

KNOXVILLE ADMINISTRATION ERC

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021 | 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Brenda Bartram, Annette Beets, Katie Bookout, Jessica Cantu, Jon Chandler, Tom Cruise (Guest Speaker), Darrell Easley, Amy Gregory, Jeffrey Hines, Gennie Hope-Davian, Jennifer Horner, Cathy Jenkins, Renee Johnson, Diane Kelly, Mary Lucal, Ami McCarter, Shelly Payne, Chrisanne Romeo, Jen Scagnelli, Melinda Simmons, Elizabeth Tampas Dixon, Renee Thomas, Sandy Thomas, Leslie Valentine, Lisa Vandergriff, Chrissy Wills-Maples, Pam Vatter, Jill Zambito, Lauren Ziegler, Carrie Zitzman

ABSENT

Andrea Brayton, Melissa Cox, Boone Huffaker, Charlene Ingle, Olivia Kelley, Ryan Kemnetz, Julie Roe, Cindy Satterfield, Sonja Spell, Teresa Volkodav-Crabtree

1. WELCOME

Dr. Darrell Easley, Director of Employee Relations & Learning & Organizational Development, welcomed everyone to the 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 noting the recent [Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (VRIP) for faculty](https://provost.utk.edu/2021/10/proposed-voluntary-retirement-incentives-for-faculty/). She announced that Chancellor Plowman also charged the Provost’s Office to do an [academic structure review](https://chancellor.utk.edu/2021/05/14/examining-our-academic-structures/). A task force looked at colleges to better understand structures including how disciplines are grouped together and the number of departments they have. She said the task force [did a very thorough assessment and made proposals](https://provost.utk.edu/academicstructure_updates/) that will help in thinking about how best to educate students and prepare them for future jobs as well as how to group people who work on similar topics together across disciplines. The task force will hold feedback sessions.

Dr. Kelly closed by discussing the new winter mini term. She asked the group to share their feedback on how the new session both positively and negatively impacts their work.

* 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 reminding the group about Be Well’s upcoming [Nutrition lunch and learn sessions](https://bewell.utk.edu/nutrition-lunch-learns/). The sessions are a partnership between Danielle Bohn, Be Well’s Wellness Coordinator, and Dr. Sarah Colby, who teaches Nutrition Counseling’s top level undergraduate students. Dr. Colby’s students will facilitate the sessions, which include developing healthy relationships with eating and recipes for healthier holiday foods.

Dr. Zambito next announced that she and Dr. Mary Lucal are partnering with Be Well to launch the [Be Well Break program](https://bewell.utk.edu/be-well-breaks/), which is intended to encourage health and wellness through incorporating microbreaks during the workday. The program will encourage employees to take healthy breaks, which may include walks, talking with colleagues, or chair yoga.

Dr. Zambito closed by sharing a reminder that the Student Health Center continues to offer [COVID and flu vaccinations](https://studenthealth.utk.edu/covid-19-vaccine-clinics/).

Cathy Jenkins asked about guidance in mixing COVID vaccine boosters. Dr. Zambito responded that the Student Health Center (SHC) offers vaccine guidance on their website and the Pfizer vaccine is not available through the Student Health Center. Dr. Lucal noted that the SHC just added more appointments for regular vaccinations and boosters.

* 1. Human Resources Update – Mary Lucal, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

Dr. Lucal greeted the group and began by updating the group on the search for the new Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services. She said she is pleased with the slate of candidates from their search firm partner. Interviews for first round candidates are scheduled for next week and finalists are slated to be on campus in early December.

Dr. Lucal next discussed the [ongoing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project](https://dash-erp.tennessee.edu/). She reported that Oracle and Workday recently delivered financial and human resource capital demonstrations. Once a vendor is selected implementation is expected to take about two years. She asked those in the group who use IRIS to take part in implementation meetings if invited.

Dr. Lucal then turned her attention to the Board of Trustees’ recent decision to approve the new minimum hiring rate of $15.00 per hour. She shared her appreciation for the Chancellor’s decision to commit resources to bring all employees up to the new rate and address compression around the increase. Discussions are currently taking place about implications for auxiliary units and centrally funded and non-centrally funded positions. She explained the change will take effect with the first pay period in January 2022 and shared her hope that the new rate will help the university stay relevant and competitive considering new facilities including Amazon and Smith & Wesson will open soon in the Knoxville area. Dr. Kelly announced that the Board also approved the creation of the Africana Studies department.

Dr. Lucal closed by reminding the group about President Boyd’s recent message about vaccine time frames. She noted he strongly recommends that employees upload their vaccination or exemption information as soon as possible to IRIS Web’s Employee Self Service. HR is working to assist people with uploads and review submissions. Employees with vaccination questions can call 865-974-9976 or email hr@utk.edu. For more information, including vaccination time frames and IRIS Web verification upload instructions, visit: <https://tennessee.edu/coronavirus/vaccines/>.

Jennifer Horner asked for clarification about the federal mandate. Dr. Kelly noted that the original vaccine dates were recently extended into January. She explained that although there is no current vaccination requirement figuring out how it might impact the campus community is incredibly complicated. Lauren Ziegler asked to clarify if vaccination is currently required after Provost Zomchick recently announced it was not. Dr. Lucal confirmed the President’s message strongly recommends being vaccinated or uploading an exemption request. Dr. Kelly confirmed the Provost’s messaging and shared that more guidance will be issued soon but, as of right now, there is not a campus wide requirement. Dr. Lucal noted it is a very fluid situation.

Elizabeth Tampas asked if employees who were vaccinated on campus can have their records automatically uploaded to IRIS Web. Dr. Lucal responded that, as of today, employees who were vaccinated on campus will need to upload their vaccination information.

Ms. Tampas asked for an update on the mask mandate. Dr. Lucal responded it is actively being monitored. Per federal guidance it depends on community spread but, as of today, there is no change.

Leslie Valentine asked how employees who have lost their vaccination cards can get their information. Dr. Lucal suggested they contact their personal physician or the local Department of Health if vaccinated in Tennessee. She also noted that if those employees have a picture of their card on their phone, that image may be uploaded to IRIS Web. Cathy Jenkins asked if general vaccination statistics will be made available. Dr. Lucal responded she would locate information about vaccines provided by the SHC to share with the group.

Ms. Ziegler asked that staff be given ample lead time for ERP meeting announcements. Dr. Lucal agreed and said they will voice this to our System partners.

Chrisanne Romeo asked to clarify if a VRIP is planned for staff. Dr. Lucal confirmed nothing is being planned as a similar need does not exist on the staff side. VRIP was intended to allow academic units to free up resources to be flexible in responding to the strategic plan. Dr. Kelly responded that it will be helpful by allowing units to cultivate teaching and research expertise in response to changing student needs and interests.

1. GUEST SPEAKER
	1. Veterans Success Center – Tom Cruise, VSC Coordinator

Tom Cruise, VSC Coordinator, greeted the group and began by reintroducing the [Veterans Success Center](https://veterans.utk.edu/) (formerly Veterans Resource Center) to the group. The VSC is primarily focused on support and care of student veterans and military connected students including active duty, guard, reserve, and military dependents. They also focus on student services programming, community outreach, fundraising, and GI Bill certification. Mr. Cruise shared that the university recently received a gold standard [Military Friendly School designation](https://www.militaryfriendly.com/the-university-of-tennessee-knoxville/), the highest ranking for the designation, and was also designated a Military Friendly #1 Spouse School. The VSC also has new scholarship donors enabling student grants and scholarships.

Mr. Cruise said the VSC held a new Vet Camp event at the beginning of fall semester. Vet Camp was a student veterans’ specific orientation allowing time for VSC staff to interact with students before they set foot in classrooms. The Camp allowed time to meet one-on-one with new student veterans to talk about the GI Bill and offer opportunities to meet campus partners. He said it was a huge success and they are planning to host a Vet Camp every semester going forward. Mr. Cruise extended an invitation to campus partners who are interested in speaking with attendees or attending the Camp to meet with student veterans to connect with him.

Mr. Cruise then announced that the VSC recently [received a $500,000 endowment from the Pilot Company](https://news.utk.edu/2021/10/07/ut-and-pilot-company-partner-on-student-veterans-success/). They dedicated the Center’s lounge as the Pilot Company Veteran Student Lounge and welcomed representatives from Pilot including Mr. and Mrs. James Haslam. The Pilot Company Veterans Success Endowment will allow the them to create resources including support services and scholarships to help further academic support and success of student veterans. He noted that he started a [new VSC podcast called “Dog Tag Dialogue”](https://soundcloud.com/user-83103040) and he was able to speak with Mr. Haslam about his time in the military and playing football at UT during a recent episode.

Mr. Cruise announced an [upcoming Green Zone training](https://calendar.utk.edu/event/green_zone_training_5816#.YYAvSJ7MKUk). The trainings cover student veteran related topics including the GI Bill, strengths and challenges for students, and a student veteran panel. The training will be held in the Student Union just before Veterans Day and employees will receive training credit through K@TE.

Mr. Cruise then discussed plans for [celebrating Veterans Day on campus](https://news.utk.edu/2021/11/05/campus-community-invited-to-celebrate-veterans-day/). Events include Coffee with a Cop with UTPD veteran officers, a first-generation student swag event, and an ROTC ceremony dedicating a new [Armed Forces Memorial on Pedestrian Walkway](https://news.utk.edu/2021/11/11/armed-forces-memorial-to-honor-fallen-students-faculty-and-staff/). The Veterans Appreciation Dinner will take place on Veterans Day.

Mr. Cruise closed by inviting the group to stop by and visit the Center, located on the ground floor of Hodges Library. Ms. Jenkins asked if VSC still hosts [HABIT dogs](https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/outreach/habit/) and to confirm open hours. Mr. Cruise responded the Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and they had a HABIT dog in today. A discussion about HABIT took place. Mr. Cruise said HABIT comes at least once a week if not more often to spend time with students.

1. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS
	1. Vaccine Mandate – Ami McCarter

Q: “I have some folks with questions about the email on the vaccine mandate. Will there be an impromptu meeting scheduled before the vaccine dates listed in the email? The email is a little vague on who actually has to get vaccinated and no consequences are listed to help our constituents make an informed decision.”

A: Dr. Lucal addressed vaccinations in her update.

* 1. Stairs for SC Parking Lot – Ami McCarter

Q: “TRECS constituents have asked if stairs could be installed to connect the SC parking lot (where the Bubble used to be) and the path to the Band Pavilion. The only current exit path for students who park in the lot is at the entrance due to the fencing.”

A: Before the meeting Jessica Cantu reached out to Terry Ledford, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services. Mr. Ledford responded the stairs could be put on a list for future improvements. He suggested that the stairs be submitted as a Volunteer First Impressions project.

[Volunteer First Impressions](https://fs.utk.edu/comminfo/commpr/volunteer-first-impressions/volunteer-first-impressions-contest/) is a contest for improving campus public spaces, and winning projects are awarded up to $10,000.00 for completion. Entries are judged on their overall impact to students, faculty, and staff and visitor first impressions.

Ms. Cantu also reached out to Sam Ledford, Communications Coordinator for Facilities Services, for more information about when the next round of the contest will open as it is currently closed. Ms. Ledford will reach out and may join the group closer to time to give a short presentation about the contest and how participating can benefit constituents across campus.

* 1. Additional Trash Cans for Hill – Teresa Volkodav-Crabtree

Q: “Can additional trash cans be added near seating on the Hill?”

A: Before the meeting Jessica Cantu reached out to Mr. Ledford, who referred the question to Jason Cottrell, Director of Landscape Services & Facilities Operations.

Mr. Cottrell responded that there are approximately 30 trash cans on Ayres Hill, with most located at table congregation areas and along the heaviest pedestrian traffic routes. He asked that the representative contact him directly to address specific areas of concern.

* 1. Traffic Concern for Skybox Restocks – Jen Scagnelli

Q: “Is a plan being established for those of us that have skyboxes and stock on Fridays? Since they remodeled Estabrook, the drive in front of the new Estabrook building is now a student walkway, tables/umbrellas, and is blocked for driving. This makes it very difficult after stocking to turn around and get out from under the stadium. People are driving in as we are driving out and it is one-way. It is usually completely jammed and people are backing up that hill to let folks out as they can’t get in and park until others are gone. Just not enough room.”

A: Before the meeting Jessica Cantu reached out to Mark Hairr, Director of Parking Services. Mr. Hairr deferred to Tennessee Athletic Hospitality as they handle skybox stocking and operations. Candra Howell, Director of Tennessee Athletic Hospitality, responded that information for skybox stocking is included in communications for the East Tower:

“EAST TOWER: PLEASE NOTE: Estabrook Rd. (used to exit Gate 26) is now closed, and vehicles are unable to exit through the back of the stadium. If you drive down Tee Martin Dr. to the entrance of Gate 26, you must be able to turn around to exit. Please remain to the right and plan accordingly when coming to stock.”

Ms. Howell noted that if guests are uncomfortable with this process, they are welcome to parking Lot 5 under the Gate 10 ramp for stocking and can cart their items to Gate 26.

* 1. Parking Payments – Ami McCarter

Q: “Why do employees have to pay to park?”

A: Staff must pay for parking in that Parking Services is an auxiliary service. The University has debt for parking lots and garages, and those facilities require upkeep.

The current tiered parking fee structure based on salary level came from the Employee Relations Advisory Organization (ERAO).

Dr. Lucal explained an auxiliary service pays for itself entirely including salaries and benefits. Parking Services must pay debt service on all of the parking facilities around campus.

Ms. Jenkins asked if discounted parking is available for veterans. Jessica Cantu responded that [Purple Heart Parking](https://veterans.utk.edu/purple-heart-parking/) is available for student, faculty, and staff veterans who have been awarded a Purple Heart.

* 1. Follow-up: Melrose Hall/Pedestrian Walkway – Amy Gregory

Original 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.”

Original 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 gave an update during the meeting that the overgrown area between Melrose Hall and the Pedestrian Walkway has been cleaned up.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	1. Campus Vaccine Clinics

Vaccine shots are now available for students, faculty, and staff at the Student Health Center. Flu shots are available at the SHC Pharmacy with no appointment is needed. Walk-ins are welcome Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit <https://studenthealth.utk.edu/influenza-vaccine/> for more information.

Flu shots are also available at several campus events. Visit <https://calendar.utk.edu/search/events?search=fluvaccine> to view locations and dates and register for an event near you.

COVID vaccinations and booster doses are also available on campus. Vaccinations and boosters are by appointment at the Student Health Center and include the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

* More information including booster eligibility guidelines: <https://studenthealth.utk.edu/covid-19-vaccine-clinics/>
* Appointment signups: <https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/vaccine/>.
	1. Campus Chest

Our annual Campus Chest campaign is wrapping up! Campus Chest is an employee giving program that promotes the support of health and social service non-profit agencies to help our community, provide assistance to those in need, and show what the Volunteer spirit really means.

The campaign runs through this Friday, November 5. Employees can participate by visiting the pledge page: <https://campuschest.utk.edu/>. For questions or assistance call 974-3061 or email campuschest@utk.edu.

* 1. UTK Veterans Holiday Food Drive

UTK HR, Second Harvest, and the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association are teaming up to help provide food assistance to struggling veterans and their families throughout East Tennessee during the upcoming holiday season. HR will be collecting canned food items (meals-in-a-can) and other non-perishable food items (no glass containers, please) through Monday, November 15. Please bring donations to the UTK HR Office in 105 Student Services Building, Veterans Success Center in Hodges Library, or Army or Air Force ROTC offices in Hoskins Library.

If you know of a veteran, member of the Guard or Reserves, an active-duty service member, or a family member in need of food assistance, please contact HR Veterans Representative Casey Bain at cbain4@utk.edu.

Sharable flyer: <https://hr.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2021/10/UTK-Veteran-Mobile-Food-Pantry-Holiday-Food-Drive.pdf>

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