EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE RETREAT
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
January 27, 2014
Chattanooga Rooms B & C, University Center

Members Attending: Donna Adams, Terri Bearbower, Pam Blevins, Pat Boyer, Catrina Brown, Sue Carroll, Merrium Carver, Bonny Clark, Mary Donoso, Karla Evans, Jennifer Faires, Cheryl Faulkner, Kelly Griffin, Adam Groves, Valerah Hodges, Ken Hood, Anne Jay, John Johnson, June Knowles, Anna Lane, Debbie Mirra, Jack Pitkin, Melita Rector, Diane Reed, Julie Romeo, Cynthia Stanley-Cash, Sue Stephens, Robert Thurmond, Baley Whary, Cindy Williams.

Others in attendance: Dr. Steve Angle, Chancellor; Dr. Jerald Ainsworth, Provost; Dr. Richard Brown, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations; Dr. John Delaney, Vice Chancellor for Student Development; Dr. Deborah Arfken, Director, Strategic Planning; Dan Webb, Director, Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources.

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

Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the October and November, 2013 minutes.

Guest: Dr. Steve Angle, Chancellor

The university will take ownership of the state office buildings on McCallie Avenue and includes 600 parking spaces. The high-rise building will be evaluated to see if student housing would be a good usage of space. The new library’s opening will be delayed due to some construction issues. Lupton Library will be renovated after securing 25% of the cost, which is not an uncommon practice across the country, before it can be considered for capital improvements list. The university carried the request to the UC Foundation who voted to backfill the money, approx $8 million. The project that is ranked #5, combined with Board of Regents requests, might not be included on the state’s capital project budget.

The library renovation will include office space and flipped classrooms. Renovations for the Fine Arts Center include completing the building, $10 million was cut from the project when built, and redefining 35% of the space. Even though it was built to code, there will probably be some enhancements for patrons.

The budget process will begin in early February and follow what has been done in past years. When completed, it will be presented to President DiPietro on May 27th prior to his presentation at the June meeting of the Board of Trustees. The ERC has a representative on the UPRAC (University Planning and Resources Advisory Council) committee.

The Strategic Plan ran through 2013 and now the university will embark on developing a new plan while building upon the past. An RFP for an outside vendor was considered; however, the cost was prohibitive. Open forums will be held as the university considers what it means to be a metropolitan university while viewing the mission and values of the institution.
UTC’s six-year graduation rate is 36.1% while UT Martin is 10% above that. To understand why students do not graduate will take some research but it has been shown that connected students are more successful students. The university is looking at intramurals space for the future and other ways to provide some outdoor recreation space. Branding the university is a huge asset and the university will look at branding and marketing in the Strategic Plan to make sure we’re sharing our story internally and with the community. Dr. Angle said Chattanooga is eager to connect with the university but requires follow-through.

Training for performance reviews is underway to make sure that reviews are done well as they are linked to merit pay. Dr. Angle, whose academic discipline is Chemistry, said it has been a great six months since arriving at UTC. He encouraged members to email him at Steven-Angle@utc.edu and said caring for students is what ties us all together.

Guest: Dr. Jerald Ainsworth, Provost

Dr. Ainsworth came to UTC three years ago and said every employee is important to the operation of the university no matter what position they hold. A Lupton Library re-purposing committee will determine what departments and services should be housed in the space to provide better functions. The Complete College Act task force has finished a rough draft and affects those beyond the classroom as everyone plays a role in retaining students. Dr. Ainsworth is working with faculty on student credit hour production. Last semester $170,000 was released from part-time monies so it could be put towards permanent faculty lines. As more federal dollars are secured for research, it will free up other monies for operations.

Guest: Dr. Richard Brown, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations

The state is experiencing a $170 million shortfall in revenues, which creates a challenge in the university’s budget as there is no statutory requirement to fund higher education. Health care reform, K-12 education, which must be funded, and prisons are always priorities on the state’s budget. However, Dr. Brown doesn’t foresee any major base budget reductions and expects there to be a minimal COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) for all state employees.

Dr. Brown encouraged everyone to view the Budget Chatt website to see how monies are spent as they relate to the Strategic Plan. The new funding formula for colleges is driven by outcomes and monies are disbursed from the state as students progress through the university and graduate.

Capital improvements include renovating Holt Hall and construction of a new residence hall. The acquisition of two State office buildings on McCallie Avenue includes 653 parking spaces worth an estimated $18 million.

Dr. Brown serves as Chair of the UT Compensation Advisory Board (CAB) and they continue progress towards making wages competitive in relationship to peers. Dr. DiPietro has requested $20 million from the governor to close the gaps and TBR asked for the same amount, although
unlikely to be approved but lets the governor know the university is serious about compensation.

Differential tuition and specialized fees not covered by the tuition discount has been brought to Dr. DiPietro’s attention. Fees that will be enhanced going forward in the budget include tech fee, student health fee, and parking fees, which must be incrementally increased with a five-year goal to build a new parking deck. The Plan Unit Development, of PUD, determines the number of parking spaces the university must have and as new facilities are added to the university, this requirement will grow. Dr. Brown added that parking is the lowest of any campus in the state at $20/month for general and $25/month for reserved. Knoxville employees pay $400/year for general. The state does not provide any subsidies for parking, which is an auxiliary unit.

**Guest: Dr. John Delaney, Vice Chancellor for Student Development**

It is estimated that within three years, 1200-1500 students will live in properties that UTC develops or in nearby private properties that will increase the vitality and energy that MLKing Blvd needs. Conversations have been held with private developers targeting students to ascertain whether the housing will be affordable and offer some amenities. New developments should not draw students away from campus housing but from other areas. Dr. Brown said conversations have been held with the developer who will be sensitive to the price point. The greatest need is for housing for freshmen.

Future plans call for the university to work with Aramark in adding another dining facility. Student Health Services had been contracted through Erlanger for five years and returned to campus last fall with over 2,000 visits. Services are available to help those students dealing with anxiety and stress-related issues. The Career Center is partnering with deans and academics departments to ensure career services information is available to every student to align their career path and academic path.

**Guest: Dr. Deborah Arfken, Director, Strategic Planning**

In the interest of time, Dr. Arfken said she would like to present an update of the Strategic Plan at a future ERC meeting. (Since the meeting, Dr. Arfken is scheduled to speak at the March meeting.)

**Recognitions**

Recognition certificates were presented by Mr. Webb to outgoing members.

**UT Policy and UTC Guidelines for Employee Relations Committee**

The purpose of the Employee Relations Committee is to provide a direct channel of two-way communication between University administration and regular non-exempt employees for information and advisory purposes. All UT campuses have a board representative that attends Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) meetings, four times a year, to provide communication between campuses and system administrators.
Non-exempt employees are elected to represent units, which are determined by geographic location and/or job group. A representative and/or alternate from each area is expected to attend meetings, held monthly, except August. Representatives may miss no more than four regularly scheduled monthly meetings during a calendar year. A representative’s absence is excused if the alternate attends in their place.

Representatives elect a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair serves as liaison to the Director of Human Resources, collaborates with the Director of Human Resources in determining meeting agenda, presides over meetings, and attends system-wide Employee Relations Advisory Board meetings. The Vice Chair will assume the duties of Chair in his/her absence. The Director of Human Resources, the Chancellor, and retiring ERC Chair will serve as ex-officio members of the Employee Relations Committee.

**Election of Chair & Vice Chair**

Members eligible to serve as Chair must currently be serving as an ERC representative or alternate and must have served for at least one year as a representative or alternate within 10 years prior to the election, according to ERC By-Laws. The Chair will begin his/her term immediately after election for the next two years. Officers can serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The floor was opened for nominations for Chair. Ms Hodges was nominated and a motion was made and seconded to cease nominations. By acclimation, Ms Hodges was elected Chair.

The floor was opened for nominations for Vice Chair. Ms Lane was nominated and motion was made and seconded to cease nominations. By acclimation, Ms Lane was elected Vice Chair.

**Other Issues**

Ms Griffin said as the Chancellor left he wanted her to inform ERC members about ‘Coffee with the Chancellor’ on February 12 from 8 to 10 am. No appointment is necessary to stop by, have a cup of coffee, and speak with the chancellor in what he hopes will become a monthly event. An email will be forthcoming via UTCinfo.

The Chancellor will give a ‘state of the campus’ address on March 5 in the University Center, following a presentation at Hunter Museum that morning.

Fees are assessed for those enrolled in online courses and differential tuition is assessed for those enrolled in Business, Nursing, Engineering classes. The tuition waiver for employees and fee discount for spouses/dependents does not apply to these fees. This issue could be submitted for the ERAB meeting.

Ms Hodges urged members, including alternates, to attend meetings.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.
Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler  
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources