EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

October 16, 2008
Fortwood Room, University Center

Members attending: Joyce Blevins, Deanna Cameron, Sue Carroll, Cheryl Faulkner, Jeannie Hill, Valerah Hodges, Anne Jay, Anna Lane, Joyce Powell, Nancy Tolar, Liz Walker, Jean Walston.

Others in attendance: Chuck Cantrell, Assistant Vice Chancellor, University Relations; 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 September 18th meeting.

Blue Ribbon Award for September 2008: Kelly Locke, Geology

Guest: Dawn Blackwell, Service Line Manager, Erlanger Medical Center

Ms Blackwell is the Project Coordinator for University Health Services, a partnership between Erlanger, UTC, and the UT College of Medicine. Erlanger was chosen, among bids submitted to the university in June, to provide health care services for faculty, staff and students beginning August 2008. The contract extends for 13 years.

University Health Services is located on campus at the student health center. It will shift to the UT Family Practice building, at the corner of Central and 3rd Streets, on January 1, 2009 and is accessible via the MOCs Express. Appointments are accepted but not required.

When an individual is seen, he/she will make the copay required by insurance and University Health Services will bill the insurance company. If a subspecialty physician, diagnostic testing or major/minor surgery is required; Erlanger can provide services at the main, East or North campuses. Staff seen in the E. R. should identify themselves as affiliated with UTC. A primary care physician (PCP) will be assigned if he/she does not have one in order to receive follow-up care.

Some communication problems have been encountered with the transition, which are being addressed. By speaking to the ERC, ESC, and Faculty Senate, Ms Blackwell wants to make everyone aware that healthcare services are available for faculty and staff in addition to students. Members may email questions/concerns to Ms Sadler who will contact Ms Blackwell.

Budget Issues

The university has been notified of a 2% cut to the current fiscal year, effective January 1, 2009. A 3-5% reduction in the 2009-2010 budget year is possible; however, President Petersen has stated that programs critical to the core mission of the university will not be cut.
Vice Chancellors have been notified the university’s budget must be reduced. Responses will be submitted on November 15 and Chancellor Brown will review Vice Chancellors’ proposals, formulate campus plan, and forward his plan to Dr. Peterson before December 10.

University administrators met November 3 with Anthony Haynes, UT lobbyist in Nashville, and met previously with UT’s lobbyist in Washington. Budget cuts could affect short-term projects.

Governor Bredesen has stated that tuition cannot be raised to cover cuts to the budget. The university will try to generate more dollars through fundraising and revenue-generating units. The public phase of the Capital Campaign has begun and a fund drive is being conducted by WUTC.

Approximately 80% of the university’s budget is in personnel and any major reduction in spending must consider cuts in personnel. However, at this point, Mr. Cantrell indicated, there are no plans for RIFs (reduction in force). The Chancellor and senior administrators want to preserve positions of current staff, although some vacant positions may be eliminated or hiring deferred. Outsourcing of various campus operations will be considered among various strategies for cost curtailment; however, Mr. Cantrell pointed out that the outsourcing of any major function would not produce immediate cost reductions as its implementation would take at least a year, if not more. Hiring restrictions are in place, which Mr. Cantrell said is a smart business move anytime, not just during an economic crisis. Decisions on the filling of vacant positions will be based on the “mission-critical” nature of the position. Cuts will likely affect the implementation of the campus Strategic Plan although there is talk of setting some monies for parts of the plan, in order that the campus may move forward toward strategic objectives.

Another challenge for the university is an increasing enrollment; 12,500 students can be accommodated at this time though there are only 3,300 beds. UTC is no longer a commuter college and must look at increasing class size as well as offering additional class times. Mr. Cantrell said that Chattanooga State offers a class that meets from 1-4 A.M. that is filled.

Chattanooga State has the contract for on-site line education with Volkswagen while UTC is working to fill needs for engineering, computer science, education, business, and foreign language. VW officials are impressed with the Sim Center, particularly their work with aerodynamics and fuel economy, and the hydrogen fuel cell test center. VW is very interested in exploring hydrogen as an alternative fuel.

UTC has purchased Bryan Funeral Home and will take possession of the property soon. The lot will provide parking spaces for the university; patrons of the Yellow Deli will not be allowed to park in the lot. Members discussed the lack of parking on campus especially as construction of a new library begins soon. The library will not have a garage underneath it and parking will be limited to 5-6 handicapped spaces, according to Ms Lane.

The American Red Cross and Salvation Army buildings are not within the university’s footprint. The UC Foundation owns the Doctor’s Building and tenants were offered a 10 year lease upon purchase that will pay for the building before UTC assumes ownership and renovates it.

Bursar’s Office will move to the University Center in December. A wall separating Adult Services and Mocs Express will be removed to enlarge the
area for Bursar. Adult Services will move to 1st floor, near the Atrium, along with some staff members in Admissions and Financial Aid to provide a one-stop shop.

Ms Faulkner said Continuing Education is working with faculty in the College of Business to develop a brochure of classes that are most needed. A minimum of 10 students is required in order to pay the instructor. In an economic downturn, Mr. Cantrell said college enrollment increases for returning students and adult students as well as new students. UTC is reasonably priced costing less than $10,000 a year to attend.

**Training**

Ms Lane, Chair, said a focus similar to the ‘Chancellor’s Challenge’ for training would be initiated in the spring. More information will be forthcoming.

Mr. Webb said the campus TAG Committee is discussing training for compliance and legal issues. An IDP (Individualized Development Plan) would identify training that an employee needs to perform their job and would be attached to the SPDR (Staff Performance & Development Review).

Ms Lane met with Mr. Webb, Ms Sadler, Jina Johnson, April Matthews, Jan Arp, and Terry Zimmer to discuss IRIS training. When IRIS was implemented, training was delivered by peers; some individuals became ‘super users’ offering assistance to others in their college/division. Mr. Webb said there was discussion of a forum that would meet every month or two on specialized functions. Some felt there was also a need for ‘cheat sheets’ although the IRIS website contains extensive documentation.

Ms Lane urged members to contact her about training they would like to see offered.

**Issues/Concerns**

- **SACS Committee** member, Karen Adsit, emailed Ms Hodges seeking members of the ERC to serve as contact person for the following committees: Quality Enhancement; Compliance Certification; Logistics & Support. Ms Lane will serve and two more members are needed.

- **Chancellor’s Christmas Party** for ERC members will be December 3 from 6 – 8:30 P.M. at the Chancellor’s residence on Lookout Mountain. Dinner will be served.

- **Staples Open House** will be held November 5 from 1 – 3 P.M. in Chattanooga Rooms B & C.

**Adjournment**

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist
Human Resources