EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
February 21, 2013
Fortwood Room, University Center

Representatives and Alternates in attendance: Merrium Carver, Bonny Clark, Karla Evans, Cheryl Faulkner, Kelly Griffin, Valerah Hodges, Squoia Holmes, Anne Jay, Sandra Jones, Anna Lane, Debbie Mirra, Tiffany Pettyjohn, Jack Pitkin, Jordan Spencer, Cynthia Stanley-Cash, Sue Stephens, Roberta Thurmond, Alan West.

Others in attendance: Dan Webb, Director, Office of Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Office of Human Resources.

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

Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes from the December 6, 2012 meeting. (The ERC did not meet in January, 2013.)

Work Culture Improvement Initiative

Rich Boyer of ModernThink and Chancellor Bogue presented results from the 2011 Employee Engagement Survey to the campus in late March. Ten questions focused directly on the UT system dealing with support, diversity and compensation and now the university is comparing its info to benchmark schools.

The Work Culture Improvement Team was formed with broad representation from all divisions and believes the data should be used to focus on critical thinking, retention, and engagement. The Analysis Team include members whose expertise is in crunching numbers and interpreting data.

The communication model, which has been approved by the Executive Team, establishes the first level at the Vice Chancellor/Provost level and work with a team at the division level to determine the best way to communicate information with their subordinates. The next level would be communicating information from Dean to departments with 6 or more employees, to protect anonymity. Each department will be presented with their top 10 and bottom 10 statements with percentages showing scores; UTC overall; Honor Rolls (4 year universities with population greater than 10,000); Best Colleges Survey.

Mr. Webb said the value of the survey is to stimulate dialogue within the department and college and celebrate what can be done to the make the workplace even better and identify things to improve upon. A survey question about compensation is just one of the initiatives that is being taken very seriously by UTC administrators as they move all categories of employees closer to market value.
Equity adjustments in January for full professors with 25-30 years service were to address internal equity when compared to assistant or new professors. Approximately $100,000 was used for 640 employees.

Mr. Webb said Dr. Richard Brown has set aside another $100,000 for staff equity adjustments. The current rule of not exceeding 8% of the advertised minimum when hiring nonexempt staff has been discontinued. The challenge now is to move current staff closer to market value but there is a commitment from the Chancellor and Executive Team to do so. The methodology this time will be different as the amount includes benefits.

Links to the Strategic Plan survey and a comparison of the 2008 (in-house) and 2011 surveys will be posted on the ERC website. Another survey will be distributed in 2014.

Employee Relations Advisory Board Meeting

Members are urged to submit agenda items to Ms Griffin by next week.

Cookbook

Ms Hodges gave an update of cookbook sales. Approx 40 were sold in December with 380 remaining for sale. The Chancellor paid upfront for shipping & handling costs of $4,577.48. The cookbook originally sold for $25 and has been marked down to $12.50. The cost to publish was $7.99. Another promotion will be made around Mother’s Day.

Ms Hodges will speak with Dr. Brown’s office about forgiving some of the debt.

Other Issues

The Board of Trustees meets February 28 at UTC and will announce the new Chancellor, who should assume the position by July 1. Ms Faulkner served on the selection committee and said the last time they met was January 28.

The budget planning process has started and the governor has proposed a 1.5% across-the-board increase, 60% funded by the state and 40% by the university. It is hoped that campuses will work towards adding some additional monies to that.

A member asked why the Network & Learn events for administrative support staff are limited to 48 attendees. There are some constraints to the number due to space and the nature of the program. The intent is to provide opportunities for training and professional development and networking. STAR Achievement will also be rolled out this year, according to Ms Griffin.

March 15 is the deadline for the Partners for Health health assessment.
Next Meeting

The next meeting is March 21, 2013 @ 2:00.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources