

EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL

June 28, 2023

Held via Zoom

Minutes

Members in Attendance: Susan Lazenby (Chair), Mary Lee King, Lance Keatley, Jordan Hicks, Elizabeth Johnson, Sherry Marlow Ormsby, Elizabeth Smith, Sandra Jones, Emma Fullington, Terry Sanford, Kelly Griffin

Others in Attendance: Lee Pierce, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs (EMSA); Julie Brown, Director of Employee Relations; Nicole Gaines, Employee Relations Consultant; Logan Rader, HR Administrative Support Specialist

Call to Order: Susan Lazenby called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Enrollment Management Updates (Lee Pierce): Assistant Vice Chancellor Lee Pierce shared some highlights and updates regarding transparency in enrollment figures for the coming academic year, marketing efforts for the recruitment of undergraduate students, and improved communication surrounding future EMSA plans.

Enrollment Goals: As indicated in the university's strategic plan, the target for total enrollment is to reach 12,950 students by 2025, up from 11,457 students, with a particular focus on traditionally underrepresented groups and the state's performance-based funding formula focus populations. There is also a higher target set by UT System Administration and President Randy Boyd of 13,900 students by 2025. These figures were established before the COVID-19 pandemic, but regardless of this, the Division of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs (EMSA) is working to achieve the total enrollment goals set, per the university's strategic plan.

EMSA has expanded this effort by determining enrollment goals for the Fall 2023 semester, which significantly impacts UTC's annual budget proposal. The enrollment goal for the upcoming Fall semester is 10,230 undergraduate students in total. This goal is broken down in the following categories:

New Spring 2023 Students: 557 (this was exceeded by roughly 36 students)

New Fall 2023 Freshmen: 2,268

New Fall 2023 Transfer Students: 730

New Fall 2023 Other Students (non-degree, transient, etc.): 409

Returning Undergraduate Students: 6,266

The Office of Planning, Evaluation & Institutional Research has created a dashboard that illustrates live data concerning enrollment and other institutional factors, which varying levels of university leadership use to inform their proposals concerning the outlook of the university and its funding, operations, programming, etc. The data also provide a comparison from the previous year(s). Ms. Pierce shared the following data, which bodes well for reaching the enrollment goal for undergraduate students in Fall 2023. As of June 27th, 2023:

First Time Freshmen: 1,513 Housing Deposits; 2,271 Orientation Registrations; 1,735 Financial Aid Acceptance

Transfer Students: 122 Housing Deposits; 530 Orientation Registrations; 163 Financial Aid Acceptance

Returning Undergraduate Students: 6,319 Registered

Marketing & Recruitment: EMSA has been working closely with the Division of Communications & Marketing to develop effective strategies aimed at increasing enrollment, particularly in marketing to potential students locally, regionally, and nationally. The overall model for marketing can be understood as an “Enrollment Funnel.” It starts with reaching people effectively enough for them to express interest or inquiry about UTC. By marketing institutional knowledge, values, and experiences, this ideally leads to more applicants, accepted students, and orientation and housing deposits, ending in students’ official enrollment at UTC. Recruitment of students is a multifaceted endeavor. Channels and contributors of marketing to potential Mocs include publications websites, tours, social media, direct mail, texting, and recruitment events, all while being bolstered and driven by UTC Admissions and partners across campus. Employees are encouraged to support recruitment by attending events, conducting phone and email outreach, departmental visits for touring families, student referrals, hosting groups on campus, and simply welcoming visitors, who can be identified by the yellow bag they are most likely carrying. EMSA also utilizes communication plans, which involve listings and targeted emails directed to students based on their class and student type or relation thereof.

Divisional Plans: In 2022, EMSA began developing a divisional strategic plan, which complements the university-wide strategic plan, and it spans through 2025. This expands to each division, and it includes intentional and collaborative goals that would aid in the journey to reach the university’s enrollment goals.

Q&A with Lee Pierce:

- **Does Enrollment Management reach out to students who initially chose to attend another university and wish to return to Chattanooga to continue their postsecondary education?** Transfer students' names, in general, are difficult to obtain. Right now, the recruiting environment for four-year universities is highly competitive. While there are some sources available from which EMSA can obtain this outreach information, they are not always reliable. The situation can also vary by case, whether it is financial or preferential. If individuals have shown previous interest in UTC as an incoming freshman but are enrolled elsewhere, EMSA has made the decision to decline to reach out to them. If those same individuals are not currently enrolled in another institution, they will receive messages from UTC inviting them to apply. Communications & Marketing always runs social media ads as well to keep UTC at the front of their minds as an option. Admissions currently has a priority deadline of July 1st ahead of the Fall semester, but they will admit students through the first few days of courses beginning.
- **Once transfer students have applied to UTC, are preliminary assessments being made regarding transferring course credits ahead of time?** There are two ways these credits are assessed and transferred. To do an unofficial evaluation of course credits, incoming students and parents can visit the Registrar's [Transfer Equivalency Charts](#). However, if students simply apply and submit their transcripts that include previous credits from another institution, UTC conducts a course-by-course evaluation. The latter option typically takes seven to ten business days if processed in April, but that service window widens as time goes on and volume increases. It also depends on where these credits were obtained – Chattanooga State courses transfer much more quickly than courses that must be more closely evaluated due to being initially unknown to UTC.
- **Can students who left Tennessee to attend an institution out-of-state but wish to return to UTC still receive Hope Scholarship funds?** There are [several criteria](#) that determine eligibility, and the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships is able to assist in determining if it is possible for a student to receive the Hope Scholarship after returning to Tennessee.
- **How can departments and employees find EMSA's schedules for recruitment events?** EMSA will be sending save-the-dates for all recruitment

events for the 2023-2024 academic year soon, as of the date of this meeting. The logistics for these events are being finalized. This announcement will come via email as well as the weekly newsletter sent by Communications and Marketing. Two events are held each year called the Blue and Gold Preview, and the dates are forthcoming. EMSA is also conducting the annual Power C Tour this year, wherein UTC recruiters and other staff travel across the state of Tennessee to Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, and ending in Chattanooga. During this tour, potential students are invited to learn more about UTC, and this will take place in the Fall and Spring of the coming academic year. Two of these same tours will be aimed at recruiting Transfer students as well, and they will take place in Spring 2024. All these dates are forthcoming for employees. Currently, these tours are not extended to all employees wishing to volunteer due to several logistical limitations. If there is enough interest across campus for employees to volunteer who are not typically involved in these events, EMSA will reach out campuswide to extend specific calls for volunteers.

Blue Ribbon Award (Logan Rader): The May 2023 Blue Ribbon Award winner is Shuntika “Sister” Cox, Senior Custodian with Facilities, Planning & Management. The group congratulates Shuntika on her impactful work, and employees are encouraged to continue nominating their fellow colleagues for this honor by clicking this [link](#).

Prospect of a Staff “Senate” (Susan Lazenby): The chairs of the Exempt Staff Council and Employee Relations Committee have continued discussions regarding the formation of a collective staff group. Due to the sometimes-differing nature of needs, concerns, and governing policies between non-exempt and exempt staff members, concerns were shared between the groups as to what type of environment this potential staff group would intend to foster. These types of collaborative discussions are ongoing and constructive, so further partnership will allow both non-exempt and exempt staff to create the most effective way to cultivate a culture of openness, efficacy, and respect in solving problems and driving efforts that affect staff subsets as well as the entire staff population.

The chairs of the two groups proposed that the ESC and ERC hold at least two joint meetings each year. The first of these meetings will be held in July 2023, and the second will take place in December 2023 ahead of the Winter Break. These meetings will include time so members of each group can get together in an informal setting with food and drink provided or encouraged.

Other Matters:

- **July Meeting:** In July 2023, the ESC is inviting Dr. Chris Cunningham to speak about ongoing concrete efforts aimed at boosting total organizational health for staff at UTC. This work to improve staff engagement on campus, which is based on previous staff surveys that were sent out in Summer and Fall 2022, has culminated in the creation of the Total Organizational Health Task Force. The ERC will be joining this meeting on July 26th, 2023.
- **Operation Move-In:** Each Fall, all employees are encouraged to volunteer or assist with [Operation Move-In](#), which spans the entire move-in season for new and returning students who are arriving on campus, some for the first time as residents. More information can be found via the weekly newsletter sent from Communications & Marketing each Tuesday leading up to Operation Move-In. Employees may sign up in groups or as individuals.

Adjournment: Susan Lazenby adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 26th, 2023