THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL

PRESENT

Emma Burgin, Jessica Cantu, Jon Chandler, Kevin Cooper (IPS Leadership Academy Observer), George Drinnon, Darrell Easley, DeAnna Flinchum, Kevin Frye, John Goddard, Liz Gossett (IPS Leadership Academy Observer), Marcus Hilliard, Elisha Hodge, Rita Jackson, Bonnie Johnson, Jason Jones (IPS Leadership Academy Observer), Johnny Jones, Beth Kurtz, Mary Lucal, Amber Mathes, Heath Nokes, Blake Reagan, Nancy Taylor, Pam Vatter (HR Observer), Ken Wagner, Kaley Walker, Matt Ward, Norma Wilcox

ABSENT

Eric Amos, Tom Cervone, James Hodge, Janet Jones, Theresa Sears, Michael Smith-Porter, Kevin Thompson, Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

1. WELCOME
    Elisha Hodge, Past Chair and IPS MTAS representative, welcomed everyone to the February meeting. She welcomed IPS Leadership Academy observers as well as Nancy Taylor, the new Representative for Law, Communications, Nursing & Architecture.

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

        Mary Lucal greeted the group and began her update by reflecting on the current performance review season and the Online Performance Review (OPR) system. More information about performance reviews and OPR can be found at: https://hr.utk.edu/performance-evaluation/.

        Dr. Lucal next discussed HR recruitment efforts including compensation and HR analysts, a community recruiter, and a career development role.

Dr. Lucal closed by turning her attention to the recent staff engagement survey. She noted a theme of supervisors not having regular career development conversations with their staff, with some conversations only happening annually at performance review time. She asked the group to share back with their leaders that we need to remind supervisors that staff want more frequent career development conversations and discussion about meeting their goals and needs. Darrell Easley announced that Learning & Organizational Development is hosting a career development session on March 16.

3. COMMISSION REPORTS
    a. Commission for Blacks – Elisha Hodge

    Ms. Hodge reported the [Commission](#) is scheduled to meet tomorrow, February 23. An event on the history and advocacy of Commission for Blacks will take place from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

    b. Commission for LGBT People – Tom Cervone

    No report was given for the [Commission](#). Dr. Lucal noted that in their recent meeting there was discussion about possibilities for recruitment in the LGBTQ+ community.

    c. Council for Diversity and Inclusion – Tom Cervone

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

    d. Commission for Disability – Emma Burgin

    Emma Burgin reported the [Commission](#) met yesterday. They are holding their inaugural event, ["A Conversation with Kevan Chandler"](#), on March 2 from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Chandler has written a memoir about his adventures travelling in Europe and speaks worldwide about his unique life with a disability. He is also the founder of the nonprofit organization, We Carry Kevan.

    Dr. Burgin closed her report by noting membership applications for the Commission will open in the next few months. More information will be shared once available.

    e. Commission for Women – Amber Mathes

    Amber Mathes reported that Diane Kelly, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, spoke on parental leave for faculty at the [Commission](#)'s most recent meeting. The Events

Committee reported they are working on plans for a networking event in April, and the Safety Committee is working on an [anti-bullying workshop set for March 24](#).

f. Faculty Senate – George Drinnon

George Drinnon reported the [Faculty Senate](#) recently met. The Chancellor was present and spoke about Covid, noting that more than 80% of faculty and staff have completed or started vaccination. Approximately 66% of all in-state students are fully vaccinated. Data for out-of-state students is not available. The Chancellor noted the trend of positive Covid tests is moving downward.

Mr. Drinnon then reported Chancellor Plowman next discussed budget allocations, noting that the Governor had allocated a historically large commitment of funds to higher education and the University this year. The meeting then moved to faculty comments, with some faculty expressing concerns about undergraduate students and their lack of mask wearing. There was also discussion about submitting suggested changes to the Faculty Handbook.

4. CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS

a. Volunteerism Policy

Follow-up Q: "At our next meeting, the TSAC (Tickle Staff Advisory Council) would like our Volunteer policy discussed. Dean Mench is presenting it to upper administration with his full support, but we aren't sure when that is happening.

Our original intent was for this to be a TCE policy but with the Chancellor showing interest, it could potentially be a campus policy down the road. I have attached the draft policy. We are hoping to get more input and support for this."

A: Ms. Mathes gave an update on the Volunteer policy presented at the January meeting. TSAC will present the policy to non-exempt staff through Employee Relations Committees and seek feedback. She said Dean Mench met with Dr. Lucal and Provost Zomchick about the policy, and TSAC hopes to get support to present the policy draft to the System's Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) for consideration.

Dr. Lucal shared her enthusiasm for the policy but advised the ERAB does not currently have a next meeting scheduled. She provided suggestions for next steps for moving the policy forward at the campus level in the interim.

John Goddard voiced concern that the ERAB is not currently meeting. Dr. Lucal said although that the group doesn't have a meeting currently scheduled that does not indicate that the group is not functioning, just that there is not a meeting currently on the calendar.

b. Extension Agents Classification

Follow-Up Q: "Why are Extension Agents no longer classified as Faculty as they were in the 1980s? Will they be reclassified as Faculty in the near future? If so, would they be tenured or non-tenured? What would be the difference?"

A: Before the meeting Jessica Cantu reached out to Doug Bohner, Human Resource Officer for UTIA HR. A follow-up response has not yet been shared with the group. The question will be tabled until next month for an answer.

c. Remote/Hybrid Work

Q: "Is there going to be a serious look at maintaining an appropriate remote/hybrid work capacity for normal operations, for the mutual benefit for the university and employees? Has anyone looked at remote work for those who find in the office work a problem?"

A: Dr. Lucal responded that there are areas on campus looking at implementing hybrid schedules including HR. She said although she isn't sure where the constituent is, if they are in a supervisory role, they are welcome to contact HR to learn more about piloting a program for their area or get support on equitable decision making.

Matt Ward identified the question as coming from one of his constituents, and Dr. Lucal asked that he refer the constituent to contact HR for support as Finance & Administration has the largest number of hybrid setups on campus. At the moment there are three team hybrid work pilots within HR.

d. Campus Process Streamlining

Q: "With the new budget model and the new system replacing IRIS, is there a group responsible for looking at processes on campus to see which ones can be streamlined, like a team lead by a Six Sigma Black Belt to review? This group would look at processes and see if they are still needed or if it's a paper process, for example, can that process be done electronically?"

A: Dr. Lucal responded that the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project is working to hire a consultant partner to assist with implementation. Significant

transition work will start this July, and the timeline is aggressive. In the time leading up to implementation the campus is doing business process reviews to better understand how the Oracle cloud-based ERP will work and how it can be customized to better understand how the new system will change our processes. She said she believes Brandon Herriage, ERP Project Manager, is Six Sigma certified and there may be additional people involved in the project who will seek that certification.

For more information about the ERP project, visit: https://erpfinadmin.utk.edu/.

e. Parental Protections Available to Employees Ineligible for FML or PPL

Q: "I have a pregnant employee. Because she has not been here a year, she does not qualify under UT guidelines for formal maternity leave. FMLA protections only kick in after 12 full months of employment. She talked to HR, and she relayed to me, that her leave and arrangements to return were internal-only -- UT doesn't guarantee her job, the dept director does.

Are there any other job or salary protections for her?"

A: Dr. Lucal confirmed that Family Medical Leave (FML) does require employees to meet certain eligibility requirements including being employed for at least twelve months. More information about FML can be found at: https://hr.utk.edu/family-and-medical-leave/.

Dr. Lucal said she understood the employee is in a difficult situation due to not being eligible for FML, but that it sounded like she has support from her department to take leave and come back to her job. She encouraged the department to consider working to hold the employee's position while on leave and consider remote work if that is an option.

For more information about FML and Paid Parental Leave (PPL), contact Jeremy Smith with HR Compensation at FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu or call 865-974-9976.

John Goddard asked if the employee would be eligible for Sick Leave Bank time. Dr. Lucal responded that pregnancy by itself is not a Bank-eligible condition, but if the employee was a Bank member and experienced an emergency or complication then it would be possible for the employee to apply for Bank time.

For more information about Knoxville-area and UTIA Sick Leave Banks, visit: https://hr.utk.edu/sick-leave-bank/.

f. Employee Engagement Survey Results

Q: "Is a UTK-specific version of the 2021 Employee Engagement Survey Results going to be prepared/distributed for campus leadership to consider? Also, what topic was on slides #7 & 8 that are missing on the UT Engagement Report linked to from President Boyd's 12/20 email?"

A: Dr. Lucal responded that the campus level report has been presented to the Cabinet, and senior leadership including Deans and Vice Chancellors have received their engagement aggregate data.

She also noted that System HR was asked about missing slides. System HR responded that there was personally sensitive data on those two slides, so they were not included in the document.

g. Programs for Minors' Online System

Q: "Programs for Minors' online registration system is difficult to navigate and not user-friendly. It is also unclear how to determine which teams in my department must work with the Programs for Minors Office. One team was told they do not need to, and another was told they should.

Can the intake form or system be revised to be more user-friendly? And can criteria be developed to clarify which areas must work with Programs for Minors?"

A: Darrell Easley responded that, before the meeting, Jessica Cantu reached out to the [Programs for Minors Office](#) but a response had not yet been received. Dr. Lucal suggested that if someone is having challenges or concerns and is not already in contact with the PFM Office to connect with them.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

a. HR Virtual Office Hours – Online Performance Reviews

Jon Chandler announced that HR Employee Relations (ER) is hosting Virtual Office Hours via Zoom for Staff Performance Reviews and Online Performance Reviews (OPR).

Through March 30, join ER on Wednesdays from 8:30 to 9:30 am and 3:30 to 4:30 pm or Fridays from 12:30 to 1:30 pm (all times Eastern).

Bring your performance review-related questions to an ER team member for a personalized Q&A. No appointments are required, and virtual walk-ins are welcome. Please note there will be a waiting room so visitors may talk with ER team members individually.

Virtual Office Hours Zoom links and information about upcoming annual review learning sessions: https://calendar.utk.edu/department/human_resources.

Learn more about staff performance reviews and OPR: https://hr.utk.edu/performance-evaluation/.

b. STRIDE for Staff Workshop: Pilot Session Volunteers

Learning and Organizational Development has an exciting opportunity for commission and council members to play a role in shaping the future of the STRIDE for Staff workshop. We are seeking volunteers to attend one of two Zoom pilot sessions and provide feedback that will serve to enhance the new STRIDE workshop launching in fall 2022. Each session is capped at a maximum of 50 participants. Session information and sign-ups are included below.

If you have any questions please contact Abby Sherman, Staff Diversity Fellow at asherm10@utk.edu.

Zoom links will be provided one week prior to the sessions:

- Tuesday April 12, 2022 9:00a-10:30a EST
- Wednesday April 13, 2022 2:00p-3:30p EST

Sign up: https://tiny.utk.edu/STRIDEPilot

6. REMINDERS
   a. Next meeting: March 22, 2022.

   b. Please email constituent questions to Elisha Hodge (elisha.hodge@tennessee.edu) or Jessica Cantu (jlcantu@utk.edu).