

KNOXVILLE OPERATIONS ERC

MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, September 6, 2022 | 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Jason Baggett, Mike Brady, Brian Browning, Shannon Bruce, Amy Bruner, Dave Bryant, Jessica Cantu, Jon, Chandler, Darrell Easley, Chris Gilert, Doug Grant, Holly Harmon, Kasey Kahm, Riley Kneale, Mary Lucal, Jim McCarter, Chip Pennoyer, Patrick Richter, Ed Roach, Julie Roe, Jeni Sharp, Shane Sloan, Jeremy Smith, Samantha Smith, Laura Solomon (guest speaker), Justin Stafford, Natalie Summers, Randall Thornhill, Jake Turner, Neal Vercler, William Wainright, Michele Wilson

ABSENT

Stevin Amonett, Paul Finley, Dedra Giles, Alexanderia Gonzales, Judy Jones, Debbie Lane, Jimmy Large, Regina Olum, John Platt, Rhett Priode, Richard Shackelford, Cody Smith, Hannah Wallace

1. WELCOME

Jon Chandler, Senior Employee Relations Consultant, welcomed everyone to the September meeting, which is the first meeting of the academic year.

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

Brian Browning greeted the group and reflected on the beginning of a new semester and new students arriving on campus. Total enrollment for both undergraduate and graduate students is around 33,500, which represents a significant increase in the student population. There is continuing growth in the staff and faculty ranks as well.

* 1. Facilities Services Update – Mike Brady, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services

Mike Brady greeted the group and reflected on the recent football win. He gave updates on the campus master plan, which should be updated in the spring. It will help the university plan for the next ten years.

Mr. Brady continued by mentioning that facilities services is looking to hire for multiple roles and would appreciate references. They are actively trying to recruit military personnel who are transitioning out of the military and might be interested in working in higher education. They are also looking for people to fill trades rolls. He asked for the group’s help in recruiting and making the University a top place to work in Tennessee.

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

Dr. Mary Lucal greeted the group and reflected that the theme of the meeting is growth. She shared that there has been a record number of hires over the past year, the most that she has seen in her time at the University. She discussed the turnover trends on both campus and nationwide for employers. Recruitment and departments have been doing a great job of pulling in talent to the campus. She mentioned the importance of being able to onboard our new employees and provide them with career development. She stressed the importance of wanting to make sure that employees have a great work life balance and growth opportunities. Learning and Organizational Development (LOD) will be growing to increase these offerings. This includes podcasts and CliftonStrengths trainings for academic and administrative areas. They are being mindful of feedback voicing that staff would like more opportunities for professional development and working to develop more programming.

Dr. Lucal then announced that a McLean Survey will be coming out in the next couple of weeks. She emphasized that people should take the short survey to share feedback with campus leadership. The subject line will say “University of Tennessee Survey” and will take about 15 minutes to fill out. This survey is being conducted by a third party and is non-identifiable. The data will not be returned to the supervisor unless they have multiple direct reports. The Deans, Vice Chancellors, and the Chancellor are very interested in hearing what our staff have to say.

Lastly, Mr. Chandler introduced Sam Smith, who is the new Employee Relations Specialist. Ms. Smith will be shadowing the ERC meetings for the next couple of meetings and then will begin to take over sending out the ERC agenda, minutes, and any support for the group.

1. GUEST SPEAKERS
	1. ServeUTK – Laura Solomon, Assistant Director, Jones Center for Leadership and Service

Laura Solomon greeted the group and began her presentation of the [new ServeUTK platform](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fleadserve.utk.edu%2Fserveutk%2F&data=05%7C01%7CSamSmith5%40utk.edu%7C4225c66703134b5d99b008da902bc689%7C515813d9717d45dd9eca9aa19c09d6f9%7C0%7C0%7C637980814935417397%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=OrEEuDDkKeOKp7PsxrL0BmP1rEmKUddowiz013ejeMo%3D&reserved=0). She explained that the Jones Center for Leadership and Service does a variety of leadership, programming, and service programing for students and focuses on service and volunteering for faculty and staff. The new ServeUTK platform allows people to find posted volunteer needs from many different nonprofit organizations. The website to find the platform is [https://leadserve.utk.edu/serveutk/](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fleadserve.utk.edu%2Fserveutk%2F&data=05%7C01%7CSamSmith5%40utk.edu%7C4225c66703134b5d99b008da902bc689%7C515813d9717d45dd9eca9aa19c09d6f9%7C0%7C0%7C637980814935417397%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=OrEEuDDkKeOKp7PsxrL0BmP1rEmKUddowiz013ejeMo%3D&reserved=0) and is powered by GivePulse which combines two old systems, Track Your Hours and Sign Up to Serve. It is used by community partners, in connection with campus, to serve as a place for them to meet the needs of their programs and services. The new platform launched this past July 2022, so nonprofits are still being added into the system.

Ms. Solomon then began a demo of the platform. You will use SSO to login into the platform and on the homepage, you will see a calendar of volunteer requests from various nonprofits for events or programs that they have scheduled. You can click on a volunteer request and be routed to a page that has information on the event, contact information for the nonprofit, and where you can sign up for shifts. There is also a section called “Open Opportunities” that list nonprofits that have said that they do not have specific days or times that they need volunteers for, but their programs or services have a general need for volunteers. These opportunities are a way to find more long-term opportunities with nonprofit organizations.

At the top of the page there is a tab for “key partners” where you can search nonprofits that have accounts in the system and see any upcoming events or view contact information for them. There is another tab called “Subgroups” that allows you to create a group for your staff or department and plan service opportunities for them. You can also add “impacts” into the system by clicking on your profile. You can add several different impacts, such as monetary donations, goods donations, hours, etc. To prevent abuse of the system (mainly by students), the Jones Center will verify impacts that are manually entered into the system to make sure the nonprofit that was listed is legitimate.

You can also search for volunteer opportunities in anywhere the platform is used, such as different cities. The use of this platform helps the Jones Center and nonprofits to track data and see how the University is serving the community. Ms. Solomon mentioned the [new volunteer leave policy](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpolicy.tennessee.edu%2Fpolicy%2Fhr0446-volunteer-activities%2F&data=05%7C01%7CSamSmith5%40utk.edu%7C4225c66703134b5d99b008da902bc689%7C515813d9717d45dd9eca9aa19c09d6f9%7C0%7C0%7C637980814935417397%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=1yfD5iCGWm3ppTPuPfyY16U3kybq5s5zs11B5qaMCsc%3D&reserved=0) and that a goal of the department is to remind faculty and staff that volunteer leave is available to complete these opportunities.

Riley Kneale asked if the software and tracking of these impacts is something HR related and if employees will be paid for the day that they are trying to do volunteer service. Mr. Chandler expand on the volunteer leave policy. He explained that there is a two-step process for getting paid. You would submit that time volunteering through IRIS self-service like you would submit a sick day, annual day, or personal day. ServeUTK is just for finding volunteer opportunities and tracking impacts where people are donating their time. Dr. Lucal then explained that HR will be auditing the hours logged in the ServeUTK system to make sure they match what is in IRIS. She reiterated that the University is interested in seeing how they are making an impact in the community through the new volunteer leave policy and how it is being utilized. She also mentioned that the volunteer time expires at the end of the year and does not roll over into the next year.

Ms. Solomon ended her presentation by mentioning that there are several opportunities looking for larger groups of volunteers as well and would be great for a staff group who is looking to do something together. The Jones Center office is also available to help find community partners and other opportunities that you are passionate about.

Patrick Richter asked if a service opportunity from your personal life is eligible for the volunteer leave policy. Ms. Solomon said that you can still input the service into the system so that the impact can still be seen. Dr. Lucal added that University asks that you stick with organizations that are consistent with our nondiscrimination policy.

Michele Wilson then asked about how to properly input an organization into the system if you cannot find it already listed. Ms. Solomon answered that you should use the proper name for the nonprofit when entering in the information, not any sub-names or event names.

Kasey Kahm asked if volunteer hours could be used on a Saturday. Dr. Lucal clarified that the policy is intended to be used only during your normal scheduled working hours. If you are not regularly scheduled to work on Saturday, then the hours will not be able to be used then. The University still wants the employee to add the impact into the ServeUTK system to see the contribution to the community that they made, but it would not count toward overtime pay.

1. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS
	1. There were no constituent questions submitted before the meeting.
	2. Ed Roach acknowledged the great cleaning job that was done after the home opener football game. He said that he had never seen the stadium that clean. He also inquired about uniform issues and wanted to know the status of any improvements. Mike Brady informed that it was a facility services concern, so he is working with people in that department to get those improvements made.
2. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	1. Public Service Loan Forgiveness Webinar

Dr. Easley announced that Financial Aid will host a free webinar entitled “Everything You Need to Know About Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) will be held on September 8. He encouraged the group to attend. A recording of this webinar can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOIPiypBTIA>.

You can also read more about this on [the One Stop page on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville website](https://onestop.utk.edu/utk-employees-public-service-loan-forgiveness/)  or the [Federal Student Aid website page on Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)](https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service).

* 1. ERC Survey

Mr. Chandler shared there will be a survey sent out soon that will poll ERC members on meeting modality preferences, such as meeting in-person vs Zoom, and guest speakers. It will be quick and have about four or five questions. We are looking for any feedback that would help to improve these ERC meetings.

Riley Kneale asked if representatives would be able to call into the meeting if the meetings were to move to in-person. Dr. Lucal answered that you would not be able to call in to in-person meetings but if you need to miss the meeting, that is a moment where you can utilize your alternate representative.

* 1. Volunteers For Other Committees

Mr. Chandler shared that several Committees need representatives from the ERC.

Two volunteers or nominations are needed to serve on the Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB), which is a System Council. This committee meets quarterly and needs one representative from the Knoxville Operations ERC and one representative from the Knoxville Administration ERC.

A volunteer is needed for the University Leadership Council (ULC), which is through the Chancellor’s office. They are looking for one representative out of the entire ERC and they meet throughout the academic year.

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) is also looking for a representative from both the Operations ERC and the Administration ERC.

* 1. Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment begins October 1 and runs through October 14. It is a passive enrollment, but it is suggested that you go into the Edison system to check your selected [coverage and rates for 2023](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/fa-benefits/documents/2023_annual_enrollment/2023_ST_HE%20Newsletter.pdf). You should also review the survivor benefit and beneficiary form. There will not be any information sent through the mail this year. Dr. Lucal suggested to the group that if anyone has constituents that depend on getting information through the mail to help them access information through a computer lab and start putting out information about Open Enrollment now so that there is plenty of time to help people get assistance for when Open Enrollment start on October 1. For Enrollment materials, see <https://www.tn.gov/partnersforhealth/ae/materials.html>.

There are annual enrollment webinars being conducted to learn about the 2023 benefits options. An employee benefits webinar will be held on September 28, October 5, and October 13, 2022. For more information, see [Blue Minimalist Life Insurance Flyer (tn.gov)](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/fa-benefits/documents/2023_annual_enrollment/2023_ae_employee_webinar_flyer_final.pdf). One session will be recorded and posted on the ParTNers for Health [YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/user/partnersforhealthtn).

There are also Insurance Carrier webinars that will provide more details on specific insurance products including medical, dental, vision, disability and life insurance, and your health savings account/flexible savings account options. For more information about dates and which insurance products will be discussed, see [Modern Professional Business Flyer Template (tn.gov)](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/fa-benefits/documents/2023_annual_enrollment/2023_ae_vendor_webinar_flyer_final.pdf). These sessions will be recorded and posted on the ParTNers for Health [YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/user/partnersforhealthtn).

Randall Thornhill asked if a constituent needs help with Open Enrollment, do they direct them to Human Resources? Mr. Chandler answered that you would direct them to the Insurance Department. The email to contact them is utinsurance@tennessee.edu. It is suggested that you call in early if you have any questions since they will be busy during this time.

It was requested that a representative from Insurance could come and do a presentation, specifically for facilities since it is a large department. Mr. Brady mentioned that he could reach out to see if he could set something up. Chip Pennoyer asked if it would be possible to set up a shuttle to the Insurance office in downtown so that employees who have questions or need a 1 on 1 can do so more easily. Dr. Lucal advised that it is unknown what can be set up with the Insurance Department, encouraging departments to contact them. Darrell Easley pointed out that one option might be to have a recorded information session so that people who are not able to attend the meeting can still get the knowledge that they need for Insurance and Open Enrollment. Dr. Easley did point out that this could be difficult since Insurance is personal to each person’s needs.

Shane Sloan commented that several people in his department do not have access to computers and they expect to get information in the mail. Michele Wilson asked if a basic poster could be created and hung on a community board to tell employees they will not be receiving Insurance information through the mail and they need to seek it out online. Mr. Chandler responded that there is a lot of information about Insurance so it would not be feasible. Dr. Lucal suggested that the employees who do not have access to computers partner with the Facilities building so that they can get access to resources for Open Enrollment.

Mr. Brady summarized that we will need to contact the Retirement and Insurance departments to see what they are capable of doing in regards to an information session or program. Our main objective right now is to make sure employees know that Insurance is all online now.

Mr. Thornhill made the comment that Facilities has a weekly meeting to keep the staff updated and wondered if it could be done for this committee in the form of general announcements. Mr. Pennoyer then communicated a link that gives information about the discounts and benefits that you receive through the University and being a state employee (<https://hr.tennessee.edu/benefits/employee-discounts/>).

1. REMINDERS:

Please email Jon Chandler (jchand41@utk.edu) or Sam Smith (SamSmith5@utk.edu) any constituent questions.