for your BENEFIT

NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR UNIVERSITY BENEFITS

SPRING 2021

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EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, UT

TOGETHER, FORWARD

HUMAN RESOURCES
DEAR UT SYSTEM EMPLOYEES

Greetings from UT System Human Resources! As we move “Together, Forward” in preparation of our return to workplace beginning June 1, 2021, we are excited to present this issue as an additional resource to help navigate a safe and productive process for returning to our offices and in-person interactions. It is critical that we emphasize our intent to establish a “new normal” inclusive of increased flexible work schedules and alternative work arrangements to support both our employees and the needs of the University of Tennessee.

Employees and supervisors are encouraged to be flexible, accountable and reasonable in making these determinations. System HR will support supervisors and employees with resources for employees to decide on the most effective workplace coverage strategy through a newly established website. We will continue to improve our processes that support our employees during the new normal and are optimistic about the future world of work at UT.

In August 2020, the University of Tennessee System embarked on an effort to identify and develop systemwide shared values. The process included evaluating existing values at each campus, surveying UT employees and conducting more than 13 focus group sessions with representatives including chancellors and cabinets, faculty, staff, students and volunteer leaders across the system. These values will guide the collective, strategic effort to ensure this is the greatest decade in the history of the University. They are also intended to shape culture across the system and build purpose, improve team cohesion and create a sense of shared commitment in the workplace. The values will be incorporated into the performance review process and will be integral to determining the President’s Awards in the future. We will share more about the Be One UT values later in this issue.

Lastly, as we continue our quest towards becoming the “employer of choice” for Tennesseans, as well as establishing this as the greatest decade in the history of UT, we have added Paid Parental Leave (effective July 1, 2021) to our already rich faculty and staff benefit offerings. System HR continues to reimagine itself, and we continue to explore ways to enhance our employee value proposition and improve the overall experience for our workforce across the system. With optimistic anticipation we are excited about our way forward together. I hope you enjoy this issue of For Your Benefit.

—Brian K. Dickens
THE QUARTERLY EXM SURVEY
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Employee Experience Monitor (EXM) survey, distributed quarterly to all regular employees by McLean and Company, plays a vital role in providing regular feedback to UT System Human Resources.

The one-question survey asks, “How likely are you to recommend the University of Tennessee to a qualified friend or family member as a good place to work?”

Administering the survey quarterly enables frequent feedback, allowing for a more agile approach to making adjustments according to feedback. All responses and comments are reported anonymously.

The EXM survey is more important than ever before. As all employees enter this season of unknowns together, the survey feedback provides university leaders and managers with frequent data to best instill a culture of engagement accountability and increase manager effectiveness.

The survey is delivered to all regular employees in March, June, September and December. Each survey remains open until the next is delivered.

Help us, help you—make sure to complete the EXM survey the next time it’s delivered to your inbox.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

During the winter meeting, the UT Board of Trustees unanimously approved the new Paid Parental Leave Policy, which offers full-time employees up to six weeks (240 hours) of paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child, to be used within the first 12 months of the birth or adoption.

Employees will not be required to use any accrued sick or vacation leave. It can also be used concurrently with leave provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act or the Tennessee Parental Leave Act. The benefit begins July 1.

“We are pleased to offer this new and exciting benefit to all employees,” said Brian Dickens, chief human resources officer. “I am hopeful this will continue to be a substantial benefit to working in the University of Tennessee System.”

UT SYSTEM LAUNCHES RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE TOOLKIT

In anticipation of employees returning to the workplace on June 1, UT System Human Resources created a Return to the Workplace Toolkit. Aimed to assist in the transition back to the office, the toolkit offers helpful resources for both managers and employees.

As University of Tennessee System administration begins reintegrating its workforce to on-site activities, strategic action plans will be imperative. The toolkit shares the best practices for safely welcoming faculty and staff back to the office, mindful approaches for returning to the office and resources for in-person and work-from-home planning and tracking.

Trainings, resources and the complete toolkit are available at: hr.tennessee.edu/return-to-the-workplace/
UT Chattanooga Provides Ongoing Mental Health Resources for Employees

CHATTANOOGA – The UT Chattanooga Human Resources department recognizes the need for more online resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of all University employees. Since March 2020, the department has hosted more than 20 webinars and online sessions for staff and managers, providing support and highlighting several useful tools focused on recognizing and coping with stress and anxiety.

Call-in sessions also are available for employees who don’t have the ability to easily access a computer and join a webinar. Employees can join by phone to learn about coping with stress and anxiety. After the stress and anxiety session, employees have a safe space to talk with a provider individually, with a 15-minute private conversation.

Opportunities like these will continue each month as UT Chattanooga moves forward together. Sessions will cover opportunities and resources available through the Employee Assistance Program and Optum, with a focus on health and wellbeing. Recordings of past events are located online at https://kate.tennessee.edu/, and new opportunities will be announced through email.

“2020 has changed and challenged us all,” said Nicholle Harrison, talent management specialist. “We have worried about loved ones, had our work-life balance strained and learned just how real Zoom fatigue is. Stress has reached us all in new and unprecedented ways and we are hoping that by continuing to offer these sessions, we can help our employees process their current situation and find ways to take care of their personal wellbeing as we move into the next normal.”

UT Chattanooga offers a safe, in-person class environment.

Call-in sessions also are available for employees who don’t have the ability to easily access a computer and join a webinar.
Thanks to an on-campus lab, intentionally established to analyze COVID-19 test samples, UTHSC has been able to quickly analyze and receive results for the campus, as well as its community partners.

MEMPHIS - The UT Health Science Center has stood at the forefront of the local and state response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to keep the public safe. In many ways, the university’s efforts to keep the campus community safe have mirrored the local and state response.

When UTHSC led the establishment of Memphis’ first drive-through testing site at the Mid-South Fairgrounds in partnership with University Clinical Health and city leadership in March 2020, a campus-only COVID-19 testing site soon followed at the Student-Alumni Center, where asymptomatic faculty, staff and students could be tested without appointment necessary.

Thanks to an on-campus lab, intentionally established to analyze COVID-19 test samples, UTHSC has been able to quickly analyze and receive results for the campus, as well as its community partners. The on-campus testing site remains open and continued COVID-19 testing is available to the campus community.

In December, UTHSC began administering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine by appointment through University Health Services to personnel who provide inpatient services. UTHSC received 2,900 doses of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine and the UTHSC COVID-19 Vaccine Team—comprised of faculty, staff and students trained in administering vaccines—assisted in the effort.

Continued alternate work schedules and telecommuting for employees continued in 2021 as appropriate. To support employees’ mental and behavioral health, UTHSC will continue to offer psychiatric and counseling services and resources for employees through University Health Services, which employs a full-time counseling psychologist. Physical health also continues to be a focus. Employees can take advantage of ongoing free access to campus recreation offerings, as well as virtual sessions including yoga, Pilates and Zumba.

Additionally, human resources, the Employee Assistance Program and the Office of Equity and Diversity will host virtual engagement sessions to assist employees and supervisors with ongoing challenges.
UT MARTIN PROMOTES PHYSICAL, MENTAL WELLBEING FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

MARTIN - When COVID-19 began last year, the world was unsure of the physical health effects the virus would have on those who contracted it. Now a year into the “new normal,” everyone, regardless of if they have been infected or not, has been affected by COVID-19 in some way. In order to help combat the negative, lasting effects of the pandemic, UT Martin is providing mental health wellness and awareness programs to its employees to ensure their safety and wellbeing even after the pandemic subsides.

The UT Martin Office of Human Resources has partnered with numerous organizations on campus, including the UT Martin Healthy Hawks and the Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs, to offer ongoing learning opportunities and engagement activities to promote physical and mental wellness from a holistic perspective. Through virtual check-ins for teleworking employees and educational programs hosted via Zoom, UT Martin is working to provide its faculty and staff with resources to help them as needed during and after the pandemic.

Recently, the Offices of Multicultural Affairs and Human Resources, along with Mark McCloud, chief diversity and inclusion officer, hosted a virtual “burnout bootcamp” for faculty and staff to share a wellness expert’s tips and tricks for avoiding burnout during the pandemic.

“Burnout and stress are real, and oftentimes coupled with the pressures of work and adjustment due to the pandemic, it is important that we prioritize our mental health and self-care. Oftentimes as faculty and staff, we put ourselves on the backburner, so this was an opportunity to put ourselves first and learn tools and tips to better care for our physical and mental state,” said Anthony Prewitt, co-interim director of student life and multicultural affairs. “I hope that faculty and staff prioritize their own mental health and are able to put into practice the tools and activities in order to prevent burnout and work-related stress.”

As the university continues to adjust to the needs of the students, faculty and staff amid the pandemic, these resourceful programs, such as the burnout bootcamp, will be offered even after the pandemic ends to provide support to the university community.

For more information about UT Martin’s mental wellness programs, visit http://utm.edu/humanresources.

“Burnout and stress are real, and oftentimes coupled with the pressures of work and adjustment due to the pandemic, it is important that we prioritize our mental health and self-care.”

ANTHONY PREWITT, CO-INTERIM DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
The University urges all employees to check their health daily, stay home when sick and follow current health and safety guidelines. Doing so helps keep our campus open and safe.

KNOXVILLE – At UT Knoxville, one of our missions is to educate students. Our employees are a critical part of that effort. For the past year, we have all navigated this pandemic together, and we will continue to move forward together. The university is working to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to the campus community in an effort to slow the spread of the virus. Faculty and staff in eligible phases outlined by the Tennessee Department of Health can make an appointment for vaccination at the Student Health Center. Eligible employees can also sign up to be vaccinated at a public clinic hosted by the University. The University will offer vaccine appointments as supply allows. Read more about making a vaccine appointment at https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/vaccine/.

The number of COVID-19 cases among UT employees remains low. The University works to limit the potential for workplace transmission through university-provided PPE, hand sanitizer stations and other preventive efforts. The University urges all employees to check their health daily, stay home when sick and follow current health and safety guidelines. Doing so helps keep our campus open and safe.

The uncertainty of the pandemic has caused added stress for many. Moving forward can also bring challenges that can impact our mental health. The university is committed to offering resources for faculty and staff to cope with the ongoing changes. Help is available 24/7 for employees in distress. The university also offers wellness services, emotional support resources and other mental health benefits. A full list of resources is available on the UT COVID-19 website: https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/guides/coping-and-support.

The university appreciates all employees and their ongoing efforts to keep our campus community safe. Their dedication gives us hope for the future and the momentum to move forward in what has been a trying time for us all.
IPS Launches Permanent Remote Work Arrangement

by Susan Robertson, IPS

Shortly before COVID-19 turned the world upside down and changed the way many do business, the Institute for Public Service partnered with Baskin Strategies to study workforce flexibility across the institute.

IPS initiated the study following employee engagement feedback asking for remote work arrangements to eliminate long commutes and avoid costly and limited parking in Nashville.

Baskin Strategies, a Nashville-based workspace strategies consulting firm, began its Employee Flexibility Analysis in late March 2020 by looking at all IPS office space and interviewing employees across the state. Baskin identified employee job functions, work patterns and types of workspaces necessary and analyzed square footage of IPS’s current office spaces.

We had employees working remotely during the spring, but undertaking and continuing this study allows us to implement a permanent work from home arrangement for our employees.

- IPS Vice President Herb Byrd III

IPS conducted a square footage study to determine how much workspace will actually be necessary once employees start to work remotely, giving IPS the chance to reduce costs.

“We had employees working remotely during the spring, but undertaking and continuing this study allows us to implement a permanent work from home arrangement for our employees,” said IPS Vice President Herb Byrd. “This arrangement is something our employees requested, and we have the technology to allow them to succeed remotely and continue our mission to serve business and government and improve the lives of Tennesseans.”

Baskin Strategies recommended that certain jobs be in the office five days a week; some positions would be hybrid between in the office three days a week and working from home two days a week; others, such as field consultants, are primarily mobile with touch down spaces in IPS offices across the state; and others can work from home up to three days a week.

IPS rolled out a pilot alternative work arrangement to its Nashville-based employees in February 2021. After the pilot is complete and all of the arrangements analyzed by agency directors and supervisors, the plan will launch to include all IPS employees adopting the alternative work arrangement.

“Every organization is different and there is never a ‘one-size fits all’ solution. By selecting a group of IPS employees to participate in a pilot, we are able to gain insight into IPS’ overall readiness for implementation and gain feedback directly from employees,” said Reen Baskin, principal and founder of Baskin Strategies. “We incorporate the pilot findings into our methods and practices that will be used for the successful IPS agency-wide launch of AWA.”
Throughout working from home much of the past year, UTIA, its 95 Extension offices and 10 AgResearch Centers across the state have placed high priority on remaining safely connected. Efforts to keep employees informed, engaged and supported have allowed UTIA to move forward together, while still maintaining a strong connection with the millions of Tennesseans impacted by UTIA each year.

With the continuation of Senior Vice President and Senior Vice Chancellor Tim Cross’s Fireside Chats—which began as a weekly way to stay connected in the earliest days of the pandemic—employees have been able to join monthly engaging sessions featuring among others, UT President Randy Boyd, former UT Knoxville Athletic Director Phillip Fulmer, Tennessee Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Lisa Piercey and Deputy State Epidemiologist Dr. Mary-Margaret Fill as guest speakers. UTIA is now organizing a leadership workshop to prepare supervisors for the responsibility of creating a staffing plan and employee work location recommendations for the upcoming return to the workplace.

Digital efforts to remain connected also included the continuation of virtual employee recognition and appreciation, as well as increased offerings of digital physical and mental health resources.

“I’m very proud of the commitment demonstrated by the UTIA community over the past year as our faculty and staff strive to maintain continuity of services and programming across that state. As our focus now shifts to returning more of our team members to the physical workplace, I’m really looking forward to seeing others in person again,” UTIA Human Resources Officer Doug Bohner said. “Just like everything else we do, this will be a team effort between our leadership team supporting creative solutions to maintaining the health and safety of our workforce, while each of us do our individual part to protect ourselves and those around us. I encourage everyone to get the COVID vaccine.”
When President Boyd joined UT in 2019, he had a vision to make the next 10 years the greatest decade in the history of the University of Tennessee. To do so, he established strategic plans, goals and values to guide the way. The Be One UT values will unite the aspirations and vision for the greatest decade. Developed to encapsulate what UT is and what it should be, Be One UT will serve as a guide for the way forward.

**Be One UT Values**

- **Bold and impactful:** Serving the state by tackling grand challenges
- **Embrace diversity:** Respecting individual and organizational uniqueness that makes all stronger
- **Optimistic and visionary:** Empowering courageous leadership
- **Nimble and innovative:** Inspiring creative and transformational action
- **Excel in all we do:** Committing to continuous improvement and outstanding performance
- **United and connected:** Collaborating internally and externally for greater collective impact
- **Transparent and trusted:** Fostering integrity through openness, accountability and stewardship

**Why are you excited about the Be One UT values?**

The Be One UT values provide meaningful aspirational targets for all of us, and particularly for those of us who lead a unit and set a tone for a team.

—Jorge Perez, UT System associate vice president for institutional effectiveness

**What do the Be One UT values mean to you in your role as a UT System administration HR staff member?**

The Be One UT Values provide guidance as we energize our partnerships with all campuses and institutes. These values are actionable and positive and are helping us bridge the gaps of learning and development collaboratively and consistently across the UT System and the state.

—Debbie Alley, LMS administrator & eLearning consultant

**UT Launches the Newly Reimagined Presidential Committee, UT IDE**

Moving into a new decade, the University of Tennessee System realizes the importance of being nimble and flexible in order to engage students, faculty and staff in meaningful ways.

On Oct. 23, the UT Board of Trustees reaffirmed the University’s standing diversity statement. This reaffirmation clarifies the intent and opportunity of UT to foster campus communities that are diverse and fully inclusive. Campuses that are enriched by individuals from a variety of backgrounds can create environments that are supportive—where all individuals may flourish academically and professionally.

UT is deeply committed to the work of enhancing inclusion (I), appreciating diversity (D) and providing opportunities for engagement (E) of all members of our community. We are embarking on a positive and productive systemwide journey that will help our campuses, institutes and state move forward together.

To facilitate this movement, UT IDE is a reimagined presidential committee that will guide our direction to operate and manage all efforts involving diversity, inclusion, equity, engagement and belonging.

Through UT IDE, we will create a strategic alliance to help us develop strategic direction, spark robust dialogue and facilitate awareness opportunities.

The overall vision of UT IDE committees is to be an active resource for all efforts involving inclusion, diversity and engagement at the University of Tennessee, which supports and develops world leaders from all backgrounds. In moving forward, we will be transparent in our efforts and will share opportunities for you to be part of this exciting journey.

“One Embrace Diversity’ is an important component of our Be One UT values. As the president of the University of Tennessee System, one of my main goals is to make the university a strong and welcoming community for everyone. What makes a university great are its people—students, faculty, staff—and the opportunities to impact the future. Our experiences and our differences make us stronger together than we could ever be separately. I’m eager to witness the impact UT Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement will have on our System, campuses and state.”

—RANDY BOYD, PRESIDENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM

For more information: [https://tennessee.edu/values/](https://tennessee.edu/values/)

**FOR YOUR BENEFIT**
**ERAB spotlight**

**ANGIE HOLTZCLAW**

Angie Holtzclaw brings 15 years of professional experience to the UT System Communications and Marketing team, with more than 30 of those years at UT. Angie has held multiple titles at UT and has received various recognitions for her dedication to the University, including the UT Foundation Board of Directors Award for exemplary performance and outstanding achievements. Holtzclaw joined communications and marketing in 2019 and brings a unique, loyal and fun-loving personality to the team. Her favorite part about working in this department is the people with whom she gets to work with.

When she is not hard at work, she can be found enjoying the outdoors, riding on the back of a motorcycle, or exploring in her Jeep. Holtzclaw has one daughter, Ashlee, and two dogs, Nugget Roy and Flower.

**TOM ANDERSON**

Tom Anderson is a buyer in the UT Knoxville Facilities Services Central Supply Warehouse. He has been with the University for nearly 20 years, all in central supply. He procures materials and equipment to maintain and support all of the buildings and grounds across the Knoxville campus. He finds great satisfaction in being part of the University community and supporting the education of students.

Anderson has long been an active member of the UTK community, representing constituents on ERC and ERAB for more than 10 years. He is also a founding member of United Campus Workers (CWA Local 3865), Tennessee’s higher education union. He is a member of United Campus Workers (CWA Local 3865), Tennessee’s higher education union. He is also a founding member of United Campus Workers (CWA Local 3865), Tennessee’s higher education union. He is a member of United Campus Workers (CWA Local 3865), Tennessee’s higher education union. He is also a founding member of United Campus Workers (CWA Local 3865), Tennessee’s higher education union.

**RYAN WINTON**

Ryan Winton has been working at the University of Tennessee Space Institute as an IT technologist for two years. Winton graduated from the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in McMinnville, Tennessee. During his time there, he also received a CompTIA A+ certification and CompTIA Network+ certification. Ryan has been married for 10 years and has three children. His hobbies include kayaking, hiking and building computers.

**CATHY JENKINS**

Cathy Jenkins is the graphic designer for UT Libraries and a UT Knoxville alumna. She is passionate about education and making it accessible for all. Jenkins is originally from San Diego, California, and she loves to cook and read sci-fi, fantasy and political commentary. She has a growing collection of cookbooks and puzzles thanks to working from home.

**KATORA JONES**

Katora Jones now serves as an administrative specialist for the West Tennessee Regional Forensic Center (WTRFC), after beginning her career as a receptionist. She manages the out-of-county and state billing, as well as collaborates with the state medical examiner’s office and additional government entities across several counties to ensure efficient operations of the WTRFC.

Jones is a highly approachable individual who has a pleasant attitude and a willingness to make a positive mark. She has a passion for healthcare and plans to pursue her nursing degree this fall. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to inspirational podcasts, reading books that focus on empowerment, viewing educational documentaries and listening to music of all genres.

**DOROTHEA OWENS**

Dorothea Owens brings 20 years of professional experience to the College of Medicine administration team, with four years at UTHSC. Owens has held multiple titles at UTHSC. In her first time she has served on the ERC and the ERAB. Being an ERC and ERAB representative allows her to feel connected and involved with her colleagues.

Jenkins is originally from San Diego, California, and she loves to cook and read sci-fi, fantasy and political commentary. She has a growing collection of cookbooks and puzzles thanks to working from home.

**LEE ANN CRAIG**

Lee Ann Craig joined the UT Foundation team in 2015 as the contracts and purchasing coordinator. As a member of the UTI Business Office, she is responsible for reviewing and processing all Foundation contracts system-wide as well as providing financial and accounting support. Prior to working with the Foundation, she held the position of buyer for a major frozen food manufacturer. Craig’s strong work ethic, time management skills and ability to excel in any collaborative environment makes her a valued team member.

Craig is a UT Knoxville alumna, with a Bachelor of Science in logistics and transportation, now known as supply chain management. Both her children have called UT Knoxville home as well, and they are truly an “All Vol” family.

**CARLA PHILLIPS**

Carla Phillips serves as the administrative specialist for the chief business officer at the UT Institute of Agriculture, where she began working in March 2014. She serves as the point of contact for the online receipting system and serves on various committees giving a voice to non-exempt staff. Prior to joining UTIA, Phillips was employed at Oak Ridge Associated Universities for more than 15 years in the field of supply chain management.

**ERAB spotlight**

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the communications and marketing department, following a time in the peer review department. She holds an Associate of Science in Business Administration from Roane State Community College. Phillips is a native of East Tennessee and has three children with her husband, Junior.

MELITA RECTOR

Melita Rector has served as an accounting specialist in the UTC Office of Budget and Finance since 2018. She began her career at UTC as an administrative specialist for Housing and Residence Life in 2011, before transitioning to the Student Development Office in 2015. Rector has served on several committees while at UTC. She is the chair for the ERC and has served on the committee for eight years. She also serves on the Administrative Task Force, the Athletics Board and Strategic Plan Implementation Committee. Rector has been married to her husband, Jeff, for 38 years, and they have one daughter.

CHRIS SHERBESMAN

Chris Sherbesman has served in many different roles throughout his 14 years of service at UTC. He began as the administrative assistant for Continuing Education, while also pursuing his undergraduate degree at UTC. After working in banking for several years, he returned to UTC as a staff accountant in the Bursar’s Office. In 2012, after receiving his Master of Business Administration, he transitioned to senior accountant for the UC Foundation. In 2015, Sherbesman was promoted to assistant director of the Office of Budget and Finance. Sherbesman now serves in the role of executive director of budget and finance, as well as currently filling the interim vice chancellor of finance and administration role. Sherbesman and his wife Carrie, who serves as the UTC director of orientation, are both proud graduates of UTC. They have three children.

ELISHA HODGE

Elisha Hodge serves as a legal consultant with the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS). Before joining MTAS in October 2014, Hodge served as the open records specialist and the open records counsel for the state of Tennessee from 2007 until 2014. Prior to joining the Comptroller’s Office, Hodge prosecuted cases and served as advisory counsel for the Tennessee Department of Health. Elisha graduated from the University of the South (Sewanee) in 2001 and the University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 2003. Elisha currently serves as a member of the IPS Diversity Committee and as the chair of the Exempt Staff Council for UTK, IPS, UTIA and University Administration. As part of her role as chair, she sits on the UTPD Advisory Council, the Commission for Blacks and the ERAB. Elisha is a 2021 graduate of the Tennessee Certified Public Manager program and is an intercultural development specialist inventory qualified administrator. She also serves as a UT Promise Mentor and a tnAchieves Mentor.