EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL MEETING
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
July 18, 2011
Fortwood Room, University Center


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

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

Minutes: Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes of the June 20th meeting.

Guest: Cindee Pulliam, Director, Auxiliary Services

Campus Crossroads, located in Guerry Center, is undergoing renovation into an all-you-can-eat facility, seating 376. Ms Pulliam said most universities already offer this option.

Crossroads will have a soft opening of August 1, providing time for workers to train before classes begin. Ms Pulliam suggested that folks try to avoid eating at noon and during the first week of classes. Although designed for freshmen, the facility will be open to everyone and should alleviate overcrowding at the Food Court. There will be no changes to the Food Court this year. Subway will maintain its location in Guerry Center, with a separate entrance and will be open until midnight.

Faculty and staff will pay a flat rate at Crossroads but the rate will differ depending upon the meal - breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Food will be offered at different stations - breakfast bar, salad/fruit bar, wood-fired pizza, ice cream, grill, and home zone. There will also be some exhibition cooking and different venues. Crossroads will be open 7 am to 8 pm. Takeout is not allowed.

Ms Pulliam said 1,800 freshmen are required to select from 1 of 3 meal plans, at a cost of $1,312.50 per semester. Plans include Unlimited; Weekly, offering 14 meals/week; Block, offering 160 meals/semester. The university is finalizing a commuter meal plan but it will be taxable, according to state law.

Parking is still a challenge at the beginning of the fall semester, despite the acquisition of 2 lots this year from UNUM. The lot behind MacLellan Gym should be reopened this fall. Additional spaces have been added at Engel along with signage to let students know when a bus will arrive. Students and staff may view the bus tracker on CARTA’s website for arrival times, including city buses.
Students have requested buses running until 8:30 pm, when evening classes end, and an abbreviated route in the summer from 8:00-3:00. The university has ongoing discussion with CARTA about extending shuttle hours. Ms Pulliam said some students enjoy parking at Engel and riding the shuttle instead of searching for parking on campus.

A member asked if folks could pay hourly for the E. 5th Street garage or if it was available only to decal holders. Ms Pulliam said no decision has been made yet; the garage remains full from 8:30-1:30 with over 400 decals have been sold.

The Campus Master Plan has a push to increase parking although planners say the ratio is higher than at other universities. There is excess parking even with faculty, staff, and students enrolled at peak hours though it may not be convenient and people may not be able to park in the lot they want to. Two consultants have conducted parking studies and reported no parking problems but stated there is a perception of lack of parking.

The Parking Authority has discussed the possibility of establishing a lot for visitors to Admissions and Financial Aid, although no decision has been made. They are also viewing different mixes of lots and limiting the number of decals sold.

Continual complaints exist from Fortwood, Battery Place, and ML King areas about students parking in the neighborhoods. Ms Pulliam said urban universities with adjacent neighborhoods will have parking problems. Not allowing freshmen to bring cars to campus would make for a recruiting problem and many students need a car to drive to work. She added that Vanderbilt and Western KY University experience the same problems. However, Vanderbilt does not allow freshmen to have cars and they also have a great impact on their neighbors, who do not seem to mind.

The bookstore has been remodeled and textbook rentals now occupy the space that previously housed the popular reading section. Rentals, which started last year at 50% of the cost of new textbooks, may not be available if the textbook is custom or has a component. Very few rental textbooks were not returned. While there are some online books, they are not inexpensive.

State and Federal laws require disclosure of the price of textbooks. Faculty must acknowledge and agree to the price of a textbook before adoption. The university does not adopt textbooks for multi-year period, except Chemistry. When students register through Banner, they are asked if they want to rent a textbook. The deadline for students to return textbooks is printed on every receipt.
Employee Relations Advisory Board Meeting

Ms Dake attended the Employee Relations Advisory Board meeting, via videoconference, on June 27. Among the items for discussion were:

- 3% (or $1,000 minimum, whichever is greater) across the board, effective July 1, and 1% non-recurring bonus pool for Chattanooga. Staff must be on payroll by June 30 to receive the across-the-board increase.
- $50 million in stimulus funds will be eliminated from the university’s budget.
- Request for a vision plan as part of the health insurance plans. Rob Chance, Director of Payroll, serves on the state insurance committee and will state that UT is interested in vision care coverage for its employees.
- Request to add HMO under the health insurance plans. UT administrators said the plan is too expensive to sustain.
- Question regarding fiscal policy for retirement receptions.
- Employee Engagement Survey will be conducted later this fall.
- Insurance co-pays for employees in smaller towns, such as Martin, might mean employees incur higher costs since they are sent to multiple doctors for diagnosis and charged individually for each doctor, location, etc. Rob Chance said this could happen in any town and co-pays are not based on geographic location.

The next ERAB meeting will be face-to-face on September 29th in Knoxville with all Employee Relations Advisory Board members. Members are asked to email Ms Dake with non-campus specific questions.

Employee Picnic

The employee picnic will be held August 12 with UTC’s 125th Anniversary as the theme. The menu will be baked potato bar and grilled chicken. Names will be drawn from a master list and placed in a drawing for approximately 30 door prizes; names will be attached to the door prize and winners do not have to be present.

Ms Martin said that VW will have cars for test drives and hopes the Passat would be available. A valid driver’s license and UTC ID is required for test drives. VW’s suppliers’ support program that offers UTC employees the same discount as VW’s employees is still in effect.

Issues/Concerns

- Effective July 1, Development and Alumni are affiliated with the UT Foundation and no longer part of the ERC and ESC. The UT Foundation will have a separate ERC and ESC. While staff will maintain the same university benefits, Mr. Webb said he is unsure if they will retain membership in the UTC Sick Leave Bank or another Sick Leave Bank.
Ms Dake and Mr. Webb had discussed combining the groups with another but have decided to keep the representational group as it is and members agreed. Prior to elections every two years, representational groups are reviewed and some changes made. Elections will be held in May 2012. Ms Dake said she may ask Cindy Carroll to serve as representative. (Since the meeting, Ms Carroll has accepted.)

- UTC has entered a consortium agreement with other institutions and four-year state schools can no longer teach developmental classes, effective this fall. Students will need to take remedial classes at community colleges. Discussions about how this will impact students who are below full-time and receiving financial aid are being held with departments. This will also impact students who go to Vanderbilt or UT Memphis but more likely students who go home for the summer and take classes, who in the past were considered transient students.

- The Financial Wellness Committee is hosting an open house on September 21st. (Since the meeting, the open house has been rescheduled to September 14th. More information will be forthcoming but members were asked to notify those they represent with the date.

Next Meeting

The ESC will not meet in August. The next meeting is September 19th.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Sadler
Administrative Specialist, Human Resources