

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES - OCTOBER 25 - 26, 2001

Thursday, October 25, 2001

In Attendance

Employee Advisory Council Members in attendance:

Lee Arisano, Lynne Bandy, Paula Berkley, Sherill Boline, Teri Brooks, Victoria Bullock, Linda Cox, Ofelia Aguilar Dominguez, Lorraine Etkin, Douglas Ferrier, Kimberly Hagara, Becky Hansen, Kevin Hawbaker, Deborah Herron, Dewayne Jennings, Mike Jimenez, David Maldonado, Bruce Moore, John Poindexter, Robert Radnik, Jennifer Raeke, Terri Reynolds, Gillian Rittman, Donna Royal, Frank Simon, Beverly Stern, Bob Vasquez, Charles Washington, and Shirley Zwinggi.

Employee Advisory Council Members Absent:

Minerva Castillo, James Sparks, and Walter Tenery

Others in Attendance:

Kerry Kennedy, U. T. System Administrative Liaison to the Employee Advisory Council, Dan Stewart, U. T. System Administrative Support, and Karen Harrison.

Call to Order - Lorraine Etkin

Ms. Lorraine Etkin welcomed the Employee Advisory Council to their third meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome Comments-Kerry Kennedy and Dan Stewart

Kerry Kennedy welcomed the EAC and announced that the Executive Committee would give a presentation to the Board of Regents (BOR) on February 13, 2002. The agenda for this presentation needs to be submitted by mid-January, 2002. Following the presentation the EAC will make recommendations to the BOR for their review, consideration and comment. Kerry Kennedy identified deregulation to be of primary importance to the BOR.

Mr. Dan Stewart welcomed the EAC members and expressed his pleasure at having the opportunity to work with them. He discussed the positive evaluations of the July EAC meeting. U. T. System representatives helping with Standing Committees are Susie Gutierrez and Jim Sarver with the Benefits Committee; Bunny Davis with the Compensation Committee; Brett Morris with the Policy Committee; and Tracie Spillar with the Communication Committee. Dan Stewart would try to meet with each Standing Committee if time allowed

Dan Stewart mentioned the Group Insurance Advisory Committee would like our input regarding a proposal from Merck-Medco. Jim Sarver was on the agenda later in the day to discuss the plan.

Announcements and Final Approval of July 19-20, 2001 Meeting - Lorraine Etkin

Lynn Reynolds from U. T. Tyler has stepped down as a member of the EAC. Deborah Herron is her replacement. Deborah will be appointed to the Communication Standing Committee. A new membership list reflecting these changes was provided.

EAC minutes for July 19-20, 2001 were approved. In the future final draft copies of the minutes will be electronically sent to all members of the EAC just before the next meeting. This will provide adequate time for review prior to approval. The minutes were approved by a voice vote.

Meeting with Chairman of the U.T. Board of Regents - Lorraine Etkin

Lorraine Etkin reported to the EAC that on September 5, 2001, the Executive Committee of the EAC met with Regent Charles Miller, Chair of the BOR. Search for the new chancellor was discussed. The BOR will serve as the search committee with input from the Presidents of each component. A search firm was hired to do research for the Regents. Regent Miller said the candidates for chancellor must be well respected in their field, have good leadership skills, and vision for the U. T. System. The Regents are interested in having the person in place quickly to ensure adequate lead-time in understanding the Texas legislative process.

Break

Goals for FY 2002 and Beyond - Lorraine Etkin

Lorraine Etkin opened the discussion about the report due to the Regents in February. She asked if the council wanted to give a progress report to the Regents or have actual items to bring forward? Standing Committee Chairs were asked to keep this in mind when they had their meetings that afternoon. They would be expected to report back to the EAC Friday morning with their answers.

Videoconferencing was discussed. U. T. System has set up specific times that the EAC could use for meetings. The schedule is from Monday 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Friday 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Times other than listed are available if participating components have no conflicts.

A question arose as to the actual start of the term of appointment to the EAC. Dan Stewart was asked to provide an official answer. He assured us that by the end of the meeting this would be resolved.

Communicating with one another will become more important as time goes on. Chat room technology was discussed and the EAC web site will soon be able to have this capability. Training on this technology, user IDs and passwords, and scheduling will be discussed once the software is in place.

Alternate members of the EAC have not had the chance to meet the entire committee nor have they consistently received information from the committee. It was determined that each member of the EAC would be responsible to share information with our respective alternates. The full committee agreed to invite the alternates to the videoconference meetings when appropriate.

Old Business

The EAC agreed to determine the next two meeting dates at each meeting. Therefore, after some discussion, future meeting dates are March 28-29, 2002 and July 18-19, 2002.

Sick Leave Pool (SLP) was discussed with the EAC. SLP is an unfunded liability and each component administers the Pool differently. Some components define "catastrophic injury or illness" in its narrow sense and other components define it more broadly. As part of HB 1545, medical components have been given permission to develop a paid leave system that would combine vacation, sick and holiday pay. Once this paid leave system is established, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center is hoping to be able to provide short-term disability insurance for its employees. This could eliminate the need for a Sick Leave Pool. It was recommended that the EAC take a closer look at SLP policies at each component.

Lunch

Insurance Update - Jim Sarver

Jim Sarver gave an overview of the revenue shortfall of the insurance program from the last two fiscal years. To add to that the legislature was asked to fund the program at \$302 million for this biennium although it only provided \$292 million. This insurance program has 135,000 covered lives including retirees and dependents. Since September 11, 2001, many events have stressed the cost of general health care. These include testing for anthrax, downsizing and closure of companies.

Even so, the pharmacy component of U. T. Select has planned two future enhancements. In the first, Merck-Medco plans to review individual prescription histories and target seven diseases. These include hypertension/high cholesterol, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, hepatitis C, asthma, digestive health and depression. Individuals will receive correspondence that offers them the opportunity to participate in a program that will help them manage their disease. This program is called Positive Approaches and the hope is to lower medical costs with an educated participant.

In the second, Merck-Medco is hoping to introduce a software package to alert patients and their physicians of drug interactions. This is being called the Rational-Med Program. Mr. Sarver wanted our reaction to these two programs. There were several concerns voiced including confidentiality issues but Merck-Medco assures U. T. System that HIPAA regulations will be followed.

Update on Distribution/Dissemination of EAC Information

The following campuses have an EAC (or equivalent) web site: U. T. Austin, U. T. El Paso, U. T. Dallas, U. T. Pan American, U. T. Permian Basin, U. T. San Antonio, and U.T. HSC-Houston. The following campuses do not have an EAC web site: U.T. HSC-San Antonio, U. T. Medical Branch Galveston, U. T. Tyler, U. T. Arlington, U. T. M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, U. T. Southwestern Dallas. It was agreed that it is important for the EAC representative to disseminate information back to their campuses.

Breakout of Standing Committees

All Standing Committees were adjourned by 4:00 p.m. Minutes are attached.

Friday, October 26, 2001

Call to Order - Lorraine Etkin, EAC Chair

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and summarized outstanding issues from Thursday's meeting. Draft minutes will be sent out electronically to all EAC members and their alternates. Information about the first videoconference will be announced at a later date.

The presentation to the Board of Regents was discussed. It will be a PowerPoint presentation and the EAC will be given as much as 1.5 hours to meet with the Regents.

Standing Committee Reports (15 minutes each)

The Standing Committee minutes are to be sent to the EAC Chair and Secretary for inclusion in the EAC minutes. The Vice Chair of each Standing Committee will be responsible for taking minutes.

Benefits Committee: Terry Reynolds, Chair

The Committee decided to concentrate on preparing information for the Board of Regents presentation and to

temporarily table the Component Benefit Summary. Two others issues are still being investigated. One concerns sick leave credit toward retirement through trade-out as opposed to buy-out, and the other concerns TRS, ORP and ERS multipliers. There was a discussion about retiree life insurance benefits. Once retired an individual is offered a maximum benefit of \$10,000.

Compensation Committee: Shirley Zwinggi, Chair

The Committee identified four items to research, which include, Job Family Study, Creative Compensation, and Retention of Employees and Competitive Recruitment. The committee will need to review A&P and classified positions, salary policies, various forms of compensation, efforts in employee retention, negative and positive factors surrounding competitive recruitment and many others. The committee decided to develop a Best Practice document to address these issues. A survey will be used to compile the information.

Policy Committee: Robert Vasquez, Chair

The Policy Committee is the research arm of the EAC. As such, they have asked each Standing Committee to review any deregulation issues that pertain to their committee agenda. Topics may include, but are not limited to purchasing, human resources, financial management, retention planning, strategic planning, merit/ longevity pay, and probationary periods.

Communications Committee: John Poindexter, Chair

The Communication Committee's goal is to ensure that every employee obtains all information needed to do their job and to feel they are an integral part of the U. T. System. The committee will send a survey to capture the data about communication at each component. Once the data is reviewed, recommendations will be made to select the best vehicle possible to disseminate EAC information to all employees.

Open Discussion About the Board of Regents Presentation - Lorraine Etkin

Although Committees have begun working on a large number of issues, the EAC felt that they were not at a point to bring a specific proposal forward to the Board of Regents for their recommendation. Therefore, the Executive Committee will collaborate on a presentation that will inform the Board of Regents of the information gathering that has already taken place (and will continue to take place) and what issues are being investigated. We have a dedicated, hard-working team and will continue to work, across components, on issues to be brought to the attention of the Board of Regents.

Break

Review of Student Advisory Council (SAC) Report to the Board of Regents - Lorraine Etkin

An SAC report was distributed to the EAC. The report and resultant outcome response gave the EAC an understanding of what to expect from our presentation to the Board of Regents.

Roundtable Discussion of Issues From Component Staff Advisory Councils - EAC Members

Following is a list of issues that were shared:

- U. T. San Antonio -- Working on a new election process; Staff Education Assistance Program is being implemented; accurate classified and A&P employee listings
- U. T. Arlington -- Health Insurance issues
- U. T. Austin -- Addressing parking issues throughout the campus; providing computer access to employees who do not have access; new Council currently developing bylaws for newly elected council; addressing re-districting of currently assigned districts for Council representatives
- U. T. Brownsville -- Changes in hierarchy has caused changes within representation of Council members constantly and Council is addressing representation evenly among employee districts; addressing conflicts with holiday calendar

- U. T. Dallas -- Developing a newsletter for the Dallas campus employees; solicit questions from staff employees to address to the Administration of U. T. Dallas; ad hoc Wellness Committee is a part of Staff Council;
- U. T. El Paso -- Dissemination of information to employees who do not have access to a computer for e-mail
- U. T. Pan American -- Elections on line. This presents some challenges because not all employees have ready access to the web.
- U. T. Permian Basin -- UTPB is awaiting approval to hold its first Staff Forum, modeled on the format used at U. T. Arlington.
- U. T. Tyler -- Parking problems on campus.
- U. T. Health Science Center Houston -- Employee recognition is a big issue; improve communication between A&P staff and classified employees.
- U. T. MD Anderson Cancer Center -- Sick Leave Pool waiver; parking issues

Employee tuition/fee waiver received a lot of discussion. It was decided that the Policy Committee would look into deregulation surrounding this matter and report findings to the EAC. At that time an Ad Hoc committee could be formed to investigate further.

Discussion of March 2002 Agenda - EAC Members

The one and one-half day format for the EAC meetings will continue. The only change will be that the Standing Committees will meet for 30 minutes on the second day to re-address the previous afternoon's discussions.

Dr. Harry Gibbs from U. T. M.D. Anderson will discuss Diversity at the March meeting. Members of the Special Committee on Minorities and Women will possibly be joining us from U. T. System Administration. Other topics for consideration are: the Human Resources Director at U. T. System Administration (HR issues System-wide); Executive Director of Public Affairs (communication issues); Tom Scott, Governmental Relations (deregulation); Sid Sanders, (Parking issues System-wide); ERS versus TRS issues; legislative, constitutional, and strategic changes; merit pay, lump sum pay.

Closing Remarks--Dan Stewart

The Board of Regents created the Employee Advisory Council because they were interested in hearing thoughts and concerns of employees from each component. This was made very clear when the Chair of the U. T. Board of Regents invited the Executive Committee to meet to discuss the search for a new chancellor.

Recruitment and retention are major issues that face each component. Proposals that the EAC will make to the Board of Regents will/may impact recruitment and retention of employees for years to come. It would be interesting to look at average tenure at the different campuses. Working together and collaborating on a document that looks at best practice approaches to different issues may help to improve our retention statistics over time.

Dan Stewart distributed a memo from Vice Chancellor and General Counsel, Cullen M. Godfrey to explain the term of appointment for the members of the Employee Advisory Council.

Lorraine Etkin adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:15 p.m.

Prepared By: Lorraine Etkin and Lee Arisano

Attachments to Minutes:

Minutes from the Standing Committee Meetings

Handouts Provided and Attached with Copy of Minutes to Historian:

Agenda October 25-26, 2001 Meeting

The University of Texas Student Advisory Council Issues and Recommendations Academic year 2000-2001 - Chancellor's Response to Recommendations

Memo from Vice Chancellor and General Counsel, Cullen M. Godfrey - Term of Appointment
Travel Safety and Security Guidelines
Addendum to EAC Members Biographical Information

U. T. System Employee Advisory Council Communications Committee

Thursday, October 25, 2001

Present: Sherill Boline, Ofelia Dominguez, Becky Hansen, Deborah Herron, David Maldonado, John Poindexter, Robert Radnik and Frank Simon

Guests: Tracie Spillar and Dan Stewart

Meeting to order at 02:09 p.m.

The meeting began by John Poindexter (Committee Chairperson) introducing Deborah Herron, the new representative from the University of Texas at Tyler, who is replacing Lynn Reynolds. In addition, he revisited Committee charges as the vehicle for dissemination of EAC information.

Becky Hansen circulated handouts relative to the survey providing institutional contacts for each Office of Public Affairs and guidelines for each at U. T. MB. Discussion began over mechanisms for dissemination of information at each component. Ofelia provided sample documents of all mechanisms available at UTEP. Discussion began over e-mail access at each component. It was agreed that the philosophy of administration (at all components) was that everyone has an e-mail address and access to such. It was agreed that if no computer is available at the employees work area, they should be given time during the workday to go elsewhere to access their university e-mail account. This conversation revealed that first-line supervisors are under pressure to get work done. It was agreed that managers and directors disperse information down - not up or across. Thus, custodial and physical plant employees do not have access to the same information as the bulk of employees at each component. These employees make up ~5% or less of the component workforce and deserve the same access to staff information. This may be something that should be brought to the attention of the Board of Regents in our report. Further discussion reviewed the importance for people "in the trenches" to receive EAC information and whether or not information distribution should be stopped at a higher level. The Committee discussed the general mechanism at components being that the President provides information to the Deans and Directors to get to everyone. Those people provide information to their next level and this goes on until the information may or may not reach the lower levels.

Committee members discussed various survey mechanisms. It was agreed that a web based survey tool, Survey Monkey, would be used. Becky Hansen will provide the information for the survey from these Minutes and Sherill Boline agreed to create the "monkey." The survey will first be distributed to members of the Communications Committee for review before distributing through email to the EAC at large. In this web survey tool, questions can be designed giving options to select and areas for users to provide input.

Survey Information Needed

1. How many newsletters do staff have access to at each component? (Publications: Institutional, Programmatic, Departmental, etc.)
2. Electronic, hard copy or both?
3. List of communication vehicles at component (click on):
 - A. Newsletters
 - a. Hard copy
 - b. Electronic
 - B. E-mail
 - C. Quarterly reports

- D. Websites
- E. Flyers
- F. Press releases
- G. Daily announcements
- H. Monitors
- I. Pay check stuffers
 - a. English language
 - b. Spanish language
- 4. How much are each of the mechanisms in item #3 used (A-I)? There should be a scale provided ranging between none to highly used for each of these.
- 5. Target audience and relative numbers accessing each item of #3 (A-I).
- 6. Name of responsible person for each communiqué vehicle in item #3 (A-I)
- 7. How does each component communicate in the other direction and how comfortable do the employees feel in doing so? Give a range.
 - A. Face-to-face
 - B. Telephone
 - C. E-mail
 - D. Website
 - E. Other
- 8. Numbers for faculty, staff, students at each component.

The survey is to be sent to each component EAC representative and alternate by November 15th and must be completed by December 07th in order to prepare data for the presentation to the Board of Regents in February.

Upon further discussion, it was determined that a policy change should be made in order to give all employees the ability to access their e-mail during working hours, not before or after. This is a long-term goal of the Communications Committee.

Communication Among Ourselves

Different mechanisms were discussed for communicating when not meeting face-to-face. It was decided chat software or Net Meeting would serve our purposes best.

Meeting adjourned at 03:47 p.m.

Recorder: Becky Hansen

U. T. System Employee Advisory Council Benefits Committee Report

October 25, 2001

The Benefits Committee met and was happy that all members were able to attend. We were also very pleased to have Susie Gutierrez and Jim Sarver (our U. T. System Liaisons) there as well. Brett Morris joined us after his group finished their meeting. Together the Liaisons from System are an extremely valuable asset to us.

As discussed at the previous meeting, Terri passed out the Component Benefit Summary. There was discussion regarding the data still needed on the spreadsheet and possible further clarification needed. After this discussion, the committee agreed to table the work on this spreadsheet (at least temporarily) to focus on preparing our portion of the report to be presented to the Board of Regents.

The committee concurred that there would not be enough time to prepare a quality proposal given the deadline involved. Therefore we will present a detailed report explaining the status of the committee and breakdown of the issues we plan to address. We discussed the items previously identified at the last meeting and began to prioritize

them for our report. During our discussion we seemed to return repeatedly to retirement benefits and the consensus that these benefits could have a definite impact on recruitment and retention of quality employees. As a result, we agreed unanimously that this should be the focus of our first proposal to the Board of Regents. In our report we will include our plans to begin our research and draft a proposal for presentation early next year. Specifically, we plan to target two issues relating to retirement benefits. First we will address sick leave credit toward retirement through trade out as opposed to buy out. Second we propose to investigate increasing the multiplier as well as the percentage of state matching contributions in TRS and ORP. Through discussion with Jim Sarver, we found that an increase in the state matching contribution would raise the pool of funds used to increase the multiplier. In the process of preparing this proposal we will monitor ERS and whether they plan to request an increase in the multiplier as well. It was agreed that Terri would draft our report and provide the Benefits Committee with a copy for comments and editing by November 9. This way we can have the final draft ready for the Executive Committee by their December 1 deadline.

The committee then began to formulate the plan for preparation of our proposal. Terri presented a list of key factors for developing a proposal, which Lorraine Etkin shared with the Executive Committee earlier. We divided the committee into two groups, one to address each of the issues. In researching the sick leave credit issue the sub-committee will review the House Bill presented to the Legislature this past year that did not pass. They will also look into detailing problems with the current sick leave buy back processes including the obvious inability to document requirements and the excessive cost of this buy back to employees, giving examples. The subcommittee working toward the increase in state matching contributions to TRS/ORP will begin their research with the House Bill that passed giving us the 2.3 multiplier this year. Susie Gutierrez agreed to help us acquire essential data to get the ball rolling. The committee agreed on a status report date of December 3. We will arrange either a conference call, chat board (if that option is available) or possibly see if we can get time on the video conferencing schedule.

U. T. System Employee Advisory Council Compensation Committee

October 25, 2001

Present: Paula Berkley
Teri Brooks
Linda Cox
Douglas Ferrier
Kimberly Hagara
Kevin Hawbaker
Shirley Zwinggi

Not Present: Minnie Castillo

System Liaisons: Bunny Davis
Dan Stewart

The Compensation Committee meeting began by discussing the sub-committee reports. Each sub-committee reported the following findings:

Job Family Study - Kimberly

Proposal - To have in place at each component a "Classified Compensation Committee" whose focus would be to review and evaluate A&P and Classified positions. The committee could review salary policies, evaluate current classification systems, review competitive salary data, review recommendations from Human Resources concerning evaluation of new and existing jobs and ensure compensation and classification policies for non-faculty are understood.

Action Item - Request each component submit their current program for reviewing and evaluating A&P and Classified positions.

Creative Compensation - Kevin Hawbaker and Shirley Zwinggi

Goals - Research various forms of compensation including but not limited to COLA, Merit Increases, Incentive Pay, Lump Sum Increases and other forms of compensation. A survey was sent from U. T. System Office requesting information from the components concerning merit policies. The survey results were discussed later in the meeting.

Retention of Employees - Teri Brooks and Paula Berkley

Presented an extremely comprehensive listing of each component efforts in retaining employees. The information was gathered by telephone interviews with Human Resources professionals. The committee discussed the various methods some components used to retain employees such as market based salary programs, accessibility to athletic and cultural programs, exit interviews, flexible schedules, after hours exercise, craft and photography programs, paid parking, paid job referrals, tuition assistance, follow up program for new hires, counter offer for critical positions, employees receive 2 afternoons off a month, annual picnic or barbecue and staff scholarships.

Competitive Recruitment - Linda Cox and Douglas Ferrier

Review of negative and positive factors effecting competitive recruitment. Negative factors include job search takes too long. There is a long time from when an applicant applies and is finally hired. If a search committee is used to recruit and hire for a vacant position it only lengthens the time. Thus, good viable candidates are lost because of the lengthy recruitment process. Lack of consistency between job descriptions and salary ranges within U. T. System. Positive factors include excellent benefits package and job stability.

Bunny Davis distributed the survey results and different component's merit policies. In summary the components merit plans were similar with certain regards such as length of service, performance related and budget driven. Several of the components plan to institute the new lump sum non-recurring merit increases. A smaller number of components offer an incentive plan for staff.

Discussion continued about what could be done with this vast amount of information gathered from the sub-committees. A major concern was not wanting to recommend a mandate to the components concerning merits and total compensation. Each component is different due to funding issues, demographics, employee recruitment, and retention problems. Not all components will benefit and thrive on the same recommendations. Decision was made to develop a "Best Practice" document for Employee's Total Compensation. The committee felt the best way to gather this information was to ask the components questions concerning total compensation and then compile a Best Practice document from the information. This information would be made available to the component Presidents, Business Officers, Human Resources Management and other appropriate individuals. The goal would be for the Compensation Committee to annually update this document and U. T. System Compensation Office is the repository of the information. The information would be available electronically and hard copy. Listed below are general topics we would like to receive input from the components:

1. Do you complete job family survey? If so, do you have a regular schedule?
2. Do you have a program in place to follow up with new employees at regularly scheduled time intervals? If so, please describe the program.
3. Do you conduct exit interviews? If so, how is the information from the interviews utilized?
4. Do you have a Wellness Program and EAP? If so, what services are included?
5. Do you have an Employee Awards and Recognition Program? If so, please describe the details of the program.
6. What programs or efforts does your component do to foster component spirit and pride?
7. What efforts do you do to enhance your component's image to employees and applicants that your component is a great place to work?
8. Does new employee orientation and subsequent training explain the component's business, mission and goals?
9. What positions do you use a search committee to fill vacancies?
10. What is the amount of time between posting a classified position and hiring?
11. Does your component offer tuition assistance and/or fee waiver? If so, please describe the program, is it for on and off campus classes, is there a limit on the number of hours, do the classes have to be job related?

The Committee agreed on the following action items and the meeting was adjourned.

ACTION ITEMS:

Draft survey for Compensation Committee and Bunny Davis to review - Committee Members

Distribute survey after U. T. System approval - Bunny Davis
Compile survey results for March 2002 EAC Meeting - Committee Members
Draft report for Board of Regents meeting and send to Compensation Committee and Bunny Davis for review - Shirley Zwinggi
Send final report for Board of Regents meeting to Lorraine Etkin by 12/1/01 deadline - Shirley Zwinggi

U. T. System Employee Advisory Council Policy Committee

October 25, 2001

We re-evaluated our role as researchers of issues and want to remind all of you that we are here to help with your issues. We also discussed de-regulation and how we might expand on the issues. We looked at polling components for topics that may be relevant and we are asking this body for any topics that are relevant.

We discussed areas that we might research, these were: Merit, Probationary Period and Longevity Pay.

Brett Morris assures us that we have a group of attorneys that will help us in research efforts. Give us a call, e-mail or whatever if you need our assistance.

Submitted by Robert L. Vasquez, Chair Policy Committee

[BACK TO TOP](#)
[EAC HOME](#)