EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Thursday, June 15, 2017
Fortwood Room, University Center

Members attending: Vickie Adkison, Terri Bearbower, Pam Blevins, Wanda Budan, Merrrium Carver, Heather Heinlein, Anna Lane, Melita Rector, Samantha Skidmore, Sharon Thomas.

Others in attendance: Todd Dockery, Associate Director, Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources.

Call to Order: A motion was made and seconded to call the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the April 20th meeting.

Chancellor’s Blue Ribbon Award: Cheryl Murphy, Biology, Geology and Environmental Science, is the Blue Ribbon winner for March 2017.

Guest: Laura Cagle, Director of University Events, Office of the Chancellor

The kick-off to Founders Week will be Mocs Games 2017 on Monday, September 11. Founders’ Week will include some student events and alumni events and Ms Cagle said the Mocs Games is one of the chancellor’s favorite events. Ms Lane said last year’s feedback from the ERC was to make the event more of a picnic and eliminate games. Ms Cagle said her office is open to suggestions but would like to provide some activity as an option. The week will conclude with the State of the University address on Friday, September 15th. The university will celebrate its 50th anniversary of joining the UT system in 2019.

Guest: Yancy Freeman, Associate Provost for Enrollment Services

So far 9,691 total students are enrolled as compared to 9,375 on the same day last year. All new freshmen and transfer students are pre-registered and freshmen enrollment is 200 students ahead of same time last year. Orientation sessions are limited to 350 students per session and is being stretched to 375 for the next four sessions and may necessitate another session being added in August.

The new regional tuition discount has been extended to include freshmen and sophomores from north Georgia and Alabama and is expected to transform the campus. The university has already had in place a tuition discount for the last 6-7 years for juniors and seniors who had completed 60 hours. Students will pay in-state tuition plus 25 percent of the out-of-state tuition.

Students who enter UTC with risk factors such as an ACT score below 19, Pell grant eligible, or first-generation student, are eligible to participate in Moc Up Camp this summer designed to acclimate students to campus. Students will also be enrolled in freshmen seminar or University Studies 1250 course this fall and is predicted to improve the freshmen to sophomore retention rate. A member said Student Development visited with students during Moc Up Week to inform them of activities provided through Student Development. Mr. Freeman said balancing school with wellness activities and student organizations provides opportunities for students to make connections and remain at UTC.
The West campus housing is projected to open in Fall, 2018 providing an additional 600 beds with 25% of local area students now living in campus. The university is in the midst of a housing strategic plan and would see more transfer, graduate, and international students living on campus. Some faculty and staff live on campus and Mr. Freeman said it is not uncommon to have faculty and staff live on college campuses.

Career Services is headed by Dr. Rob Liddell who has created a career services plan and career development alliance pulling in folks from all over the campus with an interest in how we administer career services. All colleges provide internships very differently, even within the colleges, and reporting is done differently. This will provide a streamlined approach to offer services for students locally, regionally, and internationally. Career Services is restricting space and now has two interview rooms. There is talk that once Lupton Hall is renovated and Disability Resource Center moves, the present space would be used by Career Services. Such a move would signal a message to students about what the university offers, allowing them to see the end of the process (obtaining a job) at the beginning when enrolling in school.

A member asked what the life of a recruiter was like and Mr. Freeman said they represent the university at day and evening events ranging from high school visits, college fairs, responding to email from prospective students. Recruitment season is mid-August to mid-March and involves lots of travel with one recruiter logging 20,000 miles last year. Regionally recruitment is done in Jackson, MS; Birmingham, AL; Asheville, NC; Louisville, KY. Local recruitment includes Chattanooga and Hamilton County; Marion County; Sequatchie County.

When asked what convinces a student to attend UTC, Mr. Freeman said the excellent quality of academic programs combined with housing options that are unlike other campuses in the Southeast. The City of Chattanooga is also a draw with the campus providing an urban setting.

Proposal for Administrative Professionals Luncheon

At last month’s meeting Ms Lane discussed submitting a proposal to Dr. Richard Brown, on behalf of the ERC, for planning and funding the administrative professionals’ luncheon. This means the ERC wouldn’t be the ones planning the event and staff who attend wouldn’t need to pay from their own pocket. A motion was made for Ms Lane to draft the proposal and with no opposing votes, Ms Lane will email the proposal to members prior to the next meeting.

Compensation Issues

There will be no across-the-board increases this year. Colleges have been given a pool of money that is 3% of total filled positions in their area. Department heads and deans will determine how the money will be distributed following guidelines in place and a maximum cap on increases. Increases will be merit based.

The ERC has affirmed that a need exists for supervisors on how to properly evaluate employees and for employees in submitting information to be evaluated upon. Ms Lane said evaluations could potentially have an impact on an employees’ livelihood and into retirement. Mr. Dockery said system-wide there are several committees looking at evaluation tools and how to enhance the current tool. Rolling out of the Learning Management System (LMS) will provide a system to track training, including required training, and completion of training.
IRIS Issue

Ms Rector spoke about the problem entering travel reimbursements for students whose primary account is not the department paying travel expenses. Several other members said they have encountered the same problem. Since this is an IRIS issue, Ms Sadler suggested that Ms Lane present this at the next ERAB meeting.

ERAB Meeting

Ms Lane will attend the next Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) meeting in mid-July. She said a question had been submitted to the For Your Benefit newsletter regarding advancing within the department/pay grade but was not answered so this question will be on the agenda. Also on the agenda is the inclement weather policy proposal. Ms Lane said she has not received any word of Facilities outsourcing but hoped to gain some information from an ERAB representative employed in Knoxville’s Facilities department.

Network & Learn

Ms Lane encouraged members to attend monthly Network & Learn events not only for networking opportunities but for the variety of topics provided.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Next ERC Meeting

The ERC will meet July 20th @ 10:00 in the Fortwood Room, University Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources