



September 22, 2026

Approval of Minutes



Elected Staff Senator Check-In



Administrative Reports



Artificial Intelligence and Higher Education

with Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien



Staff and AI at UTC: Why I Am Asking Now

Why staff, why now

- The AI conversation at UTC has moved on the faculty and student sides. Staff have not been included in the same way.
- Staff are closest to the systems that actually run the university day to day.

What we know, and what we do not

- Staff may be using AI in their work, and we do not always know how, or which systems already have it built in.
- I would rather hear UTC's picture from you than assume it.

Where UTC stands on policy

- We do not have a working institutional AI policy right now.
- I want staff to help shape it, not receive it after the fact. That is a real invitation, not a courtesy.

94%

of higher education workers use AI tools
in their work

54%

are aware of their institution's AI policies
and guidelines

Survey of 1,960 staff, administrators, and faculty at more
than 1,800 institutions, fall 2025 (Robert, 2026).

Starting with What Is Already Working

Some of this I simply may not know about.

- What AI support is already in place for staff? Training, tools, or guidance coming from your own units that I may not be aware of.
- What is UTC already doing well here that we should build on rather than replace?
- Which systems you use day to day already have AI built into them? Some of it may be embedded in tools we would not normally think of as AI.

What Staff Actually Need

- When you say you need help with AI, what are you picturing? A specific task, a specific worry, or a general unease?
- What part of your work takes more time than it should, and would you want help with it?
- If you are not using these tools now, what is stopping you: not knowing which ones are approved, not knowing how, or a deliberate decision not to?
- What would you need to know about data and privacy before putting university information into a tool (student records, personnel information, budget data)?
- Is your unit's expectation about AI clear to you, and does it match what you hear from other units?
- What format could you attend, given your workload? Short sessions, hands-on workshops, written quick guides, or one-on-one help when you hit something?
- What would you want an institutional AI policy to protect, or to make possible, for staff?

What We Have Heard So Far

Early responses from staff, shared ahead of today.

Where things stand

- Little to no AI training, tools, or guidance in some units.
- Some existing systems already have AI built in, and staff can turn those features off.
- Everyday personal use: troubleshooting irrigation and small engine repair, smoothing the wording of an email.
- Many staff do not see a need for AI in their jobs yet, and many do not have ready access to it.

What staff are asking for

- The basics: what is accepted, and the do's and don'ts of using AI at work.
- In-person, hands-on workshops.
- Help navigating benefits, retirement options, and continuing education, possibly through voice AI.
- A clear decision from leadership, with explicit permission, before university or student data goes into any tool.

Questions Staff Are Already Asking

- How can we ensure an AI system is FERPA and HIPAA compliant, and who is accountable if it is not?
- What have we learned from past rollouts, such as DASH, that launched before they were fully supported?
- What are the university's goals with AI?
- Will AI create positions at UTC, and can employees be assured they will not be let go?
- How will we make sure AI systems meet accessibility needs?
- Will employees be able to opt out of AI features on their computers?
- If I choose not to use AI, or it is not part of my job, will that count against me in any way?
- Who will have access to the data AI systems collect?
- Will the UT System be upfront about who owns the AI system and the company behind it?
- Will the system stay a closed network, and how will campus IT keep it secure?
- How will we navigate the fact that AI use is unpopular with many on campus?

HR Minute

Associate Vice Chancellor
Laure Pou



2026[!]

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT TIME

— ♥ —
Your benefits. Your choice.
Your future.



ENROLLMENT DATES:

OCTOBER 1 – 16



Take time now to choose
peace of mind for the year ahead.

We've got you. ♥

Annual Enrollment is Almost Here!

Your opportunity to
make changes to
your current benefit
elections is October
1 – 16.

The changes you
make will be
effective January 1,
2027.

The Power of Planning

2026 Annual Enrollment Resources



- [ParTNers for Health 2026 Annual Enrollment](#)
- [Annual Enrollment Updates](#)
- [Annual Enrollment Benefit Options Guide](#)
- [Annual Enrollment Videos](#)



What's Changing for 2027?

Insurance Premiums

- State and higher education active members: Health insurance premiums will increase by an average of 7.9%.
- Specific premium increases will vary slightly depending on the health plan, network and coverage tier you choose.
- There will be no increase in health plan copays, deductibles or coinsurance.
- For the CDHP, there will be an increase in deductibles, but no increase in coinsurance.

What's Changing for 2027?

New for 2027

- Weight-loss surgery will only be covered by [Carrum Health Centers of Excellence program](#).
- Optum Behavioral Health: Employees and eligible dependents will now get up to 8 short-term counseling visits, per problem, per year, per individual at no cost.
- Sharecare Wellness Program: Enrolled health plan members will be able to earn an incentive for participating in the Unwinding Anxiety program. 5 wellness challenges will offer incentives instead of 4.



What's Changing for 2027?

Other Benefits

- Disability coverage will stay with MetLife. There will only be one plan available for short-term disability and one plan for long-term disability.
- Dental, vision, and life insurance premium rates and benefits will not change for 2027. The same carriers will provide these benefits.
- The flexible spending account and health savings account carrier will continue to be TASC.



2027 Health Plan Comparison of Member Costs — State and Higher Education



PPO services in this table ARE NOT subject to a deductible. CDHP/HSA services in this table ARE subject to a deductible and coinsurance except for in-network preventive care and maintenance medications.
Coverage for ALL services is subject to medical necessity as determined by the third party administrator.

HEALTH PLAN OPTION	PREMIER PPO NETWORK STATUS & COST ⁽¹⁾		STANDARD PPO NETWORK STATUS & COST ⁽¹⁾		CDHP/HSA NETWORK STATUS & COST ⁽⁴⁾	
COVERED SERVICES	IN-NETWORK	OUT-OF-NETWORK	IN-NETWORK	OUT-OF-NETWORK	IN-NETWORK	OUT-OF-NETWORK
PREVENTIVE CARE — OFFICE VISITS – AS RECOMMENDED & MEDICALLY NECESSARY						
• Well-baby, well-child visits • Annual exams - adult physical and well-woman • Routine prenatal and postnatal services • Immunizations • Annual hearing and non-refractive vision screening • Screenings, labs, nutritional guidance, & tobacco cessation counseling	\$0	\$45	\$0	\$50	\$0	40%
OUTPATIENT SERVICES — SERVICES SUBJECT TO COINSURANCE MAY BE EXTRA						
Primary Care Office Visit ⁽²⁾ • Family practice, general practice, internal medicine, OB/GYN and pediatrics • Nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurse midwives (licensed health care facility only) • Initial maternity visit • Surgery in office setting • Provider-based telehealth • Allergy injections and serum	\$25	\$45	\$30	\$50	20%	40%
Specialist Office Visit ⁽³⁾ • Nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurse midwives (licensed health care facility only) • Surgery in office setting • Provider-based telehealth • Allergy injections and serum	\$45	\$70	\$50	\$75	20%	40%
Behavioral Health and Substance Use ⁽⁵⁾ ⁽⁶⁾ • Including provider-based virtual visits	\$25	\$45	\$30	\$50	20%	40%
Telehealth Programs (MDLive/Teladoc/Talkspace)	\$15	N/A	\$15	N/A	20%	N/A
Chiropractic and Acupuncture • Annual limit of 50 visits each	\$25/visit 1-20 \$45/visit 21-50	\$45/visit 1-20 \$70/visit 21-50	\$30/visit 1-20 \$50/visit 21-50	\$50/visit 1-20 \$75/visit 21-50	20%	40%
Convenience Clinic	\$25	\$45	\$30	\$50	20%	40%
Urgent Care Facility	\$45	\$70	\$50	\$75	20%	40%
PHARMACY – GENERIC/PREFERRED/NON-PREFERRED						
30-Day Supply	\$7/\$40/\$90	copay + amount > MAC	\$14/\$50/\$100	copay + amount > MAC	20%	40% + amount > MAC
90-Day Supply 90-day pharmacy or mail order	\$14/\$80/\$180	N/A - no network	\$28/\$100/\$200	N/A - no network	20%	N/A - no network
90-Day Supply Certain Maintenance Medications 90-day pharmacy or mail order ⁽⁷⁾	\$7/\$40/\$160	N/A - no network	\$14/\$50/\$180	N/A - no network	10% before deductible	N/A - no network

2027 Health Benefits & Premiums

- Three plan options: Premier PPO, Standard PPO, and CDHP
- Medical plans continue to be administered by BlueCross BlueShield and Cigna
- Compare deductibles, copays, and out-of-pocket costs before enrolling.

Health Savings Account (HSA)

- Must be enrolled in the Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP)
- State contributes \$500 (employee only) or \$1000 (all other tiers) annually.
- Payment options include an TASC debit card or reimbursement from the funds in your account
- Cannot combine the HSA and Medical FSA



Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

- Three types of FSAs: Medical FSA, Limited Purpose FSA and Dependent Care FSA
- Medical FSA: used for medical, dental, vision, and prescription costs not covered by insurance.
- Cannot enroll in the Medical FSA if enrolled in the CDHP.
- Limited Purpose FSA: used for vision and dental expenses
- May enroll in the Limited Purpose FSA if enrolled in the CDHP
- Dependent Care FSA: used for childcare expenses for children 13 and under



2027 Vision Benefits and Premiums

- EyeMed offers Basic and Expanded plans.
- Members pay 100% of the vision premium.
- No vision premium increase for 2027.

SERVICE	BASIC PLAN IN-NETWORK COSTS ¹¹	EXPANDED PLAN IN-NETWORK COSTS ¹¹
Eye Exam With Dilation as Necessary	\$10 copay	\$0 copay
Retinal Imaging	Up to \$39 copay	\$0 copay
Contact Lens fit and Follow up (standard/premium)	\$40/\$50 copay	\$35/\$45 copay
Low Vision Evaluation	\$300 allowance	\$300 allowance
Low Vision Supplemental Aids	\$300 allowance	\$300 allowance
Eyeglass Benefit—Frame		
Retail Frame	\$105 allowance	\$150 allowance
Eyeglass Benefit—Spectacle Lenses		
Single Vision, Bifocal, Trifocal & Lenticular Lenses	\$20 copay	\$15 copay
Standard Progressive Lenses	\$90 copay	\$50 copay
Premium Progressive Lenses (Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3 Tier 4)	Copay amount of: (\$110/\$140/\$155/\$225)	Copay amount of: (\$85/\$110/\$150/\$175)
UV Treatment	\$15 copay	\$15 copay
Tint (solid or gradient)	\$15 copay	\$15 copay
Standard Polycarbonate (adults/children ⁽¹⁴⁾)	\$40/\$0 copay	\$40 copay/\$0 copay
Standard Anti-reflective Coating	\$45 copay	\$45 copay
Premium Anti-reflective Coating (Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3)	\$57/\$68/\$85 copay	\$57/\$68/\$85 copay
Polarized	\$90 copay	\$75 copay
Plastic Photochromic Lenses	\$75 copay	\$50 copay
Standard Plastic Scratch Coating	\$15 copay	\$15 copay
Contact Lenses		
Conventional and Disposable	\$105 allowance	\$150 allowance
Medically Necessary	\$155 allowance	\$0 copay
Frequency of Vision Benefits		
Vision Exam	Once every calendar year	Once every calendar year
Eyeglass Lenses	Once every calendar year (in lieu of contact lenses)	Once every calendar year (in lieu of contact lenses)
Frames	Once every two calendar years	Once every calendar year
Contact Lenses	Once every calendar year (in lieu of eyeglass lenses)	Once every calendar year (in lieu of eyeglasses)
Contact Lens Fit and Two Follow-ups	Once every calendar year	Once every calendar year
Retinal Imaging	Once every calendar year	Once every calendar year
Low Vision Evaluation	Once every two calendar years	Once every two calendar years

2027 Dental Benefits and Premiums

- Two carrier options:
 - Cigna DHMO and MetLife DPPO
- UTC/State pays a portion of dental premiums.
- No changes in dental premium rates.

**Partners for Health 2027 Dental Insurance**

TWO OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

1. Dental health maintenance organization
- prepaid provider administered by Cigna

2. Dental preferred provider organization
administered by MetLife

DHMO

- There is no deductible to meet, no annual maximum for services and no waiting periods.
- You pay copays for services, which are found in the [Patient Charge Schedule](#). You will also be responsible for paying lab fees for certain services.

Teledentistry is available to members at a \$0 copay with no frequency limit.

Routine exams and cleanings

- Oral evaluations are limited to a combined total of 4 of the following during a 12 consecutive month period
 - periodic oral evaluations,
 - comprehensive oral evaluations, and
 - comprehensive periodontal evaluations
- Cleaning – limit 2 per calendar year; can add 2 additional per year at copay of \$45

Orthodontics

- \$3,360 maximum (\$140 x 24 months) for treatment fee only. Member pays full charge after 24 months
- No age limit

Waiting periods

- There are no waiting periods.

Providers/Network

- You must select and use a Cigna network general dentist from the DHMO list for the state's dental plan and let Cigna know of your choice. You may select a network pediatric dentist for your child under age 13; the dentist will be considered a specialist.
- Before enrolling, carefully check the network for your location. You may be able to cancel this coverage if you enroll and later there are no network general dentists within a 25-mile driving-distance of your home address.
- Providers can be found here: hcpdirectory.cigna.com/web/public/consumer/directory/search?consumerCode=HDC060

DPPO

Deductible

- In-network: \$50 single; \$150 family, per plan year
- Out of network: \$100 single; \$300 family, per plan year
- \$1,500 plan benefit maximum per person per calendar year

Costs

- You pay deductible and coinsurance for services
- Provider negotiated fee, or maximum plan allowance, is the highest dollar amount of reimbursement for specific dental procedures provided by MetLife DPPO in-network providers. The in-network dentists have agreed to not charge members or the plan more than the provider negotiated fee.

Member coinsurance breakdown for in-network

- Diagnostic and preventive services: 0%
- Basic services: 20%
- Major services: 50%
- Orthodontic services: 50%

Routine exams & cleanings

- 2 routine office exams per calendar year
- 2 problem-focused exams (office or teledentistry) per calendar year

Orthodontics

- \$1,500 lifetime plan benefit maximum per person

Waiting periods

- There are no waiting periods.

Providers/Network

- You can use any dentist, but you'll save money and receive maximum benefits when visiting an in-network MetLife PDP Plus provider for the Partners for Health DPPO dental plan.
- Providers can be found here: metlife.com/StateOFTN

Employee Wellness Program

- Cash incentives available for employees and spouses enrolled in medical insurance.
- Earn up to \$250 per person or \$500 per household.
- Complete eligible wellness activities to [earn incentives](#).
- Learn more about the wellness and available resources through [ShareCare](#).
- Get started by creating or accessing your [ShareCare account](#).





Do I Need to Take Action?

- For most benefit plans, no action is required if you want to keep your current elections.
- Current medical, dental, vision, and disability elections will generally continue automatically.
- Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) require annual enrollment and must be re-elected each year.

How Do I Enroll or Make Changes?

- Review, enroll, change, or cancel benefits through the Edison Self Service system.
- Annual Enrollment elections must be completed during the enrollment period.
- Use Edison to verify your current benefit selections before enrollment closes.

Campus Conversations

Moderated by Brad Bond

Today's Guest:

Director of Space Management

Danielle Williams



Campus Space Panel

Bo Baker, Library

Aaron Grisham, UC & Campus Recreation

Danielle Williams, Facilities



Standing Committee Reports

Communications Committee

Curiosity Committee

Employee Relations Committee (ERC)



Communications Committee



Curiosity Committee

Staff Book Club Update
Staff Mentoring Program



Staff Book Club Update

The Let Them Theory by
Mel Robbins

- Facilitated by Tiana Leonard (HR)
- 5 attendees

*The Southern Book Club's
Guide to Slaying Vampires*
by Grady Hendrix

- Facilitated by Maria Barlow (Housing and Residence Life) and Juanita Wade (Military Science)
- 5 attendees

Project Hail Mary by Andy
Weir

- Facilitated by Marietta Song (Bursar's Office)
- 2 attendees

Contact: Victoria Bryan, WCTL, Staff Senate VP
Victoria-Bryan@utc.edu



The Southern Book
Club's Guide to
Slaying Vampires

Staff Mentoring Program

A 9-month, goal-driven framework
for staff growth and connection

A practical investment in people, professional growth, and retention.

A voluntary pilot that connects staff with experienced colleagues for purposeful development throughout the academic year.

9

months
August–April

10

mentor–mentee
pairs in Year 1

1:1

professional
development

What it is — and why it matters

A staff-centered pilot built for meaningful growth, connection, and retention.

THE PROGRAM

- Voluntary, one-to-one mentoring
- Aligned to the academic year: August–April
- Experienced colleagues serve as volunteer mentors
- Year 1 pilot: 10 pairs / 20 participants

STAFF BENEFITS

- Clearer professional-development goals
- Guidance, encouragement, and accountability
- Cross-campus connections beyond a home unit
- Visible recognition for both mentees and mentors

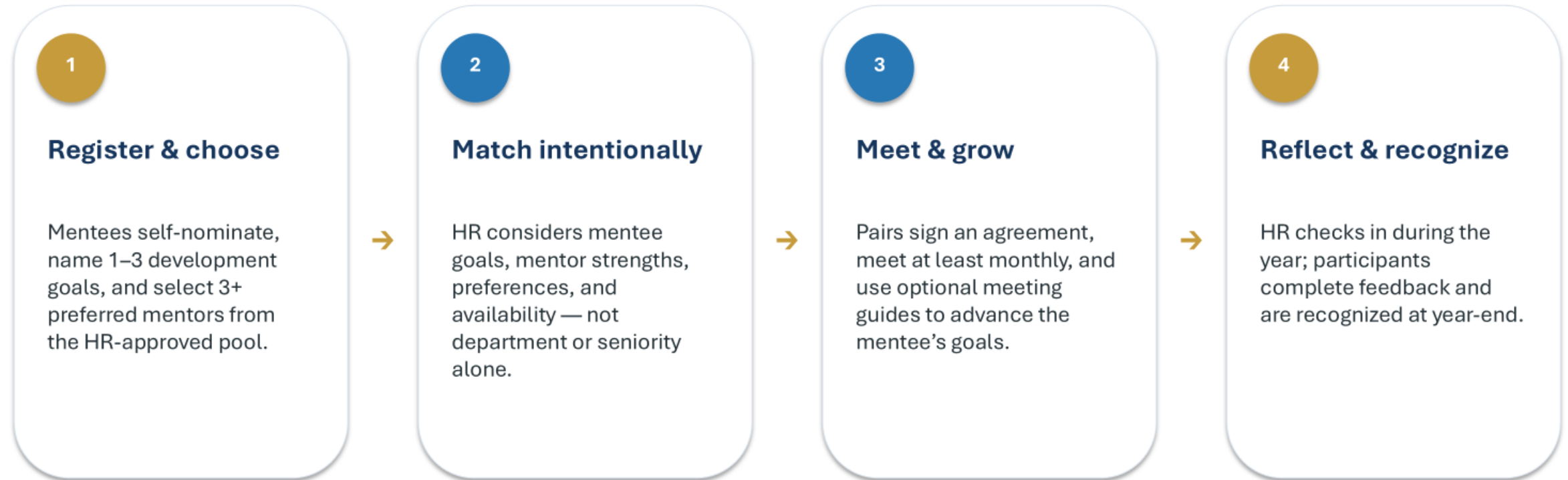
WHY NOW

- Employees in formal mentoring programs show 50% higher retention than nonparticipants
- Belonging, feeling valued, and engagement are strong predictors of staff retention
- Supports UTC targets: 90% staff retention and 95% faculty retention (Objective 2.2.3)

The intended result: staff feel supported in their growth, connected to UTC, and more are likely to stay.

How the program works

A clear process from staff interest to a recognized, goal-focused mentoring experience.



The relationship is mentee-driven: each monthly conversation centers on the mentee’s goals, current challenges, and next actions.

The four pillars that make mentoring work

Structure gives staff a dependable experience while preserving flexibility in each relationship.

Goal-driven enrollment

Mentees articulate 1–3 professional development goals and identify what support would be most helpful.

Goals anchor every meeting.

Structured matching

Mentees select preferred mentors. HR makes final pairings based on goals, mentor strengths, fit, and availability.

Match for growth — not hierarchy.

Mutual accountability

At entry, each pair signs an agreement covering cadence, expectations, confidentiality, communication, and a no-fault exit option.

A safe, respectful foundation.

Formal recognition

A year-end ceremony includes institutional remarks, certificates, and public acknowledgement of mentor service and participant growth.

Growth and service are visible.

Who is involved — and what each person does

The program shares responsibility across participants, HR, and campus leadership.

Mentors

Benefits-eligible staff/faculty with 5+ years of service. Submit a standardized bio, attend orientation, meet monthly, support goals, and complete feedback.

Mentees

All benefits-eligible full- and part-time staff. Self-nominate with no supervisor approval required; identify goals, select preferred mentors, and drive meetings.

Human Resources

Recruits and vets mentors, manages the pool and matching, administers agreements, provides orientation and touchpoints, and leads recognition.

Leadership

The Chancellor's Office and division leaders visibly sponsor the program, encourage participation, and acknowledge mentor service.

Mentors share experience. Mentees set the direction. HR provides structure. Leaders reinforce that staff growth matters.

Structure and cadence: what participants can expect

A manageable rhythm that respects staff schedules while keeping progress moving.

Year 1 program rhythm

May–July

Recruit mentors
Review bios
Open registration

August

Orientation
Matches confirmed
Agreements signed

Sept.–March

Meet monthly
Optional guides
Midpoint check-in

April

Final survey & debrief
Recognition ceremony

At least one meeting each month

Minimum of 9+ sessions per year, scheduled by the pair. Face-to-face or virtual format.

Useful support, not extra burden

Optional monthly meeting guides provide prompts, activities, and a simple structure when helpful.

HR stays connected

Mid-program survey in December; final survey/debrief in April. HR is available if a pair needs support.

A targeted investment with broad staff value

The pilot is designed to build staff capacity, satisfaction, recognition, and retention.

YEAR 1
ESTIMATED COST

\$10,200–
\$18,200

Mostly HR coordination
and the recognition ceremony

Volunteer mentors receive
no monetary compensation.

Staff satisfaction

Mentoring builds belonging, feeling valued, engagement, and stronger cross-campus connections.

**Professional
development**

Goal-focused conversations encourage learning, skill-building, feedback, and career exploration.

**Recognition &
retention**

Formal recognition honors service; structured mentoring supports the conditions that keep staff at UTC.

Directly maps to all six workforce strategic objectives, including feedback culture, workplace satisfaction, recognition, professional-development participation, and retention.

The ask: help shape a staff mentoring pilot

Staff Senate can help ensure the program reflects what staff need most.

Requested action Confirm interest in a Staff Mentoring Program and authorize Staff Senate to survey staff interest and priorities.



Please submit your feedback on the proposed Staff Mentoring Program here before 10/19.

Questions? Irene-Hillman@utc.edu.

Thank you

Employee Relations Committee (ERC) Updates



President's Report



2027 Meeting Dates

Thursday, February 4

Thursday, March 4

Thursday, April 1 (ELT Connect)

Thursday, May 6

Thursday, June 17

All meetings scheduled 2:00-3:30pm in
the UC Auditorium



Announcements



Annual Staff Engagement Survey coming soon...

Be looking for an email from McLean &
Company tomorrow (9/23)



Next Meeting:

Tuesday, October 20
at 3:00pm
in the Wolford Athletic Center



Save the Date – ELT Connect

Tuesday, November 17
at 3:00pm
in the UC Auditorium



Elected Staff Senator Check-In





Adjournment

Thank you for coming!