

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Margaret W. Sallee, Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

From: Thomas A. Cervone, Director (Exempt Staff Council Chair)
Department of Theatre

Date: January 28, 2011

Re: 2010 Campus Work-Life Climate Survey

On behalf of the members of the Exempt Staff Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending our monthly meeting (this past Tuesday, January 25th) and to inform you that we as a Council have voted unanimously to support and recommend the Work-Life Climate Survey and its goals. Striving for excellence in Higher Education while achieving “Top 25 Status” among peer and aspirational institutions AND providing a safe, secure and sensitive work environment for the faculty and staff that pump the “life-blood” into this enterprise, need not be mutually exclusive nor a “pie in the sky” undertaking. Your commission has organized a compelling and comprehensive survey to support and substantiate this mission. Thank you.

One final caveat, however, if I (we) may. In addition to my responsibility as Chair of the Exempt Staff Council, I have the privilege of sitting/representing the exempt staff on several other UT commissions/committees, one of which is the Commission for LGBT People. When we (LGBT) voted to endorse this survey, Lynn Sacco, Chair of the Commission for LGBT people, eloquently and enthusiastically reminded you (and the Chancellor) of the need to aggressively pursue a much more comprehensive commitment to recognizing domestic partner inclusion/benefits. We would like to echo/reiterate that position. The statement below was developed in concert and collaboration with my colleagues who sit on the Exempt Staff Council:

US businesses have taken the lead in developing domestic partner benefits programs for their employees. They see this as an inexpensive way to attract and retain talent and to gain an advantage over the competition. Many of the nation's most competitive colleges and universities, including the institutions UT compares itself too, are doing the same. Emerging research is documenting that domestic partner benefits is a cost-effective strategy for fully harnessing workforce potential. UT administration and state policy makers need to understand what the competition already recognizes: that offering domestic partner benefit programs is a cost-effective strategy to attract and retain faculty, staff, and administrators from a greater pool of talent. And of equal importance, offering these benefits is essential if UT is to demonstrate their commitment to social and economic justice, diversity, and inclusiveness.

Margaret, again, we so appreciate the extraordinary work on this document you and the Commission for Women have produced. If there is anything else we can do as a Committee, or I can do, personally, please feel free to contact me.