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## PRESENT

Eric Amos, Brad Briggs, Brian Browning, Chip Bryant (Guest Speaker), Emma Burgin, Jessica Cantu, Tom Cervone, Joe Christian, Darrell Easley, Deanna Flinchum, John Goddard, Elisha Hodge, Janet Jones, Beth Kurtz, Mary Lucal, Amber Mathes, Heath Nokes, Julie Roe, Theresa Sears, Ken Wagner, Kaley Walker, Norma Wilcox

## ABSENT

Jeannine Berge, Kevin Frye, Kim Hardaway, Rita Jackson, John Rich, Michael Smith-Porter, Kevin Thompson

## 1. WELCOME

Elisha Hodge, Chair and IPS MTAS Representative, welcomed everyone to the January meeting.

## 2. UPDATES

- a. Human Resources Update – Dr. Mary Lucal, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources

Dr. Lucal greeted the group and gave a brief HR update. She shared that Taleo, the recruitment tool used by the University, no longer asks applicants for previous salary information. This was a significant diversity and inclusion change, brought about by the fact that research shows that women and people of color have historically been underpaid.

Dr. Lucal concluded by also highlighting that the Online Performance Review system is live. She also announced that, effective for 2021 a new diversity and inclusion question will take the place of adaptability and flexibility. Prior to the meeting, Dr. Lucal [co-hosted a webinar](#) with Mark Savage, Interim Assistant CIO and Executive Director of OIT, introducing the new Online Performance Review system. After the meeting, she co-hosted an additional webinar with Katrice Morgan, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of the Office of Equity & Diversity, about [exploring diversity, equity, and inclusion in the staff performance review](#).

### 3. COMMISSION REPORTS

#### a. Commission for Blacks – Elisha Hodge

Elisha Hodge reported that the [Commission](#)'s next meeting will take place tomorrow. She said she would share an update at the February meeting.

#### b. Commission for LGBT – Tom Cervone

Mr. Cervone reported that the [Commission](#)'s next meeting will take place later this month. He said he would share an update at the February meeting.

#### c. Commission for Women – Amber Mathes

Amber Mathes reported that the [Commission](#)'s next meeting will take place next week. She said she would share an update at the February meeting.

#### d. Faculty Senate – John Goddard

Mr. Goddard reported the [Faculty Senate](#)'s next meeting will take place later this month. He said he would share an update at the February meeting.

#### e. Commission for Disability – Emma Burgin

Ms. Burgin reported that the Commission is still figuring out priorities. She shared that more information and news about events will be coming this semester.

#### f. Commission for Diversity and Interculturalism – Tom Cervone

Mr. Cervone reported that the [Commission](#)'s meeting will take place later this month. He said he would share an update at the February meeting.

### 4. GUEST SPEAKER

#### a. Chip Bryant, Vice Chancellor for Advancement

Mr. Bryant greeted the group and shared information about UT Alumni and development efforts. He began by noting that their donor bases had expanded during the last fiscal year, and that through campaigns like Join the Journey, alumni and friends contributed 1.33 billion dollars over a nine-year period. Other areas of

success include Colleges and centers named for contributors as well as an endowment that has grown and almost doubled.

Mr. Bryant shared that during the 2019-20 fiscal year, [UT had over 50,000 donors](#). This this past December was the best in the history of the University for charitable gifts. He reflected on efforts to pivot to engage with donors over the last year, including hosting mostly virtual events and some socially distanced events. Mr. Bryant discussed how the Alumni program held virtual receptions and events like tailgates, and that they found the virtual events engaged distant Alumni. He shared that they will continue to host virtual events to keep those Alumni far from campus engaged. He also discussed fundraising as a team sport for coworker participation, and announced the related Big Orange Family campaign will begin in February with a goal of 64% employee participation.

Mr. Goddard asked how coaching choices affect charitable giving programs. Mr. Bryant responded that historically engagement goes up and down in football, but fundraising-wise they set records over the last decade. Mr. Cervone asked how to create conversations that is compelling about fundraising and how to motivate donors. Mr. Bryant responded by emphasizing the importance of listening to donors, and finding out where their passion is. He said to make a significant impact on campus those interested in raising funds should help donors identify specific areas to support and plan for those gifts. He also said to stay in contact with donors, and that by being in front of them metrics show it is easier to have a conversation around giving. Lastly, Mr. Bryant said that building relationships and visits with donors is a primary goal. Having a relationship with donors, especially as the stock market goes up, will help build generous philanthropic support. Beth Kurtz asked about Welcome Wednesdays. Mr. Bryant discussed that staff members are still engaged and talking with students about Alumni programming, including recording ThankView videos remotely.

For more information, visit [giving.utk.edu](http://giving.utk.edu) and [alumni.utk.edu](http://alumni.utk.edu).

## 5. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS

### a. Self-Isolation & Department Notifications

**Q:** “According to the University of Tennessee Covid-19 website (<https://tennessee.edu/coronavirus/utsa-employees/self-isolate/>) the question is posed *what should we do if someone in my department has decided to self-isolate*. The response is as follows: “Unless your supervisor informs you that someone in your department has tested positive then you may continue to work in the office. In the event of a positive test, the department head or supervisor will be contacted, and the

office area will be closed for cleaning. It is the responsibility of the supervisor or department head to inform department members that there has been a positive test within the department. It will be up to the employee to decide if they should self-isolate or get tested.”

Are supervisors receiving enough consistent training on the communication expectations listed above? There have been some unclear situations that may stem from a lack of supervisory knowledge/action on this matter.

**A:** Dr. Lucal responded that the constituent who reached out is citing UT System policy, but her understanding is the question came from an individual who is part of UTIA. She said she reached out to Doug Bohner, UTIA Human Resources Officer, who confirmed that the Institute of Agriculture follows UTK/UTIA COVID practices and procedures including completing a self-isolation form that goes to the contact tracing team. She explained that UTK & UTIA have an extensive contact tracing effort, but the UT System is different. For UTK & UTIA employees, the contact tracers reach out to the individual to find out when they were last on campus to assess any space cleaning issues and to determine if they need to get in touch with any other individuals who might be close contacts. Dr. Lucal said if the UTIA constituent had been a close contact then they would have been contacted through contact tracing, and it would not have been the supervisor’s responsibility to share that information.

Janet Jones shared some differences for general UTIA employees or those at the Vet School. She shared that they have two task forces including one for the College of Veterinary Medicine. Heath Nokes identified the question as coming from one of his constituents in Middle Tennessee, not from CVM. Both he and Mr. Goddard shared their experiences with contact tracing.

b. Staff Work Time Accountability

**Q:** “Is there any way to hold administrative assistants accountable for their work time during this Covid-era?”

**A:** Dr. Lucal responded to the question by asking for more information, and Mr. Goddard shared that it came from one of his constituents at the county level. He shared that county directors and supervisors have been told that staff cannot be made to do something they don’t want to, and Mr. Nokes confirmed that messaging as well. Mr. Goddard shared work that the staff in question would do in-office has been difficult to perform remotely, and that he does not know what else they can do. Dr. Lucal suggested that Mr. Goddard talk with Mr. Bohner about what other Extension offices have done during the pandemic, as administrative support staff on campus are able to take assignments with them to do during telework days. Mr. Goddard shared his experience with an Extension employee who didn’t enjoy telework and retired early.

c. Telework Tax Deduction

**Q:** “I would like to know if we can count a portion of our housing/utilities off our taxes as business expense from March-December.”

**A:** Dr. Lucal referred the constituent to talk with their tax professional about the question. Mr. Goddard said he talked with Alan Galloway, Extension Area Specialist III with Putnam County, who advised him that due to tax law changes it is almost impossible for W-2 issued employees to qualify for a home office deduction. Dr. Lucal suggested that if people bought home office furniture or supplies and have questions about deducting them they should talk with their tax professional.

d. Market Salary Range Questions

**Q:** Several questions were asked about UT’s plans to address market salary range inequities now that the new compensation system is in place.

**A:** Dr. Lucal responded that the first step in implementing the market-based pay structure was placing 9,000 staff positions from across the system and placing them into the new compensation system. She explained that they did not make adjustments as it was a budget neutral project. She said compensation issues that are surfacing now are because the new compensation structure is much more transparent, and those issues did not come as a result of the project but were there before and much more apparent in a market based system. She stressed that the project will help us see our pay issues more clearly.

Dr. Lucal followed up to say that not everyone should be at the midpoint of their position’s salary range. She said the question assumes the goal of the project is to move every person to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, but that it isn’t appropriate as it depends on the skill and experience each person has. At the moment, notification letters are being sent out to employees, and the next step will be when market and merit dollars are available and using those resources to address data that shows supervisors the distance people are from their position in the market and help them make decisions to address those issues. Dr. Lucal said she would be watching Governor Lee’s State of the State address on February 8, and suggested that everyone do so as well.

e. Higher Education Employee COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

**Q:** “Why were higher education staff left off the COVID-19 vaccine distribution list and timeline whereas K-12 staff were addressed? Will there be any updates to this timeline or what is happening?”

**A:** Dr. Lucal replied that she was not sure why higher education staff were excluded but the decision for K-12 was made to prioritize teachers and childcare workers for their importance in stabilizing society and the economy. Brian Browning noted that Knox County Health Department is responsible for following state vaccination guidelines. Dr. Lucal encouraged the group to view the current vaccination schedules

to know where their group is on the vaccine timelines. She said Dr. Spencer Gregg, Student Health Center Director, and the College of Nursing have recognized the need for vaccinating populations who have been working at vaccine clinics or who are working in clinical settings.

f. Employee Self Check & Telework

**Q:** “I’m still concerned with how much we are being encouraged to physically come into work when the numbers are up in our area (Knoxville). Working from home has been good for me with general productivity, but especially my mental health. Moving forward, will there be more flexibility in letting staff have a balance between working from the office and working from home?”

**A:** Dr. Lucal replied that telework has been an experiment for all of us, and that she has become much more flexible in thinking about telework than before. Monitoring performance and productivity is important, and staff and supervisors should continue to have conversations around telework and return to office plans. Dr. Lucal and Kim Hardaway discussed remote work and the possibility of recruiting candidates for positions that could be done remotely. Ms. Hardaway expressed concern about a potential side effect of telework on staff whose work must be done in person, reflecting on critical roles like Housing’s housekeeping, maintenance, and administrative staff.

## 6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Big Orange Food Pantry

The Big Orange Pantry provides emergency food assistance for students, faculty, and staff attending or employed by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Big Orange Pantry is located on the ground floor of Greve Hall. Students, faculty, and staff seeking food assistance will be able to choose for themselves what products they would like to receive. To utilize this service, please go to [tiny.utk.edu/BigOrangePantry](https://tiny.utk.edu/BigOrangePantry) to complete the application and submit your order.

Ms. Hardaway shared more information about the Big Orange Pantry with the group, and said they are also looking for volunteers to help. Those interested in signing up can also visit [tiny.utk.edu/BigOrangePantry](https://tiny.utk.edu/BigOrangePantry) for more information. A discussion about food insecurity on campus took place, and Ms. Hodge noted that students can also volunteer to [donate meal funds](#) to assist other students.

## 7. REMINDERS

- a. Please email Jessica Cantu ([jlcantu@utk.edu](mailto:jlcantu@utk.edu)) any constituent questions.