

**The University of Tennessee Space Institute**  
**Employee Relations Committee Meeting**  
**July 20, 2017, 10:00 a.m. CST**  
**Room B112 Classroom**  
**MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Kaycee Edwards, Kathlene Franklin, Terry Garner, Susan Murphy  
**ERC Chairperson:** Patricia Burks-Jelks, **Recorder:** Pam Ledford  
**Special Guest:** Julie King, SGA president

- 1) **2017 UTSI Annual Family Picnic planning “Fall Festival” – Friday, September 22, 2017 (1<sup>st</sup> day of Autumn) - Door prize committee:** Susan Murphy – Julie King – Terry Garner - HR  
*Food & Decorations committee:* Kaycee Edwards – Kathlene Franklin - HR  
*Games committee:* Kaycee Edwards – Julie King  
Whitt’s BBQ has been requested to cater event. SGA is donating \$150 to the picnic. Pontoon boat rides are being planned if payment details can be worked out. A Dessert contest will be held with two chances to win 1) Best Tasting Homemade Dessert & 2) Random Drawing for those who bring store bought desserts. The UTSI Running Club and the ERC will co-host the One Mile Fun Run and Walk. Picnic day plans are ongoing.
- 2) **Status of recycling program** – Terry Garner is working on this project. He is trying to contact AEDC to see if UTSI can collaborate with them on recycling efforts. He has made contacts with several area agencies but they deal with mass recycling and UTSI does not have enough items to warrant their interest. Susan Murphy will ask Allied Waste who does UTSI’s trash disposal to see if they offer recycling assistance. Terry plans to call Estill Springs recycling to see if they are interested in collaborating with UTSI in recycling efforts. Project ongoing.
- 3) **Training updates** – Patricia Burks-Jelks is reviewing a list of training options. She plans to offer various training in the coming months to include Myers-Briggs, regulatory training, etc. Training announcements will be emailed to UTSI Faculty, Staff, and Students as they become available.
- 4) **I’m curious: why are perfectly healthy, good trees being cut down around here? Is it because the guys don’t want to mow around them? I thought we are trying to save money, cutting down healthy trees is not saving money, its wasting it just like throwing away perfectly good furniture.–submitted to Patricia Burks-Jelks**  
*Response provided by Scott Van Zandbergen, Facilities Director:* There are a number of reasons why trees are being cut down, but most importantly it has nothing to do with the grounds crew:
  1. Though the trees may look healthy, when cut down they are actually hollow and poise a safety concern.
  2. Full grown trees located near buildings further poise a safety concern for our facilities. Is it cheaper to cut down a tree that may fall on a building or is it cheaper to repair a building? Further, trees located near a building drop debris on the roofs which clog the drains, resulting in water damage.
  3. Some trees need to be cut down in order to provide access to work areas in order to complete the work, i.e., work that will need to be done to the tennis courts will require the immediate trees surrounding the tennis courts to be removed in order to complete required repairs. Further, the removal of these trees will keep the courts cleaner with less debris.
  4. Other trees need to be cut down due to lightning strikes that make the trees unsafe or trees growing at awkward angles that further poise a potential safety issue.
  5. When feasible and practical, new trees are planted to replace those that have been removed.

Regarding the comment about “throwing away perfectly good furniture” is incorrect. The furniture disposed of was either moldy, damaged, or would never be issued due to the age of the furniture or people simply do not want it – generally employees opt for new furniture instead of accepting old furniture in storage. The furniture disposed of has been placed on the auction site with no takers and since Facilities does not have a storage area available, we have no choice but to dispose of the items.

As FYI, the administration is advised each time a tree cutting is scheduled, as well as, being advised that in order to accommodate the realignment of office assignments that items in storage would need to be disposed.

#### **5) Miscellaneous Items**

- Annual Enrollment - October 2-13, 2017 (two business weeks). Watch your mail this summer and fall for more information on your 2018 insurance benefits.

#### **Next Meeting:**

Time/Date: Wednesday, August 9, 2017 – 10:00 am

Location: Lower C wing Conference Room

Please submit agenda items for this meeting to your ERC representative no later than Wednesday, August 2, 2017.

#### ***Secretarial and Clerical representatives***

Kaycee Edwards, MS-05, ext. 37477

Susan Murphy, MS-29, ext. 37311

#### ***Buildings, Grounds, Maintenance, Skilled Trades, Food Services, and Technical Services representatives***

Kathlene Franklin, MS-18, ext. 37298

Terry Garner, MS-22, ext. 37252

The **Employee Relations Committee** gives non-exempt employees an opportunity to express concerns and issues at UTSI. To find out more information on the UTSI ERC and see past minutes, please click [here](#).