
PRESENT

Jessica Cantu, Tom Cervone, Jon Chandler, George Drinnon, Darrell Easley, Deanna Flinchum, Kevin Frye, John Goddard, Marcus Hilliard, Elisha Hodge, Rita Jackson, Janet Jones, Johnny Jones, Beth Kurtz, Mónica Lebrón, Victoria Leidy, Mary Lucal, Amber Mathes, Heath Nokes, Blake Reagan, Bill Strickland, Theresa Sears, Michael Smith-Porter, Ken Wagner, Matt Ward, Mitch White, Norma Wilcox, Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

ABSENT

Eric Amos, Emma Burgin, James Hodge, Bonnie Johnson, Julie Roe, Kevin Thompson, Kaley Walker

1. WELCOME

Tom Cervone, Chair and Arts & Sciences Representative, welcomed everyone to the August meeting. He noted that he and Elisha Hodge, Past Chair, are discussing how to proceed with Chair duties for the balance of the year.

2. UPDATES

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

Dr. Mary Lucal greeted the group and began her update by announcing that [HR Roadshow](#) events are wrapping up. She encouraged the group to remind constituents to review all of their beneficiary information including [survivor benefits](#). She emphasized the importance of reviewing and updating information if employees wish to name current spouses and family members as beneficiaries.

Dr. Lucal next announced that HR is preparing for staff performance reviews this fall. She encouraged the group to look for more information on upcoming workshops from the Staff Diversity Fellow, José Lee-Perez, and Lorna Hollowell, Assistant Director of Education and Development with the Office for Equity & Diversity. She

said the workshops will help everyone get ready for the new inclusion, diversity & equity (IDE) category.

Dr. Lucal closed her update by announcing the Knoxville Chamber's [Endeavor Summit](#), which will take place on Thursday, October 21. The summit is intended to motivate Knoxville's young professionals to engage in their community and take ownership of their professional growth. Sessions include diversity, equity, and inclusion, workplace mental health, and working and living in Knoxville. Dr. Tyvi Small, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement, will provide opening remarks. Michael Smith-Porter and Tom Cervone shared positive feedback from staff from their departments who attend the Summit.

Dr. Darrell Easley shared his thanks with the group around the recent needs assessment survey from [Learning & Organizational Development](#). He said that the responses will help L&OD prepare programming and content around topics that are meaningful for staff.

3. COMMISSION REPORTS

a. Commission for Blacks – Elisha Hodge

Elisha Hodge reported that the [Commission](#) met recently and it was an organizational meeting. She said there was communication around committees and discussion around efforts that have gone into Austin-East High School and the community.

b. Commission for LGBT People – Tom Cervone

Mr. Cervone reported that the [Commission](#) met on August 30. He said the meeting welcomed new and returning members and Dr. Mitsu Misawa, Chair, introduced priorities for the Commission this year: LGBT housing, training for faculty and staff on LGBTQ+ issues, the campus pride index and response task force on intersectionality. He said budgets were talked about as well as an effort to recruit a new Chair or Co-Chair for Dr. Misawa. The Commission next meets on October 4.

c. Council for Diversity and Inclusion – Tom Cervone

Mr. Cervone reported the [Commission](#) met on September 22 and the meeting was mostly organizational. Julie Roe will serve as Chair for the year with Renee Thomas serving as Co-Chair/Chair Elect. He reported the group discussed accomplishments and committees with the big goal for the year being the effort around the campus pride index and how to better serve all communities and groups within campus.

Janelle Coleman, Executive Director for Diversity and Engagement, will be working with the campus community to get the index organized and disseminated so they can provide that information to the Chancellor. Dr. Lucal noted there is more recognition for the concept of intersectionality and how identities span groups.

d. Commission for Disability – Emma Burgin

No report was given for the [Commission](#).

e. Commission for Women – Amber Mathes

Amber Mathes reported that the [Commission](#) met recently for an organizational meeting to welcome new members and provide an overview of their role on campus. Mr. Cervone and Ms. Mathes shared a call for volunteers interested in representing ESC on CFW.

f. Faculty Senate – John Goddard

John Goddard reported that he was unable to attend the recent [Faculty Senate](#) meeting due to technical issues. Mr. Goddard and Mr. Cervone shared a call for volunteers interested in representing ESC at Faculty Senate meetings. After the meeting George Drinnon volunteered for the role.

4. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS

a. Weekday Gameday & Staff Scheduling Concern

Q: “I wanted to pass along a constituent concern that I received regarding the 9/2 football gameday parking. My constituent expressed dismay and anger that the university did not put its employees and students’ interest first when it came to the 3pm parking deadline on Thurs, 9/2 before the game. I know this was a common sentiment, but I wanted to make sure this particular facet was shared: the constituent was particularly concerned for the non-exempt staff that they supervised and did not feel adequately prepared as supervisors to answer questions about making up hours missed due to lack of campus parking, schedules being shifted around, etc. This constituent was adamant that this issue be raised since exempt employees have the flexibility to work remotely or take paid annual leave for this 3-5pm window, but they have to hold their non-exempt employees to a different standard since they do not have the same flexibility (“come in earlier to make up the hours”). To quote the constituent: “morale among exempt and non-exempt staff is already in the toilet, we are understaffed all around, and now I have to tell my nonexempt employees that they need to either come in before 6am or lose money that they need to make their

bills. It's not fair to put us as exempt supervisors in that position or to prioritize football attendance during a global pandemic in the worst state for COVID-19 numbers when morale and pay are both already so low for our non-exempt service workers.”

A: Dr. Lucal reflected on similar difficulty with a weekday game that took place several years ago. She said there were limited solutions, and the campus did its best to accommodate different parking situations, but she has heard and shared concerns upwards.

Dr. Lucal said she was concerned that the constituent didn't feel they had guidance from their department and suggested that they reach out to Employee Relations if they are struggling to get guidance for their supervisory role. Tom Cervone shared feedback from Theatre staff working on campus that day.

b. Campus Flu Shot Clinics

Q: “Will the University be having flu shot clinics this year? If so, what are the dates?”

A: Flu shots are now available for students, faculty, and staff at the Student Health Center pharmacy with no appointment is needed. Walk-ins are welcome Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Flu shots will also be available at several convenient locations across campus. Visit <https://tiny.utk.edu/CampusFluEvents> to view locations and dates and to register for an event near you.

All employees enrolled in health insurance through the University who are interested in [receiving a flu shot for free](#) can find local providers by visiting the Partners for Health website.

c. Tennessee Modernizing Football Ticket Pricing Model

Q: “Can we discuss the Tennessee Modernizing Football Ticket Pricing Model that is [discussed here](#) and the impact that it will have on employees?”

A: Mitch White, Associate Athletics Director for Annual Fund, and Dr. Mónica Lebrón, Deputy Athletics Director for Championship Resources, attended to respond. Mr. White reviewed the new pricing for the Tennessee Fund model, noting that faculty and staff will now pay 100% of the donation costs for each section and 80% of ticket price with donation. He affirmed the Fund is committed to working with each constituent base to talk with them about the new model and do the best they can to be fair and equitable across the season ticket and donor base. He shared he has spoken with several faculty and staff who are sitting in sections like the lower end zone areas where prices went down the most.

Dr. Lucal asked Dr. Lebrón to help explain benefits of the pricing change for staff. Dr. Lebrón responded that the Tennessee Fund's ticket sales team is willing to meet ticketholders in person, over the phone, or via Zoom to help them understand how the changes will affect them. She noted that some faculty and staff may be sitting in seats where they haven't had to pay a donation until now, but that 12% of the stadium will be in a section where no donation is required. She said they hope to find a spot in the stadium to suit every account holder including faculty and staff.

Dr. Lucal asked the group to share contact information with their constituents and areas so they can find a section where it won't be as financially impactful or help deal with change constructively.

Dr. Lucal asked Dr. Lebrón to confirm her understanding that donations for priority seating are now limited to Athletics and ticketholders who have season tickets for multiple sports must now make a seating donation to each individual sport. Dr. Lebrón confirmed that is the case, citing other SEC schools like the University of Florida adopted this model some time ago. Mr. Cervone noted that the [Clarence Brown Theatre](#) changed their model similarly a few years ago. A conversation about productions at the CBT such as the annual production of "A Christmas Carol" and programs took place.

Constituents with questions about the new Tennessee Fund season ticket pricing may contact Mitch White at mwhit120@utk.edu or call 865-227-0370.

d. Resolution Request

Q: "As you know very well, lots of folks have worked extremely hard to keep campus safe since the pandemic began, and many of them have been exempt staff. In particular, the folks involved with the Emergency Operations Center on campus have put in so many hours and dealt with so many issues trying to navigate keeping campus open, keeping people safe, complying with CDC guidelines and state mandates, and dealing with backlash from various groups, including faculty. They often felt unappreciated and demoralized.

I'm not sure if the council ever passes resolutions, but it might be really nice to do so to thank them for their dedication over the past year and a half."

A: Dr. Lucal reminded the group that the Council is self-governed and HR supports the group, so any discussion and decision around creating a resolution would be up to the group and the by-laws. Mr. Cervone said he and Ms. Hodge have been reviewing the by-laws and did not find anything that would preclude the group from creating a resolution or memorializing it in the minutes. He reflected if the group did decide to pass a resolution it would be good to publicize it to help draw awareness to the effort. Dr. Lucal and Dr. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch discussed how resolutions are handled by the Faculty Senate. Mr. Cervone said they would like time to discuss how

to create something that has an impact. The group indicated their interest in proceeding and Mr. Cervone said he and Ms. Hodge would bring something back to the group so they can determine when and how the effort should be shared with the campus community.

e. COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters on Campus & Vaccine Mandate

Q: “Will we be able to get the booster shots here at UT like we got our Covid vaccines?”

A: Jessica Cantu reached out to Dr. Jill Zambito, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life. Dr. Zambito provided newly updated information from the Student Health Center about booster availability, which was shared with the group after the meeting.

For up-to-date information about booster availability on campus as well as additional vaccine doses for those who are moderately or severely immunocompromised, please visit the [Student Health Center’s vaccine page](#).

Johnny Jones asked if there were any expectations of changes to the COVID-19 vaccination policy. Mr. Cervone shared his experience engaging in related conversation with the Office of the General Council and Brian Gard, Director of Emergency Management, about current theatre industry standards for attendance conflicting with state legislation requirements. He said that his understanding is the situation is challenging and changeable.

Dr. Lucal agreed, and noted that the new Biden administration vaccine mandate is very broad for federal contractors including the University. She said General Counsel is working to determine what the mandate will mean for the System-wide community. She asked the Council to keep boosters on the agenda as ongoing business as it may be revisited during the next meeting. Mr. Cervone detailed the difficulty for CBT in meeting obligations to collective bargaining partners due to not being able to ask about vaccination status or testing results.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Call for Nominations: Chair & Vice Chairs

Mr. Cervone shared that he would not be able to serve as Chair due to departmental commitments. He asked for nominations or volunteers for those who would be interested in serving. Ms. Hodge clarified that they are seeking nominations and volunteers for Chair, First Vice Chair, and Second Vice Chair positions.

- b. Call for Nominations: Representatives for Faculty Senate & Commission for Women

Mr. Cervone called for volunteers to represent Faculty Senate & Commission for Women. A discussion about meeting schedules, modalities, and efforts as part of being involved in Commissions and Councils took place.

6. REMINDERS

- a. Next meeting: Tuesday, October 26, 2:30 p.m. ET
- b. Please email constituent questions to Elisha Hodge (elisha.hodge@tennessee.edu) or Jessica Cantu (jlcantu@utk.edu).