

# Exempt Staff Council

Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2024

Held via Zoom

**Members in Attendance:** Susan Lazenby, Anitra Barrett, Elizabeth Smith, Elizabeth Johnson, Jordan Hicks, Mary Lee King, Sherry Marlow Ormsby, Ashley Alletto, Terry Sanford, Bonny Clark, Lance Keatley, Tara Mathis, Kelly Griffin

**Others in Attendance:** Laure Pou, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources; Nicole Gaines, Director of Employee Relations; Logan Rader, HR Assistant

**Chairs' Meeting with Campus Leadership:** On October 31, the chairs and vice chairs of the Exempt Staff Council & Employee Relations Committee attended a meeting with members of campus leadership to discuss the draft bylaws of the new Staff Senate model, which are expected to be implemented in Spring 2025. In attendance were ESC Chair Susan Lazenby, ESC Vice Chair Anitra Barrett, ERC Chair Melita Rector, ERC Vice Chair Mark Stotts, Chancellor Steven Angle, Vice Chancellor & CIO Vicki Farnsworth, and Guerry Professor & UC Foundation Professor Chris Cunningham (Total Organizational Health). These bylaws have been developed and revised through a process of consistent feedback from both staff representational groups, UTC legal counsel, and campus leadership over the last several months.

After further review and discussion, the primary purpose of the new Staff Senate model was identified, which is to supply all staff members with a vehicle through which they are represented, recognized, and able to effect change, in addition to other avenues on campus such as the Ombuds Office and Human Resources. With this purpose in mind, a newly updated draft is currently being shared with UTC legal counsel and the Chancellor's Office for final approval before implementation.

**Review of Updated Draft Staff Senate Bylaws:** The newly revised draft of the Staff Senate bylaws was shared in detail by Susan Lazenby with the Exempt Staff Council for review. When approved, these will be posted for public viewing on a new UTC website, which is already built for content that will outline the operations, bylaws, members, and other details of the future Staff Senate.

**Staff Senate Communication Plan:** Upon approval of the bylaws, a multifaceted approach to campus communication will be underway to announce the changes brought forth by the Staff Senate. These may include, but are not limited to, the new UTC website, in-person and virtual information sessions hosted by the current ESC & ERC chairs and vice chairs, various email

communications through campuswide newsletters, physical and virtual displays for units that have staff populations whose positions do not typically require computer usage, and regular communication among representative groups.

**Fair Labor Standards Act Ruling:** On November 15, a federal judge in the Eastern District Court of Texas ruled to strike down the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime rule to increase the exempt-salary threshold, meaning both the prior July 1 and anticipated January 1 salary thresholds are no longer in effect, and the triennial automatic updates will not take place. The decision applies to all covered employers and employees under the FLSA nationwide.

As a reminder, the final rule implemented a two-phase approach to increasing the minimum salary threshold under the FLSA overtime regulations. The first increase took effect on July 1, increasing the minimum salary threshold from the current level of \$684 per week (\$35,568 per year) to \$844 per week (\$43,888 per year). The second increase was set to take effect on January 1, 2025, and it would have increased the minimum salary threshold again to \$1,128 per week (\$58,656 per year).

With the recent decision in the Texas court, the salary threshold set in the 2019 regulations (\$35,568 per year or \$683 per week) will be the salary threshold employers should continue to adhere to. Questions regarding the ruling and related impact can be directed to Laure Pou, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, at [Laure-Pou@utc.edu](mailto:Laure-Pou@utc.edu) or x. 5742.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.