

## PRESENT

Michele Atkins, Christopher Binkley, Mary Beth Burlison, Alicia Calderon, Jon Chandler, Shane Colter, Jamie Cyphers, George Drinnon, Darrell Easley, John Goddard, Marcus Hillard, Bill Jackson, Melissa Jenkins, Whitney Jenkins, Tarah Keeler, Beth Kutz, Amanda Middleton, Kim Raia, Shay Riggs, Tonya Sartin, Sam Smith, LaShel Stevens, Matt Ward, Samantha Ward, Tanya Washington, Leslie Wereszczak, Brooke Wichmann, and Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

## ABSENT

DeAnna Flinchum, Allyson Graves, Lauren Hatcher, David Moore, and Hillary Tune

### 1. WELCOME

Shane Colter, Exempt Staff Council (ESC) Chair, welcomed everyone to the July 2024 meeting and introduced the new Representatives, Whitney Jenkins (Division of Student Life), Shay Riggs (UTK College of Arts and Sciences), and Samantha Ward (second representative for UTK Provost).

### 2. NEW BUSINESS

- Human Resources Update – Darrell Easley, Director of Employee Relations & Learning and Organizational Development

With DASH slated to go live in January 2025, the UT Knoxville Finance and Administration Office hosted a DASH (Dynamic Administrative Systems for Higher Ed) Fair to preview the Oracle System and provide an overview of select processes. The event was a success with a lot of participation. Train the Trainer for some of the DASH protocols have begun, with a larger rollout of training to start later this fall for the whole of campus.

Following the success of the Spring networking event, the Career Development team will be hosting a Fall networking event, on October 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., in the Frieson Black Cultural Center. It will be a tailgate theme with some snacks provided. A registration link will be coming soon.

Shane Colter asked if any updates to the across-the-board raises have been issued. Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Tarah Keeler, responded

that the across-the-board 3% raise have been applied to everyone eligible and will begin on July 1, 2024. There were limited exceptions, such as being in active discipline, joining the University after May 1, 2024, or having a 9 or below on their Annual Performance Review. This only affected a handful of employees. Unlike previous years, letters will only be sent out to those employees who will not be receiving the 3 % raise.

- **Committee Updates**  
There were no updates provided for the Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB), the Police Advisory Council, the University Leadership Council, and the Council for Diversity and Inclusion.

A Faculty Senate update was provided for the April 2024 Faculty Senate meeting. Discussions took place regarding the updates to the faculty handbook. Updates were provided on anti-hazing and new Bachelor's programs.

The UTK Collaborative Leadership Council plans to begin meetings in September, with the first meeting with the Chancellor & other senior leadership in October.

- **Election Update**  
UT System and IPS HR staff are currently reviewing paths for system-wide membership as we transition to a UTK Staff Senate, and will reconnect with UTK HR in August. In the meantime, UTK HR has asked the ESC to pause on backfilling the UTSA Administration & Finance and IPS-CIS vacancies for now, so those areas will be represented by representatives Tonya Sartin for UTSA and Tanya Washington for IPS.

### 3. CONSTITUENT ISSUES

- **(Q):** Is there an appeal process for a written warning? How does disciplinary action affect transfer eligibility?  
**(A):** Jon Chandler, Senior Employee Relations Consultant shared there is no formal appeal process for written discipline. However, an employee may write a rebuttal to go in the file with the warning to pair their voice with the document. Employees are encouraged to share the rebuttal with their supervisor/leadership. A rebuttal does not serve as a formal appeal and will not change a warning. That said, if the department reads the rebuttal they can review, amend, rescind, etc. if compelled to do so, but that is a departmental decision and not a formal requirement. And any changes should be documented and implemented by the department in consultation with HR.

Policy HR0525 Disciplinary Action states "An employee who receives progressive discipline more serious than a verbal warning is ineligible to transfer to another position within the University for up to one year from the date of the most recent

disciplinary action more serious than a verbal warning.” Chandler suggests employees contact their respective campus/institute HR Office for more information.

- **(Q):** With the new Park-and-Ride option, staff members are able to park on campus after 5pm in unreserved staff and commuter spaces. Does this also extend to employees who work on weekends?  
**(A):** HR has sent an email to Tanara Teal-Tate, Executive Director for Parking and Transportation but she was not able to give an answer in time for the meeting. Ms. Teal-Tate was able to respond with the following after the meeting, “I am consulting someone on the KAT question. Since a lot of our weekends involve Special Events, I would say no to weekends. At this point, a full price tag based on salary offers more flexibility than the 9-month tag.”
- **(Q):** Regarding the new partnership with KAT and offering free fares when traveling to and from campus, are employees expected to prove they are going to and from campus (rather than, say, Market Square)? If so, how?  
**(A):** HR has sent an email to Tanara Teal-Tate, Executive Director for Parking and Transportation. Ms. Teal-Tate has reached out to her contact with KAT for guidance on the question and will follow up when she has an answer.
- **(Q):** I only saw the news of the extended winter break on the Hub. Do you know why Knoxville staff haven’t received the official email from President Boyd about this? It seems the release of this information was wonky, with the information being released a little bit at a time to different people.  
**(A):** Tarah Keeler, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources responded that HR has reached out to System Communications to understand what their media strategy is when releasing information to campuses and is waiting to hear back.
- **(Q):** Has there been an update on how UTK is planning to address the new Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act overtime pay requirements that will increase the minimum salary to \$58,656 on 1/1/2025 for exempt employees?  
**(A):** Tarah Keeler, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources acknowledged that the salary threshold for exempt employee status did raise on July 1, 2024, but with the recent across the board 3% increase, only a handful of UTK employees were affected by the July salary threshold increase. With the additional increase of the salary threshold for exempt employee status coming in January 2025, a greater number of UTK employees will be affected. The System Human Resources team, along with the Human Resources teams at each campus, will be monitoring the progress of the January 2025 exempt salary threshold as it moves through the Courts and will solidify and communicate plans to comply with the law closer to the implementation of the salary threshold increase.

#### 4. Other Business:

- The [UT Verse](#) is a chat-based, AI-powered platform specific to the University of Tennessee community. This is UT's generative AI chat, where you can have AI conversations about topics that are geared toward our internal audiences, university business, and research. Use UT Verse for your UT-specific AI conversations, including conversations about your research and proprietary university data.
- Shane Colter asked about distribution of the UT Employee Engagement Survey Results. Ms. Keeler addressed that she has provided specific results to senior leaders for their areas around February 2024. A theme in the results was interest in programs to support staff.
- Next meeting- August 27, 2024 at 2:30 pm EST.
- Please email Shane Colter (colters@utk.edu) or Sam (samsmith5@utk.edu) with constituent issue or questions the Friday (by noon) before the next meeting.