

EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL MEETING

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
March 16, 2016
Fortwood Room, University Center

Members attending: Twyler Boykin, Kim Brooks, Nicole Brown, Belinda Brownlee, Amy Davis, Christine Estoye, Angie Johnson, Tonia Martin, Lindsey Pearse, Chris Sherbesman, Charity Trillet, Carling Wilson.

Others in attendance: Andrew Clark, UT Foundation Representative for Development & Alumni; Laure Pou, Interim Director, Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources.

Call to order: Ms Martin called the meeting to order.

Approval of minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the February meeting with a correction, to read: The next ESC meeting will be March 16th.

Guest: Laura Cagle, Coordinator of Programs & Events, Office of the Chancellor

Clean and Green, sponsored by River City Corporation, is Chattanooga's annual cleanup event for downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Staff are encouraged to sign up at www.cleanandgreenchattanooga.com and designate UTC as their team. Ms Cagle said they are hoping for a large turnout on April 23rd as last year's event was rained out. Staff will receive a blue and gold T-shirt at check-in at 8 am and the event should end at noon.

Guest: Ann Yoachim, Director of Community Partnerships, Office of the Chancellor

Since being hired July 1, Ms Yoachim said she is still defining her role and identifying new partnerships, to give the university a more visual presence in Chattanooga. Much of her work has been focused on engaging faculty with service projects and research and connecting and recognizing student groups. Ms Martin said as the CRM Administrator, she is trying to connect employment and volunteer experiences of incoming students.

In the next 3-6 months, Ms Yoachim said by working with Kirk Englehardt, Vice Chancellor of Marketing & Communication, she would identify ways to recognize staff for their volunteer efforts. A member noted that staff often get left out when it comes to research and publications and don't often get recognition. Ms Yoachim replied that she would like to return to another ESC meeting to gather more information and could send questions ahead of time to Ms Martin to distribute.

The university is actively engaged in conversations with Chattanooga 2.0, an initiative to improve academic excellence in Hamilton County. Ms Yoachim said she would like to engage neighborhoods downtown and identify new partnerships. She asked members to contact her if they wonder why the university is not involved in an issue in their neighborhood.

ERAB Meeting

Ms Martin will attend the Employee Relations Advisory Boarding meeting in

Knoxville on March 22. The governor's proposal to view outsourcing of facilities statewide will most likely be a topic of discussion and could be a question for Dr. Angle's visit to the ESC next month.

FLSA Threshold changes

Ms Pou said proposed changes by the Department of Labor to the exempt threshold are expected in July or August. The current threshold is \$23,600 and proposed to \$50,440. Such a change would affect benefits, leave accruals, and timekeeping and the UT system has committees - training, communication, and general issues - that have already met to discuss the impact. When enacted, the university will have 100 days to comply. Another proposal of the legislation is an adjustment for cost of living.

As of March 4, 220 exempt staff have salaries below the threshold, including Assistant Directors, Associate Directors, and some Directors. Spreadsheets are being updated monthly of those who might be impacted and the list could change depending upon the new salary threshold. Communication with senior leadership will take place and open sessions with individuals impacted by the change and training for managers will be held. Managers could propose alternate scheduling options or limit the amount of overtime and comp time or use flex time. Proposed changes will also impact federally funded programs because staff are university employees.

System has discussed several options such as grandfathering, not grandfathering, or hybrid approach to leave accrual changes. A hybrid plan would allow approximately 15 month period for transition period for using annual leave over the maximum allowed for nonexempt employees. Ms Pou said whatever is decided would be a system wide approach with each campus doing the same thing. When asked if salaries would be bridged, Ms Pou responded the cost to move exempt staff to the threshold would cost approximately \$2 million.

Ms Pou said it was important to note that changes are not a demotion or the directive of UT, but a mandated change to federal law. Ms Martin said she has discussed with Dr. Richard Brown the need for UPRAC to discuss the proposed changes. It is unknown how this would impact the makeup of the ERC and ESC as there may not be a division between the employee relations groups for representational purposes.

ESC By-Laws

A subcommittee met to review by-laws and recommended amending Section B, # 1, *Such representational units shall be established such that there will be at least one representative and one alternate per approximately 10% of the overall number of regular exempt staff members at UTC, with exceptions made by the ESC as needed.* With no discussion, a motion was made and seconded to accept the change. The amendment passed.

Elections and Retreat

Ms Sadler said she expects to send electronic ballots the first week of April. The retreat for outgoing and incoming representatives and alternates is scheduled May 20th. An Outlook invite will be sent later.

Other Business

Ms Pou reminded members that Staff Performance Reviews are due in Human Resources by March 31st, who will enter them into IRIS before system reports are sent to the Chancellor and Executive Team. SPDRs should have a total of three signatures; the employee, supervisor, and next level administrator.

Haven training for faculty and staff must be completed by March 31st. Employees will receive a follow-up email to complete a brief survey 30 days after completing the module.

Several housing complexes are being constructed next to campus. Ms Wilson asked members to direct students to her if they have a need for housing.

Next meeting

Chancellor Angle and Richard Brown will be guests at the next meeting April 20th. Ms Martin asked members to allow 2 hours for the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources