

PRESENT

Christopher Binkley, Alicia Calderon (Campus Partner), Shane Colter, Matt Cramer (Guest), DeAnna Flinchum, John Goddard, Allyson Graves, Lauren Hatcher, Marcus Hilliard, Bill Jackson (Campus Partner), Melissa Jenkins, Bonnie Johnson, Amanda Middleton, David Moore, Kim Raia, Blake Reagan, Chris Roe (Guest Speaker), Julie Roe, Sam Smith, LaShel Stevens, Hillary Tune, Paige Turner (Guest), Matt Ward, Tanya Washington, Brooke Wichmann (Campus Partner), and Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

ABSENT

Michele Atkins, Mary Beth Burlison, Jamie Cyphers, George Drinnon, Allyson Graves, Beth Kurtz, Nathan McKinney, Kim Raia, Blake Reagan, and Leslie Wereszczak

1. WELCOME

Shane Colter, Exempt Staff Council (ESC) Chair-elect, welcomed everyone to the April 2024 meeting. Chair Beth Kurtz was unable to attend the meeting.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Mental Health Resources – Optum, Employee Wellness Solutions
Chris Roe from Optum, presented the Employee Wellness Solutions (EWS) program, previously called Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is the provider for the University’s mental health resources benefit. A copy of the presentation is attached [here](#). For more information about Optum and Employee Wellness Solutions, you can visit their website at <https://www.here4tn.com/>.
- b. Safe Zone Training – Bonnie Johnson, Pride Center Director
Bonnie Johnson, Director of the Pride Center, gave a brief overview of what the Safe Zone Training workshop entails. Safe Zone at UT is an educational workshop series focusing on:
 - i. Basic language and terminology related to gender and sexuality
 - ii. Awareness and understanding of the intersections of gender, sexuality, and other social identities
 - iii. Skills to intervene in situations of discrimination and injustice
 - iv. Knowledge about LGBTQ+ resources available on UT’s campus.

Safe Zone is open to all current faculty, staff, and students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For more information on Safe Zone Training or to sign up for a workshop, visit: <https://pridecenter.utk.edu/safezone/>.

c. Human Resources Update - Julie Roe, Employee Relations Manager

The 2023 Annual Performance Review season officially ended on March 31, 2024. The completion rate as of mid-April is slightly above 90%. Human Resources will continue to reach out to supervisors who have not completed their annual reviews.

The DASH (Dynamic Administrative Systems for Higher Ed) project go-live date has been shifted to January 1, 2025. While UT would be technically ready for the DASH transition on the initial go-live date of July 1, 2024, the DASH executive team determined that an extension would ensure the University is organizationally ready to adopt the change and will yield dividends with long-term success for the transition.

The Exempt leadership development cohort program, University of Tennessee Inclusive Leadership Academy (UTILA), is now accepting applications for the 2024-2025 cohort. This is a strong leadership development program that focuses on inclusive leadership. To learn more about this program or to apply, visit: <https://hr.utk.edu/ut-inclusive-leadership-academy/>. You can also nominate a colleague you think would be a good fit for the program on their webpage.

Staff Appreciation Week is May 6-10, 2024. A whole week of activities have been planned. To see more information on what you can expect during the week, visit [the Hub](#).

d. Staff Senate and Spring 2024 Election Update

Julie Roe and Shane Colter shared upcoming changes with the Council. The Exempt Staff Council and the Non-Exempt Employee Relations Committees (ERC) will combine in Summer 2025 to create one group, tentatively titled the Staff Senate. Over the next academic year, the ESC and the ERCs will work together to bring the Staff Senate to life. Representatives from the ESC and the ERCs are being asked to serve one additional year (AY 2024-2025) while we make this transition. Therefore, these groups are skipping elections this Spring 2024 and will conduct elections in Spring 2025 under the new Staff Senate bylaws (to be determined). Mr. Colter asked that current ESC representatives who are unable to serve an additional year to let him or Beth Kurtz know as soon as possible so they can review membership and back-fill any vacancies.

e. Committee Updates

There were no updates provided for the Employee Relations Advisory Board, Faculty Senate, and the University Leadership Council for the April 2024 meeting.

The Police Advisory Council met and talked with the new Chief of Policy, Shawn Patterson. The University Police Department is currently providing hiring for several part time positions. Many buildings on campus have transitioned from having physical key locks to swipe card access. The Police Department asks that employees who work in a building that has gotten swipe card access installed on their building to turn in their old keys for security reasons.

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion had a presentation from the Director of [Disability Services](#), David Ndiaye, called Disability and Creating Inclusive Spaces. The Commission for Asian American and Pacific Islanders also hosted a few events this past month, including a screening of *Parasite*.

The Shared Governance Committee from Faculty Senate had a meeting at the UT System Tower with campus representation including Chancellor Plowman, Vice Chancellor for Student Life, Frank Cuevas, Dean Dixie Thompson of the Graduate School, and various chairs and vice chairs of councils. The group discussed their purpose and how it differs from others that are already established on campus. The group agreed on trying to create a group called the Collaborative Leadership Council and developing what it might look like.

3. CONSTITUENT ISSUES

- a. **(Q):** A constituent has inquired about whether the University will update the Sick Leave Bank (SLB) policy to allow the use of sick leave bank time for a sick dependent. In addition, feedback was provided regarding the application of the bank policy and sick leave transfer policy.

(A): Julie Roe, HR Employee Relations Manager, shared the University has Policy HR0382 Sick Leave Bank and Policy HR0383 Sick Leave Transfer Between University Employees. The transfer policy is connected to the SLB policy in that recipients must be a current bank member in need of time. This ensures there is due process to verify a transfer request for time (i.e. certify a qualifying condition and seek trustee review). It is a good safeguard for all parties and requests for time are properly processed/stored. Donors do not have to be bank members to donate time.

Further, these policies are aligned with state statute and should not be more restrictive. There are some places where the University is less restrictive, examples include a three-day enrollment donation (vs. four days), no annual assessment of time from members, a one month (vs. four month) waiting period for new members to make a request, and a six-month waiting period for pre-existing conditions (vs. one year).

A constituent specifically asked whether the University plans to update the SLB policy to allow the use of sick leave bank time for a sick dependent (minor)? Roe

confirmed that is a new change as of 2023 for the state bank, but has not been implemented in UT Policy. Further, the constituent has raised this question with the System Office and now Knoxville campus. We (campus HR) will connect with our System partners to explore. More to come.

The constituent also expressed concerns related to HIPAA and the forms. Medical certification is obtained with written employee consent (similar to Family and Medical Leave processes) and securely housed within Human Resources. In addition, trustees do not receive personally identifying information when reviewing requests for time.

Lastly, the constituent asked about pandemic language on the SLB application form. That language is as follows: "I also understand that if faced with a pandemic event bank hours may be frozen, and operation suspended." Julie Roe noted this language has been on the application form for many years. Per policy, the trustees are responsible for the administration and health of the bank. This language gives trustees the latitude to take action to preserve the bank in rare instances.

If constituents have questions regarding the bank or transfer donations, they may contact sickleavebank@utk.edu. There is also [an informational video](#) available for those who wish to learn more. 2024 SLB open enrollment is underway! (See announcements section of the minutes.)

- b. **(Q):** I have recent hires who work non-traditional shifts and are assigned parking off campus and need to take the bus. Night shift starts at 3:00 p.m. and goes until 1:00 a.m. There is no scheduled bus service during that time, so they must call for an on-demand pickup. They can only park in lot 66 after 5:00 p.m., but their shift starts at 3:00 p.m. There are plenty of parking spots in parking lot 66 after 3:00 p.m.
- c. **(A):** Human Resources reached out to Tanara Teal-Tate, Executive Director of Parking & Transportation Services, and she responded with the following:

"I completely understand the importance of finding a viable solution for the Vet School's parking needs. To ensure we can provide the most effective assistance, it's crucial that we have a clear understanding of the exact requirements.

If someone from the Vet School could kindly provide me with the specific details regarding the number of non-traditional shifts currently available, including the precise dates and times, I would be more than happy to assess the demand and determine if we can accommodate these needs within our existing capacity.

Please rest assured that we are fully committed to exploring all possible options to support parking requirements. If there is indeed a specific need for shifts, we are open to evaluating our current product offerings to find the best solution. However, to maintain the integrity of our policies and procedures, it's essential that we have a comprehensive understanding of the situation before providing any definitive answers."

4. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Sick Leave Bank open enrollment began April 1, 2024, and continues through June 30, 2024. For questions, or to submit your application, email sickleavebank@utk.edu. For more information regarding the sick leave bank visit the Hub at [Sick Leave Bank \(sharepoint.com\)](#). An informational on-demand session is available at [SLB Information Session on Demand - YouTube](#).
- b. UT Inclusive Leadership Academy [UTILA](#) applications are live! If you are interested in a leadership development opportunity, click the link to apply today!

Next meeting- May 28, 2024 at 2:30 pm EST.

Please email Beth Kurtz (ekurtz2@utk.edu) and Sam (samsmith5@utk.edu) with constituent issue or questions the Friday (by noon) before the next meeting.