

Exempt Staff Council

Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 2:30-4:00 pm

Via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Present

Michele Atkins, Rex Barton, Jeannine Berge, Brad Briggs, Brian Browning, Leah Buffington, Jessica Cantu, Tom Cervone, Joe Christian, Veronica Clark*, Marlan Crawford*, Steven Cross*, Linda Daugherty, Kim Denton*, Deanna Flinchum, Kevin Frye, Elizabeth Greene, Kim Hardaway, Bill Hicks*, Elisha Hodge, Janet Jones, Johnny Jones, Mary Lucal, Patrick Mills*, Heath Nokes, Will Porter, Charles Primm, Tammy Renalds, John Rich, Tomi Rogers*, Julie Roe, Tim Schade*, Teresa Sears, Nick Simson, Norma Wilcox, Wesley Wright,

* IPS Observer or IPS Leadership Academy Observer

Absent

Kaley Walker

Welcome

Kimberly Hardaway, Chair & Student Life Representative, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

New Business

1. Commission Reports

Commission for LGBT People

Tom Cervone greeted the group, and reported that the [Commission](#) recently met. He announced that Dr. Rebecca Morgan was recently awarded the [Chancellor's LGBTQ Advocate Award](#). He praised Dr. Morgan, a longtime member of the LGBT Commission, for her stalwart support. Mr. Cervone also highlighted Sterling Field, who received the [Chancellor's LGBTQ Student Leadership Award](#). The Awards Ceremony will take place online on May 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Cervone continued by noting the Commission is currently looking for new members. The membership application form can be [found on the Commission's website](#). Alternately, those interested in applying may [email Stephanie Langley](#), one of the co-chairs for membership. Applications may be submitted through the end of the day on May 15, 2020. He encouraged anyone interested in being a part of the Commission to apply.

Mr. Cervone announced that Dr. Lettie Flores would be stepping down as co-chair. Dr. Mitsu Misawa will continue as a co-chair, and the Commission is in the process of nominating new co-chair as they look to the beginning of the new academic year.

Mr. Cervone concluded by acknowledging that the work of the subcommittees is largely paused due to COVID-19. After a brief check-in with Tammy Renalds and Dr. Lucal, he closed by wishing everyone well.

Faculty Senate

Charles Primm reported that the Faculty Senate met on April 6, 2020. He shared that the senate tested the poll functionality of Zoom and suggested it might be useful for the Council as well. He said Chancellor Plowman gave an update to the senators about the [increase in credit hours delivered online](#) due to COVID-19 response. The Chancellor also talked about the initiative to have [someone call all 29,000 UTK students](#) to check on them and see how they are doing.

He said there was a discussion about if classes remain online during the fall semester, and noted that the [Re-Imagining Fall Task Force](#) will be presenting recommendations to the Chancellor.

Millie Gimmel, Associate Professor in Modern Foreign Languages, was elected as the new Faculty Senate Secretary. Revisions were made to the instructor feedback system to incorporate the move online. He also announced that Senators voted to allow undergraduate students to select satisfactory credit or no credit for spring semester.

Mr. Primm concluded by noting that the Chancellor was asked about the budget, and she reported that the budget is currently in good condition as a result of past

stewardship, and that the University is awaiting word from the state looking towards the future.

Commission for Women

No report given.

Commission for Blacks

No report given.

2. Discussion/Other Business

ESC Elections

Ms. Hardaway asked Deanna Flinchum to give a report about the elections process. Ms. Flinchum described the election process, which takes place online. The elections take place in May and the new and departing representatives attend the June meeting.

Ms. Flinchum discussed the areas which would be participating in elections this year and noted there would also be two ad hoc elections for Extension East and IPS Central including LEIC, the Naifeh Center and TLC.

Julie Roe noted that whoever is elected for the ad hoc areas will finish the original term.

Re-Imagining Fall Feedback

Ms. Hardaway discussed the [Re-Imagining Fall Taskforce](#), and how the group will provide suggestions and feedback about the process. She encouraged anyone with ideas or concerns to share them via the Task Force's website, and to also communicate those directly with the subgroups.

Mary Lucal added that she is the co-chair for the Workplace Safety Subcommittee. She said she's received several batches of feedback from the survey, and shared that they are not getting as much staff feedback as she'd like to see. She wants everyone to feel that they have a chance to be heard and express what is on their minds for their specific areas.

Tom Cervone shared that Claudio Gomez on the Visitors to Campus Subcommittee has reached out to areas of campus that are host to public assembly, and that they have been discussing how that will look for those areas in the fall.

Sick Leave Bank Application Deadline

Ms. Hardaway announced the extension of the [Sick Leave Bank](#) application deadline. She encouraged the representatives to apply before the new August 31, 2020 deadline.

Dr. Lucal asked Ms. Roe when employees would need to have accrued the necessary 48 hours accrued needed to join the bank. Ms. Roe clarified that employees have until August 31 to accrue the hours, of which 24 will be donated as part of the enrollment. She also confirmed that currently members of the bank do not need to re-apply or do anything during the enrollment period. She also reminded the group about sick leave balance information available via IRIS Web Employee Self Service (ESS). Interest was expressed in ESS training. John Rich suggested that those interested in ESS training should contact Kathy Zelem, who is IRIS' expert on ESS time entry and leave requests.

Applications and general information about the Knoxville area and UTIA Sick Leave Banks can be found on the [HR website](#), and questions can be emailed to SickLeaveBank@utk.edu.

Partners For Health Wellness & Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Programs

Ms. Hardaway encouraged the group to explore ongoing wellness programs through [Be Well](#), [Partners For Health](#) and services including the [Employee Assistance Program](#) while adjusting to the current conditions.

Julie Roe updated the group that she has received feedback about the EAP program around difficulty in finding providers accepting new patients. She shared that EAP call center associates can stay on the line with callers to ensure they can get paired with a provider accepting new patients. Callers should let the EAP associate know that they want help to connect with a provider who can accept them as a patient. Callers will still need to set up an appointment on their own.

Constituent Issue/Concern(s):

Q: “My children’s day care won’t open until at least May 26th. We use the program through the school system. There is a concern they may not open at all if they don’t get enough interest. My concern is that I will be required to return to campus before I have adequate child care for my children. Will the University work with me? Will the department heads and Dean’s be instructed to work with staff in these situations?”

A: Dr. Lucal acknowledged feedback from the recent Task Force survey that employees who are working parents or providing elder care have had a challenging few weeks after beginning telework.

She said that HR is ready to receive any questions or provide assistance to individuals who might qualify for some of the [new federal benefits](#) around those who cannot telecommute because of caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed due to COVID-19 related reasons.

She suggested that if constituents reach out about similar concerns to suggest that they call HR or email hr@utk.edu to start a conversation around supporting their needs.

Ms. Roe added that they've received questions around summer camps or events for children. She said that Employee Relations is looking for virtual resources and events to share. Those resources [will be posted to the HR website](#).

Q: “Not a concern but a kudos to EOC group: “...please take forth a huge “thank you” to the committee. The university has done a tremendous job in keeping us informed as we work from home. I particularly appreciate the frequent messages from the president and the trust that the university has for us all to do our work remotely. In addition, when so, so many people are unemployed right now; I am immensely grateful that I don’t have the added stress of worrying about whether or not I’ll have a paycheck at the end of the pay period. GO UT!”

A: Ms. Hardaway and Dr. Lucal discussed the comment. Nick Simson shared his perspective as a System employee. Janet Jones shared that the College of Veterinary Medicine is still seeing patients, and faculty and staff are on site running the Hospital providing emergent and specialty care. She expressed her admiration for those providing direct patient Veterinary care. Dr. Lucal thanked Ms. Jones and reminded the group that some groups on campus including CVM never left including Facilities Services, UTPD, and Housing.

Mr. Cervone shared that the Theatre department has made over 1,500 masks in the last month. He also shared that the theatre business model is changing to [delivering content virtually](#). Linda Daugherty asked about the process to request masks, and Johnny Jones asked if there will be a mandate to wear masks while on campus. Mr. Cervone responded that Emergency Management requested that Theatre produce masks for a central supply through Surplus. Julie Roe replied that there will be a process for ordering supplies like cloth masks and hand sanitizer, and more information will be shared in an upcoming Chancellor’s update. Ms. Hardaway shared that Housing has reopened time windows for move outs, and discussed the precautions being asked of those moving students out. She also shared information around changes to emergency housing for those students residing on campus during the summer.

Leah Buffington asked if any themes were of note from recent surveys conducted by System HR that w assist representatives in supporting their staff. Dr. Lucal shared feedback around caring for children at home while telecommuting, having difficulty finding EAP providers accepting new patients, and providing professional development opportunities.

Distributions

None.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 2:30 pm
Via Zoom

Please send agenda items to Jessica Cantu at jlcantu@utk.edu