

Staff Advisory Committee
PCR Meeting
September 22, 2022

Members Present: Eric Carlile, Amy Foster, Joni Gilmore, Birgit Hoffman, Bethany Jones, Charlene McClain, Autumn McDaniel, Jessica Morgan, (Amanda Ramsey) Proxy-Lorie Worley, Lisa Rice, Gary Stafford, Sarah Starkey, Denette Way, Angie Wells

Members Absent: Margo Dirkson, Shana Eads, Corinne Johnson, Andrea Kruszka

Others Present: President Oldham, Lee Wray, Kevin Vedder, Donna Schrock

Summary:

Approved Agenda

Approved May 5, 2022 minutes

Discussed Staff Day 2022 and Evaluations

Discussed Job Duties, Classification & Salary Scale

Discussed Parking Costs

Discussed Compensation Plan for pursuing higher education: Ed.S

Elected Vice-Chair for 2022-23

Comments by the President

Proceedings:

Chair Angie Wells called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Bethany Jones motioned to approve the agenda for September 22, 2022. Motion APPROVED.

Charlene McClain motioned to approve the May 5, 2022 minutes. Jones seconded. Motion APPROVED.

All members introduced themselves and told what department they worked in.

Wells asked for comments on the Evaluation Summary from the Staff Day held on Friday, July 15th. McClain stated the comments she had heard were positive and that people would like to have at least a half day retreat once a year. The pickles were a big hit, but not enough for everyone. Many comments were given that the employees enjoyed the day and thought it was worth their time.

Jones said that in her area comments were made that they would like more interactive activities and more time to get to know people across the campus. Joni Gilmore suggested that we do an interactive activity in the morning and one in the afternoon so it would give people more opportunity to meet others. Fridays looked like the best day to hold the retreat. T-shirts for next year were a common suggestion. Wells asked President Oldham if that would be a possibility? Oldham replied yes, but would let the committee pick the design.

Wells suggested CPR training as a possibility for next year. Wells asked the committee to be thinking of what they would like to do for next year. More advertising and get an earlier start. One hundred and three people were registered and a few more came the day of. Kevin Vedder suggested that it be marketed as an advance and not a retreat. Jones suggested something on Time Management.

Jones started the discussion on Job duties, Classification & Salary Scale with a commented on equal pay. Jones had heard across campus that people were concerned with inflation and that the Tennessee Tech was not keeping up with pay raises. TBR was able to increase salary across their program last year. Jones also commented that some banks had raised their minimum pay rate to twenty-two dollars an hour. Employees wondered if there was something coming to help them in the near future?

President Oldham responded that the University was taking a close look at all of it and were also concerned about the inflation rate. Up until last year Tennessee Tech was typically beating the inflation rate on the annual salary increases. Tech will likely bring in an outside group to do a study. Jones felt like many employees do not feel that they were being paid a fair market value. Jones also commented that long-time employees feel that new hires were getting hired in at a higher rate than what the long-time employees make. There was also a lot of job openings because of the rate of pay offered. Oldham replied that the Tennessee Tech tries to respond as quickly and fairly as it can.

Amy Foster brought up the concern of the cost of parking for employees on campus. Staff were upset that they pay \$265 a year while faculty and administrators only pay thirty dollars more even though faculty and administrators make double and triple what staff were making. Foster added that it seems unbalanced and unfair that staff should have to pay such a high price. Foster suggested a parking tag based on the salary of the employee. Who would be in charge of setting parking rates? Oldham said there was a parking committee that may be a place to start with questions and concerns. Jones brought up that previously the committee had asked if employees could pay a monthly fee instead of twice a year.

McClain asked if the money from parking tags were originally used to maintain the roads on campus? Oldham replied that all of the auxiliaries around parking and transportation had to be self-funded. Originally the students were paying the entire amount which did not seem fair since all of us use the roads and parking. Oldham suggested to present a proposal to the parking committee. McClain thought if a change were made it would have to be charted on a scale. Foster will look into who the contact person would be from the committee to give a proposal to.

Vedder shared that the University of Tennessee's staff parking fees used a tiered structure; \$240, \$360, \$420 and \$600 for unreserved staff parking space. Restricted parking spaces were \$670, \$800 and \$1,400. Jones pointed out that the University of Tennessee had more parking spaces attached to the buildings.

Chair Wells shared that an employee had inquired about the Compensation Plan for pursuing higher education, in particular an Educational Specialist degree (ED.S.). Kevin Vedder commented that the current policy just lists Bachelor's: \$1,000; Master's: \$1,500; and Doctorate: \$2,500. Vedder added that an Ed.S. was something that could be given consideration to.

Jones asked if Tennessee Tech incentivize employees who get an additional degree in another area than the one they already hold? Such as a secondary Master's. Sarah Starkey believed that it was just a one Master's pay increase. Vedder also believed it was just for the first degree.

Wells asked for nominations for Vice-Chair and read the duties it entailed. Three members whose two terms will be up at the end of this year were not eligible to run; Shana Eades, Amy Foster and Angie Wells. Bethany Jones and Sarah Starkey were nominated. Bethany Jones won the final vote for Vice-Chair.

President Oldham commented that there was a near record Freshman Class on campus, third largest class ever at 2,050. TN Tech had to put 130 students in hotels because there was not enough room on campus. Sixty students were still in hotels. This year was also the largest incoming class of black students and the largest incoming class of Hispanics. Overall enrollment was up 6/10 of a percent. Oldham added the incoming students average ACT score was 24 and average high school GPA was 3.66 with one third of these freshmen have a 4.0 GPA.

Oldham added that one of the main reasons students select a university was the appeal of the campus. It takes all of the staff to make it happen. Tennessee Tech continues to be the number one public university in Tennessee, according to Money Magazine.

President Oldham stated that the south end of Peachtree had opened back up. He added that on Peachtree Ave. from Wings Up Way north to Johnson Hall would be pedestrian area. Work will begin to take up the pavement, put in pavers and hardscape over the next few months. Stadium drive would also be getting some work done. Oldham also commented that the Ashraf Islam Engineering Building was well underway and that projects were timed for the least inconvenience for everyone. The president appreciated everyone's patience during construction.

President Oldham shared that Tennessee Tech had three budget cycles every year. October revised budget was in process now, the enrollment increase helped and the state had a large reserve pool of money.

Other Such Matters: McClain let the committee know that she had asked a visiting student and parent why they choose Tech to attend and they said one word, Kindness. The President added that Tech had always been good at being kind and am glad that we celebrate it now. Every student and everybody who worked here was a representative of Tennessee Tech. Vedder added that he was impressed by the little things that students do, such as getting the door for others.

Wells asked about the housing situation and the next semester's plan. Oldham stated that the success in reaching 2050 incoming freshman far exceeded his dreams, which had forced them to accelerated the university's plans. There was a new student residency in design with 400 beds. It may not be completed till early 2025. As soon as construction is started on that hall, Tech will immediately start design for a second phase with approximately 300-400 beds. In the interim we need to maximize the use of current facilities. Oldham added that Tennessee Tech was using

Crawford Hall currently and can address any issues there may be in order to continue to use it. Tennessee Tech was also looking at potential apartment complexes near campus that could be entered into long term lease agreements. These were great problems to have.

Wells asked if there was an update on Summer Hours for next year. Lee Wray commented that it was up for review and they did not get back to it yet. Wray added it was introduced to Cabinet and there was some interest and a lot of questions. Vedder and others will get together for review.

McClain mentioned that there were fourteen lights out on University Drive. Gary Stafford said they were the city's lights and the city was in the process of getting the lights changed out to LED bulbs.

McClain motioned to adjourn. Gilmore seconded. Adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Documents on file:

Agenda September 22, 2022
Minutes, May 5, 2022
Retreat Evaluation Summary

Donna Schrock, recorder