Employee Relations Council Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2004

I. Phil Bright opened the meeting with a welcome and introduction of those present:

Noel Arant – Building Services
Phillip Bright - Director, Human Resources
Cathy Brown - University Center
Jenny Canary – Elam Center/Fieldhouse/Football/Children's Center
Dr. Nick Dunagan - Chancellor
Cherie Edwards - Administration Building
Pete Gibson – HVAC
Jessie Harrell – Administration Building
Al Hooten – Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration
Janice Lee – EPS, Fine Arts, Brehm Hall
Terry Little – Grounds, Transportation & Warehouse
Charlene LoVette – Crisp Hall & Copier Repair
Magdalene Patterson-Hampton – Clement Hall
Judy Sandefor - Employee Relations Board Representative
Susan Waterfield - Humanities/Sociology/Student Health & Housing Receptionist
Kathy Wiley – Building Services
James Wilson- Housing Custodial
Jeff Ziegler- University Center

*Since the Chancellor was unable to stay for the full meeting, Mr. Bright reordered the agenda to allow Dr. Dunagan time to make his comments to the group before he had to leave.

II. Workplace Satisfaction Survey Results

Mr. Bright commented that UTM had very positive overall results on the survey when compared to other UT institutions and that the Administration was working toward making it an annual survey. Dr. Dunagan also commended our staff for the positive reflection these results have on UTM as being a good place to work. We ranked first or second in each category specifically relating to workplace satisfaction. He stated that compensation was an issue of concern at all of the institutions and that, specifically, the dental plan seemed to be of major concern to UTM staff.

Dr. Dunagan also reported on the budget situation, stating that a 2% pay increase has been authorized effective July 1 along with a 1% one-time salary bonus are still being debated. It will either come in one lump sum or divided over the twelve-month period. Also to be determined is whether the bonus will represent 1% of our individual salaries or if it will be 1% of all salaries at UTM divided by the number of eligible employees to net the same bonus amount for each eligible employee. The legislature is still discussing these issues until late May or early June. As directed, we had planned for a 5% budget reduction, but it was only a 0.9% cut for UTM. However, the 2% pay increase will have to be funded through further budget reductions or by tuition increase. Our budget is based on a flat enrollment, but all
indications thus far show an increase in Fall 2004 enrollment. Therefore, more funding may become available in the fall based on the increase in enrollment. Dr. Dunagan feels that with Governor Bredesen, higher education has little brighter outlook.

He asked if there were questions from the group and was asked about his interest in the UT President position. Rumors have been circulated that he is in the running for the position. Dr. Dunagan confirmed that he had been nominated for the position, but that he asked to be withdrawn from the pool. He stated that he wants to concentrate his efforts to seeing that the new president recognizes UTM’s value to the UT system. The Board of Trustees was on campus in early March, met many of our students, and now has a better understanding of what UTM is all about.

III. Report from the Employee Relations Board Meeting

Judy Sandefer delivered the report from the Employee Relations Advisory Board Meeting held at the University Club on the Knoxville campus on January 16, 2004. Interim President Joe Johnson was present at the meeting. He welcomed the group and spoke about budget issues and capital projects. Though no topics were specific to UTM, many related on a system-wide basis.

- An initiative to ban smoking in UT vehicles is underway. Since there is no way to enforce a “no smoking” policy, signs will be put in all UT vehicles which ask drives and passengers not to smoke.

- Longevity and compensation bonus were discussed. The University will continue to follow the State mandate on these issues. The University is reviewing its compensation strategy, and all components of the compensation plan will be reviewed and considered.

- Compensation for earning certification in specific job areas was also discussed to possibly reward staff and better promote competency on the job. The University relies on its compensation philosophy to determine which certificates, licenses, and registrations are recognized. Funding for these is also an issue of concern. It was suggested that possibly focusing more on rewarding job performance might better handle the situation.

- The possibility of transferring the full-time staff fee waiver to a spouse or dependent was discussed. When the program was instituted, it was never assumed that all employees would utilize this benefit. The estimated cost of fee waivers is established for employees, and funding would probably not be available for the number of family members who would utilize this benefit.

- Concern was expressed about the availability of results of salary survey comparisons. A consultant was hired to conduct a salary survey with employers in Tennessee as well as with those at other colleges and universities. A presentation will be prepared for the ERCs to explain the information. Also, the review by the consultants of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service will be completed this semester, and recommendations will be made in hopes of developing an effective method of communicating compensation strategies with employee groups. Additionally, PDQ training will be provided to assist employees in preparing their PDQs during the cyclical
review of positions which will begin at UTM this spring.

- Though not established at UTM, Exempt Staff Councils have been developed on other UT campuses, and those representatives will be included at future ERB meetings.

IV. Position Data Questionnaire Training Sessions

Mr. Bright reminded the group that UTM is first in line for the position review and that, as mentioned earlier, training sessions would be provided before the review on May 5 & 6. Eighteen training sessions are being offered to train staff on completion of PDQs before the review, and he encouraged the group to sign up and to encourage others to sign up for training. Human Resources will provide ERC representatives a list of staff in their responsible areas to assist with this task.

V. Dental Plan Membership

Mr. Bright distributed to members the Tennessee Dental Plan United Networks of America Dental Provider List which details the discounts on specific services (including dental, vision, hearing, and massage) offered and the preferred providers of those services.

VI. Medical Insurance

Mr. Bright stated that staff who were having difficulties with the new insurance had contacted him. Several complaints have been lodged; however, reports indicate that the mail order prescription service is going good. Mr. Bright distributed to members a memo from the Division of Insurance Administration which lists the pharmacies which have agreed to be home delivery providers beginning April 1, 2004. Further details on this should be in the mail to individuals soon.

VII. Chancellor’s Christmas Breakfast – December 21, 2004

The library representatives were unable to attend today’s meeting, but they are still prepared to host the Christmas Breakfast this year. It was suggested that a budget be developed for the chair(s) of the breakfast to use as a guideline when planning expenses for the breakfast. Dr. Dunagan stated that Shelby and Edie would be of assistance in developing these budgetary guidelines.

In relation to the Christmas breakfast, Mr. Bright informed members that the holidays and administrative closing dates this year are December 24- January 3. Members discussed the possibility of saving annual leave days and scheduling administrative closing dates so that staff could always be off work until after the first of the year. Dr. Dunagan suggested that this should be left as an individual office/department policy and not make it mandatory for the whole campus. Just make sure your area is covered during this period.
VIII. Al Hooten’s Comments

- He reported an increase in natural gas this year of $300,000. After the installation of a new meter, gas bills from the City of Martin were much higher this year, so a test was performed with our boiler and the new meter. The readings were found to be accurate. The explanation for this was that the old meter had gotten slower and had been inaccurate for some time, so the University was only being billed for approximately half of the actual amount used. This situation is being watched for possible problems in the future.

- A new apartment complex is to be built. A model of the complex is in the University Center for viewing. The demolition of Austin Peay is to begin on April 1 and be completed by July 1. The new construction project is scheduled to be complete by June 2005.

- The Fiscal Review Committee has just approved a new contract with the Weakley County Municipal Electric System, and application has been made to TVA for an electrical rate change. This contract is needed to begin new power generation project.

- Current UTM Projects: The Humanities Bldg. elevator project is in progress and is scheduled to be completed in August. The Gooch Hall window replacement project is scheduled to begin in May. The upgrade to consolidate the campus fire alarm system will also begin soon. There were four capital maintenance projects included in the governor’s budget for our campus as well. Brehm Hall, Library, and University Center will be re-roofed. The HVAC systems will be replaced in Humanities and Business Administration. Labs will be upgraded in the EPS Bldg.

- Facility fees are being utilized to fund campus improvements. This effort to upgrade academic buildings and classrooms is going well. Approximately $250,000 per year is available for this project, and students are reportedly enjoying the benefits this project is affording them.

- Mike Davis recently retired as Physical Plant Director and was rehired part time as a retiree. He is handling projects and grounds in this part time role. Tim Nipp was promoted to the director position. Mr. Hooten expressed his appreciation for all they do for our campus.

IX. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.