



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA[®]

Office, Clerical & Technical Staff Assembly

OCT Staff Assembly Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 2016

3:00 – 110 AIME Building

Guest Speakers: Dr. Lee Keyes, Executive Director of the UA Counseling Center and Zoe Winston, Educational Coordinator of the UA Women & Gender Resource Center

Welcome by Allyson Holliday, President

Counseling Center:

The University of Alabama Counseling Center is one of two accredited college counseling centers in the state. Auburn is the second accredited center. They rank as number 1 in 15 amongst college counseling centers in all neighboring states. Despite this, the center is always interested in improving.

The Counseling Center offers brief individual and couple therapy for any enrolled students. Topics covered could be alcoholic, drug, and psychiatric counseling. They also handle crisis intervention for students in emergency situations. Last year, the center handled 363 major crisis, including: suicide related behavior, alcohol, drug use, domestic violence. They have telephone and face-to-face services. The center partners with third parties including police, clergy, faculty, staff, and guardians for advice and suggestions when the students have allowed those parties to participate in their counseling appointments.

The physical center's hours are standard, but they have crisis intervention services anytime day or night, 365 days per year. The physical center accepts appointments and walk-ins during the day. When the tornado hit Tuscaloosa in 2011, the center was still on call. The On-Call center is very active. If a student calls after hours, the UAPD dispatcher can reach out to the counselor on call for the evening or holiday.

As a rule, the counseling center staff cannot respond by email regarding the health or circumstances of a student. They can receive emails and read, but not respond. The staff will always call, and as a reminder, Dr. Keyes suggested that it is never good idea to initiate a crisis call by email. Why? Time.

What are some resources? The main website is being updated. The current website has links for parents, faculty, staff, and others on how to best help students in crisis. There are resources available designed just for staff. Dr. Keyes explained that FERPA can be ignored if the safety of the student or anyone else is in jeopardy.

The center also offers education programming for the community regarding emotional health of students. To set-up an educational program for your area, you can make the request online on their website. Counselors will be happy to come to staff meetings or large group meetings to talk about depression and stress management for students.

What is the current climate on campus?

In 2001/2002, the University noticed certain patterns amongst the students utilizing the Counseling Center. At one time, the number one reason was depression. Currently, the number one reason is anxiety, with depression coming in at the second reason. Why is this? Dr. Keyes believes that the world is a tougher place now for college students. Concern and fears about the job marketplace, global politics, competitive academic situations, financial issues, and social media. Social media has heightened the anxiety of young people due to the constant need for social comparisons. Students will often say that are “stressed” when not coping well with anxiety and depression.

They are currently located at the South lawn Office Center.

<https://counseling.sa.ua.edu/>

Women & Gender Resource Center:

The UA Women & Gender Resource Center is a free and confidential therapy for victims of domestic abuse and violence. They service students, faculty, staff, and families. An individual can seek services regardless of affiliation at UA. The counseling part offers a component of emotional safety planning: surviving to thriving and getting back on track. Advocates support that work, as well as physical safety planning.

The WGRC helps navigate reporting process through Title IX, safe housing, the court system. They also advocate for students to help them from falling behind with the academics. The center partners with community resources to help individuals feel safe and secure in everyday life. The goal is for anyone who utilizes the center to feel fully supported from start to finish.

Services from the WGRC won't be billed to BCBS or UA Payroll. The email correspondence does not have to go through Outlook, so there are measures for privacy for all UA affiliates. Eligibility for services is on their website. They have staff on-call 24-7, 365 days per year, even during holidays. Similar to the Counseling Center, their advocate on-call can be reached through the UAPD dispatcher. If you let the dispatcher know you want to talk to WGRC or a Victim Advocate. This will not automatically get the police involved.

How can OCT staff get involved? What resources are available?

The WGRC has a brand new website. They offer Harbor training in-person and registration can be found through Skillport. This is a great way for Staff and Faculty to expand their resources. It covers how to respond to individuals who need help and legal reporting requirements. In-person training is offered once a month, but WGRC is more than willing to schedule a special training for departments or groups.

They offer an Every Women Book Club which meets once a month and is open to the community. It's completely free except for lunch. There is another group called Artist Way which focuses on creativity in self-expression. There is also a thesis and dissertation writer's group for women in graduate school. They have a UA library, Frances Summersell Library, which focuses specifically on Gender, Race, and Intersection books and documentaries. The library is located at the center and is available to anyone.

WGRC is always interested in expanding in partnerships, so feel free to send them ideas. They are currently located at the South lawn Office Center.

Website: <https://wgrc.sa.ua.edu/>

OCTSA Committee Reports

Staff Life (Lacee Nisbett) – Working with Human Resources on Work Life projects, including participation with the Outreach Committee in the Chili Cook-Off (<https://tusceexchange.wordpress.com/cookoff-info/>) and a volunteer program with the Tuscaloosa City School System. They also have been meeting regularly with Travis Railsback, Director of HR, to discuss possible projects and current issues for the non-exempt staff on campus.

Professional Development (Lacee Nisbett filling in for Sues Noble) – The OCTS Assembly is hosting guests from one of the training sessions of the HR Professional Development Series. We hope to make this a regular invitation. The PD and Staff Life committee have been working to provide Workshops for hot topics. This past month, HR co-hosted an OCTSA organized PA Workshop. There was a great turn-out, and we hope to set up a few more in Spring 2017.

Communications (Allyson Holliday) – Created a Year-In-Review document which talks about the projects OCTSA has worked on during the 2015-2016 academic year. Jennifer Thomas did a wonderful job putting this together.

Outreach (Lacee Nisbett) – The Outreach Committee and Staff Life Committee are co-working on two projects. First, the OCTSA will be participating in the Chili Cook-off through the Exchange Club of Tuscaloosa on February 11, 2017. We will be seeking volunteers for that event in January. The two groups will meet with the superintendent of the Tuscaloosa City School System for possible partnership opportunities. We are also accepting donations for the Alabama REACH pantry. If you were not able to bring your items today, please take them to Lloyd Hall.

UA Standing Committees

Information Technology (Lacee Nisbett) – The committee is working on guidelines and policies for third-party email accounts and having UA email on personal smart devices.

University Recreation (Marina Klaric) – The committee talked about their plan of expansion of for the Rec Center.

Faculty and Staff Benefits (Marina Klaric) – The committee is focusing on the retirement center in the state.

Intercollegiate Athletics (Todd Hester) – The committee discussed the changes to Impermissible Contact Rules.

New Business - UA eTime Timeclocks

The OCTSA has been collecting phone calls, emails, and notes in campus mail. We've collected over 100 comments so far. At some point, the plan is to compile some of this feedback to provide to Human Resources. Allyson made sure to remind the assembly members that the Timeclock Policy was in no way related to the creation of the Professional Non-exempt group, which is currently being challenged. The

FLSA had nothing to do with the Timeclock Policy. UAB currently uses a Timeclock and UAH uses manual web time entry.

Allyson opened the discussion to the assembly to give feedback on the new policies.

Logistical and Technical Issues with the New Clocking In/Out System:

1. Supervisors are not properly trained to handle this. They are making mistakes due to ignorance on UA and Federal Laws. We had multiple reports of supervisors inadvertently, and sometimes purposefully, stealing paid time away from non-exempt staff. Supervisors don't know how to navigate the system, nor do they understand the legal rights for non-exempt staff.
2. Clocking in/out for lunch is not the same across campus. Many departments are at an unfair disadvantage. Perhaps this should be standard across the board?
3. Some staff reported that they can clock in from home using the approved VPN. Is this something that a supervisor and HR have to approve?
4. There is lack of understanding about FLSA rights for overtime. Some departments are denying staff overtime but still requiring them to work over 7.75. They are adjusting timeclocks inappropriately. Departments need to understand the laws, so that they can make a decision on how to upfront protect their staff from being abused.
5. Most staff do not realize that 1.25 hours of work beyond the 38.75 per week must be given as straight paid time according to FLSA. If this is the case, then UA possibly owes a lot of employees paid time for years of accruing comp instead of paid time.
6. Only some departments are using the vacation/leave approval option in eTime. Is this something that would help all departments' eTime approvers with their timesheets?

General Comments:

1. Non-exempt staff felt blind-sighted by this. Being more transparent about this would have helped staff prepare and feel more comfortable. The OCTSA could have advised on the implementation of this new policy.
2. It's apparent that administration did not get input from every-day eTime approvers or users before implementing this system. If they had, those individuals could have advised on potential issues like the ones listed above.
3. Supervisors are also unhappy about this. This is more work on them.
4. "Feel terrified about not looking good on this piece of paper." Staff are reporting heightened levels of stress.
5. This is not saving time, it's creating more work.
6. "For staff who have been here a long time, they feel betrayed."
7. This is adding anxiety and stress to everyone. Will clocking in some mornings at 8:10 because of interruptions before logging into a computer affect raises?
8. "There are issues of PSA not reporting leave. They are trusted to put in their own time, but non-exempt are not."

Improvements:

1. In person training needs to be given to both supervisors and staff. Online booklets are not enough. They need to be able to ask questions amongst peers and to experts.
2. Swiping in/out is a lot easier than clocking in. Staff are having high anxiety about making sure they are able to sit down without interruption, log in, and clock in by 8 AM. Having a swipe mechanism in every building will help reduce this issue. This was not an isolated comment. This was an assembly-wide consensus.
3. Need to consider making adjustments for eTime approvals to Monday and not Friday. It's awkward and confusing to make the adjustments before staff are even able to clock-out for the last day of the work week.

4. It would be great if HR made a statement to Colleges and Departments that this new system should no way hinder non-exempt staff from participating in previously approved UA events and resources. There is a strong concern that non-exempt staff will further feel unable to participate in professional development or community related events.

What does the assembly want for the OCTSA Steering Committee to do? How should we approach this? Steering Committee advised that it is very likely that this policy is permanent, and we should prepare ourselves for that outcome.

NEXT STEP: Consolidate comments from this meeting and the ones collected prior. Organize the information, contextualize it, and provide Human Resources with 1) List of logistical and technical issues, 2) General comments to reflect on the current climate of the non-exempt community, 3) Suggestions for improvements to the system and policies.

Next meeting on January 10, 2017.