

APPROVED
October 1 and 2, 2007 EAC Meeting Minutes

Day 1: October 1, 2007

EAC New Member Orientation Summary

Members Present

Ann Tate, Teresa Yarbrough, Juan Andres Rodriguez, Jesse Manciaz, Andrea Liner, Cindy Espinoza, Gary Cook, Danielle Fournier, Lindrea Sealy (alternate for Nancy Sutherland), Paul Summers, Laurie Thompson, Sarah Gonzalez, Michael Swindle, Dennie Clemons, Dexter Jones, and Teresa Garcia

Guests: Dan Stewart, UT System Liaison to EAC and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Employee Services, and Kathy H. Mayes, Administrative Associate, UT System

At 8:00 a.m., Chair Michael Swindle welcomed each of the new members to the Employee Advisory Council and introduced the Executive Committee. He encouraged each member to ask questions.

Dexter Jones, Historian, gave a brief EAC history, which was followed by a description of the organization as presented by Michael.

Dennie Clemons, Vice Chair, described the subcommittee structure and results from the previous year's subcommittee. Reimbursement was introduced by Secretary Terrie Garcia.

A discussion of the EAC future was led by Michael Swindle and EAC member Ann Tate, past Chair of EAC.

Group then adjourned to main meeting.

Main Meeting

Members Present

Ann Tate, Teresa Yarbrough, Randy Scott, Juan Andres Rodriguez, Rochelle Pena, Jesse Manciaz, Melanie Loving, Andrea Liner, Cindy Espinoza, Gary Cook, Aziza Young, Efrain Molina, Karen Martinez, Danielle Fournier, Kim Caperton, Lindrea Sealy (alternate for Nancy Sutherland), Pep Valdes, Paul Summers, Olga Garcia, Chris Dickson, Erin Waneck, Laurie Thompson, Debra Linzer, Sarah Gonzalez, Michael Swindle, Dennie Clemons, Dexter Jones, and Teresa Garcia

Guests: Dan Stewart, UT System Liaison to EAC and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Employee Services; Kathy H. Mayes, Administrative Associate; and Jeff Scroggins, Office of Information Technology, UT System

Chair Michael Swindle called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. on October 1, 2007 and welcomed group. Each member was asked to make introductions.

SharePoint Demonstration

Jeff Scroggins, Office of Information Technology

Jeff introduced features of SharePoint site.

- Shared documents feature allows different users to edit documents with each version being saved in case a previous version needs to be recalled.
- Document library was presented.
- SharePoint homepage was introduced, including member list and comments/announcements features.
- Meeting Workspace and Events Calendar were introduced as areas that could function as temporary work areas for subcommittee work.
- Advantages/disadvantages of several browsers were discussed. Jeff recommended using Internet Explorer to extract SharePoint's full functionality.
- New SharePoint version to be installed next week; a list of EAC members can be provided to Jeff so that access can be set up (jscroggin@utsystem.edu).

Discussion of Issue Selection for EAC subcommittee work

In an effort to brainstorm potential issues for EAC subcommittee work, Michael introduced roundtable format. Each member was given 3 minutes to present institution issues.

UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas

Member Aziza Young discussed a change that occurred for nursing staff. Nurses working 72 hours over two weeks used to be considered full-time. Now nurses on that schedule have been reduced from 1.0 to .9, which is affecting benefits. Aziza proposed investigating the possibility that nurses on .9 schedules be considered full-time employees.

UT Medical Branch at Galveston

Member Pep Valdes discussed the dire shortages being faced by his institution and calls for a focus on recruitment and retention issues because of competition for qualified staff.

Furthermore, market adjustments have created inequity for staff not in shortage areas. Pep proposes investigating strategies for increasing retention of staff in critical areas like pharmacy, nursing, and police officers.

UT Health Science Center at Houston

Member Randy Scott presented issue of across-the-board cost of living raises. Since these have not been awarded in some time, salaries have been eroded by the rate of inflation.

Member and Vice-Chair Dennie Clemons also introduced topic of increasing workloads for all staff without compensation.

Both members felt these issues were worthy of investigation.

UT Health Science Center at San Antonio

Member Paul Summers presented issue of exploring options for wellness, including using sick leave for wellness activities. Investigating mechanisms for being proactive in responding to wellness was especially emphasized as a way to manage health care costs.

UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Member Debra Linzer echoed the importance of wellness issues to staff and was especially concerned by increasing accessibility of wellness programs to all employees.

Member Gary Cook was interested in the general exploration of the mechanism used by UT System to influence legislation and how the EAC could work within that mechanism to bring about a higher likelihood that a cost of living increase may be considered.

UT Health Science Center at Tyler

Echoing previous remarks, Member and Historian Dexter Jones called for consideration of cost of living concerns and the need for timely market analysis in an effort to affect direct patient care. Dexter also introduced issue of diversity and growing leadership from within.

Discussion of topic of diversity and training occurred. Member Kim Caperton, in conjunction with EAC liaison Dan Stewart, introduced topic of Management Development Program, used by UT System, as a method of importing/growing leaders. This program was also introduced as a method to increase diversity in leadership through grassroots training.

UT System

Kim echoed concerns regarding cost of living adjustments and wellness initiatives. Green policies were also introduced as areas suitable for exploration.

UT Arlington

Member Laurie Thompson expressed interest in the issue of tuition reimbursement and any updates on the past year's committee work that could be shared.

UT Austin

Member Danielle Founier indicated interest in the issue of developing action plans for staff that may be subject to layoff. These plans should help train and develop staff members to minimize and reduce hardship as a result of a layoff.

Member Erin Waneck added the need for training in basic communication such as how to access email, how to access and navigate website, and the need for dedicated workstations especially for staff in facilities planning.

Safety communication was also suggested as a possible issue along with other forms of communication such as iTunes U, which is used by Texas A & M. The need for a survey of issues/satisfaction was also expressed.

UT Brownsville

Member Juan A. Rodriguez introduced issue of compensatory time policies (and practices) for exempt employees. Policies and practices seem more flexible and open to interpretation for exempt employees since federal law guides overtime for non-exempt employees.

Juan also was interested in processes for awarding merit (both actual merit and exemplary merit).

UT Dallas

Member Chris Dickson introduced the issue of a possible newsletter and website enhancements to increase communication to institutions. The topics of employee recognition by the EAC and/or an endowed scholarship were introduced as mechanisms of increasing campus recognition of the EAC.

Chris also introduced a desire to increase transparency of EAC actions and functions by moving to an officer name change which would be more organizational in structure (i.e. Chair→president, Vice-chair→executive vice president, etc.).

Member Rochelle Pena indicated an interest in focusing on communication to physical plant staff members and compensation practices in general.

UT El Paso

Member Jesse Manciaz introduced the issue of performance evaluations and an interest in conducting research into developing strong evaluative processes and practices, which have substance to them.

He also expressed concerns regarding the draconian nature of the suspension process.

UTPA

Member Terrie Garcia indicated that several UTPA issues had been submitted by Member Efrain Molina for EAC review. She indicated her interest in campus communication, especially during critical times like power outages.

UTPB

Chair Swindle invited UTSA and UT Tyler to present issues.

UTSA

Member Sarah Gonzalez indicated concerns with campus security and was interested in learning about security practices in other institutions and in system. She also indicated interest in policies and practices/methods related to time documentation.

Sarah introduced UTSA's Strategic Plan working group titled "Team 2016." One area of concern for this group is that 65% of staff is eligible for retirement in the next few years.

UT Tyler

Member Andrea Liner introduced her interest in compensation practices across system institutions.

In an effort to aid the subcommittee formation process, Michael began discussion of topics introduced thus far. Several members asked for clarification of how subcommittees are formed. A list of the topics proposed was developed and included:

- Research into health and wellness benefits (including wellness newsletters)
- Communications Research
- Compensation Management and Practices (including but not limited to cost of living/merit raises; compensatory time issues (exempt and nonexempt employees); time documentation issues; performance appraisal management).
- Leadership cultivation practices as a method of increasing diversity;
- Action plan for staff members who have been laid off, including a rehire plan.
- Employee Endowment Scholarships or recognition programs such as employee of the year.
- Special Projects committee for everything else

Michael called for motions to form subcommittees.

Danielle moved that a Compensation Management and Practices Subcommittee be formed. Member Olga Garcia seconded the motion. Motion discussed and called to a vote. Motion passes.

Member Ann Tate moved that a Communication Research Subcommittee be formed. The motion was seconded by Melanie Loving. Motion discussed and called to a vote. Motion passed.

Ann moved that a Special Projects Subcommittee be formed. Chris seconded the motion. Motion discussed and called to a vote. Motion passed.

Erin moved that a subcommittee on career ladder/leadership training as diversity/ laid off employee process be formed. Debra seconds the motion. Motion is discussed. Chris calls for a vote. Motion passes.

Break for lunch—Executive committee will assign committees over a working lunch.

Committee Assignments are announced after lunch when the EAC officially reconvenes.

Absent members Loretta Barker, Patricia Dunn, Rick Peterson, and Valerie Sinor will be invited to align themselves with a subcommittee for the next meeting.

Career Ladder/ Leadership training as diversity/ Laid off employee Process Subcommittee

Sarah Gonzalez-Chair

Dexter Jones-ex officio

Debra Linzer

Laurie Thompson
Erin Waneck

Special Projects Subcommittee

Olga Garcia-Chair
Chris Dickson
Lindrea Sealy (alternate for Nancy Sutherland)
Michael Swindle-ex officio
Paul Summers
Pep Valdes

Communication Research Subcommittee

Kim Caperton-Chair
Danielle Fournier
Teresa Garcia-ex officio
Karen Martinez
Efrain Molina
Aziza Young

Compensation Management and Practices Subcommittee

Dennie Clemons-ex officio
Gary Cook
Cindy Espinoza
Andi Liner
Melanie Loving
Jesse Manciaz
Rochelle Pena-Chair
Juan Andres Rodriguez
Randy Scott
Teresa Yarbrough

Board Presentation Project assignment by Chair Michael Swindle

Ann Tate

Day 2: October 2, 2007

Chair Michael Swindle calls the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and asks for ad hoc committee reports.

Compensation Subcommittee

Rochelle Pena announced the seven issues considered by her committee, including across-the-board pay increases, merit pay (faculty and staff), 72-hour week over a two-week period, performance evaluations (not selected at this time), compensatory time (esp. for exempt employees), time recording practices, and emergency leave pay.

For the cost of living issue, it was decided that issue was legislative in nature and should be investigated as an issue of concern for all higher education employees and institutions.

The emergency leave issue should be discussed and investigated.

Regarding the 72-hour versus 80-hour issue, it was indicated that 72 hours over two weeks should be considered full-time for nurses. More investigation is needed since at least one institution's area was outsourced.

Regarding compensatory time (i.e. how comp. time is recorded or tracked), the subcommittee is considering developing a survey to be taken by members to institutions for completion. One member asked if subcommittee is looking at policies or practice. Policy is what is desired for survey tool.

Several members discussed policies at their institutions. Survey would probably be answered with the help of human resource offices on campus. Discussion of performance evaluation completion practices occurred.

Dan Stewart encouraged EAC members to work with Human Resources on issues like performance evaluation and state compensatory time.

Career Ladder/ Leadership training as diversity/ Laid off employee process Subcommittee Sarah Gonzalez announced that her committee had been renamed the Professional Development and Retention Subcommittee (PDR). Among the issues considered were diversity, retention and recruitment, plans for laid-off employees, and leadership and training in relationship to career ladders.

Issues chosen include training and development on campus as whole. Information will be gathered on how training is made available and is it only for job-related duties or for development as whole.

The subcommittee will also research state requirements and individual campus policies for helping employees faced with an impending lay off.

The subcommittee will also look at training and leadership development for the system and all campuses from the standpoint of diversity and succession planning. The subcommittee hopes to make recommendations in these areas.

Communications Research Subcommittee

Danielle is the subcommittee's spokesperson and indicates that six issues were looked at (see notes of subcommittee).

Kim Caperton as the subcommittee's chair indicates interest in surveying employee satisfaction across institutions. Survey would be 1 or 2 questions with a limited comment section which would be a powerful resource for extraction of topics of concern to employees.

The subcommittee thought that the survey could be distributed through human resources or another survey-friendly campus administrator.

Danielle continued with a PowerPoint presentation (see attached).

Subcommittee decided that issue 08-02 on EAC Newsletter and issue 08-04 on creation of a UT Webmaster position may be revisited in the future. For now, Teresa Garcia, as secretary, is responsible for updating website with the help of UT System. It was decided that a highlights page might be a good addition for the website. Chris was asked to help with the design/content for a highlights page.

Regarding communications resources, there was great feedback on UTPA's Kiosk computers for Physical Plant employees. UTPA report on the subject was presented as a model that might work for other institutions.

Discussion on UT wide survey occurred.

Special Projects Subcommittee

Olga Garcia announced that research was to be conducted on endowed scholarships. Chris has agreed to help gather research and has endowment experience. Dan also agreed to arrange for guidance from UT System to be provided as needed.

Regarding the employee recognition award, subcommittee proposes that one employee from UT System be recognized. EAC members would be ineligible for the award. Guidelines are that up to two employees can be nominated from each institution, employees nominated should be exceptional, and the institution's representative would deliver the award and plaque. EAC would benefit from the additional exposure on all campuses.

Subcommittee will conduct research into wellness proposals which would allow use of sick leave or flex time for wellness activities. This is an attempt to encourage employees to be proactive in their responses to health and wellness.

Dan Stewart commented on a number of issues.

Regarding compensation issues (like pay ranges and position titles), Dan made it clear that UT was not a part of the state of Texas compensation plan. He also presented background to the issue. For a while, compensation plan was centralized, which was TERRIBLE. System-wide pay plan was in UT System's purview. Dan communicated the challenge of making pay-scale decisions for such diverse communities. Approximately 3 years ago, pay plan was decentralized (shifted back to every institution). This process seemed stronger since the institutions had first-hand information on longevity issues, merit issues, and compensation issues within their institution and community.

Regarding surveys, Dan encouraged all members to make contact and establish rapport with their HR director. Members should know their institutions and take steps to establish groundwork which will enhance communication when questions or surveys are taken back to the institution. For any survey, Dan said the presentation and framing of the survey was important. It was suggested that if a survey is distributed, Michael, as EAC chair, might compose a letter to send back with the survey indicating how the results will be used, distributed, and interpreted. Dan also suggested that institutions and the EAC take advantage of what survey tools are already developed and out there. Dan made it clear that surveys work best and get the best response when thoroughly researched and developed.

Regarding Regents' Rules, Dan described UT System and its components as a confederacy, not a union. He posed the question of whether UT System is taking advantage of its system union in what it does. Dan describes system as being set up to help each institution move forward. As one example, Dan explored the topic of background checks. Though each institution requires criminal background checks, the application of the check is individual to the institution. Some institutions require all employees (faculty and staff) while some only require staff to submit to background checks. UT System advises each institution on the most effective methods for these checks. Dan provided other examples.

Regarding employee of the year, Dan asked EAC to consider if institutions already have an award. He advised members to go to HR director with this topic to ensure that the luster of established awards is not tarnished.

Discussion of issues presented occurred.

Michael announced that the next meeting would be hosted by the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. After discussion, it was decided that the first week of March would be the best week to aim for. Michael expressed the enthusiasm he and Karen Martinez shared at having the group at their institution.

Michael encouraged each member to speak to alternates/staff councils and to talk to HR director about the issues presented at the meeting. He also encouraged subcommittee chairs to get information to members so that data could be collected.

Members discussed salary/cost of living raises. Michael assigned issue to Rochelle Pena's Compensation Subcommittee.

Michael opened the floor for motions.

Chris made a motion to change officer titles to increase clarity. Motion was seconded by Rochelle. Chris presented reasons for name change. New designations would be more distinct so that the chair of a subcommittee would not be reporting to the EAC chair, which might lead to confusion. Change was discussed among members. Motion was supported by three members. Motion did not carry.

Erin made a motion to allow Communications Subcommittee to pursue survey by conducting research. Motion was seconded by Ann. Discussion on motion occurred. Four members opposed the motion. Motion carried.

As part of fact-finding research, it was suggested that members collect surveys already conducted at their institution and send that data to Kim.

Paul made a motion to continue health/wellness initiative research. Motion was seconded by Chris. After discussion, members supported motion.

Michael closes the floor for motions.

Discussion on cost of living bills began. Dan addressed why higher education is often left out. Legislature (both House and Senate) see higher ed. as different from other state agencies and thus appropriates differently. There is a misconception that higher ed. has the ability to do more for its employees. Examples include retirement bills and health care cost funding (with higher ed. getting only 95% of the funding allotted to other state agencies).

Dan explained mechanism of Office of Governmental Relations. This is an office dedicated to the education of legislators on issues of this type. Several questions were directed to Dan on these issues.

A motion to adjourn was made at 11:10 by Michael and seconded by Dennie. Motion passed.

The next meeting of the UT System Employee Advisory Council will be held in Odessa, Texas, tentatively scheduled for the first week of March 2008. EAC is to be hosted by The University of Texas of the Permian Basin.

Thanks Karen and Michael!

Respectfully Submitted

Teresa R. Garcia,
EAC Secretary