



University of Tennessee, Knoxville
**TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative
Exchange**

President's Communications

Office of the President

11-8-2012

Equity and Diversity Transitions to Human Resources

Office of the President

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_prescomm

Recommended Citation

Office of the President, "Equity and Diversity Transitions to Human Resources" (2012). *President's Communications*.

https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_prescomm/10

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in President's Communications by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

To view this email online, [click here](#).



Equity and Diversity Transitions to Human Resources

The press release attached below is being sent to media today. During the Board of Trustees' Executive and Compensation Committee meeting this morning, I discussed the retirement of Theotis Robinson, vice president for equity and diversity, and the transitioning of UT System equity and diversity oversight to human resources.

UT Vice President for Equity and Diversity to Retire, UT System Administration Transitions Equity and Diversity Reporting Structure to Human Resources

KNOXVILLE – University of Tennessee Vice President for Equity and Diversity Theotis Robinson will retire Jan. 31, 2014 and on Nov. 1 began serving in a transitional role as vice president and diversity advisor. During the transition, the University of Tennessee System Administration will restructure equity and diversity reporting to human resources as more accountability and responsibility for development of diversity programs and services is handled at the campus and institute levels.

"Discussions with key administrators and staff at each campus and institute about the role of the System Administration in equity and diversity matters and research of previous and peer system models led to our decision to restructure," UT System President Joe DiPietro said. "I'm confident this approach will allow us to enhance our focus on multicultural diversity, both with students and employees, and provide greater accountability in assessment and reporting."

As a result of her office's expanded responsibilities, UT Chief Human Resources Officer Linda Hendricks will be named vice president for human resources, effective Dec. 1. Hendricks also oversees human resources on the UT Knoxville campus and will continue to serve in that capacity.

The System Administration's new role in equity and diversity will be to lead statewide strategy and initiatives, provide training and best practices research, monitor compliance and offer guidance and advocacy on behalf of the UT president's staff.

To support the HR vice president and added responsibilities, an assistant vice president for equity and diversity position will be created at the System level. The search process to fill that position is expected to begin in early 2013.

Robinson formerly served as chair of the UT Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), a statewide group formed in 2010 to advise the president on matters pertaining to employee and student recruitment, retention and measurement indicators. Noma Anderson, dean and professor of the College of Allied Health Sciences at the UT Health Science Center, has assumed this responsibility for a rotating term of

three years, and Robinson will serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

While serving as vice president and diversity advisor, Robinson will continue to advise the UT president on diversity initiatives and Title VI reporting, which protects people from discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Robinson will serve as a liaison with government and community relations, support development activities, work to build relationships with diversity-oriented organizations, serve as a spokesperson and attend community and statewide events related to diversity. Robinson also will attend to matters relating to minority vendors and contractors, and assist in facilitating diversity-related professional development and team-building activities among the president's staff.

Robinson joined the UT staff in 1989 as a lecturer in political science and later joined the staff of the purchasing department. He became an administrative aide in the Office of Federal Affairs in 1992, and transitioned to the same position with the Office of the Senior Vice President in 1999. He was named to his current position in 2000.

Robinson and two other students were the first African Americans admitted to UT in 1961. He was vice president of economic development for the 1982 Knoxville World's Fair and served on Knoxville City Council from 1970 to 1977—the first African American elected to that office in more than a half century. Robinson was a charter inductee into the University of Tennessee African American Hall of Fame in 1994 and is a member of the UT Commission for Blacks and a former political opinion columnist. Knoxville's Metro Pulse newspaper also named him one of the 100 most influential Knoxvilleans of the 20th century.

Hendricks joined the University in her current role in 2008, returning after having begun her career in human resources at UT. She has more than 30 years' experience in higher education including extensive leadership experience in workforce strategic planning, development and implementation of HR policies, and management of HR information systems.

Hendricks was assistant vice president for talent management at Duke University and Health System and director of human resource programs at Vanderbilt University and Medical Center before returning to UT in 2008. She is a graduate of UT Knoxville and Vanderbilt's Leadership Development Forum. She holds certifications in Disney's Service Leaders Institute, consulting skills, negotiating and administering the labor contract, employee relations law and facilitative leadership.

All the best,
Joe

[The University of Tennessee](#) | [Office of the President](#)

831 Andy Holt Tower | Knoxville, TN 37996

Phone: 865.974.2241 | Fax: 865.974.3753



The mission of the University of Tennessee System Administration is to advance the educational, discovery, creative and outreach programs of the campuses and institutes through leadership that removes obstacles, understands needs, provides advocacy, secures resources, promotes accountability, fosters diversity, promotes innovation, coordinates campus efforts and delivers efficient and effective central services.