EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE & EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
June 19, 2013
Chickamauga Room, University Center

ERC Representatives and Alternates in attendance: Sue Carroll, Merrium Carver, Karla Evans, Cheryl Faulkner, Kelly Griffin, Valerah Hodges, June Knowles, Anna Lane, Debbie Mirra, Sue Stephens, Roberta Thurmond.

ESC Representatives and Alternates in attendance: Debbie Bell, Jean Dake, Amy Davis, Craig Hamilton, Bruce Hilbert, Cindy Hornsby, Tonia Martin, Virginia Moore, Chris Stokes, Karen Vann, Barbara Webb.

Others in attendance: Dan Webb, Director, Office of Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Office of Human Resources; Matt Ecie, Coordinator of HR Services, Office of Human Resources; Laure Pou, Manager of Talent Management Services, Office of Human Resources.

Call to Order: Mr. Webb called the meeting to order.

Guest: Carey Smith, Assistant Director for Advocacy, University of TN

Ms Smith, UT alumna, coordinates the UT Advocacy program in Nashville, which is the official grassroots network of the UT system. UT Advocacy’s objective is to empower and engage alumni, students, staff and faculty. Advocacy is easy, accessible, and meaningful and can influence the way a politician thinks about an issue and votes. Ms Smith urged members to let elected officials know that they care about the university and its value to all Tennesseans.

By joining UT Advocacy, members obtain UT News from the Hill; communications guide for contacting elected officials; weekly email reports during the legislative session. UT Advocacy tracks approximately 900 bills in one session, not all make headlines, to inform members about how an issue would affect the university and what they can do.

When contacting an elected official, members should know the issue that are advocating; be truthful; be genuine; be courteous, remembering that an elected official may vote their way on an issue next time; be brief, clear, concise, to the point; and always thank officials and staff for their time. Members may contact UT’s Government Relations and Advocacy team to learn about an issue, identify issue strategy, and receive help in how to connect with a legislator. Sometimes social media can be better than calling or emailing a legislative constituent; members can ‘friend’ their legislators on Facebook or follow them on Twitter.
In the first year, over 1,000 have joined UT Advocacy at http://advocacy.tennessee.edu and the listserv will not be sold. Ms Smith urged members to use their personal email to join. The Hatch Act prohibits the use of university resources to influence the outcome of an election. Members may disclose that they work for the university but be clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the university.

UT Advocacy does not have any working committees but UT has several legislative boards where sharing of information is key. There are lots of issues for next year’s session including legislation on student fees and a higher education package on the governor’s desk.

**ERAB Meeting**

Ms Martin attended the ERAB meeting, via videoconference, and reported that an increase of 1.5% from the state and .5% from UTC or $600, whichever is greater, would be effective July 1. Among other items discussed is a statewide roll-out next year of supervisory training for completing evaluations.

**Picnic**

Ms Martin attended a meeting to discuss plans for the annual campus picnic whose theme will be ‘Welcome New Chancellor’. There will be giveaways from ERC and ESC members to deliver to buildings, similar to last year, to advertise the picnic. VW will return for test drives. Craig Hamilton said he could have barrels available to collect canned goods for the Food Bank. Members are asked to sign up to work the Coke float wagon. Aramark will serve the meal.

**UT Employee Engagement Survey**

As the university expands both in size and numbers, members discussed ways to avoid depersonalization and increasing the number of opportunities to meet and socialize via training, picnics, informal get-togethers.

As a follow-up to last month’s retreat discussing the Employee Engagement Survey, Mr. Webb said the eight table representatives would meet again to develop a Work/Culture Improvement response for senior leadships.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Office of Human Resources