Employee Relations Council Meeting
Minutes
April 16, 2015

I. Welcome and Introduction - Phil Bright

Sherry Shanklin - Administration
Sherry Argo - Administration
Leanne Perry - Administration
Angie Gretsch - Administration
Kimberly Barnett-Sledd - Extended Campus and online Studies & Gooch Hall
Stephanie Butler - Extended Campus and online Studies & Gooch Hall
Karen Elmore - Library
Karen Sliger - Extended Campus and Online Studies & Gooch Hall
Mary Johnson - Custodial Services
Charlene Lovette - Public Safety
Diane Marks - Governor’s School, Student Success, Healthy Start, Humanities
Teresa Vancleave - Student Health, Counseling Services & University Center
Teresa Tibbs - Housing
Tim Nipp - Maintenance Center
Donna Butler - ITS
Marsha Davis - Human Resources
Phil Bright - Human Resources
Brandy Cartmell - Office of Student Engagement Interim Exec Director/Registrar
Dr. Thomas Rakes - Chancellor’s Office

II. Update on UT Martin Chancellor Position

We will have an Interim Chancellor for about one year. Dr. Dipiatro wanted to appoint someone that did not want the job permanently. A national search will be done. UT Martin is facing budget cuts and future changes. UT Martin will look for an experienced college/university administrator that believes in shared governance. A search will start during the fall semester and a possible new chancellor selected within a year. UT Martin will keep us posted.

III. Athletics Board Representative 2015-2016

Athletics Board Representative –Sherry Shanklin

IV. Equity and Diversity Council Representative 2015-2016

Equity and Diversity Council Representative- Stephanie Butler.

The representatives are welcome to share what they learn from the meetings with the ERC. The representatives will serve one year. A question will be sent to the committee on committee’s about representatives severing more than one year.

V. Enrollment and progress Brandy Cartmell

We are not done for fall 2015 enrollment and we have scholarships available. This was the opening line from Brandy Cartmell as she updated us on enrollment. Continuous branding builds an image for the UT Martin campus and helps increase our enrollment.

A few changes we are making at UT Martin to help with recruiting and retention:
Updates will be done on UT Martin publications and we are adding post cards, along with thank you notes to the prospective students.

Scholarships
Contact information

We will touch base with prospective students each month and we are adding a newsletter that is "picture heavy" to show people UT Martin is a great campus and we have many activities.

All orientations will be reviewed to make sure they are working to excite prospective students and parents.

CRM (new software) will be used to reach out to contacts faster with automatic messages to targeted students.

ISSUU is new software to update websites that we are using to engage students.

New pennants
Building relationships with principal, guidance counselors, schools, students and parents is the key to success.

We will continue to recruit for fall 2015 until fall semester starts.

Evaluating scholarship money
Recruiting prospective students in the 8th grade.

VI. Employee Relations’ Advisory Board Meeting March 4, 2015

A. President DiPietro reported that he had been attending legislative budget hearings in Nashville recently and said he was to attend another hearing that afternoon. While President DiPietro said Gov. Haslam’s proposed budget is among the strongest for higher education and UT that he has seen in seven years, he stressed that UT’s current business model is not sustainable, long-term. This conclusion is based on extensive analysis, modeling and consultation with experts, such as Dr. Bill Fox, who heads the UT Knoxville Center for Business and Economic Research. Despite how strongly President DiPietro said he feels about the need to address UT’s business model, he said he continues to advocate, meantime, for necessary state support.

B. Why do the inventory numbers have to be so small on the UT Inventory Tag? Is it possible that future UT Tags could have larger inventory numbers to make them easier to see? (Debbie Hunter, UTM)

This is the first complaint that I am aware of regarding the inventory tags. Is the issue relating to the inventory tags themselves or the reissued tags that are typed and can have transfer issues?

Debbie Martin responded that the issue is with the inventory tags themselves and the size of the information on them.

These tags are from the vendor. The comptroller’s office will contact the vendor and ask what can be done about the size of the information on the inventory tags. (Mark Paganelli)

C. Would the university consider changing the full-time hours worked per week from 40 hours to 37 ½ hours to match the full-time work week currently in place at all TBR institutions as well as the State of Tennessee? TBR changed to a 37 ½-hour work week in 1982: https://policies.tbr.edu/guidelines/procedures-implementation-375-hour-work-week; the State of Tennessee work schedule can be found here:

This issue was raised several years ago. At that time the administration said that fewer hours worked by current employees would result in the need for more employees, and if more employees were added there would also be a concurrent increase in benefit costs. Two other points were raised: if this change were to come about, it would reduce an employee’s work time by more than 16 days per year; and since the University has numerous operations that run on a 24/7 schedule, a shortened work day would be difficult to accommodate. Another issue a 37.5 hour work week would cause is daily coverage.

The University's official hours are 8am to 5pm daily. If this schedule were implemented, there would need to be different starting and ending times for employees in the same area.

The suggestion was considered, but obviously, it wasn’t implemented. Also, since there would be a reduction of 2.5 hours per week (a reduction of 6.25%), employees' pay would also be reduced. For example: a full-time employee making $13/hour would see a reduction of $32.50 per week, or $1,690 per year. (Mike Herbstritt)

D. Proposed Changes to State Employee Insurance

What would be the implications of the proposed legislation regarding state employee benefits? The information below was sent via email to myself and other UT employees. As proposed, the legislation would give permission to the state insurance committee to:

• Designate “basic” group insurance health, term life, and accidental death and dismemberment plans and “voluntary” insurance plans. The state will contribute to the cost of basic insurance plans; the employee will pay the entire cost of the voluntary plans.

• Reduce the state’s contribution to dependent coverage. The state employer will continue to pay at least 80% of the cost of the basic health plan for employees. The percentage paid for dependents would be reduced to 70% of the cost of the basic plan over the next two years.

• Continue eligibility for insurance for enrolled employees during temporary periods of disability caused by a work injury and allow the employer to pay the entire cost of health insurance during the period that the employee is not on state payroll because of the work related injury.

• Continue insurance eligibility under certain circumstances for dependents of employees killed in the performance of duty.

• Deny coverage to spouses of state employees who are eligible for group health insurance from their own employer.

• Maintain a graduated system of shared costs for retirees eligible for Medicare supplemental insurance, paying up to 80% of premium costs for retirees with 30 years of service down to 40% for retirees enrolled in Medicare supplement with 15 to 20 years of service. Retirees with under 15 years of service will be eligible for, but will not have a state contribution to the Medicare supplement. The State Insurance Committee will have the flexibility to change the % subsidy that is given to the active state and higher education employees by offering one basic health plan in which the state pays at least
80% towards the employee premium and 80%, 75% and 70% towards the dependent premium in 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively.

E. Benevolent Fund Update:

At the September 2013 meeting, this topic was raised and it was referred to the HRO’s for their fall meeting. At the December 2013 meeting, the HRO’s decision to not recommend the development of such a fund was shared with the group. It was then requested that the HRO’s provide information regarding their concerns for a benevolent fund. The HRO’s met in February 2014 and discussed the benevolent fund.

The HRO’s said the state or campus’s EAPs are designed to deal with these types of situations. The EAP coordinator is knowledgeable of community-based organizations in each local area whose missions are to deal with these situations. They can refer the employees to the appropriate organization. (Mike Herbstritt)

VII. Projects on UTM campus (Tim Nip)

We have completed the elevator projects on campus. We will add new door skins to the fine arts elevator. We are working on bids for the press box and we will work on this after the football season. The following are UT Martin Campus projects, sorority houses, renovating the book store, window replacement on campus, replacing steam lines, ADA updates, and roof replacements.

In the future we will look at moving some departments to Clement, opening a welcome center, and Derryberry Lane will be reviewed by TLM.

UT Martin post office has relocated to Clement Hall in the same location with digital printing.

VIII. Budget (Nancy Yarbrough)

We are striving to be innovative, cost effective and budget conscious, by creating new revenue, reallocating resources, reviewing bench marks and tuition models. We are looking at a 15/4 tuition model. Encouraging students to graduate in 4 years.

We are looking at a retirement incentive plan. We will give more information in the future.

Raises will be retroactive July 1, 2015. We have not decided how raises will be adjusted at this moment.

IX. Chancellor Comments (Dr. Rakes)

This may be my last Employee Relations Council Meeting. After sixteen years, I will return to teaching. The best job on campus is a faculty position. I have enjoyed UT Martin’s campus. As many of you are aware, UTM is looking for ways to become more effective and efficient. Each of us should be engaged in the recruitment process and do our part in spreading the news about the outstanding educational opportunities here at UTM. Please know that, by continuing to work hard to maintain high quality programs and services and working together, we will weather the current fiscal situation and UT Martin will be stronger than ever. Thank you, for what you do for UT Martin.