

## PRESENT

Christopher Binkley, Emma Burgin, Mary Beth Burlison, Jon Chandler, Shane Colter, George Drinnon, DeAnna Flinchum, John Goddard, Gina Hale, James Hodge, Rita Jackson, Melissa Jenkins, Bonnie Johnson, Johnny Jones, Beth Kurtz, Mary Lucal, Nathan McKinney, David Moore, Katrice W. Jones Morgan (Guest Speaker), Kim Raia, Blake Reagan, Julie Roe, Sam Smith, Kenneth Wagner, Matt Ward, Tanya Washington, Leslie Wereszczak, Norma Wilcox, and Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

## ABSENT

Emma Burgin, Marcus Hilliard, Rachel McClelland, and Kevin Thompson

### 1. WELCOME and HR UPDATE

Beth Kurtz, Vice Chair of the Exempt Staff Council, welcomed everyone to the October meeting as John Goddard, Chair of the Exempt Staff Council, was to arrive later. Ms. Kurtz introduced Dr. Mary Lucal, Associate Vice Chancellor for UT Knoxville Human Resources, for a Human Resources Update.

Dr. Lucal shared a few HR updates with the Council. Annual UT Compliance training is due December 31, 2022. The number of employees who have completed training has increased, but there are still numerous people who have not completed it. Dr. Lucal requested that Representatives spread the word to their constituents to complete the training ASAP. The Vice Chancellors have a list of those who have yet to complete the annual training. It should take about two hours to complete, and possibly even less time if you test out of some topics.

Staff performance review season is coming up. An email was sent out recently with information regarding learning opportunities for supervisors and employees to refresh their previous training or interact with the performance review materials if they are new to UT.

Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) training has been updated and refreshed. There are K@TE and in-person sessions. HR

is doing everything we can to make sure our campus, particularly for staff searches, are well educated about how to run an inclusive search.

## 2. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Committee Updates

#### i. Police Advisory Council – John Goddard

The Police Advisory Council has not met since the last ESC meeting. No update.

#### ii. Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) – Shane Colter

The Employee Relations Advisory Board (ERAB) will be meeting next month. Juneteenth, which was brought up in Spring 2022 in the ESC, was a topic submitted for the agenda. The deadline to submit additional agenda items has passed. This is the first time the group will be meeting for the past year.

#### iii. Council for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) – Beth Kurtz

The Commission for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) has reviewed their new website and it will go live soon. They are working with the Division of Diversity and Engagement on a press release to announce the website. The Councils and Commissions will attend Ready, Set, Connect!, an HR event for new staff hires on December 6, 2022.

The Commission for LGBT People picked their grand challenge, which is allyship. They will be doing some educational and collaborative initiatives surrounding that topic and will partner with other commissions and the Pride Center on those initiatives.

#### iv. University Leadership Council (ULC) – Beth Kurtz

The University Leadership Council has not met since the last ESC meeting. No update.

#### v. Faculty Senate – George Drinnon

George Drinnon was unable to make the previous Faculty Senate meeting. He did get an update that there is likely to be another large incoming class due to a large number of applications coming in following UT Football's success.

There is a continued discussion on the Baker Center and creating courses and recruiting faculty.

### b. Katrice W. Jones Morgan, JD, Associate Vice Chancellor and Executive Director – Prayer in the Workplace

The University and the University of Tennessee system do not have specific rules related to prayer, holiday parties, or what a holiday party should look like. It is left up to individual divisions. From a legal standpoint, people have the right to pray in the workplace and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits refusing to accommodate an employee's sincerely held religious beliefs or practices, which includes prayer. This means that, as long as it is voluntary, prayer in the workplace can happen. It also should not interfere with conducting business.

When it comes to holiday parties, employees should be able to opt-out of a party because it should be voluntary. There should not be any retaliation for opting out. The planners of the party should make it clear that it is voluntary to participate. They should ideally also take into consideration that there may be people attending who have different beliefs. A moment of silence can be used instead of prayer and the agenda could be provided before the party so that people are aware and can plan accordingly. Voluntary is the key to whatever option you choose, and everybody has a right to opt-out or opt-in.

Dr. Lucal asked for clarification on if someone could object to a prayer taking place. Dr. Morgan replied objecting to the prayer could arguably violate the rights of those who wanted to pray. The best action at that moment would be to either remove yourself, join the party after the prayer, or just remain there while others prayed.

c. Julie Roe – Role of the Representative

There is an on-demand video of this presentation that can be viewed on the [HR web page for ERAO](#) at any time. A video about the role of the representative and disciplinary action will be available on the web page soon.

The Exempt Staff Council (ESC) was formed to be a partner group to the Non-Exempt Employee Relations Advisory group. The ESC is a peer-elected group of exempt staff from the Knoxville-area. There are elections every spring which are held online, where one-third of the council will rotate off. There is also the opportunity to do ad hoc elections throughout the year if a representative leaves the group. The person who is elected in the ad hoc election will serve the remaining portion of the term. If there is no ad hoc situation, the term service is three years, serving from July 1 through June 30. The group meets throughout the year on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month at 2:30 p.m. eastern time.

There are several elected positions for the group: Chair, First Vice Chair, and Second Vice Chair. The Chair will preside over the meetings and can appoint committee chairs and can appoint or make recommendations to University liaisons or counterparts. The First Vice Chair assumes the duties when the Chair cannot. During the second year, First Vice Chair will serve as Chair if formally elected by the

membership. The Second Vice Chair will serve as Chair of the Public Relations Committee if the group chooses to have that actively functioning during the year. During the second year, following the domino effect of the First Vice Chair moving into Chair, Second Vice Chair will move into First Vice Chair. HR will serve as an administrative support function by distributing the agenda, minutes, and any announcements to the group, as well as, setting the logistics of the meeting.

During the meeting, agenda items typically include an HR update, guest speakers, constituent questions, and other business such as announcements or previous items that needed to be followed up on. The typical time commitment for serving on the ESC is roughly 2 to 3 hours. This includes attending meetings and sharing information/minutes with your constituents. It also includes speaking with your constituents about questions they may have. There are also opportunities to serve on other committees such as the Council for Diversity and Inclusion, the Chancellor's Leadership Council, or the Police Advisory Board.

It is important to make sure that your constituents know who you are and that you are available and happy to hear their concerns and feedback. Representatives will accompany constituents, upon request, for a disciplinary action process. The representative's role in that process is to be a second set of eyes and ears to take in information. You are not an advocate for the employee; you are just there to listen, take notes, or request a break if perhaps tensions are running high. If you are contacted to sit in on this meeting, you can contact anybody on the HR Employee Relations team to talk through your role and provide support for it. If your presence as rep is needed, you will get a call from someone on the Employee Relations team who will ask if you are available during a certain time should your constituent wish to have an ESC representative present. If the constituent does want their representative present for the meeting, they will be the one to reach out and give more details about the situation. You may recuse yourself if you have a conflict of interest in a situation and another representative from the council will be appointed by HR for the employee.

### 3. CONSTITUENT ISSUES

#### a. Email Service Change for Retirees

**(Q):** There has been an email service change for retirees stating individuals granted emeritus status or who retired as faculty with at least ten years of service will be allowed to retain their UT email account. Why doesn't this apply staff who retire?

**(A):** From the OIT webpage: WHY THE UNIVERSITY MADE THESE CHANGES

These changes help to mitigate risk for the entire university community. Compromised email accounts have already been used to scam others, and this is a proactive step to protect students and staff members from malicious activity.

Current students and staff members are held accountable to university and vendor policies, including those that protect our technology resources. In an era of unprecedented malicious activity via email and other digital communication, our goal is to minimize risk.

Several representatives mentioned that they had constituents complain about the new email policy and that they had strong negative opinions about it. Dr. Lucal stated she was told that faculty tend to have more constant ongoing engagement with research projects and need to utilize their UT email. This does not tend to be the case for staff.

David Moore explained he works on ongoing projects where they need to refer to retired members of his team. He inquired if there could be a hybrid option for retiring employees that wish to retain their email to have them also maintain annual training that all active employees are responsible for.

Shane Colter provided some background information that was considered when UT made these changes. He stated that reputation is a huge deal with emails, and if one account gets blacklisted a lot of the major email providers, even Gmail, blacklist the organization. If a UTK email gets compromised, they can withhold or slow down our email, or even not allow it to go out. We must build up a reputation with all the different email providers to help show that we are responsible users of email communications. There is a constant threat of people wanting to obtain UT credentials for a variety of malicious reasons, and there have been some incidents recently in the past year or so. There is an opportunity for post-retirement to keep the email active through an IRIS appointment. Official people who come back and do work for a department after retirement can get an IRIS flag set so they can keep the email through the duration of the appointment. Departments can [sponsor NetIDs](#) for retirees who continue to serve the university; sponsored accounts must be renewed annually.

There is a [helpline that was set up to help retirees](#) with this transition. You can call 865-974-2001 Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm ET.

#### 4. OTHER BUSINESS

##### a. Updated Bios for the Website

Some of the bios on the ESC website are outdated or it was the information that was presented for their election, and thus, no longer fits as we have already been elected. We would like to standardize the bios and get everyone to send in their new information.

Include:

- i. Name, Title, Division
- ii. Brief description of your job at UT, including how long you've been here.

iii. 1-2 sentences about why you're glad you're a part of ESC  
Send completed bios to SamSmith5@utk.edu by December 9, 2022.

b. Leadership Cores – Learning Opportunity

Human Resources is excited to announce the rollout of the first Leadership Development workshop as part of our New Leader development initiative. While more information will be coming out about our spring rollout in the coming weeks, this is a great opportunity for leaders and new leaders to come and engage on what our sessions will be like as part of this program, and learn new, or strengthen their leadership competencies.

Our first workshop “Leadership Cores” will be on November 30<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm in 260 Student Union, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor UTK Student Union. Our goal is to fill a 50-seat group to engage in this workshop which will cover leadership concepts that are valuable for various levels of leaders or aspiring leaders.

For questions, contact Brian Watkins, [bwatki13@utk.edu](mailto:bwatki13@utk.edu) or 974-5553. Register through K@TE at [Leadership Development - Leadership Cores \(csod.com\)](https://www.csod.com/Leadership-Development-Leadership-Cores).

c. Worker's Compensation Announcement

When injured workers call into the CorVel call center worker's compensation coordinators have noticed issues with them being placed under the wrong employer. This is causing delays in claim processing and sometimes treatment for the injured worker. The State of TN has created the [attached Location Card\(s\)](#) showing the location of employment verbiage that an employee should use when they call into CorVel.

Ex.

Question from CorVel: ‘Who is your employer?’

Answer: ‘I work for the State of TN – UT Knoxville (UTK)’

You will have a different answer to the question of “Who is your employer?” depending on where you work (ex: IPS, UTIA, UTK, etc.). Talk to your supervisor or [Risk Management](#) if you have any questions.

5. REMINDERS

a. Next meeting: January 24, 2023 from 2:30 – 3:00 p.m. eastern via zoom. The December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting is canceled.

b. Please email constituent questions to Sam Smith ([samsmith5@utk.edu](mailto:samsmith5@utk.edu)) or John Goddard ([jgoddard1@utk.edu](mailto:jgoddard1@utk.edu)).