary action be carried out for leave with pay?

Dr. Herbstritt answered that if an employee exhausted their accrued leave and FML is not in place disciplinary action can be carried out for absences. There typically will be a warning sent out to the employee before the leave is exhausted. Annual leave is approved time off that has been cleared with the department so disciplinary action should not occur with this type of leave. With use of sick leave the department can require doctor statements after habitual use of sick leave as it is accrued. The department will notify the employee before this documentation is required. Ed Roach asked how the essential personnel policy will affect this as not showing up on administrative closing results in leave without pay. Dr. Lucal encouraged him to request clarification on this point from Dave Irvin.

## **Old Business**

### **Announcements & Other Comments**

- ❖ ERAO and OED Joint Training – Dr. Herbstritt. The joint training session requested at the ERAO Orientation has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 25th. It will take place in the University Center Ballroom from 1:30 to 4:30pm. The role of the representative in disciplinary action will be discussed by HR. Jenny Richter, Interim Associate Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity, will be present to discuss reporting of sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. All representatives and alternates are welcome to attend. Further information will be coming soon. Please contact Jonathan Ramsey (jramse17@utk.edu; 974-8299) if you plan to attend so that HR has enough materials there for everyone.
- ❖ Chancellor Visit – Dr. Herbstritt. Chancellor Cheek will be meeting with us at the March 3rd University Operations ERC meeting. Please submit and prepare questions for him. He will speak and then open the floor for questions. He is amenable to questions. The meeting next month will be held in the Executive Dining Room at the University Center.

## **Distributions**

- ❖ ERAB flyer
- ❖ Facilities Services Contact Sheet
- ❖ Meeting Agendas

### **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, March 3, 2015, from 1:30-3:00  
University Center, Executive Dining Room  
Chancellor Cheek in attendance

Submit agenda items to Jonathan Ramsey at [jramse17@utk.edu](mailto:jramse17@utk.edu) or 974-8299.

