

## **EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL MEETING**

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
Wednesday, September 20, 2017  
Fortwood Room, University Center

**Members attending:** Twyler Boykin, Eddrick Brooks, Amy Davis, Christine Estoye, Lindsey Greiner, Angie Johnson, Tonia Martin, Chris Sherbesman, Barbara Webb.

**Others in attendance:** Laure Pou, Executive Director, Human Resources; Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, Human Resources.

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

**Minutes:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Chancellor's Blue Ribbon Awards:**

- May 2017: Sandy Zitkus and Rebecca Dragoo, Office of Records
- June 2017: Aaron Grisham, University Center
- July 2017: Corey McGraw and David Tuggle, Facilities Planning

### **Guest: Dr. Rob Liddell, Director, University Career Services**

Dr. Liddell was hired in February 2017 to lead Career & Student Employment that has been re-branded and reintroduced as University Career Services. By placing University Career Services under the umbrella of Enrollment Services, it ensures that activities and services are being talked about with new students. Freshmen are encouraged to attend career fairs to speak with employers and while they are not ready to be hired, it provides an opportunity to learn about different careers.

To help deploy the department's efforts, a Career Development Alliance has been formed that meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month at 10 a.m. This inclusive group includes those who enjoy working with students as the group tries to identify common paths and obstacles that students might experience.

Students learn about Career Services through Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, and signs placed around campus but the most effective way is through establishing relationships with clubs and organizations, affinity groups, and faculty members. An ESC member said a targeted message for adjuncts can be sent through Banner. Susan Lazenby sets up the listserv although they were not sure who owned the listserv.

One focus of the department is on career education to help students understand that the work environment experienced by their parents and grandparents has changed. Individuals no longer stay in the same community and work for the same employer for 30-35 years. Research has suggested that students educated at UTC will have 12-15 jobs throughout their lifetime.

A second focus is career exploration to help students explore and better align their brand with some key areas, such as critical thinking and problem solving, oral/written communication, teamwork, collaboration, information technology application, leadership, professionalism/work ethic, career management, and global/intercultural fluency. As employers continue to shape their preferred candidate pool, the university wants to make sure that career programming fills

the gap.

The third focus is career connections partnership with active and engaged experiential learning environments, developing a strong network by starting early, to help students conduct beneficial interviews. University Career Services provides many networking opportunities through a non-profit networking event, teacher recruitment day, STEM focus career fair and other career fairs. Dr. Liddell said he'd like to move away from the term "career fair" and instead talk about networking. The career fair was held the second week of classes. A part-time career fair was held this year but most positions had already been filled.

Ms Greiner said the School of Nursing sponsors an Allied Health Fair for high school students but she isn't sure if it's connected to University Career Services. Another member said their department, Campus Recreation, encourages students to apply for graduate assistantships. Dr. Liddell said by speaking with high school students about for a career, it makes for meaningful experiences and help students clarify their goals.

Progressive enhancement of external events through pre-event workshops, resume clinics and how to dress for an interview, could benefit all students. Other needs include partnering with a robust internship portal would provide students a better understanding of needs in the community; collaborating with UTC partners and building a database of experts; internships to identify talent; providing a self-paced certificate program where students may brand themselves to appeal to individual students or organizations. Next efforts include creating career tracks and expanding regionally.

When asked about the biggest barrier for the department's initiatives, Dr. Liddell responded the clarity of focus. Within each college are success centers with the College of Business moving early to construct a career services center. A more successful model starts at the center and then grows outward. Student preparation is slightly better at UTC with many students desiring to remain in Chattanooga. The university is moving towards a culture of assessment with a "students first" mentality, identifying students who are struggling to find purpose or struggling academically. From a resource perspective, the physical location of University Career Services, can be a hindrance as the department is located between Student Conduct and Counseling Center.

Graduate students are more concerned about connections and the UT system employs a career services individual that provides career tracks, individual mentoring, and professional development through mock interviews. Dr. Liddell said he is eager to start developing a relationship to leverage with the Alumni office.

Recruitment efforts underway include a career counselor and assistant director for employer relations, who would work with companies and organizations within SE TN, and eventually nationally so employers would recruit at UTC. Current departmental staff include Donna Cooper, Asst Director, who has an operational focus; Marc Holcomb who was a career generalist and is now the Program Coordinator to articulate the department's brand and outreach; Jan Michaels who serves as administrative support.

Some programs already have strong partnerships with employers such as Psychology partnering with Shaw Industries and College of Engineering partnering with TVA. Dr. Liddell said he wants the university to be engaged and embedded in the community and is looking for partnerships and opportunities to work with employers. Chattanooga 2.0 has lots of interesting things and through a needs

assessment, staffing would define where UTC can fill positions through collaboration and partnerships.

#### **Mocs Game Update**

Ms Martin said a date has not been announced for rescheduling of the Mocs Game that was cancelled due to inclement weather. Some members suggested scheduling during fall break, Halloween, or combining with a Thanksgiving lunch.

#### **Parking Focus Group**

Members are urged to complete the survey if they attended the parking presentation. The parking plan must be approved before communication efforts begin to implement the new plan in Fall, 2018.

#### **Safety & Risk Management Input**

Tim Pridemore has requested that members complete an emergency planning survey and attend stakeholder presentations on October 3 and 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Employee Relations Advisory Board Meeting**

Ms Martin did not attend the meeting in Knoxville due to inclement weather but joined via phone. The proposed inclement weather policy was reviewed by HR officers and they weren't sure the policy was needed. The ERAB said some campuses do not allow flexibility to use annual leave but this should bring awareness of the issue even if the policy is not approved. The HR officers did not say the issue could not go forward to the Compensation Advisory Board (CAB) but the HROs did not recommend the policy.

The remainder of the meeting was discussion of bonuses or merit increases and a fair way to implement merit. A 3% merit pool would affect someone making \$60K versus a \$30K employee. There are concerns across most of the campuses regarding performance evaluations and there will be changes to the performance instrument, although no timeline was given. A system-wide review of job families is underway and it is anticipated by 2019, job families and job titles could look completely different.

Ms Pou said there is a concern of compression issues when the university advances the minimum hourly rate. Merit is implied to acknowledge performance and designed to create a variance that was not there before. It becomes a complex situation when we are being equitable to the market. UTC in general is moving toward pay for performance but must be able to anticipate compression issues. In the past, bonuses were a one-time payment.

#### **FLSA Update**

Ms Pou said the proposed FLSA exempt threshold of \$47,476 is still on hold. Another comment period has been opened by the government not necessarily focusing on salary but a duties test and will be reviewed from multiple angles about the way nonexempt work is defined. No timeline is known for when President Trump will review it.

The university is applying the duties test to positions that were borderline because of salary and that were transitioned back to nonexempt. Split staff could transition to nonexempt or others could return to exempt status and this has been a system-wide approach as of August 8<sup>th</sup>. At UTC, there are 14 positions

that were previously exempt and transitioned to nonexempt. In the next 45 days, HR will revisit those positions and decide what to do with them.

**Next ESC Meeting**

Chancellor Angle is scheduled to speak at the next ESC meeting on October 18<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 in the Fortwood Room, University Center. Members should send questions to Ms Martin approximately one week before the meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler  
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources