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Committee Report on Admission of Blacks, April 24, 1956

University of Tennessee News Bureau

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The University of Tennessee News Bureau
April 24, 1956
For Release from Memphis, Tenn.

A five-year schedule for the gradual admission of Negro students to classes in all of the University of Tennessee's 13 colleges and schools was adopted by the U-T Board of Trustees at its semi-annual meeting here today.

Its effective date retroactive to last Jan. 1, the new schedule sets up year-by-year dates when qualified Negroes will be admitted at the postgraduate, senior, junior, sophomore, and freshman year classes in each college at U-T.

For most colleges at Knoxville and the Martin Branch, the schedule provides for immediate admission of postgraduate students, then for admission of seniors next September, juniors in September of 1957, sophomores in September of 1958, and freshmen in September of 1959.

For the agricultural and home economics colleges at Knoxville and Martin, initial enrollment of Negroes on the undergraduate level is delayed until juniors are admitted in September of 1957 because these two colleges require that candidates for degrees attend U-T during both the junior and senior years.

For colleges comprising the Medical Units at Memphis, the admission pattern differs. These colleges do not admit students in freshman classes until they have had one, two or three years of college-level prestudy, and the schedule takes these prestudy requirements into account by providing admittance next September for qualified Negroes beginning their fifth year of college-level studies; in September of 1957, those beginning the fourth year; September of 1958, third year; September of 1959, second year; and by September of 1960, all classes in all colleges.

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The schedule was recommended by a committee appointed by the board at its annual meeting last November, when the trustees adopted the gradual admission of Negro students as a basic policy to conform with recent Federal Court decisions which nullified state school segregation laws.

Since U-T is composed of a number of colleges and schools, each with its own admission and graduation requirements, the committee had been instructed by a board resolution to recommend "modification or adjustment of said (gradual admission) plan so as to fit the proper entrance of eligible Negro students in each college."

Attorney Harley Fowler of Knoxville was chairman of the committee, and other members were Attorney Harry Laughlin of Memphis and State Education Commissioner Quill Cope.

In effect, the new schedule will permit the admission of Negroes in only 10 of U-T's 13 colleges for the first time. Negroes have already been admitted in three colleges--the Graduate School and College of Law at Knoxville since 1952 and the School of Social Work at Nashville since 1953--conforming with a previous Federal Court decision handed down in 1951.

The earlier court decision required that U-T admit Negro citizens of Tennessee in postgraduate and law courses which are not offered at state-supported Negro institutions of higher education. To date 98 Negroes have been enrolled in the three colleges under this decision.

With the College of Law and the School of Social Work already open to Negro enrollment, the schedule makes no changes in their present admission policies. However, it does open additional programs of study for Negro students in the Graduate School at Knoxville.

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The first step in the five-year integration schedule, with the effective date retroactive to Jun. 1, is the opening of all Graduate School degree and non-degree programs to qualified Negro students. This eliminates the earlier proviso which prevented Negroes from enrolling in study programs which were also offered at Negro state-supported institutions.

The time schedule set for admission in the other U-T schools and colleges was adopted as follows:

September 1, 1956--Admission to: senior classes of the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Engineering, Education, and Business Administration; sophomore class of the College of Medicine (which requires three years of prestudy); the junior class of the College of Dentistry (requires two years of prestudy); senior class of the School of Pharmacy (requires one year of prestudy); and graduate class of the School of Nursing.

September 1, 1957--Admission to: junior and senior classes of the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Engineering, Education, and Business Administration; junior class of the Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics; freshman, sophomore, and junior classes of the College of Medicine; sophomore, junior, and senior classes of the College of Dentistry; junior and senior classes of the School of Pharmacy; and senior and graduate classes of the School of Nursing.

September 1, 1958--Admission to: sophomore, junior, and senior classes of the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Engineering, Education, Agriculture, Business Administration, and Home Economics; all classes in the College of Medicine; all classes in the College of Dentistry; sophomore, junior, and senior classes in the School of Pharmacy; and junior, senior, and graduate classes in the School of Nursing.

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September 1, 1959--Admission to: all classes in the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Engineering, Education, Agriculture, Business Administration, and Home Economics; all classes in the School of Pharmacy; sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate classes in the School of Nursing.

September 1, 1960--Admission to all classes in the School of Nursing.

The committee recommended that this schedule apply for Negro students enrolling for any U-T course offered for academic credit, whether in regular daytime classes or in evening Extension Center classes. Further, the committee pointed out that this schedule does not apply to self-supporting non-credit courses or programs which may be sponsored by the University in response to requests from specialized groups in the state.

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