

Employee Relations Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2024

UC Sequoyah Room

Campus Award Program Revisions: Campus leadership has been working toward revising the Blue Ribbon Award Program to be more inclusive and provide more opportunities to recipients. The proposals in their current form have been attached to the minutes as an addendum.

Staff Senate Development: The ERC & ESC leadership have been working on the logistics of moving toward a Staff Senate model for employee representation, similar to Faculty Senate. Development is ongoing and updates will be shared periodically.

Leave Accruals: On behalf of the ERC, the chairs will be drafting and sending formal communication regarding annual leave accruals and the disparity thereof between non-exempt & exempt employees. Currently, non-exempt employees must work at a UT campus for at least 20 years before accruing the same amount of annual leave accrued by exempt staff and 12-month faculty. It is a progressive accrual system before 20 years of service. Nonexempt staff are also eligible for overtime, banked compensatory time, and one day of Personal Leave per year. Communication with System will urge them to reconsider the UT annual leave accrual policies.

Recent Weather Closure: Members discussed the issues that resulted from the recent campus closure due to inclement weather last Thursday, May 9, 2024. These issues include, but are not limited to, timing of communications impacting operations of the UTC Children's Center sites, delayed announcements, expectations for staff to work remotely or utilize unscheduled administrative closure leave, etc. It is important that all members of campus are well informed in a timely manner in light of an emergent situation that forces the university to close its operations. This feedback will be shared with the Emergency Operations Committee, who is charged with making these decisions in a constantly changing environment, and more will be shared regarding the nuances of those processes.

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 18, 2024

Addendum I.

Proposed Campus Staff Ambassadors for Campus Excellence (ACE) Program

Award Overview

The ACE award is a bi-monthly employee recognition program designed to recognize outstanding staff employees at UTC who demonstrate excellence in job performance, dependability, and innovation, and who contribute in a notable way to building and sustaining a positive working and learning environment on this campus for all employees and students.

Award Components

The components of this award program are as follows:

- 1. Personalized Recognition and Documentation:** All awardees will receive a formal letter of recognition personally signed by the Chancellor and the awardee's division senior leader. Copies of this formal commendation will be filed within the recipient's formal personnel file. Where possible, this documentation will include excerpts of comments from the original nomination materials to help awardees understand why they were nominated and how/why their work matters.
- 2. Financial Incentive:** Recipients of this award will receive a one-time bonus of \$1,000 and a \$100 university bookstore credit to support the purchase of UTC-branded merchandise or other items aligned with an awardee's personal preferences.
- 3. Day of Paid Leave:** Recipients of this award will receive one day (8hrs) of leave to utilize on a date of their choosing, with prior approval of administration.
- 4. Special Event Invitation:** Awardees will be invited to attend a home football or basketball game to share fellowship with campus leaders and receive special recognition during half-time of the event. An additional 4 event tickets will be provided to each awardee to allow family to join as desired.

Eligibility Criteria

All full- and part-time staff employees at UTC are eligible as potential candidates for this award. Every other month (i.e., February, April, June, August, October, December), two staff members will be selected by a committee of ERC and ESC representatives, approved by the Chancellor and the Senior Leadership Team, from among candidates who have been nominated for that awards cycle. Previous awardees are not eligible to win this award in back-to-back cycles but may be eligible after at least one cycle passes since a previous award.

Nomination Process

This award is designed to celebrate excellence across the diverse spectrum of staff roles within the UTC community. Because of this, nominations for this award are encouraged and solicited from all members of the university community (including faculty, other staff and administrators, and students). There are many different staff functions throughout this university and nominators are encouraged to think broadly about staff all across campus who may be deserving of this recognition.

Nominations should highlight an individual employee's outstanding contributions to the university and provide specific examples that illustrate why the nominee deserves this award. These contributions should showcase excellence in the nominated employee's work directly associated with or representing the University or the greater Chattanooga community. To emphasize the importance of recognizing each other with this award, self-nominations are not encouraged.

Nominations for this award must be submitted by last day of the month preceding the designated award month (i.e., Jan 31, Mar 31, May 31, July 31, Sept 30, Nov 30).

Nominations must be submitted to the UTC Office of Human Resources.