The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Exempt Staff Council Meeting
January 17, 2012
Fortwood Room, University Center

Members attending: Tonya Botts, Cindy Carroll, Sandy Cole, Jean Dake, Amy Davis, Laura Herron, Bruce Hilbert, Susan Lazenby, Tonia Martin, Heather Wilson.

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

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

Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the December meeting.

Guest: Dr. Jerald Ainsworth, Dean, Graduate School

Dr. Ainsworth joined the university in November, 2010. At that time, there were few Graduate Assistants and stipends were low. Assistantships have been increased this year by 11 and stipends increased $600, from $5,500 to $6,100. Using a 3 year phase-in plan, stipends will be increased to $7,500 and the number of Graduate Assistants will increase to 100.

Teaching and research graduate assistants are exempt from taxation, according to IRS regulations, making it crucial to correctly classify GAs. Dr. Ainsworth said Graduate Assistantships are generally designed to advance the education of the particular graduate student in their field of study. Graduate Assistantships are, therefore, generally associated with assisting faculty in their field in teaching of scholarly research rather than service in clerical work. Additionally, GAs are generally limited to working no more than 20 hours a week, although some can work 20 hours and teach 10 hours.

One of the Graduate School’s priorities has been to review grading policies. Letter grades were given in the past, which Dr. Ainsworth said are not used by most institutions. Dissertations and thesis grading are now uniform. Beginning July, 2011, students will receive a format after defending thesis and dissertations, which will result in a better product. Workshops are held every semester to discuss how to format. The GSA is being re-invigorated with a representative from the Graduate School to provide guidance. Dr. Karen Adsit is member of the Graduate School Council, which is reviewing technology and more online offerings.

Degree Works, which interacts with Banner, is expected to roll out at the end of February and will make it easier for advisers and students to understand classes needed for their degree.
A doctorate in Occupational Therapy, beginning in 2013, has been verbally approved by Dr. DiPietro, approved by the Graduate Council, and will be sent to fully faculty and UT system. Dr. Ainsworth said he is hopeful that other graduate degrees will be offered. He praised the DPT program whose students received a 100% pass on boards; Nurse Anesthetist received a 100% pass; FMP received a 100% pass; Athletic Training program pass rate was very high. The Honors College should not have a major effect on graduate education.

Dr. Ainsworth said he personally believes the university should have a Health Sciences building, which is not a reflection on how things are done now. By doing so, UTC could highlight the differences in requirements for Education vs. Allied Health programs and be a drawing-card for the university.

A member said they thought it would be helpful for staff to receive information on entering graduate school. Dr. Ainsworth said he would take it under advisement and recommended they contact a Liaison Officer in the Graduate School. To comply with the new IRS guidelines, graduate fee waivers in excess of $5,250 will be taxed unless courses are required by the employer or serve to improve job skills in their present job.

Taleo

Mr. Webb said Taleo will ‘go-live’ on January 18th for regular staff, exempt and nonexempt, positions. Applications will be released electronically after 7 business days. Exempt positions will have one-stop with the Office of Equity & Diversity, which will approve the applicant pool.

E-verify

As of January 1, state law requires verification of employment status for all new hires. E-verify is a Federal database that checks the status using I-9s. Verifications must be done within 3 days from date of hire but can be done any time after an employee accepts a job offer.

ESC Elections

Elections will be held in March/April with new representatives installed in May. A sub-committee, with members to be determined, will review groups in late February prior to ballots being drawn up.

Reorganization of Continuing Education

Ms Botts said Dr. Adsit has been named Dean of Lifelong Learning and Ginny Reese named Director of Continuing Education. Ms. Botts, Aaron Shoemaker, Erin Noseworthy, and Evan Gross will report to the Director of Online/Distance Learning.
Discussion of Meeting Dates/Times

Ms Herron emailed members to gauge a more convenient date/time to meet. Those who responded prefer the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist
Office of Human Resources