

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Thursday, April 15, 2021

via Zoom

Members attending: Melita Rector, Shirley Hatfield, Megs Hazare, Terri Bearbower, Mark Stotts, Cindy Williams, Laneeta Derrick, Susan Gutshall, Leah Herron, Juanita Wade, Nancy Rogers, Patricia Kelly

Others in attendance: Laure Pou, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources; Julie Brown, Director of Employee Relations; Janice Michaels, HR/OEI Assistant; Tina Camba, Director of Total Compensation

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

Minutes: The minutes for the March meeting were distributed and approved electronically.

Blue Ribbon Award: Danielle Kriener, Writing and Communication Center Specialist in the Library, was the recipient of the Chancellor's Blue-Ribbon Award for February 2021.

Guest: Sara Peters, Director of the Center for Women and Gender Equity

The Center for Women at UTC first opened its doors in October 2008 and included programming, education, and gender-based violence advocacy services. Since its creation, the Center for Women and Gender Equity has become a strong community of students and community members dedicated to principles of social justice and gender equity.

Over the years, the Center for Women and Gender Equity has grown to include four staff members and programs related to women's leadership, wellness, and gender-based violence. To help us expand our programming we have developed the WISE Board, made up of student leaders, to develop and implement programs for the Center for Women and Gender Equity.

In 2017 the Center was renamed the Center for Women & Gender Equity (WaGE) to recognize the intersections of identity and expand its scope to include support and programming for LGBTQ+ students and work around masculinities.

The Center hosts many events during the year including: Take Back the Night, Women Leadership Academy, Sexual Assault Awareness month, Desserts and Dialogues, Coming Out Cook-out, Lavender Graduation and many others.

Their Survivor Advocacy Services strives to reduce the impact of gender-based violence at UTC and in the community through advocacy to support survivors of relationship

violence, sexual assault, stalking and sexual harassment. They provide education to the campus community and advocacy on behalf of all students, staff and faculty survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Safe Zone Program fosters a supportive environment for LGBTQQIA members of the campus community by providing education, resources, and advocacy regarding gender and sexual diversities.

There was a brief Q & A with the following questions:

- What type of training or certifications do the staff in the Center for Women and Gender Equity complete?
 - Nothing is required, but they are in the process of being credentialed both statewide and nationally in advocacy. They also attend national conferences each year.
- What service that the center provides is, in your opinion, the most under-utilized?
 - The space for now (due to COVID). The survivor advocacy services is also under-utilized.
- How has the move to the new Lupton Space been? Has there been more visibility with the students having a new space?
 - Because of COVID, the space is not utilized as it should be. The new space serves better with the office space and conference room. They are still in an adjustment phase.
- Will the Safe Zone training be offered via Zoom this Spring?
 - No. The course is better in a face-to-face environment. Zoom is not the best format for a discussion based course.
- Has the Safe Zone training changed at all or does it stay consistent from year to year? I've had the training a few years ago; should I retake it, or would it be a repeat/refresher of the same content?
 - The curriculum was re-written two years ago. Language is constantly changing so the course is ever changing. They are in the process of creating an on-line module as a refresher course.

Guest: Freddie Perutelli, Total Compensation Specialist, Office of Human Resources

The UTC Sick Leave Bank is a common pool of hours to which staff and 12-month faculty donate some of their accumulated leave. The sick leave bank shall provide emergency sick leave to member employees who have suffered disability due to an unplanned personal illness, injury, or quarantine and who have exhausted their compensatory time and personal, sick, and annual leave balances.

Bank sick leave days may not be granted for elective surgery, or illness of any member of the individual's family, or during any period an individual is receiving disability benefits from social security, a retirement plan, long-term disability, or during any period of time an individual is drawing or is eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits.

A request for sick leave hours is made using the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Request. The Bank Trustees review the request and appropriate medical information from the employee's physician.

The total sick leave granted to any one member shall not exceed 90 days in a 12-month period for any one illness, recurring illness, or accident. Sick Leave Bank hours do not have to be re-paid. An employee can receive donated sick leave hours from co-workers upon approval by the Sick Leave Bank Trustees. However, only employees who are members of the sick leave bank can receive donations of hours from another employee.

Who is eligible to join?

Any regular staff or 12-month faculty member, who accrues sick leave and has a current sick leave balance of at least 48 hours on June 30th is eligible to join. (The sick leave balance requirement is prorated for part-time employees.)

How much do I have to contribute?

If you work full-time, 24 hours will be deducted from your current accumulated sick leave to join; the hours are pro-rated if you work part-time. In the future, if the hours in the bank fall below one day per member, an additional assessment of up to 16 hours may be made at the determination of the bank trustees. However, [UT Personnel Policy HR0382](#) ensures that the Sick Leave Bank membership must receive a 30-day written notice prior to such an additional assessment and that members have the option to withdraw from the Sick Leave Bank if they do not wish to honor the additional assessment.

Who makes decisions on requests for time from the bank?

The Sick Leave Bank is administered by a five-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Chancellor. The trustees are responsible for the administration of the Bank, including the review of requests for withdrawal of sick leave hours from the Bank. All leave granted will be at the discretion of the sick leave bank trustees. An employee may reapply for the sick leave bank by providing additional information. The trustees' decision is final.

How do I enroll?

Employees may join the Sick Leave Bank during the enrollment period (April 1 - June 30). Any regular staff or 12-month faculty member, who accrues sick leave and has a current sick leave balance of at least 48 hours on June 30th is eligible to join for a donation of 24 hours. The sick leave balance requirement is prorated for part-time employees.

Return the [Sick Leave Bank enrollment form](#) by June 30, 2021 to Human Resources via campus mail, fax at 423-425-4574, or email at freddie-perutelli@utc.edu. A confirmation email will be sent in July to let you know if you are approved or denied.

Telecommuting Arrangements

Per the Chancellor's email update on Monday, April 19th, titled "*Bringing our Community Back Together*", a return to a full on-campus presence and operations is in the best interest of our campus community and those we serve. Each Vice Chancellor is developing a phased plan for all faculty and staff to return to campus well in advance of Fall Semester 2021. Plans will be complete before the end of April 2021. We anticipate staff to return to campus by July 1, 2021 and faculty to be back August 2, 2021. However, opportunities for telecommuting arrangements as an exception to a full on-campus return to work may be available if approved by the appropriate Vice Chancellor.

[UT Policy HR0480](#) – Work Schedules establishes standards for work schedules which accommodate both the business needs of the University and, as feasible, employee requests. Alternate work schedules, such as telecommuting, may be developed and approved by administration in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources. Telecommuting is defined as a work arrangement approved in advance in which an employee works at least part of their work hours off-campus from an alternative location. On an as-needed basis, the University may approve occasional telecommuting arrangements (as defined under Section II.A.1 [in attached](#)) without the establishment of a formal telecommuting agreement.

These guidelines are designed to provide the structure needed for effective implementation and operation of telecommuting arrangements. University administrators and employees are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of these guidelines. Please submit all Telecommuting Arrangement questions and forms to UTCHumanResources@utc.edu.

Additional information about the Telecommuting arrangements can be found at <https://new.utc.edu/finance-and-administration/human-resources/total-compensation/telecommuting-guidelines>

Other Issues

Ms. Rector asked that all questions for the May guest, David Steel, be submitted by Friday, May 7th.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. with Chief of Staff, David Steele, as our guest speaker.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Michaels
HR/OEI Assistant