

Minutes of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee
University of Kentucky Board of Trustees
Friday, September 13, 2019

The Human Resources and University Relations Committee of the University of Kentucky Board Of Trustees met on Friday, September 13, 2019 in Ballroom A of the Bill Gatton Student Center.

A. Meeting Opened

Cammie Grant, Chair of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Chair Grant asked Shakiyla Davis, staff assistant for University Relations, to call the roll.

B. Roll Call

The following members of the Board of Trustees answered the call of the roll: Cammie Grant, Lee Blonder, Bob Grossman, Michael Hamilton, Dave Melanson, Sandy Shuffett, and Rachel Webb.

Other Board Members present included: Jennifer Yue Barber, Claude A. Berry III, Cathy Black, Joe Bowen, Edward Britt Brockman, MD, Michael A. Christian, AC Donahue, Kimberly McCann, Elizabeth McCoy, Derrick Ramsey, Frank Shoop, Robert Vance, and Barbara Young.

C. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Webb to approve the minutes from the June 22, 2019, Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Melanson. Motion carried and minutes were approved as written.

D. Crisis and Issues Communications

Chair Grant introduced Tom Harris, Vice President for University Relations.

Mr. Harris informed the Trustees that a large responsibility of the Public Relations and Strategic Communications Department is the management of issues and crisis communications. He noted everything happens at a rapid pace; this makes it easy for the public to become distracted by false information in a crisis situation.

Members of the Public Relations and Strategic Communications Department were present to provide an overview on how the University of Kentucky plans, trains,

and executes crisis and issues management situations. Jay Blanton, Associate Vice President and Chief Communications Officer, introduced members of his team:

- Kristi Willett, Director of the Medical Campus News Bureau
- Sarah Geegan, Director of Executive Communications
- Kathy Johnson, Director of the Main Campus News Bureau
- Jenny Wells-Hosley, Public Relations Officer for the Main Campus News Bureau

Mr. Blanton noted that the University of Kentucky is built like a city. Having experienced working in the city environment, Mr. Blanton mentioned the elements of UK that make it city-like. At UK, "...we constantly want to assess, address, acknowledge, respond, and review". It is important to start with principles and core priorities to clarify the solutions for issues and crisis. In a university setting, principles and core priorities usually revolve around questions like:

- Are we taking care of our students, faculty, and staff?
- Are we taking care of their health and well-being?
- Are we communicating in a responsive, timely, and transparent manner?
- Are we addressing the business needs of the campus?

In a university setting there are privacy issues, safety issues, and legal considerations that must be taken into consideration. Additionally, universities also must determine how information will be transmitted:

- Who will respond to the message?
- Who should be the spokesperson?
- Who needs to receive the message?
- What is the best way to reach them?

Crisis communications can be broken down into two categories: issues management and crisis management. Issues management concerns the management of issues that may impact the reputation, brand, business continuity, or financial status of an institution. Crisis management concerns the management of crises that may threaten human life, safety, health, property, or the environment.

President Eli Capilouto is responsible for crisis and issues communications and often designates Dr. Eric Monday, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, to lead the effort in conjunction with Public Relations and Strategic Communications. A crisis communications plan, a project management tool, and UK Alert are used by the Public Relations and Strategic Communications Department and UK Police to manage crises and issues. Along with these tools, the University has invested millions to ensure safety on campus. One investment Mr. Blanton highlighted was the Emergency Operations Center. The Center enables the University to fully activate the crisis communication plan for any situation. Another investment Mr. Blanton highlighted was the UK HealthCare Incident Command System. This System enables the University to fully activate the Crisis Communication Plan as it pertains to UK HealthCare.

The Public Relations and Strategic Communications Department maintains crisis communications response teams for crises that may be short-term or long-term. Response teams include:

- External relations team
- Distribution team
- HealthCare team
- Resource and logistics team
- Social media and media monitoring team
- Executive communications team

Ms. Willett noted to the Committee that the University has a responsibility to communicate to regions that are impacted by UK HealthCare. This is largely due to UK HealthCare serving as a Level 1 Trauma Center for central and eastern Kentucky. To prepare for crises that affect the region, the HealthCare response team trains with emergency officials from around the region.

Mr. Blanton informed the Committee that annual training occurs for those managing crises and issues; city personnel are included in the training. The UK Police prepares a three-hour scenario that requires various team members to utilize crisis and issues management tools. After Action Reviews are completed for scenarios and live incidents.

Chair Grant opened the floor for questions.

Chair Grant asked how many people other than students sign up for UK Alerts.

Mr. Blanton answered that there are individuals across the nation signed up for UK Alerts, including the media. Dr. Monday added that parents are signed up and that the adoption rate of UK Alerts is high among University of Kentucky students.

Trustee Melanson asked how off-campus spaces are addressed when it comes to crisis and issues communications.

Mr. Blanton answered that the communicators for all units, especially the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, meet with the Public Relations and Strategic Communications Department on a weekly basis to address improving communication to all 120 counties in Kentucky.

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. Trustee Shuffett made the motion and Trustee Blonder seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:04 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Shakiyla Davis