

EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL MEETING

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

October 17, 2011

Fortwood Room, University Center

Members attending: Tonya Botts, Cindy Carroll, Jean Dake, Amy Davis, Bruce Hilbert, Tonia Martin.

Others in attendance: Mary Ann McKissick, representing Heather Wilson; Dan Webb, Director, Office of Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Office of Human Resources;

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

Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the September meeting.

Guest: Dr. Phil Oldham, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

The mission of UTC is to create knowledge and develop intellectual talent or capacity. Universities are complex organizations that all units within the university are critically important to that mission. The university has stated publicly its desire to be a Top 5 Public Master's University in the Southeast. UTC is currently ranked #20.

It is important for any institution to achieve some distinction. The challenge is in creating a level of distinction because universities are both a business and marketplace, where both the product and the customer are the same thing. Dr. Oldham said the time spent in strategic planning and assessment provides direction but the university must continually take stock of where we are and where we are going.

As the level of state support has diminished to approximately one-third, with some institutions receiving only 10% from their state, there tends to be a 'loosening of strings' attached to funding. It forces the university to view costs, revenues, enrollment growth, and opportunity to explore market-based strategies.

Enrollment has increased 33% in six years. Less than 40% of students come from Hamilton County with the majority of students from West TN. The average age of students, which is 21 or 22, has decreased substantially with UTC becoming a residential campus. Yet, many campus services and mentality it still geared to a non-residential campus.

There is some speculation that it has been driven by the economy and higher unemployment. The current trend line for enrollment growth preceded the recession and may have accelerated the pace somewhat. Increased enrollment will continue due to academics and location. Last year's incoming freshmen were surveyed at orientation and Chattanooga offers a lower cost of living with high quality of life. A significant

number of students chose to stay in Tennessee because of the Lottery Scholarship. Chattanooga also offers a different environment than other cities.

The challenge is how to manage enrollment growth. The Complete College Act states that universities must enroll and graduate students with meaningful degrees that lead to successful careers. The university must align its services, academics, and culture to the students being recruited so they can matriculate.

UTC has made seen a 10% increase in retention over the past 3 years. The top reason that freshmen have given as to why they don't return is the lack of on-campus housing. Most students have indicated that they wish to live on-campus for 2-3 years and most cannot afford off-campus housing. The year started with 500-600 students on a waiting list with 200 students being housed in hotels. Estimates from Campus Master Planners have latent demand for 900 beds.

Dr. Oldham said the university is accepted more transfer students than in the past. This year 800 were accepted. Students who transfer from community colleges are more likely to complete their degree than those students who began their degree at a 4-year institution. The university has more capacity at the junior and senior level and can absorb students without any greater cost.

The average class size is 25 with lots of small classes. Dr. Oldham said the most important factors an instructor brings to the class are not necessarily content, but an instructor who can inspire and encourage students. That can be accomplished in most discipline to students in classes as large as 100 but in some areas, such as English Composition, it cannot be done.

Online education will continue to grow and each university has a different market, cost structures, and price points. In order to compete, the university must target a market that is ready and available and does not have competition. A number of prestigious institutions have discontinued their online MBA programs. Dr. Oldham said the Criminal Justice department is one program that could be delivered online and the university is ready and prepared to support them. UTC also has a number of hybrid programs around the state, i.e. the Ed. D. program in Kingsport.

While a lot of attention is focused on those students who do not do well, UTC continues to attract top students and is morally obligated to help students obtain success no matter what their preparation was for getting into UTC. The Honors Program is a good program but a small one, serving 150 students a year. Establishment of a University Honors College would allow the university to recruit top students and increase enrollment from outside the state. Dr. Oldham cited the College of Charleston, which has 1/3 of students from outside South Carolina. Dr. Oldham said some financial backing would be needed to establish the Honors College, which has a goal of 10% of undergraduate

students, which will be discussed at the next UT Board meeting. The item will not need approval from the Board but will be presented for information. Approximately \$7 million has been set aside for creation of the college and will recruit for a Dean immediately. Development of the college will take several years and will involve fundraising with another \$7 - 8 million dollars needed.

The present Honors program is currently housed in Guerry Center but the Honors College would need some kind of physical presence. As new residence halls are built, one could possibly house Honors students. While Dr. Oldham said he is not proposing this, options should be considered.

An external board has been assembled with Dr. Bill Stacy and Dr. Fred Obear as co-chairs. Members include Dr. Randy Walker, Professor of Physical Therapy and former Brock scholar; Dr. Cliff Cleveland; member of the Brock family; member of the Guerry family.

When asked how international programming would fit, Dr. Oldham responded that the Honors College would have global learning with students from around the world, no matter what major they have. It is hoped that it would facilitate visits abroad to homes of some students. While language instruction is important, students also need to understand cultural distinctions and how it applies to political and social issues.

The average college graduate will change careers 8 times during their lifetime and 40% will not be working in major in 10 years. The university must make develop students to be flexible and able to adapt and the Honors College can do that.

Other Issues

- The Employee Engagement Survey, conducted by ModernThink, begins November 1 and will remain open for 2 weeks.
- Ms Dake will email minutes from the Employee Relations Advisory Board meeting to members.
- Annual Enrollment for insurance changes ends November 1.
- Flexible Benefits Enrollment for medical/dependent care ends November 30.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources