EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
November 15, 2012
Fortwood Room, University Center

Representatives and Alternates in attendance: Merrium Carver, Cheryl Faulkner, Kelly Griffin, Valerah Hodges, Squoia Holmes, Anne Jay, June Knowles, Anna Lane, Debbie Mirra, Jack Pitkin, Jeanine Snowden, Sue Stephens, Roberta Thurmond, Jean Walston.

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 of the October 18th meeting.

Guest: Dr. Jeff Elwell, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Elwell holds a Ph. D. in Theatre and is a published playwright, previously served as Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at East Carolina University. That college had 150 full-time faculty as compared to UTC’s College of Arts and Sciences, which is the largest academic unit with 17 departments and 280 full-time faculty. Although East Carolina is approximately the same age as UTC (126 years), the culture is very different from UTC’s.

The Faculty Senate has been discussing the issue of General Education. Dr. Elwell said he believes that General Education courses should offer depth and breadth, no matter what the student’s major is. The university must determine what it will take to grow online, as UTC is well behind other universities in the state in its online offerings, which have unlimited virtual capacity. A new Life Sciences building, with an estimated cost of $59 million, is ranked #4 for UT capital projects. Construction could begin in Fall, 2017 with UT providing monies for planning.

Attracting new students can be done by offering amenities such as a recreation center, food court, etc., but engagement can be accomplished by reducing the number of adjunct instructors. Many adjuncts teach at other institutions and don’t maintain regular office hours. A dean will be hired for the Honors College will not have faculty reporting directly to him/her. As the college grows, faculty from Arts & Sciences will pick up additional classes.

Dr. Elwell has spent time reviewing practices and ensuring that signed contracts and performance reviews are received by his office on time. Faculty are evaluated under the rules of the faculty handbook and procedures developed by the Dean’s and Provost’s office. Staff are evaluated yearly and Mr. Webb added that the UT system is concerned about developing a better performance management system. UT policy
requires that all regular faculty and staff receive a yearly performance review.

Compensation Plan

Staff received a 2.5% increase or $1,000, whichever is greater, this past July and additional monies were set aside for "Keep the Stars Shining" bonus pool. An additional pool of money has been identified to address market/equity increases; increases will be retroactive to July 1.

The Sibson study has found that the majority of employees paid below market value are nonexempt employees. This year’s Equity Plan will devote the majority of its resources to moving our lowest paid non-exempt staff closer to a market competitive salary. The principal goal of this year’s adjustment is to ensure that staff with 1 year’s service are paid at 75% of market value and 66% of staff, or 166 employees, will receive an adjustment. [Longevity, CAP (formerly CPS) and academic degree increases, and the 2007 bonus that have been added to the base were not included for market comparison.] The PI or department head that supervises grant-funded positions have been notified of employees that meet the Plan criteria to receive equity increases. Grants don’t always have money for adjustments but usually put in a request for the next grant cycle to make adjustments later.

Most organizations also have a major performance component; UT is attempting to devote more compensation to merit-based pay. Additionally, the university increases pay for obtaining the CAP and is viewing other certifications that add value to the job. It is hoped that monies will be available later for more equity adjustments.

Employee Engagement Survey

The Employee Engagement Survey was completed last year by regular faculty and staff at all campuses with a 62% response rate. A majority of employees responded that they are proud of the institution. Data from the survey has been broken down by colleges and departments and will be disseminated by the Work/Culture Improvement Team to them to learn of areas of improvement and areas they excel at.

Other Issues

Ms Lane said the new library is on track to open Feb/March 2014.

Ms Griffin and Ms Hodges announced that the cookbook will be sold 2/$25 in the bookstore this month, hoping to generate sales of the cookbook as Christmas presents.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is December 6 with Chancellor Grady Bogue as the guest speaker.
Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources