

OPERATIONS ERC

Meeting AGENDA

TUESDAY, may 4, 2021 | 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Tom Anderson, Jason Baggett, Brian Browning, David Bryant, Harold Bivens, Jessica Cantu, Jeremiah Cook, Ted Coward, Darrell Easley, Sarah Hoel, Paul Finley, William Iler, Debbie Lane, Jimmy Large, Terry Ledford, Chip Pennoyer, John Platt, Gavin Ramsey, Eric Robinson, Thomas Spoon, Jake Turner, Lisa Turner, Dave Webb, Jessica Woofter,

ABSENT

David Blaylock, Joseph Bray, Charles Burton, Steven Henry, Judy Jones, Ethan Long, Mary Lucal, Raheem Obaid, Regina Olum, Ed Roach, Debra Robinson, Julie Roe, Cris Strange

1. WELCOME

Dr. Darrell Easley, Director of Learning & Organizational Development & Employee Relations, welcomed the group to the May meeting and the last meeting of the 2020-21 academic year. The ERC will resume meetings in the fall.

1. UPDATES
   1. Finance and Administration Update – Brian Browning, Acting Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

Brian Browning greeted the group and began his update announcing the state legislature has approved the Governor’s budget. He noted that there were a few minor changes but it was the best budget that has ever been awarded to the University. It includes a 4% salary pool, and discussions are underway as to how it will be used. Once information is available that will be shared with employees.

Mr. Browning said as spring semester is winding down focus has turned to summer campus projects, including repaving Todd Helton Drive and Peyton Manning Pass over the summer. He anticipates a return to normal capacities for the fall semester including academic classes and special events.

Mr. Browning closed by highlighting notable campus construction projects including Phase 2 of the Pedestrian Mall Extension on Andy Holt Ave., which will start in early June. The Engineering building and West Campus Dining Facility are both scheduled to open this fall.

For more information about campus construction projects, visit: <https://conezone.utk.edu/>

* 1. Human Resources Update – Darrell Easley, Director of Learning & Organizational Development & Employee Relations

Dr. Easley updated the group on current HR efforts related to the Chancellor’s call to return to campus on June 1. HR is helping departments plan transitions back to campus by offering consultations around decision-making. He said helpful resources for leaders and employees have been put out, and they will be offering a series of return to campus sessions in June and July. Topics will include re-establishing work-life balance, transitioning with children, transitioning with pets, leading a hybrid workforce, building resilience and mental health & well-being resources.

1. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS
   1. Taking Leave for COVID Vaccinations – Lisa Turner

Q: Should employees be required to take personal leave to receive their COVID vaccinations?

A: Dr. Easley responded that Dr. Mary Lucal, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, advised that normally sick leave would be required for medical appointments, but for COVID-19 vaccinations we are not requiring the use of leave for COVID vaccines from a wellness perspective. She said it is critical that our community gets vaccinated; this is our best way to ensure the safety of our community.

Q: Does this include only on-campus vaccination events or on-and-off campus events?

A: This should apply to any vaccine location within reason.

Q: Is there anything employees who have already used personal leave to receive a COVID vaccine can do to reclaim time?

A: Employees who have used personal time for vaccination appointments and are interested in getting that time back should talk with their supervisor.

Ms. Turner followed up to ask if an employee has side effect symptoms from being vaccinated like fever or nausea are they required to take personal leave for that time.

Dr. Easley responded he would check and follow up with a response. After the meeting Michelle Currier with Compensation confirmed that employees who miss time related to any side effects from vaccination should continue to use sick leave.

The University encourages all students, faculty, and staff to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. Vaccines are safe, effective, free, and readily available on campus and through other providers in the area.

Employees can receive COVID-19 vaccinations at the Student Health Center Pharmacy. Parking is available for free, including accessible spots. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/utkpharmacyvaccinations>.

For more information, visit: <https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/vaccine/>. Off-campus vaccine providers can be located by visiting: <https://vaccinefinder.org/search/>.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
   1. ERAB Report – Tom Anderson

Tom Anderson discussed the recent quarterly [Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB)](https://hr.tennessee.edu/get-involved/committees-councils/employee-relations-advisory-board/) meeting held in April. He reported he asked for clarification around the 4% salary pool and said David Miller, Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, explained that 2% of the raise will cover January to June and 1% over the course of the year. He said they intend it to be a one-time bonus and that System expressed intentions to distribute it as an equal dollar amount across the board. The 4% raise pool will be active July 1, with campuses and departments deciding percentages for specific distribution. He said that they are likely to get specifics at the June meeting about how that money will be distributed, and discussed a flat dollar raise option. He said he asked specifically about the Board looking into and addressing wage compression separately from the 4% raise and was told the Board will look into it.

Mr. Anderson closed by sharing that the Board discussed the Be One UT mission and COVID updates. He noted the Health Science Center is now included in recurring funds as other campuses, which means the state will now supply 55% of HSC raises instead of 100% funding by the System.

* 1. Sick Leave Bank Open Enrollment - Ends June 30

Sick Leave Bank open enrollment is underway! We will be accepting applications for new enrollees for the Knoxville-area and Institute of Agriculture Sick Leave Banks through June 30. To be eligible, you must be employed as a regular UT employee, accruing sick leave, with a sick leave balance of at least 48 hours or 6 days (pro-rated for regular, part-time employees). Employees who meet those requirements who wish to join the Bank must complete an enrollment application and agree to donate 24 hours of sick leave to the bank. The 24-hour donation is non-refundable.

Applications may be submitted to [SickLeaveBank@utk.edu](mailto:SickLeaveBank@utk.edu), and electronic signatures and scans are accepted. Current bank members do not need to reapply.

For more information and to download an enrollment application, visit <https://hr.utk.edu/sick-leave-bank/>.

UTK HR Employee Relations recently hosted a Sick Leave Bank Information Session for employees interested in more information. The session was recorded and is viewable on our YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/T8uV67XkMg0>.

* 1. UConnect 2021-22 Program: Application Period Ends May 21

Learning & Organizational Development in partnership with the Division of Diversity & Engagement will open applications soon for their 2021-22 program cohort.

UConnecT is an inclusive, yearlong immersive leadership and professional development program built around speakers from senior leadership, and practical leadership growth strategies. UConnecT is a carefully constructed rigorous learning experience for non-exempt staff who have no less than three years of continuous service as of August 3, 2021.

The application period closes on Friday, May 21, 2021.

Learn more about UConnecT: <https://hr.utk.edu/uconnect/>

* 1. Fall 2021: ERC Changes

Dr. Easley announced that the UTK Employee Relations Advisory Organization groups will be merging four ERC groups into two this fall. The System ERC is moving back to System HR and Operations will inherit HR and housing area reps beginning in September.

* 1. Thank You for Your Service!

1. REMINDERS
   1. Please email Jessica Cantu ([jlcantu@utk.edu](mailto:jlcantu@utk.edu)) any constituent questions.