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PRESENT

Michele Atkins, Brian Barnett (Guest), Christopher Binkley, Sheila Boarders, Mary Beth Burlison, Alicia Calderon (Campus Partner), Jon Chandler, Shane Colter, Jamie Cyphers, DeAnna Flinchum, Allyson Graves, Kim Harmon (Guest Speaker), Lauren Hatcher, Marcus Hiliard, Bill Jackson, Melissa Jenkins, Bonnie Johnson, Rhiannon Jones (Guest), Beth Kurtz, Mary Lucal, Kelley McNeal (Guest), Amanda Middleton, David Moore, Will Porter (Guest), Kim Raia, Blake Reagan, Tonya Sartin, LaShel Stevens, Matt Ward, Leslie Wereszazak, Brooke Wichmann, and Norma Wilcox

ABSENT

George Drinnon, John Goddard, Nathan McKinney, Sam Smith, Tanya Washington, and Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

1. WELCOME

Chair Beth Kurtz welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a. IPS Leadership Academy – Kim Harman, Executive Director for the Naifeh Center  
The Naifeh center does everything that is professional development and leadership and is under the Institute for Public Service (IPS). They work with several sister agencies and counties to provide professional development and leadership services to the communities. With IPS, they have the Tennessee Language Center, the Law Enforcement Innovation center, and a forensic academy where people can come in and learn different skills. They are also working on the opioid abuse issue that is ongoing in Tennessee through an abuse and recovery initiative.

Members of the eighteen-month IPS Leadership Academy are in attendance to learn more about the UT system & campuses.

- b. HR Update – Mary Lucal, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources  
Human Resources is in the peak season for hiring. All hires (student, faculty, temp, and staff positions) go through the HR office to be entered into the system so they can be paid. During this time, HR’s goal is to work to the next payroll deadline. This

means that data is entered based on payroll priority. Everyone will get entered into the system on time, as long as HR has all needed information. However, entry may come right down to the deadline at this time of the year.

Open Enrollment for insurance will begin soon, October 1-13, 2023. The open enrollment window will be abbreviated again, like it has been the past few years. Here is a gentle reminder to look into any information sent out and make any changes before the last day of enrollment, so you don't have to worry about technology or password issues.

HR sends out monthly newsletters with HR updates and reminders. It also features things our Learning and Organizational Behavior team is currently doing, like podcasts and upcoming trainings. Visit [here](#) to sign up to receive the monthly HR newsletter.

- c. ESC Overview – Jon Chandler, Senior Employee Relations Consultant  
To view a recorded version of this presentation, visit the [Employee Relations Advisory Organization](#) webpage. The Role of the Representative in Disciplinary Action video will be coming soon to the ERAO website.
- d. Member Introductions  
All representatives introduced themselves to the group with their title, division, and why they are glad to be part of the Exempt Staff Council.

### 3. CONSTITUENT ISSUES

- a. **(Q):** Will the Exempt Staff Council consider supporting an independent study on the advantages, efficiency(ies) and/or deficiency(ies) regarding the staff employee requirement to use a smart phone to house the VolCard app to enter University card access only spaces? (Such as: Impact on going green initiatives, costs, employee accessibility, employee satisfaction, work/life balance as several staff members report never using the app due to technical issues regardless of the device they use.)  
**(A):** Beth Kurtz reached out to the Volcard office, and they said that students are not issued physical cards unless they have extenuating circumstances, which would be the same for faculty and staff. There are several reasons for the switch to a digital Volcard, including: student requests, the go green trend, technology moving beyond the card (printer machines are hard to find that will work with a physical card), and security associated with an ID on the mobile device.

DeAnna Flinchum brought up the issue that the Volcard does not say “The University of Tennessee” on it. Leslie Werszczak brought up the issue that at the Vet hospital, a physical card is much easier to use when having to carry animals during an emergency. It is hard to use a phone to unlock doors while having an animal in their arms. Beth Kurtz offered to see if someone from the Volcard office could attend next month's meeting to discuss this issue further.

### 4. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Volunteers are needed to be a representative of the ESC and attend council meetings. You will then report back to the ESC group and update on what is happening in the councils. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Beth Kurtz ([ekurtz2@utk.edu](mailto:ekurtz2@utk.edu)) or Sam Smith ([samsmith5@utk.edu](mailto:samsmith5@utk.edu)). Volunteers are needed for:
  - i. Employee Relations Advisory Board
  - ii. Faculty Senate
  - iii. Police Advisory Council
  - iv. University Leadership Council
  - v. Council for Diversity and Inclusion
  
- b. Follow up on previous UTIA questions:
  - i. **(Q): Why do 4-H Agents have to raise funds to send region winning teams to national competitions?**  
**(A):** Most, if not all, 4-H agents will be involved in fundraising activities from time to time. 4-H will always have various activities for members, leaders and families that involve varying levels of expense. To ensure there is broad and open participation in events that may be expensive, we look to our agents and other leaders to assist with fundraising to help offset costs. The Tennessee 4-H Foundation provides partial funding to offset expenses for most of the national contests, and continually seeks funds to find more support. County 4-H agents are always encouraged to visit with the 4-H Foundation staff for further ideas.
  
  - ii. **(Q): When is the organization going to address 4-H Agents being the only staff charged with selling a product as part of their performance appraisal, 4-H Camp?**  
**(A):** If this criterion for you is problematic it is suggested that you discuss your concerns directly with your supervisor. As mentioned above, fundraising is a part of the duties that many carry out on behalf of 4-H.
  
  - iii. **(Q): How often are wage increases evaluated for county extension agents?**  
**(A):** In keeping with the practices and expectations of various local, state and federal funding sources, wages of all employees are generally reviewed annually. There very infrequently may be extraordinary circumstances in any given year, the pandemic for example, that may cause the deferral or cancellation of the review. In addition to individual level reviews, the extension pay structure and our related practices are periodically benchmarked or compared via salary surveys and other competitive information. There is no denial that recent escalations in inflation have heightened the importance and need for these activities.

## 5. REMINDERS

- a. Next meeting- August 22, 2023 at 2:30 pm EST.
- b. Please email Beth Kurtz ([ekurtz2@utk.edu](mailto:ekurtz2@utk.edu)) or Sam ([samsmith5@utk.edu](mailto:samsmith5@utk.edu)) with constituent issue or questions the Friday (by noon) before the next meeting.