

## PRESENT

Jason Baggett, Mike Brady, Amy Bruner, Alicia Calderon (Campus Partner), Jon Chandler, Jeff Flowers (Guest Speaker), Chris Gilbert, Bill Jackson (Campus Partner), Kasey Kahm, Debbie Lane, Mary Lucal, Jim McCarter, Chip Pennoyer, Pam Quick (Guest Speaker), Marchelle Robinson (Guest Speaker), Jeni Sharp, Shane Sloan, Bryan Sodomora (Guest Speaker), Sam Smith, Justin Stafford, Natalie Summers, Jake Turner, Neal Vercler, and Dave Webb

## ABSENT

Stevin Amonette, Cory Beets, Shannon Bruce, David Bryant, Paul Finley, Alexanderia Gonzales, Douglas Grant, Holly Harmon, Riley Kneale, Jimmy Large, Regina Olum, Rhett Pride, Patrick Richter, Cody Smith, Randall Thornhill, and William Wainwright

## 1. WELCOME

Jon Chandler, Senior Employee Relations Consultant, welcomed everyone to the September meeting, which is the first meeting of the 2023-2024 academic year.

## 2. GUEST SPEAKERS

### a. [Fee Waiver Taxation](#) – Pam Quick, Associate Director for Payroll

Fee waivers for the Graduate fee waiver [graduate only, not applicable for undergraduate], the first \$5,250 (in a calendar year) is [tax free](#). After that amount, the IRS deems it as a fringe benefit to the employee, and thus, becomes taxable to that employee. To alleviate a little bit of the taxes, Payroll does not put 100% of the taxes on employees at one time. Taxes are divided over equal increments for each semester [Spring-February, March, & April; Mini-term is divided over one month; Summer-June & July; Fall-September, October, & November].

If the graduate coursework is job related, a tax-exempt form can be submitted. However, if the employee is audited, it is the responsibility of the employee to prove that it is 100% job related and not taxable. This form must be submitted each

semester, and Payroll does not double check if the employee is eligible to be tax exempt. The due dates for the [form](#) are:

- a. Spring semester - February 15
- b. Mini-term – May 15
- c. Summer – June 15 (first) July 15 (second)
- d. Fall semester – September 15

b. [Open Enrollment 2023](#) – Marchelle Robinson, Assistant Director of Benefits & Retirement

Open Enrollment begins on October 1, 2023 and runs through October 13, 2023. Changes can be made in Edison, the State's benefits enrollment management system. To login to Edison, you will first login to IRIS Web (<https://irisweb.tennessee.edu>). On the menu bar across the top of the page, the button to access Edison will be on the far right and say "Edison."

Health insurance premiums will increase by an average of 5% for active employees. Premium increases will vary depending on the health plan, network and the tier you choose. Your premium is automatically deducted from your paycheck each month. BlueCross and Cigna will remain the health insurance carriers. The four provider network options will remain the same: BlueCross Network S, BlueCross Network P, Cigna LocalPlus, and Cigna Open Access Plus. For the BlueCross Network P and Cigna Open Access Plus networks, the additional cost to your premium will increase by \$10 or \$20 per month depending on the tier in which you're enrolled. There continues to be no additional cost above the premium for the BlueCross Network S or Cigna LocalPlus networks. Starting January 1, 2024, Sharecare will be the new wellness program vendor. While health premiums are increasing, there will be no increases to deductibles, copays, or coinsurance. The state will pay 50% of the dental insurance premiums. If enrolled, this change will automatically occur in Edison.

The state will pay 100% of the premiums for employee long-term disability insurance. Employees using this benefit will receive 63% of their monthly salary, up to \$10K per month, after a 90-day waiting period. All employees not receiving long-term disability claim benefits will be automatically enrolled in this product. If you are already enrolled in long-term disability, you do not have to do anything.

The state will pay 100% of the premiums for employee basic term life/basic accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Designated beneficiaries will receive 1X the employee's base annual salary rounded to the next highest thousand (\$50K minimum except when reduced at age milestones/\$250K maximum). This change will automatically occur in Edison.

Life insurance benefits are changing. Dependent basic term life/basic accidental death and dismemberment insurance coverage is ending. You may be able to enroll your dependents in voluntary term life insurance and/or voluntary AD&D. For more information on life insurance changes, visit: [Life Insurance - State Plan Only \(tn.gov\)](https://www.tn.gov/life-insurance)

You must re-enroll in your medical Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or Limited Purpose Flexible Spending Account (L-FSA) and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DC-FSA) each year and choose how much money you'll put in your account during Annual Enrollment unless you have a special qualifying event. You can enroll by going to <https://www.optumbank.com/Tennessee>.

To make changes to your benefits, you will login into [IRIS Employee Self-Serve](#) and click the Edison button on menu bar on the far right.

- c. Empower/RetireReadyTN – Jeff Flowers, RetireReadyTN, Retirement Plan Advisor  
Jeff Flowers and Brian Sodomora are the RetireReadyTN retirement plan advisors for the University of Tennessee campus. Their role is to support employees through the retirement process. The focus of their job is education. They can do presentations to groups or schedule one-on-one retirement readiness reviews to assess what an employee's specific retirement outlook may be. To schedule a one-on-one retirement readiness review, visit: <https://utk.empowermytime.com/#/>. Meetings can happen on campus or virtually and are free to employees. Jeff and Brian can also be contacted at [Jeff.Flowers@Empower.com](mailto:Jeff.Flowers@Empower.com) or [Bryan.Sodomora@Empower.com](mailto:Bryan.Sodomora@Empower.com). To be eligible to meet with a RetireReadyTN Retirement Plan Advisor, you must be enrolled in either a Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) account or have a 401k through the University.
  
- d. Career Development for Staff – Cearra Sears, Career Development Specialist  
The Career Development team is growing. [Cearra Sears recently joined Nancy Burkett](#) to help fulfill the growing demand for career development for staff. They conduct one-on-one coaching, where they can help empower people to navigate their careers and have a safe space to talk about career progress. For more information on all the services they provide, visit: [Career Development | Human Resources \(utk.edu\)](#).  
They can also offer sessions based on departmental needs. Campus wide events are being planned, with the first one set for September 12, 2023 at 12-1 p.m. in the Student Union, room 360. This event is called "[Career Compass: Navigating Careers Here at UT.](#)" which will include a panel of UT staff to speak about their experiences with career development. You can register for the [event now in K@TE](#).

### 3. UPDATES

- a. Facilities Services Update – Mike Brady, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services

Projects across campus are progressing. The Energy and Environmental Science Research Building project has hit some delays. Faculty should be able to move in during the summer of 2024 and classroom spaces should be able to be used in the Fall 2024. The Nursing building is on track to be completed for the Fall of 2025. The new Haslam business building is in the design and planning phase, with an expected completion date of Fall 2027. The demolition of the Greve and Dunford buildings are scheduled to occur in the March/April 2024 timeframe, with the Henson building being demolished at the conclusion of the 2024 Spring Semester. Renovations to Neyland stadium continue but will be paused during home football games this fall. A new student entrance for Neyland Stadium will be next to the Truely Gate.

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

Annual Compliance training has been emailed to everyone to complete in [K@TE](#). This is due by December 31, 2023. It is recommended that you finish the training before the winter holiday break, as there will be no technology help due to closures after December 22, 2023, if you have any issues/technology problems.

The Employee Engagement Survey will be emailed staff across the entire system on September 20, 2023. We appreciate participation as the results of that survey are reviewed by the Cabinet, and acted upon.

Support for the upcoming 2024 Annual Performance Reviews will kick off soon. A series of educational sessions to support supervisors and staff will be coming soon and can be found in [K@TE](#) now. A Financial Wellness Series will also be coming to help support staff with financial literacy. More information can be found at [2023 Financial Wellness Series | Human Resources \(utk.edu\)](#).

4. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS

a. There were no constituent questions submitted before the meeting.

b. Jason Baggett asked why staff must purchase a separate motorcycle pass, in addition to their regular parking pass. Would it be possible to get the motorcycle pass with the parking pass, since they would only be using one space a day by driving either a regular car or a motorcycle to campus?

**(A):** Justin Stafford, Parking Enforcement Office Supervisor responded with the following: “Per parking regulations that are decided on and approved by [Traffic and Parking Authority \(TPA\)](#), a motorcycle permit must be purchased if a motorcycle will be parked on campus regardless if the person has a normal staff or student permit. Requests for changes to the approved regulations would need to be submitted to the Parking and Transportation office.”

5. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Retirement Support

Dr. Lucal surveyed the group to see what retirement support the campus might be interested in or feel campus might be lacking in. The group shared that they think having someone on campus to answer retirement questions would be helpful as it is hard to get into the UT Tower.

6. REMINDERS:

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