

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

April 17, 2008

Southern Writer's Room, Lupton Library

Representatives and Alternates present: Angela Bradshaw, Sue Carroll, Julia Cronin, Jeannie Hill, Valerah Hodges, Ken Hood, Anne Jay, Anna Lane, Jack Pitkin, Joyce Powell, Jean Rice, Nancy Tolar, Liz Walker.

Others in attendance: Dan Webb, Director, Office of Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Office of Human Resources.

Call to Order: Ms Hodges called the meeting to order.

Minutes: Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the March 20, 2008 meeting.

Guest: Phil Oldham, Vice Chancellor & Provost for Academic Affairs

Dr. Oldham arrived at UTC nine months ago and said it has been a great transition and good move for him and his family. UTC struggles with issues like any other institution in the country but he said the people here make the campus special.

Enrollment has increased 10% in the last two years and is projected to increase 3-5% this fall. Applications are ahead by 5% over the same time period last year. While this creates much needed revenue, it also creates many challenges.

UTC's Strategic Plan has been met with great participation and little cynicism. The university is beginning to implement the plan, which ties directly with the budget process. UPRAC (University Planning Resource Advisory Council) will advise the Chancellor on allocation of resources. A member said at recent UPRAC hearings there was discussion that construction of facilities could be placed on hold. Dr. Oldham said there might be a hold on funds approved for capital maintenance.

Dr. Oldham was asked if the university has enacted a hiring freeze. He replied that the last two months of the legislative session is tense and it is not unusual for the administration to practice due diligence. He advised members to take media coverage with a grain of salt. He predicted it would be a tight budget year with no gains but also no significant losses and said that UTC is preparing for the worst case scenario. He noted that Kentucky and Alabama are facing 12 - 15% cuts, far worse than Tennessee. (Since the meeting, Chancellor Brown announced an immediate hiring freeze.)

UT System Chief Human Resources Officer

Mr. Webb told members that Ms Linda Hendricks has been hired as the UT System's Chief Human Resources Officer. She previously held senior human resources positions at Vanderbilt and Duke. Mr. Webb said Ms Hendricks would be an advocate for compensation and training and for the first time, the Chief HRO will serve on the President's staff. A member asked if the reporting line for UTC's Human Resources Office would change; Mr. Webb replied that it would remain the same.

Ms Hodges served on the selection committee for CHRO and said Ms Hendricks was her choice and had offered many ideas about training.

Training Committee Report

Ms Lane, Chair, said the committee felt many employees were not aware that training provided by EOD (Employee & Organizational Development) is a valuable and free resource to the university. She stated that training offered by outside organizations are often expensive and lack much content.

If training was marketed similar to the President's Challenge for Fitness, with the Chancellor encouraging departments to participate, attendance would increase. Changing the mindset from the top down was seen as a key component. Mr. Webb will ask to speak at the Council of Academic Department Heads regarding training opportunities. Ms Hodges expressed concern that some departments are short staffed and makes it difficult to attend training.

The committee would like to see a focus on customer service training for every department next year. Ms Lane said customer service can make or break a business and that the university is a business. Ms Cronin suggested placing drop boxes in hallways outside departments with cards to nominate an employee who provided "Scrappy Service with a Smile". Cards would be collected weekly and the most 'smiles' would receive Scrappy (perhaps a wooden plaque) for a week. Announcement of winners could be made by the Chancellor's office via UTC info. Winners would be entered into a drawing at the end of the year. "Scrappy Service with a Smile" is viewed as a morale booster and is not meant to compete with the Blue Ribbon Award.

A motion was made and seconded to form a subcommittee to investigate a customer service program. Members should email Ms Lane or Ms Hodges if they would like to serve. Mr. Webb said he views the ERC's role as central to the program but would like to include the Chancellor's office and University Relations. The program could begin as early as this fall. He will ask to speak to the Executive Team when substantial ideas from the committee have been formed.

Compensation Committee Report

Ms Cronin, Chair, said the committee has not met but should funds become available in the budget she recommended it be used for compression or COLA (cost-of-living) and not merit increases. Monies have been used in the past to provide a flat amount, not a percentage, to employees making below \$30,000, according to Mr. Webb. Ms Lane said she believed that employee salaries would not keep pace with COLA and she favors merit increases.

Ms Cronin will draft a letter to the Chancellor for members to review at the May meeting and a vote will be taken. Ms Lane said she would abstain from voting. Members should contact Ms Cronin if they would like to see specific wording in the recommendation.

Blue Ribbon Awards

- March 2008 - John Shulman, Head Men's Basketball Coach, Athletics
- April 2008 - Cindy Williams, Administrative Specialist, Associate Provost for Academic Administration

Picnics

Ms Hodges reported that one picnic would be held this summer on August 8, to coincide with new faculty orientation, from 11:30 - 1:30. The theme will be 'New Orleans Blues' with Cajun food and Booker Scruggs' band will provide live music. The Chancellor's staff will serve for 1 hour and the ERC and ESC will serve for 1 hour. A bake-off contest will be held and Ms Hodges is soliciting donations for door prizes.

Employee Relations Board Meeting

Ms Hodges distributed minutes from the Employee Relations Board meeting she attended at the UT Space Institute on March 18, 2008.

Additional Issues/Concerns

▪ Faculty/Staff Campaign

Ms Tolar said she had spoken with Emily McKay, who told her there is 49% participation in the Faculty/Staff Campaign but would like to see 52%; the campaign has been extended to 5 pm Monday. She sent an email to staff she represents (Group 10) urging their participation and said she is willing to share it with other reps if they wish to do the same. Ms Powell announced that the campaign reached 50% before she left her office to attend the meeting.

Employees may designate their gift, which can be done through payroll deduction or by a one-time pledge. Donors are entered into drawings for prizes and the grand prize will be a VIP parking pass. Ms Powell said a new fund has been established this year, Staff/Dependents Textbook Fund, which will be administered by Financial Aid. Ms Cronin said textbooks cost \$450-600 a semester.

Ms Lane said Pat Branam, Vice Chancellor for Development, told the Library's faculty and staff that no gift is too small and that a donation of 82 cents had been made.

▪ Administrative Professionals Seminar

The Administrative Professionals Seminar is scheduled for May 13. Ms Sadler will announce the seminar via UTCinfo.

▪ Administrative Professionals Lunches

Ms Hodges said that lunches on April 23 and 24 will be held in the University Center and door prizes provided.

▪ ERC Account

The ERC received monies from Lupton funds several years ago which were used for communication purposes. Mr. Webb said all monies had been spent and the account has been closed.

▪ **E-Recruiting**

Ms Lane said she had used the E-recruiting system to post a position and wanted to know if anyone else had used it and their thoughts of it. Mr. Webb said he would attend a meeting in Nashville on April 28 to discuss E-recruiting and his sense was that it would be discontinued. He will report to the ERC regarding the outcome of the meeting.

- Ms Hodges read a note from Nancy Tolar, thanking the ERC for a gift basket sent to her during a recent illness.

Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Next Meeting

The ERC will meet May 15 in the Southern Writer's Room, Lupton Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist
Office of Human Resources