



9-2011

Meeting Minutes - September 2011

Commission for Blacks

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Minutes for Commission for Blacks Meeting September 7, 2011

Call to Order: Dr. Camille Hall called the meeting to order at 12:00pm.

In Attendance: Camille Hall, Maxine Davis, Ron Tredway, Marva Rudolph, Joann Jeter, Ernest Brothers, Philippa Satterwhite, Richard Stokes, Fletcher Njororai, Nanette Rodgers, Lilia Neville, Denelle Brown, Charles Houston, Patricia Jones, Vern Granger, Chandra Dunn*

1. Review of May Minutes: After review, a name change was previously updated and the minutes were approved.

2. Report from the Chair: The chairs of the Commission for Blacks, Commission for Women (Mary Papke), Commission for LGBT People (Jenny Moshak/Tom Cervone), Council on Diversity and Interculturalism (Anton Reece/), and John Nolt met with Chancellor Cheek on September 2, 2011. During this meeting topics discussed were: keeping civility at the forefront and UTK ongoing commitment to diversity. The commissions discussed the importance of the Chancellor's support regarding implementation of recommendations from the Civility Task Force, incorporating statements regarding civility in the course syllabi, and getting buy-in from all UTK community members (i.e., faculty, staff, and students). Mary Papke said the commission chairpersons would discuss adding a statement about "civility" to the course syllabi in the upcoming meeting with the Provost on September 21, 2011.

The commissions also spoke about bringing value to diversity at UTK by adding a Campus Diversity Officer to the Chancellor's office. The commissions recommended the position may be fitting as a Vice Chancellor position.

The Commission for Women discussed meeting with Director of Women's Athletics and expressing concern regarding the women's athletic department being overlooked after merging with the overall athletics department. They report the Director of Women's Athletics expressed little concern and do not believe this will be an issue.

The goals and objectives of the Commission for Blacks include updating the bylaws. The Chancellor recommended adding a bylaw committee that will focus on keeping the bylaws up to date. The Chair asked that members send her their top 3 committee choices as soon as possible.

3. Human Resources: Ron Tredway announced the Fall Festival on September 30, 2011 and the theme is focusing on soft benefits. He explained soft benefits as unrecognized benefits for UT employees. There will be vendors available to talk about and provide discounts to UT employees. The Employee Engagement Survey will begin on November 1, 2011 and be open for two weeks. The survey will be sent out by e-mail inviting staff to participate in the online survey. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Commissioners expressed concern about non-exempt staff that does not have access to computers. Commissioner Tredway encouraged members to contact Employee Relations where there will be computers to use for completing the survey. Dr. Tredway encouraged promoting staff participation.

Report on the Status of Black Faculty, Staff and Students

4. Office of Equity and Diversity: Dr. Marva Rudolph reports on workforce trends of African American and other minority exempt and non-exempt faculty/staff. It was determined that there were gains and losses in areas, and stagnation in other areas. The overall determination is that African American and other minorities make up 3-5% of the overall workforce year to year. This is evident at the UT Knoxville campus and the Institute of Agriculture.

5. Director of Undergraduate Admissions & Assistant Dean of Enrollment Services, Vern Granger: Overall enrollment of African American students is low and stagnate. Efforts to increase recruitment are being made. Recruitment efforts include: JUMP program which invites accepted minority students to attend a two night stay at the UT campus and provides opportunities for students to learn about resources available and familiarize themselves with the campus; Sneak Peak which is for potential students and also includes an overnight stay. This program requires eligibility which is a copy of their transcript; Promise is a student bus trip for high school seniors attending a school that is consider below college ready. This program offers scholarships and encourages students to apply to UT; LEAD is also a Promise cohort that provides a smaller environment for students and has proven to have a higher success rate than Promise. Program does include students meeting with minority staff. Other recruitment efforts include holding ACT workshops in Nashville and Memphis. There is also a Destination Orientation bus ride which involves UT providing bust trips for students to their UT orientation. Students in these programs receive follow-up phone calls two times per year. Concern for bridging the GPA gap between minorities and others should be considered. Yield activities to recognize admitted and enrolled student success (top 25% of their class and ACT scores above 25) may assist. Other areas that may improve efforts are having UT staff and alumni sending personal letters and phone calls to potential students. Mr. Granger will send a calendar of recruitment events. Any additional suggestions or questions can be directed to Vern Granger at verngranger@utk.edu.

6. Diversity/Recruitment: The Graduate School Perspective: Dr. Ernest Brothers presented a slide presentation regarding recruitment for graduate students. Key highlights included promoting institutional recruitment as opposed to individual recruitment. A focus on recruiting with the intention to retain is important. Forming mutual partnerships with HBCU to promote higher education, and graduate visitation programs. Also highlighted was mentorship amongst students and staff; this will include cross cultural mentoring. Challenges were underrepresentation of minority groups, travel resources for campus visits, and internet versus human recruitment tactics.

6. Announcements: Denelle Brown announced the Diversity Dialogue which started on September 6, 2011 was a success. The BFSA meetings will take place on the second Friday of each month; the next meeting is on **September 9, 2011**.

September 20, 2011 is the Graduate Student Professional Development Workshop at the Black Cultural Center. **September 23, 2011** is the 50th Anniversary Grand Gala, for more information visit: achieve.utk.edu. **September 30, 2011** is the Diversity Faculty Mentoring Workshop for more information visit: web.utk.edu/~dfmp. **October 14, 2011** is a Professional Development Workshop and details will be discussed at the BFSA meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20pm.