

Exempt Staff Council

Tuesday, January 28, 2020, 3:15 pm-4:45 pm

1610 University Avenue

MEETING MINUTES

Present

Danielle Bohn (guest speaker), Brad Briggs, Leah Buffington, Jessica Cantu, Tom Cervone, Joe Christian, Elisha Hodge, Janet Jones, Johnny Jones, Mary Lucal, Tammy Renalds, John Rich, Julie Roe, Nicholas Simson, Kaley Walker, Norma Wilcox, Wesley Wright

Absent

Michele Atkins, Jeannine Berge, Brian Browning, William Bruhin, Linda Daugherty, Deanna Flinchum, Kevin Frye, Elizabeth Greene, Kimberly Hardaway, Heath Nokes, Charles Primm, Susan Robertson, Theresa Sears

Welcome

Leah Buffington, First Vice Chair & Engineering Representative, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

New Business

1. Guest Speaker: Be Well - Danielle Bohn, Employee Wellness Coordinator

Danielle Bohn, Employee Wellness Coordinator for [Be Well](#), greeted the group and introduced herself noting that she is passionate about people taking care of themselves. She then introduced the Be Well program, which started in 2016 and now is a part of the [Center for Health Education and Wellness \(CHEW\)](#). Ms. Bohn said that the mission of Be Well is to encourage all Volunteers to thrive, and their vision is to support a campus that makes positive lifestyle choices.

Ms. Bohn then went on to explain that Be Well utilizes the [Eight Dimensions of Wellness Model](#), which encourages thinking about the connections between different areas of well-being including Emotional, Financial and Physical health. She asked the group about their understanding of work-life balance, and noted that leaving work at work can be challenging as it impacts health. She said that in a recent campus survey campus employees self-reported not getting enough sleep. Ms. Bohn explained that, along with other choices, may impact employees' work and those employees who have a good work-life balance are more productive. She acknowledged that life is stressful, and while at work Be Well can help employees make informed decisions to improve their health.

Ms. Bohn began by reviewing the dimensions of wellness, beginning with campus resources for the Emotional dimension. This includes initiatives like the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) through Optum that support employees in coping effectively with life. She also shared that Be Well is partnering with Active Health to hold an [upcoming stress management lunch and learn series](#) on campus.

Ms. Bohn continued by reviewing resources for the Spiritual dimension of wellness, including the [UT Mindfulness Community of Scholars](#). She said that the Community regularly offers mindful meditation opportunities that employees are welcome to participate in. Tom Cervone mentioned that Casey Sams, a faculty member in the Theatre department, is part of this group.

Ms. Bohn shared resources for the Intellectual dimension of wellness including tuition fee waivers using the [educational assistance benefit](#) and online learning opportunities through [K@TE](#).

Ms. Bohn next covered Physical dimension offerings, including [Healthy Cooking Classes](#) and Cooking Demonstrations. She relayed that Be Well has partnered with the UT Culinary Institute to offer three healthy cooking series classes a semester, and noted that the classes are in high demand. More recently, Be Well has partnered with UT Medical's Healthy Kitchen to host [on-campus cooking demonstrations](#). She also said that [employee fitness classes](#) including yoga will be continuing as well as lunch and learns facilitated by Nutrition students. Healthy dining options are also available at Presidential Court Café (PCB) through an all-you-care-to-eat healthy lunch for \$6.50.

Ms. Bohn shared that Be Well will launch two campus wide wellness initiatives each year. In 2019, over 800 employees collectively participated in the spring hydration challenge and the fall Smokey walking challenge. She discussed [campus walking routes](#) available for districts and buildings on campus, which feature walks ranging from half of a mile to two miles.

The Environmental dimension of wellness has several campus resource offerings including [healthy gardening classes](#) sponsored by Be Well as well as the Grow with Be Well program. Ms. Bohn announced that Be Well has partnered with the Grow Lab Campus Garden to allow selected departments and applicants access to a plot in the

Grow Lab to grow fruits and vegetables for free on campus. She also said that the Office of Sustainability has created a [Green Office Program Guide](#) for employees to find ways to make their workplaces more environmentally friendly.

Ms. Bohn then reviewed campus resources for the Financial dimension of wellness. She noted that the HR Financial Series: Road to Financial Wellness offers free lunch and learn classes for employees to improve their financial literacy and health. She also noted that Active Health and Partners for Health manage an online [wellness incentive program](#) for employees with UT system insurance (both BCBS and Cigna) in which employees can earn cash incentives for completing various activities and wellness exams.

Lastly, Ms. Bohn reviewed resources for Social wellness, and especially encouraged employees to consider [joining the UT Covenant Marathon team](#). Faculty and staff who participate in the 5k, half-marathon and full marathon as part of the UT do so will receive 40% off of race registration if they sign up through their website.

Ms. Bohn then discussed Be Well's [Healthy Lifestyle Program](#), which is a six-week departmental lunch and learn style program. Be Well provides lunch for the first session. She encouraged employees who are interested in coordinating a group with colleagues to visit the website to arrange for a session to be set up.

Ms. Bohn then reviewed setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely) goals, and shared ways to think about each of the SMART categories. She then asked the group to reflect on measurable ways they could work towards achieving those goals, and encouraged them to choose goals that are both motivating and somewhat uncomfortable to keep them challenged. She asked the group to take several minutes to reflect and list those goals they would like to accomplish this year.

Ms. Bohn closed with the various ways to connect to [Be Well](#) including via Facebook and subscribing to their monthly newsletter. She encouraged representatives to reach out for assistance in reaching their healthy goals.

Leah Buffington asked what Wellness Champions do. Ms. Bohn explained that the [Wellness Champion program](#) is being relaunched. Be Well is tasking those employees who sign up to be part of a healthy department certification, which includes an assessment to find areas of improvement. She said the Champion commitment is two hours each month, and the intention is for Be Well to have Champions within departments to help meet specific needs in each department. Ms. Buffington followed up by asking if there is a maximum number of Champions per college or department. Ms. Bohn replied there is no maximum, and asked representatives to please share with constituents and departments that [applications are being actively accepted](#).

Brad Briggs asked what the maximum number of participants is for Healthy Lifestyle Programs. Ms. Bohn replied that her largest group is currently thirty three people. She said that the Healthy Lifestyle Program was originally a twelve week program that was reduced to six to reduce attrition and because large groups generate a lot of questions to cover.

Tammy Renalds asked if Be Well makes room reservations for spaces used. Ms. Bohn replied that departments set up reservations and Be Well brings the program. Tom Cervone offered feedback from his department's efforts to be more active including taking walks. Ms. Buffington asked how large the Be Well team is. Ms. Bohn replied that she is the only Be Well employee.

Dr. Lucal remarked on the amount of work put into the program from just Ms. Bohn's effort. She charged the group to be a voice for Be Well and the effort to improve employees' well-being to boost productiveness and attendance.

2. Commission Reports

LGBT – Tom Cervone

Tom Cervone reported the [Commission for LGBT People](#) next meets the following Monday, so he did not have any new meeting updates.

He shared several upcoming initiatives such as the Commission participating in New Employee Orientation (NEO) and said he has been invited to sit on the Equity and Climate Committee.

Mr. Cervone concluded by noting there is a lot of energy within the group and that they are committed to getting work done.

Faculty Senate – Charles Primm

Charles Primm was unable to attend the meeting, but provided a report that was shared with the group by Leah Buffington.

Faculty Senate President Gary Skolits reminded the group that the state legislative session is beginning, and that all faculty should keep up with happenings and weigh in as necessary.

He said they're getting positive feedback on adding a faculty member as a voting member of the System Board of Trustees, and that perhaps it will happen in the future.

Chancellor Plowman encouraged faculty to integrate the principles of engagement in their classrooms and offices to improve the inclusive nature of campus.

She mentioned changes in her cabinet: the departure of the Vice Chancellor of Student Life, Vincent Carilli, and Vice Chancellor for Research, Robert Nobles, and the appointment of interim Vice Chancellors for those positions as they get ready to search for permanent replacements.

On the update to the campus strategic plan, a group is working with consultants to produce a report that will be shared with the campus. The new university leadership council is made up of the Chancellor's cabinet, college deans, the Faculty Senate President, the Presidents of the SGA and GSA, and one staff representative.

Chancellor Plowman mentioned the upcoming organ donor paid leave plan.

Beauvais Lyons gave a report on revisions to the faculty handbook regarding the lecturer emeritus position, and annual evaluations and promotions for non-tenure-track faculty.

Anthony Welch gave a report on the [Vol Core curriculum change approvals](#), including the importance of enhancing diversity and inclusion in the UT coursework. A required vote was taken, and the vote passed, to continue the process. This vote was the prime reason that a January Faculty Senate meeting was held. Normally, the Senate does not meet in January.

Chris Cimino, Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, gave a presentation on the new budget allocation model.

The goals of the new model are to align resources with the campus strategic plan, to increase the transparency and accountability in how funds are spent, and to give more control and authority to units (academic and non-academic) on how their money is spent.

Commission for Women – Kaley Walker

Kaley Walker gave a brief report that, in December, the Commission for Women met and Dr. Yamagata-Lynch presented information about the [Office of Ombuds Services](#).

Commission for Blacks – Elisha Hodge/Jeannine Berge

Elisha Hodge reported that she is now able to attend [Commission for Blacks](#) meetings electronically and attended the January meeting the prior week.

She said the January meeting was an organizational meeting, and topics included what communication from the Commission will look like going forward, changes to the Commission's website, and the creation of welcome packets for black and brown new faculty and employees that include look packages with services in the Knoxville area. She said those projects are being developed and put into place.

3. Discussion/Other Business

Constituent Issue/Concern(s):

Q: “On the last two weather days, I’ve gotten feedback from my staff that it creates a burden for staff members when UT doesn’t follow the same closing/delay schedule that Knox County schools do, because people have to make childcare arrangements or use leave time. Is there any way UT can align with Knox County to prevent this issue?” (Kim Hardaway)

A: Dr. Lucal empathized, acknowledging school closures can create childcare coverage hardships. She noted that it is important to remember that UT is quite different than a public school system, including Knox County Schools. UT provides 24 hour a day/7 day a week services and housing for students on campus, and to determine whether to open or close requires different criteria be met. While acknowledging the differences doesn’t make childcare arrangements easier, she reflected that public school closures may help employees in evaluating safe travel conditions. If conditions and roads are unsafe but the University is open employees should request an annual leave day and notify his/her supervisor.

Dr. Lucal followed up by noting telecommuting while caring for older children at home might work if it could be put into place in advance of school closures. She reflected that opting to stay home is a personal decision.

Dr. Lucal also reflected that bringing a child to work is complicated, as some employees work in a setting where that may be ok but those in other settings or situations it may not be a fit (for example, in a lab setting).

Leah Buffington shared her experience with Sevier County Schools closures and coordinating childcare with other parents.

Q: “At TVA, we had a similar program to the sick leave bank donation where employees could anonymously donate excess sick leave to approved bank members. TVA also provided the names of approved bank members wishing to receive donated leave when they provided HR permission to share their names. Is this something UT might consider? Otherwise, it may be hard to figure out who has been approved to receive sick leave.” (Leah Buffington)

A: Julie Roe, Senior Employee Relations Specialist, responded that UT has a sick leave transfer policy which pairs with the Sick Leave Bank (SLB). This process does allow for employees to donate sick leave to other employees who are members of the bank and approved for time through the SLB process. To be eligible for a donation of time from other employees the recipient must receive at least one day (8 hours) from the bank. This ensures the request has been medically certified and reviewed to protect all parties. Donors do not have to be a member of the bank. HR can facilitate an anonymous

transfer if someone is interested in donating sick leave to an employee in need. While we can confirm if there are employees in need, we do not share names or medical information. However, recipients (employees in need) may share their information with whomever they would like.

Janet Jones asked if both the donor and recipient must be enrolled in a Sick Leave Bank. Ms. Roe replied the recipient must be a SLB member but a donor does not.

Q: “What guidance is given to departments and institutes when it comes to cost of living raises approved by the General Assembly for all state employees? It is frustrating to receive high scores on performance reviews, but then to only receive a fraction of the state raise, as the money is being diverted to other positions. Shouldn’t all employees with good reviews get the full cost of living raise approved by our legislature? Why are departments and institutes allowed to use the cost of living raises to bring underfunded positions up to market pay, to the detriment of hard working employees who have earned the raises?” (Elisha Hodge)

A: Dr. Lucal responded that the State of the State address will be given by Governor Lee on February 3, but clarified that the Legislature does not actually give cost of living increases. With regard to the Knox-area campus, she said the Legislature rarely funds all of the money that goes towards raises and that campus leadership must find money to fund them.

The campus then communicates guidelines for how any merit/market monies can be distributed. Within those guidelines, each department distributes their merit dollars as they see appropriate within their department, with guidance from their division. Some departments use merit money to help address market issues, internal equity concerns, or other compensation issues, or performance only.

Dr. Lucal encouraged anyone who has compensation questions or concerns to contact Tarah Keeler, Director of Compensation, at (865) 974-0424.

Tammy Renalds asked for clarification about diverting funds to bring positions up to market. Dr. Lucal replied that she finds many employees do not understand that we as a campus must fund our own increases, especially when there aren’t tuition increases. Ms. Renalds discussed the perception of past 2% increases across the board and 1% merit raises. Dr. Lucal replied that confusion may be due to each year being different.

Q: “Who establishes the amount of the employee 401k match? If the University has control over the amount of the match, I request that increasing the match be explored.” (Elisha Hodge)

A: Prior to the meeting, Julie Roe reached out to Jon Gushen, Director of Retirement Services. Mr. Gushen confirmed the 401k match amount is set by the state legislature. He has asked the state Treasurer about increasing this amount, even to \$100 per month. This recommendation may help to achieve retirement readiness for employees which has historically been one of the state's initiatives. The Treasurer was supportive of an increase, but also aware of the need to fund it. Any increase would need to be funded every year. There are no plans to increase the match at this time, however, the Retirement Office will continue to share feedback for review.

Dr. Lucal noted that a retirement match increase may have to be sourced at the campus/institute level like raises. Brad Briggs asked how long the match has been at \$50 per month. Norma Wilcox shared that it was \$30, then it was increased to \$50, and a discussion took place about when the last legislated match increase happened (2007).

Dr. Lucal shared her experience attending a Retirement seminar and noted the importance of employees understanding their 401k status. Tammy Renalds shared feedback from NEO, noting that new employees are overwhelmed with information and may not be sure what retirement options they have chosen. A discussion around strategies to reach out to constituents and newer coworkers to help educate and support them as they think about ways to review and possibly revisit their retirement choices.

Announcements & Other Comments

- Open Doors
 - Ms. Roe announced that Open Doors will take place on Thursday, January 30, 2020 from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at the UT Culinary Institute & Creamery. The event is intended to be a casual connection opportunity for those in the local community who are interested in learning more about working for UT is like if they are unsure if or how they might fit into the campus community. Spanish & sign language interpreters will be in attendance, and light refreshments will be served.
- Sounding Boards
 - Ms. Roe shared that the [Sounding Boards](#) program is continuing. The groups focus on supporting work/life integration and connecting group members. Groups include [employees as students](#), and [early career professionals](#). She noted that while HR supports the boards the groups are run by peer facilitators. More information about each board, including facilitator contact information, is available on the Sounding Boards flyer.
- Financial Wellness Series
 - Ms. Roe shared that the next event in the Financial Wellness Series will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 from 11:30-12:30 in the Student Union, Room 383F. This session will be “Money Management for Young Professionals: Part 1.”

Those interested in attending may RSVP by emailing UTKHR@utk.edu. As a reminder, anyone attending four or more of the financial series classes will have their name entered for a drawing to be held at the September 2020 session.

- Mobile Mammography event
 - Ms. Roe announced that the UT Medical Center's Mobile Mammography Unit will be on campus to provide mammography screenings to the campus community on Friday, February 21, 2020 from 9:00-4:00. The Unit uses 3D Tomo imaging and will be located in Circle Park. Insurance will be filed for each participant, and BCBS covers the cost of screenings after being applied to the deductible. For questions about the event or to schedule an appointment please call the UT Breast Health Outreach Program at 865-305-9753.
- Constituent Lists
 - Janet Jones asked for new constituent lists. New lists will be provided at the February meeting.
- Budget Model Information Session
 - Tom Cervone asked if someone would be able to attend an ESC meeting to drill down into the Budget Model information from the [Open Forum earlier today](#). A discussion about having someone attend to give a short Q&A session took place.

Distributions

- 2020 Meeting Schedule
- [Be Well – Presentation](#)
- [Be Well – 8 Dimensions of Wellness flyer](#)
- [Open Doors flyer](#)
- [Mobile Mammography flyer](#)
- [Sounding Boards flyer](#)
- [Financial Wellness Series flyer \(revised 2/10/20\)](#)
- [HR Financial Wellness Series: Planning Today for a Better Tomorrow \(Video\)](#)
- [Budget Allocation Model Campus Open Forum \(1/28/20\) \(Video\)](#)

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 2:30 pm
IPS – 1610 University Ave. Room 118

Please send agenda items to Jessica Cantu at jlcantu@utk.edu
or call 974-8299