

KNOXVILLE ADMINISTRATION ERC

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, October 6, 2022 | 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Alexis Azevedo, Annette Beets, Matthew Blondell, Nancy Burkett (Guest), Jessica Cantu, Jon Chandler, Elizabeth Coleman, Laura Crow, Greyson Dickey, Darrell Easley, Raven Edwards, Amy Gregory, Anneliese Harrison (Guest Speaker), Gennie Hope-Davian, Connie Inman, Renee Johnson, Diane Kelly, Ami McCarter, Sarah McFalls, Alexander Merkle, Kristi Pearson, Christopher Pierce, Lee Ann Ratledge, Jen Scagnelli, Denise Sears, Kathryn Shepas, Melinda Simmons, Sam Smith, Sidney Snoddy, Patrick Sullivan, Lisa Vandergriff, Lindsi Whitaker, Chrissy Wills-Maples, Angela Woofter, and Jill Zambito

ABSENT

Natalie Crippen, Katy Glaccum, David Hodges, Jennifer Horner, Mary Lucal, James Murphy, Stephanie Phillips, Sharon Sexton, Suzanne Smalley, Elizabeth Tampas-Dixon, Sandy Thomas, Roy Wood, Lauren Ziegler, and Carrie Zitzman

1. WELCOME

Jon Chandler, Senior Employee Relations Consultant, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reflected on the amazing fall weather.

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

Dr. Diane Kelly greeted the group and remarked on the empty campus due to fall break for students. Dr. Kelly began her update with the Chancellor’s email sent last month, regarding the academic restructuring. A group started working in summer 2021 to review how disciplines are grouped around campus and see if there was a way to regroup them to create better programs are more responsive to current needs. This would allow for more unique collaborations across campus. Some of the bigger changes to come from this initiative is that the College of Arts and Sciences will now have an executive dean and the humanities will have their own deans. Social sciences and sciences will be structured differently in hopes that it will allow people to work in more efficient and effective ways. There is also consideration of having an independent College of Music, as they have very distinctive ways of educating, doing scholarships, and engaging in service. There will be the creation of a new college, called the New College, which will house emerging interdisciplinary programs. It will be an incubation and support structure that will allow people to create new programs and degrees. The Baker Center will be a new college or school of public policy. This is where the Institute of Civics, a Legislature initiative, will be located.

A date for the Faculty Appreciation Week has been set for the week of February 27, 2023. Dr. Kelly would love to see many offices participate in some way. She mentioned that participation could be something small and that she wants to see that faculty are recognized.

The University Libraries are having their annual reception to honor faculty members who have been promoted. There will be a bookplate reception where promoted faculty can select a book and have a plate put in it to commemorate their accomplishments.

The [University Space Committee](https://provost.utk.edu/committees/task-force-on-space-policy/#:~:text=University%20Space%20Committee%20The%20University%20Space%20Committee%20%28USC%29,of%20all%20UT%20space%20%28including%20buildings%20and%20property%29.) posted a website that is [an informational web page about campus updates and shows current construction projects](https://provost.utk.edu/construction-related-space-updates/). The Nursing building has been demolished and the next phase will be to haul away the remnants in preparation for new construction.

Amy Gregory asked Dr. Kelly for examples of what other people have done for Faculty Appreciation Week in the past. Dr. Kelly answered that the Provost’s Office recently took over planning the week and last year was the first year they were able to have it in person since the pandemic began. Last year, there were a couple of lunches and a breakfast. In addition to some programming, Student Success bought faculty coffee, the Student Center gave a discount on VolShop items for a period of time, and Dinning offered a free drink for faculty. She is looking for small and easy things that will let the faculty know that they are being thought of.

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

Dr. Jill Zambito greeted the group and updated them on the Be Well program. Fall gardening, in collaboration with the grow lab on campus, has begun. There are two large raised beds to use during the fall planting season. It is open to faculty, staff, and graduate assistants. In this partnership, space, seeds, tools, and assistance are provided. It is a great way for employees who are new to gardening to get started. The only thing required from the group is time to manage the plot and help with harvests. If interested, visit [Grow With Be Well – Employee Gardening | Be Well (utk.edu)](https://bewell.utk.edu/programs/employee-campus-garden/).

The Be Well program has also posted [walking routes](https://bewell.utk.edu/physical_activity/campus-walking-routes/) for all of the UT Knoxville campus. Dr. Zambito suggested using the routes for 15-minute breaks. She also reminded everyone to check for construction on their preferred routes as it may have made parts of the routes inaccessible, and a detour may be needed.

The upcoming healthy cooking class on October 27, 2022 is being taught by an Italian instructor and features Italian cuisine, such as Bucatini alla Carbonara and a chocolate mousse. To explore and register for upcoming classes, visit: [Healthy Cooking Series | Be Well (utk.edu)](https://bewell.utk.edu/programs/healthy-cooking/).

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

Dr. Darrell Easley greeted the group and relayed that he will be giving the HR update on behalf of Dr. Mary Lucal. He began his update by announcing that Annual Open Enrollment has begun. Open Enrollment opened on October 1, 2022 and will close on October 14, 2022. Now is the time to review the 2023 changes to benefits and make any changes, if desired. If employees do not want to make any changes, then no action needs to be taken. Dr. Easley shared a comment that Jon Chandler made in a different meeting, which was that Mr. Chandler previously used to manage benefits enrollment and that he saw 25% of employees enroll on the first day of Open Enrollment and the other 75% enroll on the last day. Dr. Easley asked the committee to remind their constituents to educate themselves on the changes in benefits and to make decisions according to their needs.

Dr. Easley introduced Nancy Burkett, the new Career Development Coach. He has been meeting with her to discuss and generate ideas for career development for staff. They want to also hear from the campus and have requested that ERC members come to the next meeting with ideas and challenges they face regarding career development. Ms. Burkett is in the process of setting up appointment schedulers so that she can meet with people one-on-one in the future.

Dr. Easley announced that there will be sessions on performance reviews for staff, likely beginning in December and continuing until February. He also announced that the HR Road Show will be back next year, and they are in the process of planning that. There will be a virtual roadshow in January 2023, where participants can plug into various HR resources from around campus. Later in the Spring, there are plans to do a pop-up roadshow where people will be able to meet in person. Dates are forthcoming.

Denise Sears asked the question “Is there a K@TE class or an informative video that goes over the insurances and benefit changes? For example, something that explains the differences in insurance pricing.” Dr. Easley shared there is a [document on the Partners for Health website](https://www.tn.gov/partnersforhealth/insurance-premiums.html) that shows the various rates for 2023. It has different sections for insurance, dental, and vision.

* 1. Survey Feedback

Mr. Chandler revealed the results from the meeting modality and guest speaker survey. Most people responded that they prefer the Zoom meetings and would like to only meet in person once a semester. Therefore, the ERC will continue to meet over Zoom and an in-person celebration lunch will be scheduled at the end of the academic year. Lastly, survey responses about topics and guest speakers included: (1) ongoing programs in HR, (2) housing and parking issues on campus, and (3) how ERC members from other Institutes have defined their role or participation to be successful.

1. GUEST SPEAKERS
	1. Temporary Help Pool (THP) now called UT Career Gateway– Anneliese Harrison, Onboarding and Retention Specialist

Anneliese Harrison introduced herself to the group and noted the branding of the program has been changed from the Temporary Help Pool (THP) to the University of Tennessee Career Gateway; this change highlights the potential for career building. The program began in the fall of 1975 and originally consisted of roughly 50 workers. After growing to a pool of roughly 200 workers, the 2020 Covid pandemic drastically cut down the number of candidates in the pool. Since then, the program has now recovered to have 87 workers in the pool and continues to grow. The UT Career Gateway is the University’s own staffing service, with examples including: an unexpected vacancy, an extended leave, or special project. Career Gateway can help connect departments with the best applicants to meet their needs.

Mrs. Harrison then shared the [new website](https://hr.utk.edu/thp/#:~:text=Also%20known%20as%20the%20Temporary%20Help%20Pool%2C%20UT,together.%20Opportunities%20vary%20in%20requirements%2C%20duration%20and%20nature.) and reviewed the four sections: (1) an about section that explains the Career Gateway and the benefits of joining, (2) an open positions page with direct links to apply, (3) a resource page for employees with their timesheets, pay schedule, and direct deposit instructions, and (4) a frequently asked questions section. There are contact details at the bottom of the page for Mrs. Harrison’s direct phone number and the program’s email address. Mrs. Harrison did note that the email address will be changing in the future to match the new Career Gateway branding and the page will be updated when this change happens.

The Gateway program also specializes in individual requisition. Managers can submit a request form for applicants instead of using a blanket pool of candidates, such as needing a graphic designer with a niche. Mrs. Harrison composes a specific requisition and posts it in Taleo to find the correct candidate for your specific assignment. The request form is at the bottom of the Career Gateway page. If more text is needed than the form allows, a Word document can be sent to Mrs. Harrison in addition to the form. There is a 10% fee based on the gross salary of the vacant position for using the Career Gateway program. However, this is a smaller fee compared to extern staffing agencies. Mrs. Harrison expressed that this is a great way to get people into open positions, and hopefully, into a permanent position. This can also be helpful for transfers to other assignments in the future.

Mr. Chandler expressed that this program is a valuable benefit for the University to offer in-house. There are so many success stories of people who have started in this type of role and then transitioned into a permanent role, and possible long-term career.

1. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS
	1. **(Q):** Can shade umbrellas be installed at the seating in the Mossman courtyard? The sun makes the seats extremely hot in the summer.

**(A):** Mr. Chandler reached out to Sam Ledford with Facilities Services. Ms. Ledford responded there is a contest for “volunteer improvement” that Facilities Services runs each year. This is a perfect example of an idea that can be submitted. The most recent contest for improvements closed around mid-May 2022, with the winners announced in late July. There are plans to continue the contest and an announcement will be made when the dates for launch are known. This idea had been submitted during the previous round of improvements but was not selected due to many competitive requisitions. Ms. Ledford mentioned that this is a creative idea and recommends resubmitting it.

Mr. Chandler recommended to follow Ms. Ledford’s lead on submitting this idea to the improvement contest. Otherwise, this is a facilities request for a department to fund, and he can get more information on that if desired.

* 1. **(Q):** We are unable to use our staff discount when ordering with StarShip & GrubHub from the Student Union. Is there a way for the staff discount to be added to those ordering services for faculty and staff? If not, could faculty and staff have a designated register so that we can use our discount?

**(A):** Mr. Chandler reached out to Brian Browning, Associate Vice Chancellor for Operations, and Mohamed Ali, Director of Vol Dining. Mr. Browning replied that they have been working on this with both vendors and a solution has been identified for Grubhub. However, employees are still able to order at the counter to ensure their discount is applied. They just need to inform the Vol Dining employee. Mr. Ali stated that Grubhub and Starship are working together to solve this challenge and he will get back to Mr. Chandler with additional information.

* 1. **(Q):** In parking lot 12 at the libraries, the trees and vegetation are very overgrown. There is also trash in the overgrown vegetation that makes the lot look very dirty. Could Lot 12 get on the rotation for tree and vegetation trimming possibly over Fall break when there are less people on campus?

**(A):** Mr. Chandler shared that Facilities Services has a service called One Call that can be utilized for these types of requests. The number for this service is 865-946-7777.

* 1. **(Q):**  Could there be a crosswalk added on the street between White Avenue Garage and Strong Hall? While White Avenue might not be a university owned street, is it possible to speak with the city of Knoxville?

**(A):** Mr. Chandler reached out to Mark Hairr, Director of Parking and Transit Service, and he replied that this is a city of Knoxville street, but he can raise this issue at the next UT Traffic Safety Committee, as there are city representatives on that committee. It will be a few weeks before the committee meets again. Mr. Chandler also shared that he is also on that committee and hopes to bring more information to the group when it becomes available.

* 1. **(Q):**  Why is VolTech Payroll Deduction a minimum $500 purchase? Mr. Chandler spoke with Randy Davis in Vol Tech and asked, “Is the $500 minimum a UT System Policy or is this a VolTech established policy/procedure? Would VolTech ever change or consider lowering the minimum threshold for payroll deduction?”

**(A):** Mr. Davis explained that it is a VolShop policy, and they have internally discussed this issue and have made the decision not to lower the limit. They only have three items that would qualify for payroll deduction that are under the $500 minimum. If the employee were to add a service warranty or the proper protection for a technology device, and include tax, they will have reached the threshold for 2 of the 3 items. Mr. Davis explained that they have to be financially responsible with the program as a benefit. They have recently discussed and decided to keep the program interest and fee free, but the subject is evaluated periodically. They feel that the minimum adds stability and protection needed to operate the benefit program in a responsible manner.

* 1. Renee Johnson asked where she could find how much a person needs to work to get insurance and other benefits. Mr. Chandler responded that it is the policy [FI0920 - Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/fi0920-patient-protection-and-affordable-care-act/). A minimum of 75%, or 30 hours, must be worked to be eligible for benefits.
	2. Melinda Simmons commented that there have been several close calls of students almost being hit by cars on Volunteer Boulevard and Lake Loudon. Students do not look before crossing the road or cross at places where there is no crosswalk. She asked how this has been addressed in the past. Denise Sears commented that there is also an issue of people not observing the 25 mile per hour speed limit at that location. Ms. Sears has previously called Campus Police about the issue. Mr. Chandler informed the group that he would look into this further.
1. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	1. Open Enrollment Happening Now: October 1 - 14, 2022

Open Enrollment is now open and will last until October 14, 2022. Alex is a helpful program that can help employees make more informed decisions regarding their healthcare options. Employees can access Edison through their IRIS portal via a tab at the top right corner.

* 1. Campus Chest Campaign Happening Now: October 4, 2022 - November 4, 2022

The Campus Chest Campaign began on October 4, 2022 and will run through November 4. 2022. This is an employee giving program that promotes the support of health and social service nonprofit agencies to help our community, provide assistance to those in need, and show what the Volunteer spirit really means! To donate, visit <https://campuschest.utk.edu/make-a-pledge/>, and log in with your Net ID and password. Donation options include payroll deduction, annual billing, and cash or check. Employees can pledge to (1) United Way or any of its member agencies, (2) Community Shares or any of its member agencies, (3) Creating Healthier Communities or any of its member agencies, or (4) Independent Agencies listed in the brochure or pledge portal. If you have any questions or need assistance, e-mail campuschest@utk.edu.

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