

**Exempt Staff Council**

Tuesday, February 28, 2017– 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

8th Floor Conference Room– Andy Holt Tower

***MEETING MINUTES***

1. **Welcome**

PJ Snodgrass, ESC Chair, welcomed everyone to the February meeting of the Exempt Staff Council.

1. **Business**
* **Speaker – Experience Learning, Chris Lavan**

Chris Lavan, Director of Experience Learning, shared the background of Experience Learning. As part of the reaffirmation process, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), asks each institution to develop a quality enhancement plan (QEP) that arises from the institution’s ongoing, integrated, institution-wide planning and evaluation process. Experience Learning is the University of Tennessee’s QEP, submitted to SACSCOC in 2015.

Mr. Lavan introduced 12 types of experimental learning opportunities available to students based on their academic interest and personal passions, these are led by trained faculty and educators at UT, Knoxville. You may view full details at <http://experiencelearning.utk.edu/types/>. Experience learning supports student learning in every college and every major at UT, Knoxville.

There are also opportunities for faculty development, consultations, and mentoring that will primarily be coordinated through the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center. Faculty support includes faculty development program, workshops and presentations, faculty fellows program, faculty leaders program, and mentoring & Consultation.

Mr. Lavan shared information about the Experience Learning grant program. The grants provide funds to help the university bolster existing co-curricular and extra-curricular experiential learning opportunities. In addition, they empower faculty, staff, and students to create new activities and opportunities, as mentioned within the university’s strategic plan, Vol Vision 2020. The outcomes assessment will be done to evaluate the effectiveness of the Experience Learning initiative over time.

**Q & A:**

PJ Snodgrass: Does the program include internship opportunities?

Chris Lavan: Experience learning is in partnership with Center for Career Development to help students get internship opportunities.

Eric Carr: How do you evaluate the courses?

Chris Lavan: The courses will be evaluated on a voluntary basis. We do not push all the courses to have the experience learning component.

* **Exempt Staff Council Election, Deanna Flinchum**

Deanna Flinchum, Research Director of Center for Transportation Research, shared the Exempt Staff Council (ESC) election will be held this spring. Automatic election reminder emails will be sent to areas from which representatives are due to roll off. These emails will ask for nominations. Areas that are not up for re-election will not receive the election reminder emails.

1. **External Commission Reports**
* **Campus Planning — LaShel Brown**

Not in attendance

* **Commission for Blacks — Lisa Byrd (OIT)**

No Update.

* **Commission for Women — Teresa Fisher**

Not in attendance. The 2nd Annual Women in STEM Research Symposium is going to be held on March 21, 2017. You may view the full details at <http://cfwstem.weebly.com/2016-symposium.html>.

* **Employee Engagement Survey — Mike Herbstritt**

The employee engagement survey will be open to employees in early November, 2017.

* **LGBT Commission — Eric Carr**

The LGBT Commission is pushing for awards that are coming at the end of the year. Additional information will be forthcoming; Student assessment survey is coming soon.

* **Faculty Senate — David Price**

Not in attendance.

* **Work Culture Improvements — Brian Browning**

No update.

1. **Issues/Questions from Constituents**

Question: Would there ever be an avenue to use leave for volunteer work? Events such as the recent wildfires present all kinds of volunteer opportunities to fill needs of those affected. Many times they need people during the work day. I know we can use annual leave, but since we are the Volunteers, to me it makes sense to be able to designate a day or two for volunteer work.

Mike Herbstritt, Executive Director of Human Resources, shared the HR0355 – Leave of Absence policy which states that “A regular employee who is a certified disaster service volunteer of the American Red Cross may be granted leave with pay for up to 15 work days each calendar year to participate in specialized disaster relief services for the American Red Cross. The request for the employee’s services must come from the American Red Cross and is subject to approval by the employee’s supervisor.” However, there is no mechanism for the University to offer paid leave to non-Red Cross services. Employee may request to use annual leave instead. When taking Disaster Relief Services, employees’ time can be entered as Leave of Absence with the reason code “disaster relief services” in IRIS. To review policy HR 0355, visit <http://policy.tennessee.edu/hr_policy/hr0355/>.

Question: Although the university is addressing diversity from many aspects, could anything can be done about the lack of diversity in current management positions? Can something be done to help minorities to be able to move into higher level positions?

PJ Snodgrass shared that Dr. Norma Anderson will be invited to the Exempt Staff Council (ESC) to share related information on April 25, 2017.

Question: What, if anything, is being done to determine the success of the Partners for Health initiative?

Mike Herbstritt: We will forward your questions to Rob Chance, Director of Payroll, after the meeting.

Rob Chance, Director of Payroll and the university’s liaison to the state insurance committee, responded to the question. He stated:” The State Insurance Committee approves health insurance benefits that are designed by the State of Tennessee Office of Benefits Administration. The State Office of Benefits Administration reviews the cost/benefits of each plan and makes design changes accordingly each year. Benefits Administration states that the Partnership promise is having the desired outcome of improving the health of members participating in the plan.”

The annual reports are included in a fairly large publication, but may be accessed at <https://www.tn.gov/finance/article/fa-benefits-publications>. Information regarding the partnership promise is on page 39.

Question: Can someone provide clarification of the Refueling Rental Vehicles under Policy FI0705 – Travel? The wording of the policy seems to be confusing.

Mike Herbstritt shared the question with Mark Paganelli, Executive Director of Treasurer, for further clarification. Mr. Paganelli will be attending the March 28th meeting to discuss this policy and address any concerns.

1. **Next Meeting**

March 28, 2017 @ 2:30pm at Visitor’s Center Ballrooms A&B