




for your

SPRING 2020

BENEFIT

NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT
YOUR UNIVERSITY BENEFITS

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, 

IN THIS ISSUE:

UTHSC DIVERSITY
CONFERENCE

THE DIVINE NINE
AT UT MARTIN

MOC FORWARD
AT UTC

UTK BUILDS CULTURE
OF BELONGING



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
SYSTEM

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

welcome



BRIAN DICKENS,
Chief Human Resources Officer

DEAR UT SYSTEM EMPLOYEES

As you peruse this edition of “For Your Benefit” publication, look for new innovative and exciting diversity and inclusion initiatives from us as we spotlight our human resource officers and optimistically anticipate a bright future ahead.

It has been nearly five months since I joined the team in January 2020. This time has been both exciting and tumultuous with the arrival of all things COVID-19. This global pandemic has truly tested our endurance as a UT System, and I am happy to report a passing grade for our ability to pull together and navigate these uncharted waters as a leadership team across the UT System.

My career spans more than 30 years in higher education and human resources with experiences in both public and private, mid-to-large, minority-serving to predominantly majority institutions. As a servant leader having worked

in large metropolitan to small rural communities, my family and I have found the Knoxville area and surrounding communities to be a perfect mix for us with the return to the southern hospitality and charm that we have enjoyed immensely.

As the new chief human resource officer for the UT System, I have joined a fantastic working environment with great people and a collaborative energetic leadership collective poised to lead the UT System through the “Greatest Decade in the History of UT” as President Randy Boyd has called us to create. UT System human resources is excited about the journey ahead with the reaffirmed partnership

and collaboration with our fellow human resources officers and teams. We ultimately affect the lived experiences for all of our more than 12,500 employees across the System at our various campuses, centers and institutes. We are charged with making UT the employer of choice for all Tennesseans and intend to do so.

As you peruse this edition of the “For Your Benefit” publication, look for new innovative and exciting diversity and inclusion initiatives from us as we spotlight our human resources officers and optimistically anticipate a bright future ahead. I look forward to the journey.

- *Brian Dickens*

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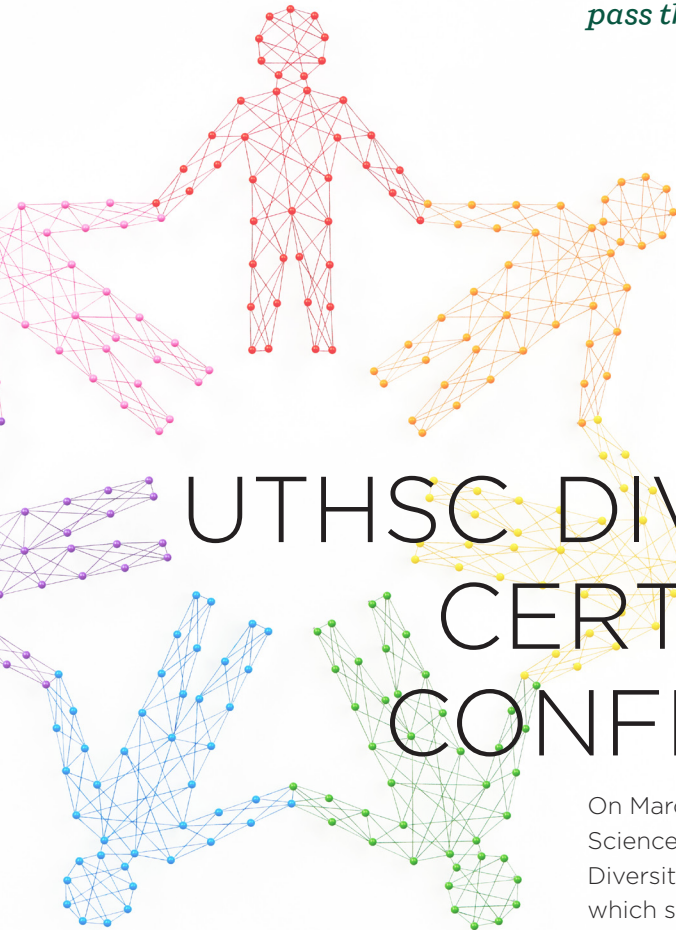
Design: Donna Wilson McClure

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.



OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

To earn this diversity certificate, participants have to attend and participate in the core courses and electives offered, the lunch panel discussion, and take and pass the final exam.



UTHSC DIVERSITY CERTIFICATE CONFERENCE

On March 9 and 10, the UT Health Science Center hosted its second Diversity Certificate Conference, which seeks to foster and sustain the diversity of its faculty, staff, students and administration through recruitment, development, support and mentorship of those groups within the entire institution.

This conference also offers an opportunity for participants to gain knowledge and understanding of current industry “best practices” in regard to diversity and inclusion that they can then implement and share.

The conference includes six core courses and three electives. The core courses included Diversity and



Inclusion Literacy, Management Supervision: What’s Law Got to Do with It?, Conflict Resolution, Practicing Cultural Humility and more. The electives were offered simultaneously and were as follows:

- 1. *Star Power: Power, Leadership and Diversity***
- 2. *Drop by Drop: Subtle Discrimination***
- 3. *Emotional Intelligence: Emotional IQ and You***
- 4. *Complaints: Informal and Formal***
- 5. *Generational Diversity***
- 6. *Self-Awareness: Your Johari Window at Work***
- 7. *Sexual Harassment in the #MeToo Era***




- 8. *Avoiding Stereotypes in the Workplace*
- 9. *Safe Zones and LGBTQ*
- 10. *Language Access to Healthcare: The Importance of Linguistic Competence*
- 11. *The ABCs of Recruiting and Managing a Diverse Workforce*

Participants also had the opportunity to attend a lunch panel discussion titled “Women in IT” featuring women information technology leaders from across the System.

Participants at this year’s conference included UTHSC faculty and staff, as well as faculty and staff from UT

Knoxville, UT Martin and UT Institute for Public Service. The conference also included participants from Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital and the Salvation Army, both located in Memphis.

To earn this diversity certificate, participants have to attend and participate in the core courses and electives offered, the lunch panel discussion, and take and pass the final exam. Those that passed the exam with a 75 percent or higher will receive a diversity certificate signed by UTHSC Chancellor Steve Schwab and Michael Alston, assistant vice chancellor for equity and diversity and chief diversity officer. 

FROM THE COVER:

At the second Diversity Certificate Conference, participants included faculty and staff from UTHSC, UT Knoxville, UT Martin and the UT Institute for Public Service.



The Divine Nine legacy at UT Martin dates back to 1970 and has grown in support over the decades.



UT MARTIN DIVERSITY GROUP: Pictured are (l-r) Gerrard Cox, Alpha Phi Alpha; Kyra Jade Turner, Alpha Kappa Alpha; Kevin Laird, Kappa Alpha Psi / NPHC president; Dr. Keith Carver, chancellor; Dr. Andy Lewter, vice chancellor of Student Affairs; Jamaal Roman Carter, Omega Psi Phi; A'Bria Hodge, Delta Sigma Theta; James Fogg, Phi Beta Sigma; Kimani Subber, Zeta Phi Beta; Amber Staten, Sigma Gamma Rho; and Keley Johnson, Iota Phi Theta.

UNITY CIRCLE DEDICATED IN HONOR OF DIVINE NINE



Unity Circle was first dedicated Sept. 15, 2011, when UT Martin joined the University of Tennessee System in observing the 50th anniversary of African American students enrolling in the university.

by Sarah Knapp

MARTIN - Traditionally African American fraternities and sororities have made notable contributions to UT Martin student life. These organizations, known as the Divine Nine, were honored during 2019 Homecoming with the dedication of the National Pan-Hellenic Council Greek Garden at Unity Circle. The Unity Circle features nine plaques in honor of each fraternity and sorority, all of which are represented at UT Martin.

Unity Circle was first dedicated Sept. 15, 2011, when UT Martin joined the University of Tennessee System in observing the 50th anniversary of African American students enrolling in the university. The Greek Garden at Unity Circle is located on the main campus between Clement

Hall and the Andy Holt Humanities Building.

The memorial celebrates diversity and inclusion on campus and serves as a monument for the impact African American students have made on the university.

“Black Greek-letter organizations have been a pivotal part of the African-American culture since the early part of the 20th Century,” said Anthony Prewitt, assistant director for multicultural affairs and adviser to the fraternities and sororities. “These organizations have been essential resources for support, service and educational advancement, and the strengthening of social bonds among black students,

entrepreneurs and professionals, especially when the organizations expanded into majority-white institutions of higher learning.”

The Divine Nine legacy at UT Martin dates back to 1970 and has grown in support over the decades.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations represented at UT Martin are Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, 1975, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, 1971, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, 1971, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, 1973, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, 1970, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, 1979, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, 1978, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, 1986, and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, 2010. **ur**

NEW PROGRAMS EQUIP UNIVERSITY LEADERS TO BUILD CULTURE OF BELONGING



The first new program, the Inclusive Leadership Academy, seeks to embody UT's mission, vision and values while reinforcing the leadership behaviors that are essential for advancing diversity and inclusion.



TYVI SMALL
vice chancellor of diversity
and engagement



MARY LUCAL
associate vice chancellor for
human resources

by Tyra Haag

For the past eight months, the UT Knoxville's Human Resources, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Engagement, has conducted two new diversity programs for leaders, both employing a new assessment tool.

"We want to equip the university's leaders—both existing and developing—with the competencies and thoughtfulness to build an atmosphere of respect and belonging across campus," said Tyvi Small, vice chancellor of diversity and engagement. "The new Intercultural Development Inventory assessment tool contributes to the depth of these new initiatives."

Mary Lucal, associate vice chancellor for human resources, said, "We heard loud and clear that the campus wanted more leadership development and

diversity education. These programs contribute to serving that need and to supporting inclusive leadership on campus."

The first new program, the Inclusive Leadership Academy, seeks to embody UT's mission, vision and values while reinforcing the leadership behaviors that are essential for advancing diversity and inclusion.

Academy workshops—six two-hour courses during a semester—provide thoughtful and intentional learning experiences designed to equip leaders with the content knowledge, leadership behaviors and support to effectively lead a diverse workforce and create a culture of inclusion. HR began offering the program in fall 2019.

The academy uses the Intercultural Development Inventory tool to assess



participants' existing intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities, a critical skill to managers in a complex and diverse institution such as a university.

The assessment tool helps to ensure that the cohort sessions are adapted to meet participating group's competency level. The academy includes readings, video reviews, reflection assignments and panels. Participants are expected to make a commitment to attend all sessions and complete all work.

UConnecT is a yearlong immersive inclusive leadership and professional development program for highly motivated nonexempt staff. Selected

through a cohort application process, the group embarks on a carefully constructed learning experience. With the participation of senior leadership, attendees learn about the complexity of higher education structures and practical leadership growth strategies during monthly meetings.

The 20-member cohort represents a wide variety of departments and roles. Each member organizes and undertakes a leadership role in a project within his or her department or unit to positively impact their area's work.

The first UConnecT cohort will conclude in May, with a new group set to begin the program in August.



UT KNOXVILLE DIVERSITY GROUP: Seated left to right: Thura Mack, Lauren Wood, Andrea Joseph, JaNay Turner, Jada Russell. Standing left to right: Izetta Slade, Peter Fernandez, Javiette Samuel, Lisa Muller, Linda Smith, Sharon Couch, Nick Meanza, Brad Morgan, Alica Shamblin, Kristin Tocci, Jeannie Jones Tennant, Will Ploskonka. Not pictured: Caroline Wienhold, Jamie Baalis Coble, Demetria Mells, Melissa Brown



**UT CHATTANOOGA
DIVERSITY GROUP:**

Panelists Nicole Brown (UTC), Dionne Jennings (Bessie Smith Cultural Center, Chattanooga), Stacy Lightfoot (Public Education Foundation, Chattanooga) and Patrick Miles (La Paz, Chattanooga) discuss bridging partnerships with the Chattanooga community at a Moc Forward break-out session.

MOC FORWARD AT UTC

by Sarah Joyner

Uncomfortable conversations. Vulnerability. Honesty. Open minds. That is the recipe for Moving Our Campus (MOC) Forward at UTC.

Every October, UTC faculty and staff spend a day engaging through workshops, presentations and discussions focused on diversity and inclusion. Launched in 2017, the event enables the UTC community to understand more fully the diversity around them and to take advantage of it for the benefit of the campus and surrounding communities.

Last year's theme was "Intersections on the Path to Inclusion." The event had 14 breakout sessions led by guest speakers as well as UTC faculty and staff. The daylong event featured a live courtroom drama in which the audience was the jury titled "The Defamation Experience."

Past topics range from talking about race in the classroom, working better with international students, interfaith panels, mindfulness, Chattanooga's historical landscape, diversity lessons from line dancing and more.

Past topics range from talking about race in the classroom, working better with international students, interfaith panels, mindfulness, Chattanooga's historical landscape, diversity lessons from line dancing and more.

Visit utc.edu/moc-forward to learn more. 

IPS EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN DIVERSITY WORKSHOP



by Susan Robertson

In late 2019, a select group of Institute for Public Service employees, as well as employees from UT Knoxville human resources and Office of Diversity and Engagement, UT Health Science Center Office of Equity and Diversity, and the UT Institute of Agriculture, participated in the Opening Doors diversity workshop.

Opening Doors consists of a three-day retreat that focuses on creating a climate for constructive change on diversity for individuals and organizations. Participants examine the cycles of oppression, domination and partnership. They are able to share their diverse life experiences in the confidential environment.

Opening Doors consists of a three-day retreat that focuses on creating a climate for constructive change on diversity for individuals and organizations.

Through the training, participants: increase their understanding of diversity by identifying and learning more about their identity groups and by identifying strategies for facilitating change at their organizations.

IPS first had a group of employees participate in an Opening Doors workshop in 2015.

The institute also held its 2019 annual conference in Memphis for the first time. It's the only time of the year where all 165 employees meet in the same location. During the three-day conference, employees toured the National Civil Rights Museum and heard from Michael Cody, who served as attorney for a Memphis firm retained by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights movement. **UT**



UT INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE DIVERSITY GROUP: Participants of the Opening Doors diversity workshop visit National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.



UT EXTENSION COMING TOGETHER FOR RACIAL UNDERSTANDING TRAINING

“Coming Together for Racial Understanding” is a national curriculum that was designed to equip Extension employees to help their communities engage in civil dialogues around racial issues. UT Extension sent staff to the national training and decided to utilize this new information to focus internally on extension employees, provide professional development that would foster higher levels of cultural competency and build capacity for engaging in dialogue around issues of diversity.

UT and Tennessee State University Extension staff then created a two-day pilot workshop adapted from the national curriculum. The workshop was held in Murfreesboro in December 2019.

This training program was designed to assist Extension employees with developing a recognition and understanding of issues related to racism and bias with the intent of increasing the capacity of Tennessee Extension to tackle difficult issues related to diversity. The content focused on increasing knowledge around systemic racism and oppression, examining how experience and bias shape engagement and learning a common language that can be used throughout the organization to increase the comfort level for cross-cultural dialogue.

Of the pilot participants, 100 percent indicated that they increased their comfort with conversations across racial differences with diverse audiences and 100 percent of participants also indicated that they grew in their understanding of cultural competency. Participants commented that the program was thought provoking, helped to start conversations about cultural competency, invited much needed conversations that allowed shared perspectives and led to personal re-evaluation of self as a result of the training.

UT and TSU Extension staff will use feedback from the pilot workshop to refine and offer a broader training to employees on an ongoing basis starting in 2020. 





Participants commented that the program was thought provoking, help to start conversations about cultural competency, invited much needed conversations that allowed shared perspectives and led to personal re-evaluation of self as a result of the training.

UT INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE DIVERSITY GROUP: Extension staff attend pilot workshop adapted from “Coming Together for Racial Understanding” in December 2019.



CHANDRA ALSTON

Chandra Alston began working for UTHSC in 1999 as the computer trainer in Information Technology Services. She then moved to the role of BlackBoard administrator. She left UTHSC for one year and returned as

the campus training administrator. Other roles Alston has held on campus are team leader for benefits, interim assistant director of HR and assistant dean of finance and administration for the College of Allied Health and College of Nursing.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

My favorite part about working for UT is the relationships that I've established with our employees. They are incredible, and I enjoy being able to work alongside them.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

I hope the HR industry will encourage practitioners to maintain and strengthen our relationship as a strategic partner in developing employees and solving organizational problems.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy accomplishing things - whether it's organizing things, reading something practical or cleaning out my email. It makes me feel good to make progress!

What is an interesting fact about you?

I earned a second-degree green belt in Shotokan Karate. I participated when my kids took a karate class. I joined for fun and exercise and was proud I achieved that status!

What's your favorite line from a movie?

"Get busy living or get busy dying." - Andy Dufrane, Shawshank Redemption

What food can you not resist?

Carrot cake from FROST Bakery in Memphis.



CAROL HOUSER

Carol Houser has worked for UT for 19 years. She served as an office manager for a law firm two years prior to beginning as an administrative assistant for an Alzheimer's research lab at UT Medical Center. Houser then moved to

a business position, which included some HR work, and gradually progressed to her current position.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

The people I meet and work with are my favorite part. I believe things we accomplish are greater because of all the different perspectives at the table.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

I am hopeful that HR continues to grow as a strategic partner. It isn't all about transactions and paperwork. HR contributions can make UT a great place to work and impact the lives of students and beyond.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy reading and working in my flower beds. I love to create - painting, sewing and decorating cakes.

What is a fun fact about you?

Growing up, I worked to pick apples, plant, weed and harvest the garden as well as tobacco fields. We raised pigs and had cows through the local 4H program. We made butter as well as cheese. Talk about living off the land and life lessons of hard work!

What's your favorite line from a movie?

While not a movie, the PBS series "Downton Abbey" has several quirky lines. One I like is from the matriarch Lady Grantham - "What is a weekend?"

What food can you not resist?

Something salty! Peanuts and popcorn are two of my favorites.



DOUG BOHNER

DOUG BOHNER
*Human Resources Officer
for the Institute of
Agriculture and Director,
Extension Evaluation and
Staff Development*

Doug Bohner started his career in attractions operations at Walt Disney World. After completing his master's in human resources, he served as the HR manager for the Magic Kingdom Park. While at Walt Disney World, Bohner also worked in organization development, HR

compliance and operations integration, leading several projects. Between his time at Walt Disney World and joining UT, Bohner worked in HR at Express Scripts and HomeServe USA.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

My favorite part of working for UT is being part of an organization that does so much good for the state of Tennessee. I enjoy interacting with people who truly believe in the UTIA mission.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

My hope is that HR can continue to modernize processes, spending less time gathering data and more time using it to make better informed decisions about our people and the organization.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy woodworking and home improvement projects.

What is an interesting fact about you?

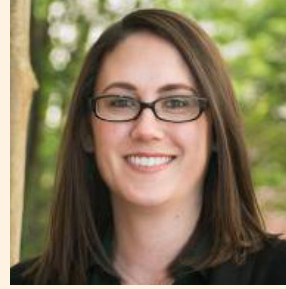
I once smoked a cigar with Milton Berle.

What is your favorite line from a movie?

"Hey, dad, you want to have a catch?" - "Field of Dreams"

What food can you not resist?

Jelly Bellies



LAURE POU

LAURE POU
*Assistant Vice Chancellor for
Human Resources,
UT Chattanooga*

Laure Pou has been with UT Chattanooga since 2008, but she will celebrate 10 years with UTC Human Resources in April 2020. Her initial role on campus was as a talent management specialist, where she led training, development,

recruitment and employment activities. She then transitioned into more of a generalist role for a short period of time before taking on additional leadership responsibilities. Pou was named executive director of the HR office in 2016 before transitioning to her current position in 2018.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

I love the mission and strategic priorities of UT and the impact we have on our communities, state, region and beyond. I cannot imagine being inspired working in another industry to the extent it occurs at UT. The network of talented UT employees across our state is a strength of our System, and it has been an honor to be part of the UT family and contribute to the great work that is carried out each day.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

Keeping up with technology and the needs of our employees and institutions is essential in ensuring continued alignment between HR professionals and those we serve. My hope is that innovation will continue to be a priority as we advance in use of technology and metrics for data-driven decision-making efforts to meet and exceed expectations among all service delivery areas.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I love spending time on the Tennessee waterways and camping with my husband, our young daughter, Bailey, and our two dogs.

What is an interesting fact about you?

I love antiquing and repurposing vintage items. My family has an annual Flea Market Flip competition at our Thanksgiving gathering, and I do pretty well.

What is your favorite line from a movie?

"You're gonna need a bigger boat." -Jaws

What food can you not resist?

Fresh seafood. I wish Chattanooga wasn't so far from the coast.



TOMI ROGERS
*Human Resources and
Operations Manager,
Institute for Public Service*

TOMI ROGERS

Tomi Rogers has been with UT since 2001. She started as an HR intern in the employee and organizational development department before transitioning into a full-time administrative role. She then progressed to an instructional facilitator in the same

office. Rogers has also worked in HR departments at the University of South Carolina, Amazon and TeamHealth before coming back to work for UT.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

There are so many favorable aspects about working for UT, but the one benefit I encourage anyone to explore and take advantage of is the employee tuition fee waiver. The benefit afforded me the opportunity to obtain my master's degree and I am now seeking a doctorate degree.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

My first hope would be equitable and competitive market pay for all employees. We have some phenomenal employees across the UT System, and it would be monumental to ensure people were paid competitively. My second hope is that we can be more proactive and equip our workforce with the knowledge and skills related to human resources such as employee development, conflict management, recognition and awards, etc.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I have a 10-year-old son who plays travel baseball and football. I love attending his games and watching him enjoy the sports. My husband recently started his own food truck business, and it has been fun to join his food-truck life in my free time.

What is an interesting fact about you?

People find it hard to believe that I am an introvert! However, I do love to sing and dance.

What's your favorite line from a movie?

I chose a line that resonates with my doctoral program. It's from Denzel Washington in "Training Day" - "It's not what you know, it's what you can prove."

What food can you not resist?

Forget the desserts! A steak and potato are my weaknesses.



MICHAEL WASHINGTON
*Director of Human
Resources and Payroll,
UT Martin*

MICHAEL WASHINGTON

Michael Washington has served as the director of human resources and payroll at UT Martin since April 2019. He has worked in HR since 1987 and in higher education since 1993.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

I like being part of a system and team of human resources officers that you can reach out to when you have questions or want to bounce an idea off of someone.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

I hope that human resources will increasingly be viewed as a strategic partner and not merely a transaction function.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I love watching a good "whodunnit" - murder mysteries like "Miss Marple," "Vera," "Poirot," "Highlander," "Columbo."

What is an interesting fact about you?

I was a judge for the Miss Memphis pageant in 1993.

What is your favorite line from a movie?

"Fasten your seat belts; it's going to be a bumpy ride." - "All About Eve"

What food can you not resist?

Ice cream!



PATRICIA BURKS-JELKS

PATRICIA BURKS-JELKS
Director of Human Resources, Equity and Diversity and Compliance, UT Space Institute

Patricia Burks-Jelks has been with the University of Tennessee for 32 years. She serves as state chair for the American Council on Education for Women in

Higher Education (WHET). She is a past president for WHET and has been recently reelected as its first vice president to serve again in the coming year. Burks-Jelks is also a past president of the Highland Rim Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management. During her appointment as past president of the Tennessee Chapter of the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, she received the Meritorious Service Award for her leadership and being the Tennessee chapter's first African-American president.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

I am appreciative of UT's support for work/life balance and opportunities extended to employees for individual professional development.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

Like my colleagues have attested, I would like to see organizations continually embrace HR as a strategic business partner, helping shape the mission and vision through workforce development.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy playing the piano, participating in community outreach and travelling with my family.

What is a interesting fact about you?

I get incentivized by "things" being in order - even the fun stuff!

What is your favorite line from a movie?

"Let my people go." - "The Ten Commandments" film

What food can you not resist?

Just about anything with cheese on it.



MARY LUCAL

MARY LUCAL
Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, UT Knoxville

Mary Lucal has worked for UT for 14 years. She began her career as an English as a second language teacher and school director before transitioning to the human resources field. After working as an HR consultant at Harvard

University, she moved to Tennessee in 2006. While working at UT Knoxville, Lucal has spent time in all HR areas but has focused on recruitment, employee relations, employee and leadership development, organizational design and strategy. Lucal is a proponent of employee tuition assistance, having received both her master's and doctorate while using that benefit.

What is your favorite part about working for UT?

We often hear that attending UT as a student is life-changing. Working at UT is also transformative and life-altering for so many people and their families, and I love being a tiny part of that journey.

What are your hopes for the HR industry?

Thanks to the existence of professional organizations, innovative degree and certification programs in the field, and the support of campus leadership, we have moved to a more strategic role in compensation, legislative affairs, leadership development, diversity and inclusion, and organizational development. My hope is that early career individuals continue to seek the great potential in higher education human resources as a professional field and that they work innovatively to support our every-changing institutions.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I am a semi-serious birder. My favorite bird is the Eastern towhee.

What is an interesting fact about you?

Last year I decided I wanted to spend more time camping. So, I bought a tiny pop-up camper and named her Big Blue!

What's your favorite line from a movie?

"This is Ellen Ripley, last survivor of the Nostromo, signing off." - Sigourney Weaver, Alien

What food can you not resist?

Fresh spring rolls with peanut sauce.

MAINTAINING AN ENGAGED WORKFORCE AMID COVID-19 AT THE UT SYSTEM

by Brian Dickens

Higher education institutions have taken unprecedented actions during the last several weeks in response to the COVID-19 crisis. From shifting to online classes to social distancing to remote work and telecommuting, people across the country have followed ever-evolving guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), federal, state and local government. The University of Tennessee System is no exception.

During the past couple of weeks, the University of Tennessee has moved more than 9,300 classes online and migrated more than 90 percent of approximately 12,500 faculty and staff to an alternative work schedule or telecommuting.

At times like this, it is critically important that human resources provides essential services, resources and support to our faculty, staff and students across the state of Tennessee and beyond. This support comes in the form of providing guidance and resources in response to the recently enacted Families First Coronavirus Response Act and providing additional leave provisions and financial support to employees and higher education institutions in response through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act Education Stabilization Fund, which was established in response to unprecedented unemployment rates and claims impacting every industry in the world.

We are providing multiple opportunities for employee engagement and learning through various technological mediums, including our online learning portal through K@TE. As of April 2, 2020, 1,851 employees have registered for online COVID-19 related trainings, and 1,456


have successfully completed those trainings for a 79 percent completion rate. Employees are also supported with resources and strategies to navigate their newly implemented work-from-home model, and we are finding creative ways to encourage an intentional focus on the mental and physical health and wellness of our One UT family through an increased daily and weekly communication and information sharing campaign.



In March we published an online employee resource to help employees manage COVID-19 Related Leave. We have also shared additional benefits-related resources from TN Telehealth and Employee Assistant Program at <https://payroll.tennessee.edu/2020/03/27/covid-19-temporary-benefit-changes/>. Please help us to better serve the needs of our employees by

providing any feedback or additional suggestions that may be useful to you as UT employees at systemhr@tennessee.edu. These resources mentioned above are continually being refreshed and updated daily as more information becomes available.

With an emphasis on appreciative inquiry, President Randy Boyd has instituted a “Lemonade Campaign” in which faculty, staff and students are encouraged to share good news stories of turning lemons into lemonade despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 (<https://www.tennessee.edu/lemonade>). We are excited that the One UT culture is one of optimism and endless possibilities as we imagine the future for the UT System.

For additional support, contact your campus, center or institute HR Office. 



NOT JUST FOR COMPLIANCE TRAINING

By Dylan Siebert



Employee and Organizational Development is proud to offer numerous online professional development opportunities using K@TE, the University of Tennessee Learning Management System. All regular faculty, staff and most temporary employees can enjoy browsing more than 1,200 eLearning courses from content providers such as

Skillsoft and LinkedIn Learning*.

Employee and Organizational Development has curated this content into various certificate programs. Explore topics such as “Diversity in the Workplace,” where you can learn more about unconscious bias, bridging the diversity gap and communication

across cultures. “Admin Skills 101” is a great program for administrative professionals eager to perfect their skills in a variety of areas, including business writing, office and record management, event management and more. Other certificate program titles include “Navigating Change Swiftly,” “Women in Leadership” and much

more. Upon completion, you will receive a signed certificate acknowledging your success.

By taking these courses, you are empowered to invest in your individual growth and professional development as a member of the University of Tennessee community. These completions automatically flow onto your HR128 transcript in IRIS, great for informing your direct supervisor how many hours you’ve dedicated to improving your skillset. The HR128 policy recommends and encourages at least 32 hours of learning and development yearly.

To learn more about Employee and Organizational Development certificate programs, please visit <https://hr.tennessee.edu/training/online-training/certificate-programs/>.

**All campuses/institutes (except UTM, UTC) have access to LinkedIn Learning.*

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM-FREE HOLIDAY

The University of Tennessee participates in the state of Tennessee group health insurance plan. At the Jan. 24 meeting, the State Insurance Committee, which governs the plan, approved a medical premium holiday for May 2020. As a result of this decision, the medical portion of your group insurance premium will not be

deducted from your May paycheck. This will not affect your insurance coverage.

The savings for the month can range from \$60 to \$432 less taxes, depending on the plan. The premium for the life insurance coverage included in the basic health plan and

premiums related to any other optional health plan will be deducted from your paycheck.

We hope you will enjoy this added benefit in your May paycheck!



for your
BENEFIT

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EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, **UT**

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