EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Thursday, October 20, 2016
Fortwood Room, University Center

Members attending: Vickie Adkison, Terri Bearbower, Sheila Cagle, Merrium Carver, Heather Heinlein, Donnie Hodge, Anne Jay, Kellie Karaky, Anna Lane, Kathy Lindsey, Marion Perkins, Laura Perryman, Melita Rector, Sharon Thomas, Roberta Thurmond, Jean Walston.

Others in attendance: Laure Pou, Executive Director, Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources.

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

Approval of Minutes: A motion and second to approve the minutes of the September meeting.

Blue Ribbon Award: Jewell Chason, Administrative Support Assistant III, Finance & Economics, is the recipient for August.

President’s Award

The President’s Award was implemented last year by President DiPietro to recognize accomplishments among the UT System’s three-fold mission – Educate, Discover, Connect. This year a new category of Support was specifically designed for staff members.

Nominations may be submitted by any faculty/staff member through November 21, 2016. An email from Chancellor Angle will provide a link to the UT system website with more information about the award.

Part of the process involves contacting the individual who is nominated and asking if they want to continue the nomination process. A campus committee will review nominations and collect materials, to include an application packet and 3 letters of support, which would be submitted to the Executive Leadership Team in December. They would then select one nomination per category and send to system for consideration. The system selection committee, which includes Dr. Richard Brown as the UTC representative, would select one winner per category and would be announced in February by President DiPietro. Winners would be invited to the State of the System address and receive $3,000 and serve on a special advisory committee for 3 years.

Last year, 35 nominations were received within a much shorter timeframe of 2 weeks and ended with 10 completed packets that were sent to the Executive Leadership Team. Three nominations were forwarded to system.

Ms Pou said Chancellor Angle and Dr. Brown have expressed their desire for ESC and ERC involvement. ERC members could nominate as many individuals as they want. Once nominated, HR would contact the individual to find out if they wishes to continue in the nomination process. The ERC could write letters of support. Ms Lane said she would start an email conversation to discuss if the ERC would like to submit nominations as a group.

ERAB Meeting
Among the items discussed at the Employee Relations Advisory Board meeting were:

- **Outsourcing of Facilities:** The state is still in the process of gathering information and there was concern that it could be expanded to include Human Resources and Information Technology. The university has been assured that it may opt-out if it is beneficial cost-wise but would require justification. The state is still on target for implementation in February and if outsourced, would offer a basic benefits package but was unclear if this would include educational benefits.

- **FLSA:** The system-wide impact is still being discussed and lawyers are reviewing the documentation to interpret accurately.

- **Annual/Open Enrollment for Benefits:** There was a question as to why there was only 2 weeks to enroll given the many changes this year. Ms Lane said administrators stated this was a UT system decision to shorten the enrollment period. Insurance is a fluid system with doctors and hospitals re-negotiating contracts at different time periods.

The next ERAB meeting will be December 14th via videoconference. On the agenda will be a request to explain why insurance premiums are not based on the employee’s salary.

**Guests: Tyler Forrest and Chris Sherbesman, Budget & Finance**

Budget & Finance is responsible for reporting all financial information to the UT Board, THEC, and the State of Tennessee. Budget for E&G totals $153 million and Auxiliaries totals $15.1 million in revenue, with expenses slightly less. A balance of 2-5% in E&G is required by THEC and the university has a balance of $6.3 million or 4.11%. Auxiliary funds are required to maintain a 3-5% balance and currently has a balance of 3.98%. SACS also closely monitors the balance.

The university is in a revised budget period now with a total university budget of $170 million and capital projects from $50-100 million. State appropriations of 30% have held steady while some states, notably Kentucky, receive far less in state appropriations. The vast majority of state funds is spent on instruction, research, public service, and academic support. Institutional support is closely watched by every watchdog group in the country and UTC’s expenses for institutional support is 8%.

Discussion of changes to parking started a year ago with a parking survey and 32% of faculty/staff/students responding. Mr. Forrest said 70% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied but 50% responded that they were able to locate a parking space within 9 minutes. Among the 2,000 comments received, the top requests were more parking, lower permit fees, and designated commuter and faculty/staff parking spaces. A utilization study was conducted and found that between 9 am - 2 pm lots were at peak capacity and no openings were observed at Engel. Another study was conducted September 6-12 and 19-23 where some capacity was observed in reserve lots.

The university has opened up 70 more reserved spaces and will provide 130 more reserve spaces in January to alleviate the pressure on general parking. A study will be conducted once a semester. Lot 34, behind the ARC, added 43 spaces and Lot 59, behind Doctor’s Building, added 100 spaces. Lot 61 to the west of the state office building will become a reserve lot at a later date. Parking at the Ortwein building would add 20-25 spaces. Sixteen lots were striped this summer and striping will continue each summer. Six-hundred and sixty spaces will be
included in West campus housing and preliminary talks include discussion of a combined garage in relation to a proposed Health Sciences Center.

The grace period at the start of the semester is now being enforced. Cars in reserve lots are ticketed on the first day of classes and after the third day in general lots. Parking violations are captured with handheld units to take 3 photos of a car that Mr. Forrest believes will diminish the number of appeals. The appeals process will move online in January by setting up a magistrate process. An appeal would not be denied but would fall within 5 defined categories.

Mr. Forrest said students cannot enroll in classes with outstanding tickets; however, there is no recourse for staff/faculty so the university will implement a towing policy or “boot”. Currently, there are 100 staff/faculty with an average of $200 owed to Parking Services. The university has instituted a zone enforcement model with 2 officers assigned to each zone.

In discussion is requiring those with a handicapped placard to register with Parking Services in order to receive a decal. The visitor parking program will move to an electronic process. Parking permits may move to a zoned model and when the plan has more details, Mr. Forrest said he would return to the ERC to discuss. Any change must be approved by the UT Board, State Legislature, and Attorney General.

Mr. Forrest was asked if there was a plan to provide parking when new staff were hired, (as names are not readily available in the system for staff to purchase a decal). He told members they may phone Parking Services for a pass. Ms Sadler said that new regular staff hires are entered into IRIS as pending employees before their hire, eliminating the waiting period for employees to obtain a parking decal.

The “C” Store on South campus will be replaced by a pod market and Subway, which will move from Crossroads. Faculty/staff meal plans are approximately $5 and delivery service is coming soon. Crossroads and the UC Food Court will be renovated, possibly next summer, in a multi-million dollar investment by Aramark. West campus housing will include a pod market and coffee option.

The bookstore will price match with Amazon for textbooks rentals, which equals 21% of sales for the bookstore. The bookstore will also have a presence in the new West campus housing. Mr. Forrest said there would be a re-brand of the Mocs card. Graphic Services contract is being rebid. The implementation of the Market Place has been good from a pricing standpoint but the system continues to be revised to make it user-friendly.

Electronic signatures will become the norm for all contracts, replacing paper forms. ESM Purchasing & Contract system is being implemented to enhance partnerships with new vendors, particularly minority-owned and small businesses through Chamber of Commerce events and state-wide events in Nashville and Knoxville.

UT manages all real dollars in a central cash pool, in excess of $1 billion, with state appropriations received monthly. The budget is not real dollars, Mr. Forrest explained, but ledgers and fund balances are. Every transaction ties back to the fund balance and every expense and revenue ties back to the fund balance. He added that it takes 6 weeks to close out the year.
Mr. Forrest said recent hires include David Seidel as Assistant Director of Parking Services; Anthony Storti as Surplus Assistant. Melissa Hays’ dual role includes Procurement and Contracts. Budget & Finance has moved to 203 Race Hall; Procurement to 202 Race Hall; and Surplus in 304 Administrative Services Building.

Mocs Game Review

Ms Lane, Ms Blevins, and Ms Perkins met with the Chancellor’s office to discuss the campus picnic. While the weather could not be controlled, tents were needed to provide shade. A picnic during Founder’s Week limited the number of employees who could attend. If anything other than box lunches are served, tables and chairs are needed. Chamberlain field could sponsor “Chillin’ at Chamberlain” similar to “Pops in the Park” for social time and networking opportunity. Ms Lane said the group would meet again in the next couple of months.

UPRAC Meeting

The Advisory Board was given a list of budget considerations to rank the top 7 but Ms Lane said it didn’t necessarily mean they would be the top 7 items funded. Overall the board ranked the following in terms of importance: # 1 – salary increases, performance based, requiring $2.1 million; # 2 – Academic Affairs support services in Continuing Education and International Affairs; # 3 – communication for recruiting and enrollment; # 4 – faculty hires to include start-up funding; # 5 – computer refresh; # 6 – Information Technology infrastructure refresh; # 7 – HR staffing. Seed funding would most likely be sought for a campus-wide wellness program.

Technology Advisory Council

Ms Pou and Ms Biggs serve on a subcommittee of the Technology Advisory Committee, which is focusing on technology around campus. By understanding what positions utilize certain types of technology this would identify competencies necessary for success within staff positions, assist with selection efforts for new staff, and identify development needs for current staff.

The survey was approved by the Technology Advisory Council and Executive Leadership Team. Surveys will begin with a distinct group of nonexempt positions, organized by division. Initial surveys are being conducted by I/O Psychology students and will be followed by focus groups. Research could possibly be tied into a Career Ladder program.

Ms Pou said job descriptions may be found on the UT Compensation site but there is little difference in the description of Administrative Support Assistant I, II, and III, although they are different pay grades. Such job descriptions could be replaced with competency based job descriptions – technical expertise, customer service, etc.

Next Meeting

Chancellor Angle is scheduled to speak at the November 17th meeting.
Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources