

KNOXVILLE ADMINISTRATION ERC

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021 | 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Brenda Bartram, Katie Bookout, Jessica Cantu, Jon Chandler, Darrell Easley, Gennie Hope-Davian, Amy Gregory, Jennifer Horner, Boone Huffaker, Cathy Jenkins, Diane Kelly, Ryan Kemnetz, Mary Lucal, Renee Johnson, Olivia Kelley, Shelly Payne, Julie Roe, Chrisanne Romeo, Cindy Satterfield, Jen Scagnelli, Melinda Simmons, Teresa Volkodav-Crabtree, Chrissy Wills-Maples, Jill Zambito, Carrie Zitzman

ABSENT

Andrea Brayton, Melissa Cox, Charlene Ingle, Sonja Spell, Elizabeth Tampas Dixon, Leslie Valentine, Lisa Vandergriff

1. WELCOME

Julie Roe, Employee Relations Manager, welcomed everyone to the October meeting.

1. UPDATES
   1. Office of the Provost Update – Diane Kelly, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Dr. Diane Kelly greeted the group and began her update by discussing the recent announcement about the proposed [voluntary retirement incentive program](https://provost.utk.edu/2021/10/proposed-voluntary-retirement-incentives-for-faculty/). The program is limited to faculty who have at least 20 years of service with the University. Dr. Kelly noted the program will require approval by the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Kelly continued by updating the group on efforts to implement new Paid Parental Leave policy (PPL) as it applies to faculty and nine-month faculty in particular. She noted that as nine-month faculty don’t accrue annual leave or sick leave days their situation is a bit different, and she has been working with Michelle Currier, HR Compensation Analyst, among others in revising the [Faculty and Family Care Policy](https://provost.utk.edu/family-leave/) to accommodate PPL. She will be talking with business managers of the colleges later today, after which they will start publicizing the benefit.

Dr. Kelly next discussed Winter Mini-Term. The new term is a three-week mini session following Winter Break, meaning spring semester will start a little later and run a little longer than usual to accommodate its’ addition. She also noted the end of summer session will coincide with the start of fall 2022, but going forward they will adjust scheduling of the cycles to include more breaks. The addition of the new term will impact academic areas and students being served by represented areas. She said there is encouragement for winter term courses to be held online, so the new term may not impact in-person service areas as much.

Dr. Kelly next reported they are encouraging faculty to think about creating shorter courses. The University currently has the capability of seven-week courses, with fall and spring semesters typically running 15 weeks long. She said some units such as the Haslam College of Business currently offer these shorter-term classes, and more may become available.

Dr. Kelly closed by announcing the Center for Global Engagement is hosting a [China Town Hall event](https://calendar.utk.edu/event/2021_china_town_hall-_national_webinar_with_fareed_zakaria_and_local_panel_discussion#.YXb1ERrMKUn) on October 19. The event features experts who will speak on U.S. China relations and supporting colleagues from China. She encouraged the group to consider attending.

Cathy Jenkins asked if staff might be offered a voluntary retirement program. Dr. Mary Lucal responded there currently isn’t a partner program being considered for staff and explained the faculty program is meant to address a need to reallocate resources on the academic side due to growth and shifts in student interests. Dr. Kelly agreed, noting that as the University moves into the new [Budget Allocation Model (BAM)](https://budget.utk.edu/budget-allocation-model/) the colleges want to be able to consider how to allocate resources including faculty lines to put programs in place to help students succeed in the state and national workforce.

* 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 announcing that [Be Well](https://bewell.utk.edu/) recently developed a partnership with the Nutrition department to deliver [Nutrition Lunch and Learn sessions](https://bewell.utk.edu/nutrition-lunch-learns/). Danielle Bohn, Health & Wellness Coordinator, is working directly with Dr. Sarah Colby, a professor who teaches nutrition counseling to upper-level undergraduate students. Under the new partnership the students will facilitate a series of lunch and learn sessions for employees. Dr. Zambito shared her enthusiasm for the partnership, noting that Dr. Colby will be overseeing the student presentations as part of their course curriculum. The lunch and learns will be held on Tuesdays in November and topics will include eating healthy with a busy schedule, healthy and balanced meals, diets that work, and holiday recipes. More information can be found by signing up for the Be Well newsletter at <https://bewell.utk.edu/subscribe/>.

Dr. Zambito next shared that Ms. Bohn, HR, and Be Well Wellness Champions across campus are interested in starting an initiative encouraging taking healthy breaks at work. She said more information will be available soon. Dr. Lucal expressed her appreciation of Ms. Bohn’s efforts and encouraged the group to [sign up for the Be Well newsletter](https://bewell.utk.edu/subscribe/), which includes a new financial wellness component.

Dr. Zambito closed by announcing [walk-in flu shots are now available at the Student Health Center Pharmacy](https://studenthealth.utk.edu/influenza-vaccine/). The Pharmacy is located on the first floor in the Student Health Center and is open Monday through Friday from 9am to 4pm. [Flu vaccine clinics will also be held across campus](https://calendar.utk.edu/search/events?search=fluvaccine). She encouraged the group to get their flu shot.

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

Dr. Darrell Easley greeted the group and began his update by discussing several surveys which have either already come out or will be coming soon. He announced that the Division of Diversity & Engagement is slated to send out a climate survey later this month. He encouraged the group to participate and to share their honest feedback in responding to the survey.

Dr. Easley next announced that an email about [annual compliance training](https://hr.utk.edu/annual-compliance-training/) will be sent this week. He reminded the group that the annual training can be taken all at once or in smaller sections but should be completed by December 2021.

Dr. Easley then discussed the recent federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate. He noted that a task force is reviewing President Biden’s Executive Order to determine what the potential impact might be. Since the University is a federal contractor which accepts federal funding we will be participating, but it has yet to be determined how the mandate will affect employees across the System.

Dr. Easley closed by noting that employees have [free access to the Wall Street Journal](https://haslam.utk.edu/news/haslam-teams-wall-street-journal-offer-ut-free-access-news-and-more), including a free e-book every other month through WSJ+. He shared his experience in reading a recent book pick about taking advantage of breaks between meetings and tasks for strategic wellness pauses.

1. NEW BUSINESS
   1. Staff Diversity Fellow and Staff Performance Daily: DEI Workshop

Ms. Roe announced that José Lee-Perez, Assistant Director in First Year Studies, was selected as the first Staff Diversity Fellow. He will partner with HR and the Office of Equity and Diversity to work on a diversity, equity, and inclusion workshop with a staff performance review focus.

Ms. Roe shared that HR and campus partners are working on a Staff Performance Review Series with the purpose of providing knowledge, resources, and support for the staff performance review experience. The series will cover both technical and practical guidance. Once fully rolled out the series can be taken in its’ entirety or individually to prepare for the staff performance review process. The series will launch in December with the first session geared towards the employee perspective of the process and getting ready for your own performance review.

The session, themed “Take Charge of Your Performance” will include self-reflection tools, topics on emotional intelligence, collaborative goal setting and how to prepare for the performance conversation. She noted that there will be a separate session for leadership around thinking about performance reviews, how to empower staff, how to motivate and set collaborative goals. The sessions will be initially be offered virtually with the hope for an in-person component to be introduced later. Ms. Roe said Mr. Lee-Perez is working on the third session on the new inclusion, diversity & engagement (IDE) category, which will allow everyone in the performance review process to consider IDE in our everyday work, goal setting, and how to make the most impact in the performance review process. Future session topics include mid-year reviews and probationary periods.

Ms. Roe noted that new tutorials for the Online Performance Review (OPR) platform will also launch in January 2022.

1. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS
   1. Follow-Up: 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:**  Ms. Roe responded that the System continues to review the legislation’s impact as it impacts all campuses and institutes. HR has reached out for more information about a comprehensive University-wide response and will share information back with the group once available. Dr. Lucal affirmed the legislation will require the System’s response. She reported that at the moment they are concentrating on reviewing the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, so an update may take some time.

* 1. Follow-Up: S23 Lot Entrance – Shelly Payne

**Original Q:** (from February 2020) “As part of the Pedestrian Mall Extension Project, one of the entrances for S23 will be closed. Large delivery trucks need to access the loading dock at Art & Architecture, and the remaining entrance has a curve that could create a problem for deliveries. What is being done to address this?”

**Original A:** “Ms. Roe reported that she received an update from Mark Hairr today. Mr. Hairr said they are looking at different funding options to see what is feasible. He also said although there are no specific answers yet, they are making progress by looking at funding options and getting price quotes.”

**Follow-up Q:** “Are there any updates to the S23 lot entrance? There are three loading docks in this lot and it can be challenging for large trucks.”

**Follow-up A:** Ms. Roe reached out to Mark Hairr. Mr. Hairr responded:

“Last year, we did make a modification near the entrance to this lot to eliminate one section of the jog that existed. There still exists an additional section right at the entrance which presents a bit of a challenge especially for larger vehicles but the costs of modifying this section requires significant funding as a series of utilities would have to be relocated for the project. Since there is no funding currently available for this project due to significant funding shortfalls in our department both last fiscal and this current fiscal year, we do not foresee this project moving forward until at least FY23 and that is certainly not a given.”

* 1. Additions (Ayres) & Shade for Tables (Buehler) – Chrisanne Romeo

**Q:** “Could we get more metal benches for the roundabout at Ayres Hall? Could we also request shade for the tables in the Buehler 300 courtyard? We do not have enough shaded spaces since students have returned.”

**A:** The requests were sent to Terry Ledford, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services. He said Facilities Services would look into the requests.

Teresa Volkodav-Crabtree noted additional trash cans may also be needed closer to seating and tables.

* 1. Shade for Seating in Mossman Courtyard – Chrissy Wills-Maples

**Q:** “Can we have shade umbrellas for the seating in the Mossman courtyard?”

**A:** The request was sent to Terry Ledford, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services. He said Facilities Services would look into the request.

* 1. Melrose Hall/Pedestrian Walkway – Amy Gregory

**Q:** “The Pedestrian Walk at Melrose Hall is overgrown with no work being done on it. I reported this safety issue to Facilities Services two years ago but no action has been taken.”

**A:** Before the meeting Jessica Cantu contacted Terry Ledford, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services. He said Facilities Services would look into the area of concern behind Melrose Hall.

Ms. Gregory reported she had emailed and made a number of calls about the issue to Facilities Services and One Call since first reporting it two years ago but has not received a return call or follow-up email.

* 1. S12 Parking Lot & Students Parking in Fire Lane – Olivia Kelley

**Q:** “I park in Lot 12 behind Hodges Library. With school back in session students are using the fire zone on Melrose Ave. as a loading zone to wait for friends coming out of Hess Hall or the Library. At times I have to ask students to move their cars because they are partially blocking my exit from the parking lot. Is Melrose Ave. a UT-owned road? Can something be done to prevent drivers from blocking the road?”

**A:** Before the meeting Julie Roe reached out to Brian Browning, Acting Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, and Mark Hairr, Director of Parking Services. Mr. Browning confirmed that Melrose Ave. is owned by the University. Mr. Hairr responded that Parking Services will focus enhanced enforcement in this area as there are is already a yellow curb and several no-parking signs posted along the entire stretch of this segment of street.

* 1. Parking Issues & Signage in SAC Lot Near TRECS – Ami McCarter

**Q:** “Since the upper (SC) lot near TRECS was opened to non-commuters it has been very difficult to find a staff spot in either S20 or the SC lot. Non-commuters have started parking in the lower lot as well, which means there is less space for people parking to visit TRECS. This is causing commuter students and other staff with no orange dot to park in S20 to use the gym. Is it possible to get more parking enforcement to deter students from parking where they aren’t supposed to?

**A:** Before the meeting Jessica Cantu reached out to Mr. Hairr. Mr. Hairr responded that Parking Services would increase regular enforcement in the two lots to assist in addressing the issue. He noted they had seen an improvement in illegal parking in the Staff 20 lot spaces recently but they would ensure the area is closely monitored and enforced going forward.

**Q:** “Is it possible to request signage in the SAC lot that shows the direction of traffic? Several of our staff members have nearly been hit by people running the stop sign coming out of the lot.”

**A:** Mr. Hairr responded that they would review the traffic flow and signage in this lot to determine if improvements can be made. Mr. Hairr later updated Ms. Cantu on the results of the review:

“We have installed additional pavement markings and refreshed arrows to assist with the traffic flow near the front entrance and drive lane between the RecSports Lot and the Old Sports Bubble Lot. Because this lot is in high use (seven) days a week, we will reassess the entire lot when we get the opportunity when the lot has little to no use during a break to consider other items that may help address the issues raised.”

* 1. Flu Shot Clinics – Ryan Kemnetz

**Q:** “Will there be flu shot clinics on campus this year?”

**A:** Information about flu shot availability was shared by Dr. Zambito during her update.

Mr. Kemnetz asked a clarifying question if larger campus clinics would be held similar to the COVID-19 vaccine clinics held in the Student Union. Dr. Zambito announced RecSports in conjunction with the Center for Health, Education, and Wellness and the Student Health Center are hoping to host a clinic in TRECS later in October.

For a list of current campus flu vaccine events, visit <https://calendar.utk.edu/search/events?search=flu+vaccine>.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
   1. Annual Enrollment

Annual enrollment is underway and runs through next Friday, October 15. As a reminder: if you want to keep your current coverage options for 2022 you do not need to do anything**.** If you want to add, remove, or make changes to your coverage you can access Edison Employee Self Service via the link in the menu bar of IRIS Web.

Employees can also use [ALEX](https://www.myalex.com/ut/2022#intro), a new tool to help employees consider benefit options. Jon Chandler shared positive feedback about using ALEX.

Signup information for flexible benefits and long-term disability insurance will be sent directly to eligible employees. LTD enrollment from Lincoln Financial group will be from October 1-15 and flexible benefits enrollment through Optum Bank runs the entire month of November.

More information including upcoming benefit & carrier webinars can be found on Partners for Health’s annual enrollment website: <https://www.tn.gov/partnersforhealth/ae/about-enrollment.html>.

If you have questions visit Partners for Health (<https://www.tn.gov/partnersforhealth/>), or contact Payroll/Insurance at 974-5251 or [UTinsurance@tennessee.edu](mailto:UTinsurance@tennessee.edu).

* 1. Campus Chest

Campus Chest, the annual employee pledge program, has kicked off. Employees can select different external nonprofit agencies to contribute to.

Employees can participate by visiting <https://campuschest.utk.edu/>. Donations can be made via cash, check, payroll deductions, and credit card. For questions or assistance call 974-3061 or email [campuschest@utk.edu](mailto:campuschest@utk.edu).

* 1. Endeavor Summit

The Knoxville Chamber of Commerce will host the Endeavor Summit on Thursday, October 21. The summit is a virtual event for young professionals interested in engaging our community and taking ownership of their personal growth. Sessions include diversity, equity, and inclusion, workplace mental health, and working and living in Knoxville. Tyvi Small, Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Engagement, will make opening remarks.

For more information and tickets visit: <https://www.endeavorsummit.com/>

* 1. Heart to Heart Live Stream Concert

Ms. Roe shared information about the Heart-to-Heart Live Stream Concert slated for later in the afternoon today.

For more information visit: <https://calendar.utk.edu/event/heart_to_heart_-_live_concert_gao_hong_and_issam_rafea_duo#.YV88idrMKUk>

* 1. Meeting Modality

Ms. Roe closed the meeting by asking the group to consider meeting modalities. She noted the group would continue to meet virtually for the fall semester, and announced they would be polled later this fall to gauge thoughts and interest in continuing to meet virtually in the spring or hold hybrid meetings.

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