

KNOXVILLE ADMINISTRATION ERC

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021 | 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Brenda Bartram, Annette Beets, Katie Bookout, Jessica Cantu, Jon Chandler, Rob Chance (Guest Speaker), Michelle Currier (Guest Speaker), Darrell Easley, Amy Gregory, Gennie Hope-Davian, Jennifer Horner, Boone Huffaker, Cathy Jenkins, Kerrie Johnson, Renee Johnson, Olivia Kelley, Mary Lucal, Ami McCarter, Shelly Payne, Marchelle Robinson (Guest Speaker), Chrisanne Romeo, Cindy Satterfield, Jen Scagnelli, Melinda Simmons, Elizabeth Smith, Elizabeth Tampas-Dixon, Leslie Valentine, Teresa Volkodav-Crabtree, Chrissy Wills-Maples, Jill Zambito, Carrie Zitzman

ABSENT

Andrea Brayton, Melissa Cox, Charlene Ingle, Ryan Kemnetz, Sonja Spell, Lisa Vandergriff

1. WELCOME

Dr. Darrell Easley, Director of Employee Relations & Learning & Organizational Development, welcomed everyone to the meeting. September marks the first official meeting of the new Knoxville Administration ERC. The new ERC combines the previous Academic Affairs & Research ERC and Student Life and Athletics areas from the Knoxville Administration & Student Life ERC.

Dr. Easley introduced Jon Chandler, Senior Employee Relations Consultant, and Kerrie Johnson, Learning & Organizational Development Consultant. He announced that Leslie Valentine, who represented the Knoxville Administration & Student Life ERC on the Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB), has accepted an appointment as a Sick Leave Bank trustee. Cathy Jenkins will represent the group on ERAB.

Dr. Easley closed his welcome by asking the group to consider how they would like to meet, with the thought of having the majority of the meetings held virtually and possibly one in person meeting each semester. The group will be surveyed in the near future.

1. UPDATES
   1. Division of Student Life Update – Jill Zambito, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life

Dr. Jill Zambito greeted the group and began her update by featuring [Be Well](https://bewell.utk.edu/), the campus wellness initiative from the Center for Health, Education, and Wellness. She shared information from Danielle Bohn, Health and Wellness Coordinator, about upcoming programs and initiatives. Offerings include [yoga classes](https://bewell.utk.edu/programs/employee-fitness-classes/) and [healthy cooking classes](https://bewell.utk.edu/programs/healthy-cooking/) including a handmade Italian pasta class. Be Well also offers a [race registration discount](https://bewell.utk.edu/physical_activity/community-events/) for the Covenant Health Marathon. She announced an upcoming community supported agriculture (CSA) produce box giveaway at the end of October. Employees can enter by subscribing to Be Well’s [monthly newsletters](https://bewell.utk.edu/subscribe/). She encouraged the group to check out Be Well as part of caring for their health and wellbeing. Cathy Jenkins asked for more information about signing up for the newsletter. Dr. Easley shared a positive experience participating in a Be Well cooking class.

Dr. Mary Lucal asked Dr. Zambito for more information and feedback about how [Welcome Week](https://orientation.utk.edu/welcome-week/) went. Dr. Zambito responded that it went well and that Student Life had to be creative in accommodating the number of students given record enrollment numbers. She shared that they contracted with a local apartment complex for additional housing and are working through some issues to support the students living there as best as possible. She said participation at Welcome Week events has been wonderful and that, due to the pandemic, there are multiple incoming classes who have not experienced real college life. She said she believes they are craving in person opportunities. Dr. Zambito closed her update by noting that Student Life continues to work on vaccination efforts with the [Student Health Center](https://studenthealth.utk.edu/).

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

Dr. Easley began his update by announcing that the University is launching a new employee discount program through Partners for Health called [PerkSpot](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/member_discount?utm_source=abcs&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=discountprogram). He provided signup information for the portal and noted the program offers discounts including the State of Tennessee Employees’ Apple Discount Program. Other discounts include movie tickets, restaurants and car rentals. Cathy Jenkins shared that PerkSpot also has car buying discounts and discounted food box delivery services.

Dr. Easley next announced several upcoming employee surveys, including a staff engagement survey from McLean that will launch around September 14. Employees should look for an email from McLean to complete the survey. L&OD will also be sending a needs assessment survey in the next week. This survey is intended to ask employees and leaders what would benefit them from learning more about in the next year. As part of the survey L&OD will hold a swag bag giveaway. Those interested in being included in the drawing can register at the end of the survey or visit the HR office at 105 Student Services Building to register in-person.

1. GUEST SPEAKERS
   1. Annual Enrollment – Rob Chance and Marchelle Robinson, Payroll

Rob Chance, Director of Payroll, greeted the group and announced that [annual enrollment](https://www.tn.gov/partnersforhealth/ae/about-enrollment.html) will take place from October 1 – 15. . Employees who want to keep their current coverage options for 2022 do not need to do anything. Employees who want to add, remove, or make changes to their coverage can do so through Edison, which can be easily accessed by selecting the Edison menu button in IRIS Web. [Annual enrollment newsletters](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/fa-benefits/documents/st_he_news_final_links.pdf) are currently available online and will also be mailed to employees. Mr. Chance announced that a new tool, ALEX, will also be rolled out soon to help employees make decisions about their healthcare coverage.

Mr. Chance announced that premiums for the primary health insurance carrier networks, BlueCross Blue Shield (BCBS) Network S and Cigna LocalPlus, will go up an aggregate of 3.2%, or about $16 per month. He explained the employee and spouse option premium was found to be low compared to cost, so the state raised the monthly premium. He announced that premiums for the expanded network options, BCBS Network P and Cigna Open Access, will see a significant premium increase. He noted that these expanded networks only have about 5,700 participants statewide including state employees but the wider network coverage means higher costs. He also noted that the out-of-pocket maximum for out of network care is going up across all plans. He strongly recommended that employees use in-network providers.

Mr. Chance next discussed vision and dental coverage, and noting that Delta Dental was awarded the dental preferred provider organization (DPPO) contract for 2022. Mr. Chance shared that they have had very good employee feedback about Delta Dental. Employees currently enrolled in DPPO coverage do not have to do anything, as their coverage will be changed to Delta Dental and they should not have a waiting period.

Mr. Chance then discussed flexible benefits and long-term disability (LTD) insurance enrollment. Sign up information for both flexible benefits and LTD insurance will be sent directly to eligible employees as UT branded emails. Flexible benefits participants must re-enroll each year as an IRS requirement. Annual enrollment for flexible benefits is the entire month of October and enrollment is through Optum Bank. LTD insurance enrollment through Lincoln Financial will take place from October 1 – 15. Mr. Chance encouraged employees to consider enrolling in LTD coverage, and shared that they have helped employees with health issues who needed to retire early and would have benefited from having coverage.

Renee Johnson asked to clarify what services are covered under the deductible. Ms. Robinson replied major medical costs including hospital services, x-rays, MRI scans, CT scans, and physical therapy. Ms. Jenkins offered positive feedback about Delta Dental and asked about healthcare costs for COVID treatment. Ms. Robinson replied that employees will pay their copay or portion for medical treatment including hospitalization but testing costs are covered.

For more information visit the [Partners for Health website](https://www.tn.gov/partnersforhealth/) or contact Payroll/Insurance at 974-5251 or [UTinsurance@tennessee.edu](mailto:UTinsurance@tennessee.edu).

* 1. Paid Parental Leave – Michelle Currier, HR Compensation

Michelle Currier, Analyst with HR Compensation, greeted the group and began her presentation by announcing that the new [Paid Parental Leave](https://universitytennessee.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=807&public=true) (PPL) benefit is available to employees who work at least 75% full-time equivalent (FTE) and have at least one year of continuous service time with the university. She announced the PPL benefit was effective July 1 this year for any births and adoptions occurring on or after July 1, 2021. The benefit provides six weeks of paid leave that needs to be used within 12 months of the child’s birth or adoption. PPL can be used consecutively and in one large chunk of time or used intermittently with the smallest increment as one day. Ms. Currier noted that if an employee chooses to use their leave intermittently to work out their schedule with their supervisor and department.

Ms. Currier next noted that married couples who both work for the university are each entitled to the six-week paid benefit and it is not split between them. They can choose to use the time however it benefits them including together at the same time or at separate times. The employees should work out their schedule with their supervisor and department.

Ms. Currier noted that PPL runs concurrently with Family Medical Leave (FML) and the Tennessee Parental Leave Act (TPLA). If an employee wishes to take longer than six weeks of leave, they can do so under FML and TPLA. The maximum they would be able to take under all of the different acts and benefits is up to four months of leave. Once an employee runs out of the PPL benefit, they use their accrued paid leave. If they run out of paid leave any remaining leave will be unpaid.

Employees can apply for PPL by completing a Paid Parental Leave Request Form and a Family Medical Leave request form. As both PPL and FML run concurrently Compensation asks that employees submit both forms at the same time. Both forms are [available on the HR website](https://hr.utk.edu/forms/) and completed forms and questions can be sent to [FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu](mailto:FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu).

Dr. Lucal asked Ms. Currier to confirm how parents who are both university employees would receive leave. Ms. Currier confirmed that they are not required to split the PPL leave and each receive the six-week paid benefit. FML is a benefit that is split, so they would each have six weeks of FML leave. The parents could have additional time if they want to take advantage of the TPTL, which will give each employee up to four months of leave. Dr. Lucal expressed her appreciation of the new paid leave benefit, and explained that there was some confusion when the policy was announced about when it would take effect. She reaffirmed that it took effect July 1 for births and adoptions that took place on or after July 1, 2021.

For more information contact HR Compensation at [FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu](mailto:FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu).

1. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS
   1. Veteran Employees and Service-Connected Disability Leave – Renee Johnson

**Q: “**The Tennessee State Legislature passed a bill this summer that provides 36 hours of yearly leave to state employees who are veterans with a service-connected disability of 30% or more to attend related appointments. How will this bill impact UTK’s veteran employees?”

**A:**  Dr. Lucal responded that this new legislation was discussed at the statewide HR meeting the previous day. She said System HR is figuring out how to put it in place and there would be more to come once the infrastructure is in place. She asked that the question be carried forward for the October meeting agenda with the hope that there will be more information by then. Dr. Easley noted that the [Veterans Success Center](https://veterans.utk.edu/) has reached out about the legislation, and they are also looking forward to learning more about this benefit.

* 1. Traffic Study Request around Mt. Castle Park (Lake/Terrace/Caledonia) – Olivia Kelley

**Q: “**Would it be possible to do a traffic study on one-way roads near Mt. Castle Park? At high traffic times all traffic is pushed to Lake Avenue, which backs up from Volunteer Blvd. to Melrose Place.”

**A:** Before the meeting Jessica Cantu reached out to Brian Browning, Acting Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration Operations. Mr. Browning replied that he can make an official request as the affected streets are owned by the City of Knoxville. He noted that on-street parking will likely be the issue of determining any possible changes to the streets.

* 1. S12 Lot Trimming Request – Olivia Kelley

**Q:** “Could trimming be done on the landscaping in the S12 parking lot? The shrubs are overgrown, which makes parking difficult.”

**A:** Employees are encouraged to call Facilities Services’ One Call line at 946-7777 to request general maintenance such as hedge trimming, changing out light bulbs, report heating and air issues and more. One Call is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

LiveSafe is a free mobile app that allows employees to report maintenance and non-emergency safety issues from their phone and include a photo, video, or audio file with their report. LiveSafe also features safety tools like reporting emergencies or suspicious activity, share virtual walks using SafeWalk, and provides other emergency resources including a campus map showing first aid and AED defibrillator kits.

More information:

• FS One Call: <https://fs.utk.edu/one-call/>

• LiveSafe App (free, iOS & Android): <https://prepare.utk.edu/app/>

During the meeting Ms. Kelley reported that she provided the One Call information to her constituent and they advised her the issue had been added to Facilities Services’ list to take care of.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
   1. ERAB Report – Cathy Jenkins

Ms. Jenkins reported on the recent quarterly [Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) meeting](https://hr.tennessee.edu/get-involved/committees-councils/employee-relations-advisory-board/) held on August 23. She sent a report to the group prior to the ERC meeting. She reported there were questions about masking and policy changes, and that there was confusion about alternative work requests. She reported there was a presentation on mileage reimbursement which included information from other Southern universities. She said the System is encouraging employees who have COVID and are able to work from home and are not seriously ill to consider working remotely while self-isolating and reported there were questions about reinstating COVID-related administrative leave. She said they also discussed the PerkSpot program, the McLean engagement survey, and the upcoming [Non-Exempt Employees Excelling Together (NEXT) Conference](https://hr.tennessee.edu/eod/conferences/next-conference/).

Ms. Jenkins closed her report by discussing the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) sessions, and the hope that the new system would help employees do things like enroll in the Sick Leave Bank, review their 401k and review time without having to use different systems.

Dr. Lucal noted that the mileage reimbursement presentation came from the Exempt Staff Council. She shared her appreciation that staff governing bodies can create a difference for all of us on campus.

* 1. HR Roadshow

UT Knoxville Human Resources is once again rolling out the orange carpet and popping up shops across campus in the month of September. HR has partnered with Insurance, Retirement, and Be Well to bring our teams to you!

This is a great opportunity to assess your financial wellness (401k, retirement, beneficiaries, etc.) and to ask questions about your health benefits before the open enrollment period which starts October 1, 2021.

“Pop” by one of these Roadshow locations from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm on:

• Thursday, September 16: Student Union in the 1st Floor Lobby

• Tuesday, September 21: Strong Hall in the Atrium

• Tuesday September 28: Hodges Library in the West Entrance Lobby

No appointment is necessary to meet with representatives for a check-up on your financial wellness and benefits including reviewing beneficiary information, retirement savings options, educational assistance, insurance options, and EAP services.

Sharable flyer: <https://hr.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2021/09/5th-Annual-Roadshow-2021-Flyer.docx>

* 1. Green Zone Training
  2. The Military Cultural Competency Training (Green Zone) aims to educate the campus community about student veterans on campus. The session includes who they are, how the GI Bill works, strengths, challenges, and support services.

Green Zone training will be held on September 8 from 9:30 – 11:30 am in the Student Union, Room 262A. For more information contact Tom Cruise ([tcruise@utk.edu](mailto:tcruise@utk.edu) or call 865-974-8716).

Registration link on the Events Calendar: <https://calendar.utk.edu/event/green_zone_training#.YTDcTY5KiUk>

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