EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

May 21, 2009
Heritage Room, University Center

Members attending: Joyce Blevins, Debby Corey, Julia Cronin, Kelly Griffin, Valerah Hodges, Ken Hood, Anne Jay, Jack Pitkin, Nancy Tolar, Liz Walker.

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

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

Minutes: Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the April 16 meeting.

Blue Ribbon Awards:
- March 2009: Miles Ledford, Campus Recreation
- April 2009: Liz Walker, Health & Human Performance

Guests: Janet Spraker, Director of Facilities Engineering Services
Chuck Cantrell, Assistant Vice Chancellor, University Relations

Part of Tennessee’s appropriations bill, slated for votes June 18, may allot as much as $15 million in Federal Stimulus monies to UTC. These funds are for one-time expenditures or projects that will find a permanent funding source within 2 years. Although this is good news the university must still cut $6 million from its permanent budget. Ms Spraker said among the projects identified for possible stimulus monies use are classrooms with dedicated space, renovations of some spaces, and a space utilization study.

Current projects include: boiler maintenance; repairs of main entrance on McCallie Avenue and removal of boxwoods, which were dying; removal of floor tile in the cafeteria due to non-adherence to the subfloor; reconfiguration of the cafeteria to prevent theft; electrical project with switches and fees; 3-sided kiosk at top of Cardiac Hill; renovation of Metro’s west side, which should be completed by fall. The 2nd phase of Metro renovation will involve removing the outer layer of the building and annex. The #1 capital maintenance project is Grote Hall, which has been bid and should be completed by Fall, 2010.

The university is seeking a certificate of occupancy next week for the Student Recreation Center or ARC (Aquatic and Recreation Center), which is 2 months behind schedule. Designs for the pool are now with the State Fire Marshall for review. Mr. Cantrell said the outside white wall visible from the street is one of the inside walls of the pool. Staging will start in the fall at Arena Gate A and the trailer, which is currently being used as storage, will be removed. Faculty and staff will be charged $120 for 6 months to use the new complex.

Ms Spraker is meeting with architects to discuss the window assemblies of the Engineering building, which flooded the building during Hurricane Ivan with 2 inches of water. She also met recently with Cornerstones to discuss the university’s plans for South Stadium. The structure is unsafe and current plans include removal of the turrets and caps. Eventually the building could be replaced with one of a similar design. The flagpole at Fletcher Hall was removed for safety reasons and the satellite dish at Grote is no longer in use and will be removed.
The exterior rendering of the new library, built on Lot 3 at the corner of Douglas and Vine, will be revealed tomorrow with a traditional look and will be LEED certified. The current library space may house some student services and Fine Arts Center expansion on the first floor. Chamberlain Field is the current practice site for Women’s Volleyball and may be converted to green space. Intramurals are held at Engel Stadium.

The university has purchased Bryan Funeral Home and when it assumes control, Yellow Deli patrons will not be allowed to use the lot because it will be needed for university faculty, staff, and students. A parking garage and offices may be considered in the future for the space. A new parking garage at Lot 4, at the tennis courts at Houston and Vine Streets, will provide 500-600 spaces.

Mr. Cantrell said the UT Board will meet in June and vote to raise the minimum ACT score from 18 to 19 and change the acceptance deadline from August 1 to June 1. This would allow better planning in arranging additional classes needed.

A member asked if students would be housed in hotels at the beginning of the school year. Mr. Cantrell said administrators did not expect UTC Place to fill to capacity within 5 years; it will take at least 18 months to construct new housing to meet the growing need for on-campus student residence. Pfeiffer-Stagmaier is a traditional dorm but cannot be used any longer for this purpose because it does not meet current fire code regulations. The university may seek to build a traditional style dorm next. As the university shifts to more of a residential campus, members discussed the popularity of adding vending machines with hot meals at UTC Place, pizza delivery by Aramark, or RedBox (movie rental).

A developer announced plans last year to construct a fraternity row at Central Avenue near the Cavalier Corporation. Mr. Cantrell said the university told the developer that it could not accept responsibility for food, maintenance, and security.

Mr. Cantrell said Ghost Hunters recently made audio recordings from midnight to 4:30 a.m. in Patten Chapel and Hooper Hall and was told there were several occurrences. Mr. Pitkin said several people have incorrectly identified the International Space Station (ISS) as a UFO. He said the ISS takes 5 minutes to cross the horizon and looks like a bright star.

**Tobacco Surcharge**

The state will impose a $50/month surcharge for employees who subscribe to health insurance and use tobacco beginning January 1, 2010. Employees will declare tobacco use/non-use during Annual Enrollment. Mr. Webb said employees who quit using tobacco products may apply for a quitter’s refund.

One member felt strongly that the state was imposing limitations on what they could or could not do. Some wondered if the state would impose a surcharge on obese employees next. Mr. Webb said the state, which is self-insured, is seeking to address health care costs and has noted that tobacco users access health care services more than non-users.

**Electronic Pay Advices**

Paper pay advices will be discontinued starting August 1. Employees will receive an email with a link to a secure portal to access their pay advice using a Net ID/password. Mr. Webb said training sessions would be held. Departmental specialists may help employees in Housing, Arena, and Facilities who do not receive email.
Other Issues

- Ms Hodges will attend the Employee Relations Advisory Board meeting on June 3 via videoconference.
- Ms Hodges said she would discuss with Sue Carroll resuming the ‘buddy system’ between new employees and the ERC.
- Mr. Webb said there has been no more discussion of furloughs. He said it would be hard to administer and would not be a permanent reduction to the budget.
- Mr. Webb said the Training Advisory Group would have a training promotion this fall similar to the Chancellor’s Challenge.
- STAR Achievement, for administrative support personnel, will be offered in the spring. Kelly Griffin is certified to facilitate the program.

Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist
Human Resources