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End-of-Year Report 2011-2012

Commission for Blacks

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Throughout the 2010-11 academic year, the Commission for Blacks (CFB) has actively supported and participated in several activities that promote civility, increase intercultural/interethnic activities on campus and within the Knoxville community. The CFB hosted two community forums (i.e., Literacy Imperative Center and Howard Baker Public Policy Center). During the fall forum, participants requested a meeting with UTK administrations. The location for both forums facilitated optimal participation of Knoxville and UTK citizens. Several commissioners participated in the anniversary celebration of the OUT Resource center, three commissioners were featured in the Civility Campaign video and the Civility Campaign and 50th Anniversary of African American Achievement kickoff ceremonies, and the Safety Forum co-sponsored by the Commission for Women (CFW) and Student Affairs. Several commissioners have completed the “Safe Zone” training; many have become allies.

In an effort to strengthen relationships and increase advocacy for Black faculty, staff and students, guest speakers and UTK representatives were invited to attend the November 2010 meeting which focused primarily on staff issues. The February 2011, meeting was devoted student life issues. UTK representatives and student leaders participated in discussions regarding civility and ways to improve UTK student life. The following steps were undertaken to increase communication with Black faculty, staff and students: 1) a Blackboard site with multiple Discussion Boards was developed; Facebook and Twitter accounts were established; the website was updated to reflect organizational growth; the collection of historical data for Traces was initiated; and a biannual newsletter was launch (e.g., the first edition published in April 2011).

The CFB will collaborate with the Commission for Women and Commission for LGBT to develop goals for commission wide meetings. This fall, a workshop for diverse faculty will take place on September 30th. The CFB has been instrumental in facilitating this endeavor. The CFB will reaffirm our commitment to development efforts for Black students, descriptions of scholarships earmarked for Black students has been added to the website, and individuals who want to contribute can access the information available via

hyperlink on the CFB home page.

Despite our accomplishments, there are several issues that require further attention: awaiting Chancellor's response to the CFB report on civility initiatives; confirmation of timeline for hiring a Chief Diversity Officer; increase partnerships with alumni; and expand collaboration with commissions for women and LGBT.

Respectfully,

J. Camille Hall, Ph.D., LCSW
Chair, Commission for Blacks