

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

September 18, 2008

Fortwood Room, University Center

Representatives and Alternates present: Joyce Blevins, Pat Boyer, Angela Bradshaw, Sue Carroll, Julia Cronin, Kelly Griffin, Jeannie Hill, Valerah Hodges, Anne Jay, Anna Lane, Jack Pitkin, Nancy Tolar.

Others in attendance: Chuck Cantrell, Assistant Vice Chancellor, University Relations; Nancy Owens, Associate 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 July 17th meeting. (The ERC did not meet in August.)

Blue Ribbon Award for August 2008: April Cox, University Relations

Guest: Courtney Hoss, Assistant General Counsel

Ms Hoss was appointed Assistant General Counsel at UTC a year ago and serves on the Chancellor's Executive Team. She described herself as a generalist, handling issues such as lawsuits, criminal law, interpreting policies, sexual harassment prevention training, reviewing contracts, etc. As a representative of the university, she advises the Women's Center but does not accompany rape victims to court.

Ms Hoss has weekly meetings with Catherine Mizell and other system attorneys. They assist her if there is a court case due to the preparation time that is needed. Although we live in a litigious society and many people threaten to sue the university, Ms Hoss said that few actually do so.

While she is willing to meet with employees, Ms Hoss advocates that they follow the chain-of-command and often they are referred to their supervisor, Human Resources, or Affirmative Action.

Ms Hoss graduated from law school in 2001 and began working for a small firm that is no longer in business. Prior to joining the university, she was employed at Baker Donelson for three years specializing in labor and employment law. She teaches Business Law for the College of Business and Boot Camp (aerobics class) in the evenings.

Town Hall Meeting

Ms Hodges announced that the ERC, ESC, GSA, SGA, and Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate will meet with senior administration on October 8 at 1:30 at the request of Jim Bowman, ESC Chair. Location will be announced. Discussion will be centered primarily on the budget.

Mr. Cantrell said the Executive Team has taken a conservative approach with the budget and has just now released monies from the 2007 enrollment. If there are budget cuts in January and monies from the 2008 enrollment had been released and spent, it would be problematic.

A 5% reduction plan is due to system by year's end, according to Mr. Cantrell. There will not be any across-the-board cuts. Nothing has been targeted and departments, programs and services will be examined. There are no plans to outsource jobs.

Departments have been told to calculate the dollar cost of replacing positions. Ms Owens said Human Resources has been told there is a cool down in hiring. She added that hiring paperwork is routed to several offices, including budget, for approvals when it leaves Human Resources.

Mr. Cantrell said faculty lines are viewed differently from staff and might be held up longer due to departments reorganizing. While enrollment growth translates into more dollars for the university, it also requires hiring of additional faculty. The number of adjuncts has been reduced since SACS requires instructors have a terminal degree in the subject they teach. Contract faculty were hired to replace them and while they are paid less than tenure-track faculty, they give the university a commitment of 3 - 5 years. They are not required to do research or committee work. Mr. Cantrell said that SACS approves of contract faculty.

The state anticipates a 2-year cycle before the state's economy begins to rebound although Mr. Cantrell said he believes it will take 3 years. The budget for capital outlay is separate from other funds and so far it has not been cut.

E-Recruiting

Ms Lane asked if departments are still using E-recruiting to fill vacant positions. Ms Owens said a committee will meet next week to discuss what is needed in a new system but in the meantime E-recruiting is still being used.

2009 Picnic

Ms Hodges said the 2009 summer picnic will be on a Tuesday instead of Friday. Members said a Friday picnic sometimes conflicts with Student Orientation.

Holiday & Administrative Closing Calendar

The 2009 Holiday Schedule has been announced by Linda Hendricks. Holidays & Administrative Closings will be observed from December 25, 2009 through January 1, 2010. Christmas Eve will be a work day.

Ms Hodges said Mr. Webb told her the ERC and ESC may write to President Petersen requesting the university observe Christmas Eve as administrative closing. Ms Owens said the HROs have discussed making a request to President Petersen to observe Christmas Eve as administrative closing.

Committee Reports

- **Compensation Committee**

Ms Cronin, Chair, said in light of the budget, the committee has not met.

- **Training Committee**

Ms Lane, Chair, said a focus similar to the 'Chancellor's Challenge' for training would be initiated in the spring or next fall so as not to

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compete with this fall's 'Chancellor's Challenge'. More information will be forthcoming.

- **Website**

Ms Griffin is updating the website with minutes and picnic photos.

Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources