

Exempt Staff Council

Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 2:30-4:00 pm

Via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Present

Brian Browning, Leah Buffington, Jessica Cantu, Joe Christian, DeAnna Flinchum, Kevin Frye, Kim Hardaway, Elisha Hodge, Johnny C. Jones, Melisa Kelton*, Mary Lucal, Patrick Mills*, Cesar Muedas*, Charles Primm, Tammy Renalds, John Rich, Lora Robinson for Brad Briggs, Julie Roe, Tim Schade*, Theresa Sears, Nick Simson

* IPS Leadership Academy Observer

Absent

Michele Atkins, Jeannine Berge, Tom Cervone, Linda Daugherty, Heath Nokes, Kaley Walker, Norma Wilcox, Wesley Wright

Welcome

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

New Business

1. Commission Reports

Commission for LGBT People

Ms. Hardaway shared a report from Tom Cervone as he was unable to attend the meeting. He reported that Dr. Mitsu Misawa will be stepping into the Commission Chair role and that the May meeting was brief. Tammy Renalds confirmed that Dr. Misawa will

begin the Chair role in the fall, and shared that several of the subcommittees have not had an opportunity to meet.

Faculty Senate

Charles Primm reported that the May meeting of the Faculty Senate was the last for the academic year and Chancellor Plowman gave a report. He noted that the Senate selected a new President, Brian Krumm, Associate Professor in the College of Law. Their Executive Council will be meeting during the summer, with new officers starting July 1. The first full Faculty Senate meeting for the 2020-21 academic year will be after the start of classes.

Two analyses from the Senate's salary study were also shared during the meeting, one for tenure track faculty and one for non-tenure track faculty.

Commission for Women

No report given.

Commission for Blacks

Elisha Hodge reported that the Commission met on April 29 and May 13. The group is in the process of nominating two new co-chairs and are discussing how remaining money in their budget can be utilized to assist students, faculty, and staff on campus who might have specific needs related to COVID-19. She noted that the group also talked about the Chancellor's Awards and Honors joint celebration held on May 8. The Commission is working on setting goals for 2020-21, and will be meeting some during the summer this year.

2. Discussion/Other Business

Academic Calendar Update

Mary Lucal announced that the 2020-21 Academic Calendar [was recently changed](#) to reflect a return to campus while dealing with COVID-19. Classes will start August 19, and the last day of instruction for the semester will be November 24. Dr. Lucal noted that the biggest impact with regard to staff will be that classes will be held on Labor Day. This means that instead of having Labor Day as a set holiday it will become a floating holiday, to be taken after September 7 and before December 31. She said those with plans for Labor Day that are affected by the change should talk with their supervisor.

Dr. Lucal asked for feedback around the calendar changes. A discussion took place about impact on different areas on campus including Housing and advising. Dr. Lucal asked representatives who have constituents with questions around the changes to contact HR or hr@utk.edu.

Joe Christian asked if employees could take the Friday before Labor Day (September 4) instead for those who have plans for the weekend. After the meeting, Dr. Lucal clarified that no, the day begins to be available on September 7, the date at which it would have normally been available. Nick Simson asked if the calendar change would affect System employees or any other campuses. Dr. Lucal replied that she believes it just affects UTK. Ms. Hardaway reflected on how the change might affect Housing. Deanna Flinchum asked if staff in areas that don't interact with students or classes could still choose to take the Labor Day holiday as originally scheduled. Ms. Roe replied that her understanding is that staff can still choose to take September 7 as the Labor Day holiday, but should have a conversation with their supervisor before that takes place.

Face Coverings Update

Dr. Lucal noted that cloth face coverings will be essential for a safe, phased in return to campus and fall. The expectation is that, when in shared spaces including walking across campus or in a private office where the wearer can control their six-foot social distancing area, employees should wear cloth face coverings. Dr. Lucal said that face coverings, disinfectant and hand sanitizer are available and that keeping face coverings on hand and using them appropriately are essential. She asked that the Council assist the effort through messaging and support. Lora Robinson said that in her area she and her coworkers sit in cubicles in one room, and asked if they would be required to wear a mask while sitting at their desks. Dr. Lucal replied that Dr. Spencer Gregg, Director of the Student Health Center, assisted the Emergency Operations Committee (EOC) with looking into this question. The answer is if coworkers are within six feet of each other, then face coverings will indeed need to be worn while working. She suggested that the department consider flexible scheduling to allow for social distancing space. Ms. Hardaway affirmed the need for face covering use.

Ms. Roe noted that Dr. Gregg and the EOC are keeping up-to-date on guidance regarding wearing face coverings, and are making recommendations to senior leadership to help keep everyone as safe as possible. Tammy Renalds asked Ms. Roe about the face coverings that supervisors can request. Ms. Roe discussed the different types of face coverings being sourced, noting that more information can be found on the HR website under [Return to work: Guidance for supervisors](#). Leah Buffington noted that supervisors in TCE have coordinated to create College-specific signage and social distancing guidelines that will eventually be placed in all Engineering buildings.

ESC Elections Discussion

Tammy Renalds asked about the ongoing ESC elections, and asked to clarify when new members would be joining. Ms. Flinchum replied that the elections would end the day after the meeting, and that the new representatives typically come to the June meeting, which is the last meeting for those rotating off. Eight areas had regular elections, and two areas (Extension-East and IPS Central/LEIC/Naifeh/TLC) had ad hoc elections. The election results announcement will go out soon.

Ms. Roe shared that she recently worked with OIT to make the mobile elections system more mobile friendly.

Ms. Hardaway reminded the group that June would also bring a call for a new Chair and Vice Chair nomination and vote. A discussion took place about making a call for nominations prior to the June meeting.

Constituent Issue/Concern(s):

Q: “Due to telework requirements beginning in late March and extending through Summer 2020, Faculty/Staff who are charged monthly through payroll deduction for an annual permit are unable to receive a refund given current Parking Services/UT Policy. In lieu of COVID-19, we have learned that telework may potentially be part of any position at UT. For the current fiscal year, it may not be possible to issue a refund or make immediate changes. However, the creation of a new policy and/or parking permit billing option should be considered to help mitigate this unnecessary expense for those affected in the future.”

A: Ms. Roe replied that, per Parking Service’s guidelines, Staff who elect to turn in their parking pass would have the parking deduction stopped. However, if they elect to renew their pass when they return to campus, there is no guarantee of being able to secure a spot in the previously assigned lot and may be placed on a waitlist. Ms. Roe also shared that Parking Services is an auxiliary unit and parking fees help to pay salaries. As a result of continued fees, Parking Services’ staff have been able to continue working, undertaking professional development and transformational work.

Brian Browning shared that he sat down with Mark Hairr, Director of Parking Services, to review the details of the constituent proposal. From a programming standpoint, Mr. Browning said that it would require a manual effort to effect the proposed changes and keep up with tracking telework schedules. He shared that there is a \$5 daily rate if parkers are only on campus a few times a month, but the privileges associated with monthly parking (including lot assignment) could be at risk due to being placed at the bottom of any applicable lot waiting lists. He noted that 59% of Parking Services’ budget is comprised of salaries, benefits & mandatory transfers (garage debt service or

mortgages payable to the state). This is roughly 5 million of their annual budget, and in addition, special event revenue is expected to be severely impacted for some time. He asked representatives to keep those figures in mind in talking with constituents.

Kevin Frye said he would share the information with the constituent who presented the proposal. He reflected that those concerned about ongoing parking fees while teleworking are staff at lower pay grades, and acknowledged that paying monthly parking fees while not parking on campus could be a strain on their budgets.

Ms. Hardaway thanked everyone for their feedback. Nick Simson shared [SmartTrips](#), a local initiative to encourage local commuters to consider alternatives to single vehicle commuting. Leah Buffington remarked that the waiting lists for lots near the Engineering buildings is lengthy.

Distributions

None.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 2:30 pm
Via Zoom

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