

Minutes of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee
University of Kentucky Board of Trustees
Friday, February 21, 2020

The Human Resources and University Relations Committee of the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees met on Friday, February 21, 2020, in the J. David Rosenberg College of Law courtroom.

A. Meeting Opened

Cammie Grant, Chair of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee, called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.

Chair Grant asked Katie Hardwick to call the roll.

B. Roll Call

The following members of the Committee answered the call of the roll: Cammie DeShields Grant, Cathy A. Black, Lee X. Blonder, Robert Grossman, Michael Hamilton, David Melanson, C. Frank Shoop, Sandra Shuffett, and Bryan Sunderland.

Other Board Members present included: Claude A. "Skip" Berry, Joe R. Bowen, A. C. Donahue, Kimberly McCann, Elizabeth McCoy, Derrick K. Ramsey, Robert Vance, Rachel Watts Webb, and Barbara Young.

C. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Melanson to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2020 Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shuffett. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as written.

D. UK @ Work Engagement Survey

Chair Grant introduced the Vice President for Human Resources Kim Wilson, to provide an update on employee compensation and benefit improvements. Ms. Wilson detailed the four changes including:

- Providing competitive pay by raising the new minimum hourly wage to \$12.50 and increasing the salaries of employees making between \$12.50 and \$14.50 an hour, ensuring the experience of UK's more tenured employees is recognized. These changes will take effect July 1, 2020.
- Also beginning July 1, all new employees will be automatically enrolled in the Matching Retirement Savings Plan. Currently, this is optional for employees under the age of 30. 70% of UK's under-30 employees were already electing to participate.

- Beginning January of 2020, staff employees may use two sick days a year as personal well-being days. These days can be used for any purpose the employee feels promotes their personal well-being, no questions asked. These are not two additional days of sick time, but instead an expanded way employees can utilize their sick time.
- Beginning January 1 of this year, staff employees can use 12 weeks sick time for the birth, adoption, or new foster care of a child. Previously, only the first six or eight weeks could be used as sick time before the employee transitioned to vacation time or into no-pay status.

Ms. Wilson recognized Trustee Dave Melanson and Staff Senate Chair Jon Gent for their involvement with a work group that continues to review Family Leave. The work group is exploring options for employees who desire to take time off to tend to family needs. In addition to Parental Leave, the group is discussing how UK can also support elder care needs.

Chair Grant asked for any questions or comments. Trustee Melanson thanked the President, Eric Monday, Kim Wilson, and her team for taking the time and thoughtful measures regarding these exciting announcements. He stated that he had received lots of positive feedback at the Staff Senate meetings and in his inbox regarding these benefit enhancements.

E. UK Career Center

Chair Grant introduced Employee Engagement and Work-Life Director, Erika Chambers, to present the UK @ Work Survey.

Ms. Chambers provided background and context for the biennial survey, which surveys campus faculty and staff and has been administered since 2005. “In 2015, under the direction and leadership of President Capilouto, we began working with an external firm, Willis Towers Watson, in order to create a more robust survey tool that would also allow us to benchmark against other higher-ed institutions.” Ms. Chambers described the conversations she has had with the deans, vice presidents, and other UK leaders over the past several months after sharing the results that are specific to their college or division. “Conversations are already underway about what action they can take in response.”

Ms. Chambers continued by reporting the 63-item survey which was administered in September 2019. The overall response rate was 59 percent; a slight decline since 2017, but Ms. Chambers noted there was an increase in the number of employees participating. Ms. Chambers reminded the Committee that UK HealthCare employees participate in a separate annual survey in the spring. “Overall, the University has made progress since 2017 and 2015, with most categories showing significant improvements.”

Ms. Chambers highlighted data above University norms including: ‘From what I hear, our benefits are as good as or better than the benefits in similar institutions’. 81

percent of UK's employees agreed or tended to agree with this statement. This score is significantly above the average score of other universities by 19 points (62 percent favorable). Ms. Chambers affirmed this is consistent with the recognition UK has received from the Great Colleges to Work For program. UK's employees perceive their benefits much more favorably than employees in other universities.

Ms. Chambers continued by highlighting the most significant declines. Respondents report that they are experiencing an increased amount of stress and feel the climate at UK increasingly discourages challenging the status quo. "While still very strong scores at 81, 89, and 82 percent favorable, we do see declines in perceptions about benefits, association with UK, and schedule flexibility."

Ms. Chambers expounded on the stress category, "In 2017, 54 percent of employees reported that stress is not impacting their effectiveness at work. In 2019, significantly fewer employees – 48 percent – could say the same. What this tells us, is that our employees are reporting higher levels of stress at work than they did in 2017. We know that stress levels are a national concern and not unique within UK and that many things both personally and professionally can influence one's level of stress. We also know that we have a lot of programs, events, and an employee counseling office in place to support our employee well-being. So, additional conversations are needed – at the University, College, and unit levels – to better understand what is driving this trend and what we can do to see change."

Ms. Chambers shifted from the results of the University overall to faculty and staff scores. Each group separately contributes to the UK overall scores, and progress has been made since 2017.

"For faculty, we can see that almost every category score has improved, several in a significant way since 2017. The one category that did not improve is Stress Balance and Workload – which we see a small decline from 59 to 58 percent favorable. The most significant declines within this category are related to perceptions about stress levels and flexibility in work schedules. The most improved items are increased perceptions concerning leadership, as well as a significant increase in faculty regard for UK and perceptions about pay."

"For staff, we see that every category score has improved or maintained since 2017, and that overall, 2019 scores are strong, with several scores in the 70s or 80s. Similar to the faculty response, staff's confidence in leadership decisions and staff having a high regard for UK has significantly improved since 2017. Staff also report experiencing an increased amount of stress, and not feeling as though they can challenge the status quo. While we see a small, yet significant decline, the scores – at 84 and 90 percent favorable – are still very strong scores overall."

Ms. Chambers discussed how UK employees' perceptions may differ by race and ethnicity. "As we look within each category and across racial and ethnic groups, we see the range between the highest and lowest scores is anywhere from seven to 18

percentage points different. The largest range – at 18 points – is in the leadership category. Although we should keep in mind the difference in sizes, we see that American Indian or Alaskan Native employees report a 57 percent favorable score while Asian employees are significantly above the UK overall score at 75 percent favorable.”

Ms. Chambers noted two new items were added to the race and ethnicity category for the 2019 survey: ‘I can be myself at UK without worrying about how I will be accepted’ and ‘UK provides a working environment that is accepting of differences in personal identity’. She pointed out that they try to avoid modifying the survey from year to year because they want to see trends. However, these were added under President Capilouto’s direction and to further align with University values.

Ms. Chambers pivoted to overall UK scores for each item and noted that each score is above 60 percent. The strongest scores related to a climate that is accepting of differences in personal identity, and leadership recognizing and respecting the value of human differences. “We see some variation in experiences, though, as we look across racial and ethnic groups,” said Ms. Chambers. She reported that the largest range in scores is found in the question: ‘My college/unit/area leadership recognizes and respects the value of human differences.’ “We see White employees report 83 percent favorability for this item while American Indian or Alaskan Native employees are 25 points below at 58 percent favorability.”

Ms. Chambers continued by discussing the smallest range found within the item: ‘I feel a sense of community at UK’. Asian and White employees reported the highest percent favorable at 77 percent, multi-race and Black or African-American employees scores at 64 and 65 percent respectively, which is significantly lower than UK overall. From this slide we can see that across all racial and ethnic groups, Black or African-American employees hold significantly less favorable perceptions on every item within this category. Because of this, we want to better understand what may be driving these perceptions and scores. We asked our vendor to conduct additional analysis to help us think about the key drivers of inclusion for our employees, specifically Black or African-American employees.”

Ms. Chambers explained that the more favorable UK’s Black or African-American employees feel about University culture, the more collaboration is promoted. Additionally, faculty and staff hold UK in high regard the more they perceive that everyone is treated with respect regardless of position, and when their performance is evaluated fairly and colleagues are held accountable. “The more favorable our Black or African- American employees feel about each of these things, the more favorable their scores are within the Diversity and Inclusion category. And, the same also holds true in reverse. Although we have run key driver analyses before, we haven’t had insights like this across race and ethnicity. It’s this level of insight, along with feedback from our employees and the expertise within our Inclusive Excellence Office, that can help us take action where it can have the most impact.”

In closing, Ms. Chambers stated, “At the University-level, our next steps are to further identify the themes and trends we see both within and across our employee groups, and then understand what is most meaningful and actionable to our employees. Our deans and vice president’s will follow a similar process in creating action plans share their results with their faculty and staff.”

Chair Grant opened the floor for questions. Trustee Bowen asked if the slide concerning compensation was valid and if UK’s pay been compared to other institutions. Ms. Chambers clarified that the survey evaluated perceptions, but mentioned that after similar results in 2017, they did a market study to evaluate compensation. The study found that in many cases, UK’s compensation did line up with other universities.

Trustee Blonder asked what initiatives are being undertaken concerning the stress and work load findings. Ms. Chambers detailed multiple programs across the University including: an upcoming Self-Care and Increasing Resiliency Summit in April, which is open to all faculty and staff; a fall event that targets working with students and considers how they can be better supported; and the hiring of two new mental health counselors to increase capacity. Trustee Hamilton asked if there was an effort to distinguish between the LGBTQ community as well as their perception of these questions. Ms. Chambers explained that this was the first time they were able to ask gender identity as well as sexual orientation in this survey. She is working with Dr. Sonja Feist-Price and the Office of Institutional Diversity to analyze those results.

Trustee Shuffett asked if the increased stress scores may be a generational trend since younger participants may feel less stigmatized to discuss this topic than older respondents. Ms. Chambers replied that they found that reported stress was highest in the younger participants. Stress declined as the age ranges increased, illustrating the generational aspects of stress. “This data supports why it is important to analyze the results across demographics and not assume that the experiences are the same for all employees.” Ms. Wilson added, “Stress and burn-out is a national trend and is highly discussed in the Human Resources realm.”

Chair Grant thanked the presenters and asked if there was any further business to come before the Committee; seeing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Trustee Shuffett to adjourn and seconded by Trustee Shoop. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Hardwick