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Task Force Recommendations and Proposals

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## Recommendations Evaluated

Commission for Blacks

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Revised 4/23/90

**COMMISSION FOR BLACKS  
STUDENT COMMITTEE**

**Shanette M. Harris  
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**April 9, 1990**

**Recommendations Evaluated**

- #1:** The Task Force urges the adoption of a specific student infractions provision forbidding the use of racial slurs, epithets and related activities. We further propose that said policy be printed in the Standards of Conduct which appear in Hilltopics. Analogist provisions should be listed as part of the Personnel Policies. Said provisions should be published in the University Work Rules.

**Finding:**

The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees revised Standard of Conduct #14 at its Fall meeting in 1988 to prohibit "disorderly conduct or lewd, indecent or obscene conduct on University-owned or controlled property or at University-sponsored or supervised functions. Specifically prohibited are both actions and language which tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace by making reference to another's race or ethnic origin." This provision was later stricken by the State Attorney General. The Standard of Conduct presently in place at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, contains only the first sentence of that which was submitted to the Attorney General for approval.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Chancellor should appoint a small committee of faculty, staff, and students to pursue the redrafting of a constitutionally acceptable Standard of Conduct which prohibits racial harassment. Appropriate legal counsel should be made available to this committee.

- #2:** We recommend structured, broad-based programs aimed at sensitizing all students to the despicability of racism. We further remind the University that old patterns will be sustained and perpetuated if our students are not sensitized.

**Finding:**

A cultural and racial diversity program has been incorporated into the Undergraduate Orientation program. . Additionally, cultural and racial diversity has been stressed at the Graduate Teaching Assistants Seminar and the Graduate Student Orientation, both of which are held each year preceding Fall registration. The Department of Residence Halls has also incorporated a racial and cultural diversity program into its staff training.

Additional programs such as the "Celebrate the Differences Program" have been initiated through efforts of the Minority Student Affairs Office, Student Activities Office and the Office of International Education.

**Committee Recommendation:**

Racial and cultural diversity programs should continue within Graduate and Undergraduate Student Orientation and the Graduate Teaching Assistants Seminars. Similarly, racial and cultural diversity programs should continue within the training offered by the Department of Residence Halls. The Committee feels racial and cultural diversity programs should be developed and made available to all faculty and administrative staff. More specifically, the Committee recommends that these programs be presented at the Deans' Retreat, department head meetings and new faculty orientation. Additionally, existing programming efforts in this area should continue.

- #3: The Task Force recommends that the University step up its efforts to effectively and completely integrate the Athletics Department and associated programs including cheering squads and bands.

**Finding:**

Since this recommendation was issued, the Athletics Department has increased both the percentage and numbers of Black staff. Presently there are four Black coaches. Three of these coaches are assistant coaches and one a head coach.

In an attempt to increase the number of Black candidates for cheering squads, the Office of Minority Student Affairs and the Dean of Students Office co-sponsored a cheerleading clinic. Every currently enrolled Black student with sixty-five (65) hours or less was notified of the clinic and encouraged either to participate or recommend others for participation. While several Black candidates enrolled in this clinic and later participated in some of the general clinics required of all cheerleading candidates, only two Black students filed for men's varsity cheerleading tryouts. One of these students was injured on the day prior to the tryouts and withdrew her candidacy. The second Black student was appointed to the 1990-91 men's varsity cheerleading squad.

A member of this Committee interviewed Dr. Jay Julian concerning Black participation in the UT band program. Dr. Julian provided documentation which outlines Black membership in the band program. During the 1989-90 academic year, twelve (12) Black students were

members of the two hundred and eighty-five (285) member Marching Band. Blacks, therefore, represent four percent of the band membership. Total minority participation in the Marching Band was six percent (See Appendix I). Dr. Julian explained that it was very difficult to recruit Black students for participation in the Marching Band because he was in competition with other institutions that offered better scholarship programs and very heavily recruited minorities. While the Band Director and his staff participated in sixty-two rehearsals statewide, Dr. Julian stated a desire to participate in recruitment trips and admission fairs sponsored by the University that were not restricted to a particular discipline.

According to Dr. Suzanne Kurth, Ombudsperson, the office has essentially received no complaints on racism related to cheering squads, bands or athletics. (One complaint was registered by a minority student concerning the band. However, the same complaint had been made by several white students, and thus did not appear to be racially based.)

#### **Committee Recommendation:**

The Committee applauds the efforts of the Athletics Department to recruit and hire more Black coaches. The Committee recommends the Athletics Department utilize the same vigor to staff the administrative unit of the Athletic Director's Office.

The Committee also recommends that the cheerleading clinic co-sponsored by the Dean of Students Office and Minority Student Affairs Office be continued, utilizing the Black Cultural Center as the focal point. Written correspondence encouraging Black students to participate in these clinics and the varsity tryouts should also be continued.

Efforts to improve scholarships for minority members of the Marching Band should be considered. Additionally, members of the Band Director's Office should participate in all general recruiting trips sponsored by the University.

The Office of the Ombudsperson should continue to monitor complaints on racism relative to the Athletics Department, Marching Band, and cheering squads, and notify the central administration if areas of concern emerge.

- #6: The Task Force urges that the University widely publicize among students the procedures for students filing complaints with the University Ombudsperson. Furthermore, the functions of that office must be clearly and publicly articulated.

#### **Finding:**

According to Dr. Suzanne Kurth, Ombudsperson, there were two primary outcomes to this Task Force Recommendation. The first was to create a brochure.

Special monies were provided to prepare a brochure which gave the procedure for registering a complaint and indicated a desire by the Office of the Ombudsperson to work more closely with Black students (See Appendix II). The second was to place ads in the The Daily Beacon. The ads were designed to inform students of the procedure for addressing a complaint and informing Black students of the desire of the Office to work more closely with minority students (See appendix III). In an attempt to more clearly and publicly articulate the functions of that office, the Ombudsperson Office took the following measures:

- (a) Forwarded brochures and posters to the Learning Research Center for posting and inclusion in the GTA Seminar packets.
- (b) Forwarded brochures to the Graduate Admissions and Records Office for inclusion in the Graduate School Orientation packets.
- (c) Forwarded brochures and posters to the Orientation Office for use at Undergraduate Orientation.
- (d) Provided posters to the Department of Residence Halls for posting (see appendix IV).
- (e) Forwarded posters to academic department offices for posting.
- (f) Published procedures for filing grievances in Hilltopics, The Undergraduate Catalog and The Graduate Catalog.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Office of Ombudsperson should continue the distribution of brochures and posters, and the placement of ads in The Daily Beacon which inform students of procedures for registering a complaint and the desire of the Ombudsperson Office to work closely with minority students.

- #7: The Task Force recommends that the University bring together under the leadership of a high level University administrator all special programs related to minority student interests. The Task Force proposes that UT immediately move to hire a Vice-Chancellor for Minority Affairs.

**Finding:**

This recommendation has not been implemented.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Committee feels that this issue is best addressed by the full Commission.

- #9: The Task Force urges that the Orientation Program for all students include a strong component which emphasizes cultural diversity and individual student obligation to obey the laws of the country, the State and the University with respect to racial equality. Further, the Task Force urges that this same emphasis be a part of the Orientation which the University offers for parents.

**Finding:**

A racial and cultural diversity component has been introduced into both the Student and Parent Orientation Program. In addition, racial and cultural diversity is addressed in all Graduate Teaching Assistants Seminars and Graduate Student Orientation Programs.

**Committee Recommendation:**

This Committee recommends that the racial and cultural diversity programs offered within both the undergraduate and graduate experience be assessed regularly to ensure that they reflect quality and genuine commitment.

- #10: The Task Force recommends that the administration take immediate steps to address the issue of faculty attitudes toward Black students, and to provide a forum through which faculty can confront and forge solutions to this problem.

**Finding:**

According to Dr. Thomas Hood, Chair of the Faculty Senate, this recommendation was approved unanimously by the Senate at the October 16, 1989 meeting. The vote on this recommendation is reflected in the minutes of the Chancellor's report. Dr. Hood reported, "it may be possible to run selected workshops, targeting those faculty members interested in cultural diversity. However, I can't speak for the University as a whole."

**Committee Recommendation:**

This Committee recommends that an assessment be conducted to obtain specific information from minority students and faculty in order to develop workshops and other formal and informal ways of facilitating rapport. These workshops should focus upon the information reported and attendance encouraged by department heads. In addition, faculty members should be recognized by departmental chairpersons for efforts to establish rapport with minority students (e.g., advising, research, discussion groups).

- #11: UTK should aggressively seek funding for competitive undergraduate, graduate and professional minority scholarships. These scholarships should include a financial commitment for the duration of the respective degree programs.

### **Finding:**

A list of minority scholarships was compiled from existing records in the Financial Aids Office in November of 1989. Dr. Shanette Harris met with Ms. Sara DeYoung on January 25, 1990 to obtain an updated list. Both documents are attached (See Appendix V a & b).

The following items represent a summary of findings relative to minority student scholarships at UTK:

- a. Most of the scholarships are determined by the individual college (e.g., Law, Engineering).
- b. Few of the awards are renewable.
- c. Of the twenty-three scholarships, eleven include "academic merit" as one of the criteria. Six specify financial need as a criterion, and four include "academic merit and/or need" in the list of criteria.
- d. Thirteen of the twenty-three scholarships are specifically for undergraduate students.
- e. Three of the twenty-three scholarships are for students in the College of Law. The remaining seven are not designated for undergraduates or graduates.
- f. Six of the undergraduate scholarships are offered by the College of Business Administration; four are offered by the College of Engineering; one for students who plan to teach; one for Afro-American Studies; one for the College of Communication, Human Ecology, Liberal Arts or University Studies; and, one for a Communications' major. The remaining rewards are offered by organizations and/or companies that do not specify a particular academic focus.
- g. The most recent rewards are offered by a program in the Department of Education referred to as "Project Enable". As of Spring Semester, ten students were accepted into the program. Nine of these students registered. The stipend is \$800.00 per student.
- h. According to Ms. Sarah DeYoung, Director of Financial Aid, most of the awards are offered by individual departments and/or colleges at UTK.
- i. In order to assess the degree of effort put forth to obtain funds for Black students, Dr. Shanette Harris met with Ms. Linda Davidson, Assistant Vice-President for Development, on

February 1, 1990. Ms. Davidson explained that fundraising occurs in one of two ways, either campus wide or at the college level. According to Ms. Davidson, most of the campus wide efforts have been devoted to the Library campaign. She claims that the most successful scholarship campaigns have been at the college level. Ms. Davidson also reported that some colleges divert and redesignate funds to scholarships.

The following colleges have designated specific individuals to seek funding for scholarships: Business Law, Engineering, Communication, Education, and Human Ecology. Ms. Davidson felt that Engineering was the most effective in obtaining awards for students.

- j. The Development Office has sought scholarship funds for four year merit awards but they are not directed towards minorities, although they can compete. These awards are to be used as student recruitment tools. The focus is generally on abilities.
- k. During the period 1980-1990, the UT, Knoxville Graduate School has received \$1,859,105 in support of fellowships for Black graduate students. Of the total, \$941,250 has been received from the Department of Education through the Patricia Roberts Harris/Graduate and Professional Opportunities Fellowship Program. Since 1984, the state has provided \$891,000 for 107 Black Graduate Fellowships to in-state graduate students entering programs where Blacks are underrepresented. Central administration has provided \$223,555 for Graduate Assistantships and an additional \$135,560 for fellowships to supplement these Graduate Assistantships awarded to the fellows following their entry year as indicated in Appendix VI.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The approach employed by individual colleges at UTK should be reviewed and adopted for obtaining funds at the University level. The strategies employed by the College of Engineering should be carefully considered for adoption by other college, given their degree of effectiveness.

The Financial Aids Office and Development Office should maintain an annual accounting of all minority undergraduate scholarships including the names and addresses of student recipients. This list should include the scholarships offered by individual colleges.



The University should finance a position in the Development Office and/or assign this responsibility to a specific employee. This individual should also be responsible for actively pursuing minority undergraduate funds via UTK alumni, federal grants, and private funds with the same vigor used to seek Library funding.

A needs assessment should be conducted to determine the mean grade point average of UTK minority undergraduates who complete each of the four years at UTK, with this average serving as the standard for determining scholarships of "academic merit".

The current support for graduate scholarships, fellowships and assistantships for minority students should continue as a high priority of the administration.

- #16: The Office of Academic Affairs should develop a program by which all students are to select either one elective that emphasizes Afro-American history or a cultural studies course that deals with multi-ethnic and multi-racial experiences. In addition, the Provost and appropriate officers of the University should charge the respective deans with the responsibility of urging their faculty to develop all University courses in such a way to reflect the multi-racial and multi-cultural character of American society.

**Finding:**

According to Dr. Marian Moffett, "a nucleus of thirty-five concerned professors will run a Faculty Seminar in the Spring." This program may continue into the Fall. The goal of the Seminar is to encourage University members to think about 'cultural diversity'. She expects that the core of thirty-five will influence less involved faculty. These thirty-five will serve as discussion leaders, each working with a group of ten faculty members.

She feels that difficulties may arise with modifying some courses but that it will be easier with others. For example, a possible goal is to change freshman English. The reading assignments and essays could focus on race, ethnicity, and gender.

Her anticipated goal is 'climate change over the next five years'.

**Committee Recommendation:**

This Committee recommends that the Chancellor initiate steps to ensure implementation of each component of this recommendation in an expeditious fashion.

- #18: The Task Force recommends the establishment of a Race Relations Institute. The Institute would engage in interdisciplinary, scholarly inquiry into matters of race and cultural in American society. The Institute scholars would consist of present University faculty members, visiting scholars, and as resources permit, full-time distinguished fellows.

**Finding:**

This recommendation has not been implemented.

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Committee feels that this issue should be addressed by the full Commission.

- #21: The Task Force urges the administration to give special care and attention to all University awards, both honorary and achievement-based, in order to assure that they reflect the presence and participation of Blacks.

**Finding:**

A review of both honorary and achievement-based awards indicates that Blacks have been well represented during the past two years. Black faculty, staff, and/or students have been recognized by the Chancellor's Office through Torchbearer Awards and Chancellor's Citations. In addition, the Department of Residence Halls and the Department of Food Services have recognized many of their Black staff via departmental employee award programs.

Chancellor Quinn has confirmed his support of such endeavors and stated his commitment to continuing such recognition.

**Committee Recommendation:**

This Committee recommends that the Chancellor continue to publicly demonstrate his support for the inclusion of Blacks in both honorary and achievement-based awards.

Additionally, it is the recommendation of this Committee that recognition of Black faculty, staff and students extend through the college and departmental levels where any forum for such recognition exists.

- #22: The Task Force proposes that a University Civil Rights Commission be established which has as its objective consideration of matters of race, gender or handicap.

**Finding:**

This recommendation has not been implemented.

**Committee Recommendation:**

It is the recommendation of this Committee that this issue be addressed by the full Commission.

**ANCILLARY RECOMMENDATION:**

Finally, it is the recommendation of the Student Committee that funding for the Black Cultural Center be increased. More specifically, it is the recommendation of this Committee that funding for capital renovation projects and new program initiatives be identified. The Black Cultural Center is presently in need of major maintenance and lacks adequate office equipment and furnishings.

An assessment of structural needs and office equipment and furnishings should be undertaken at the earliest possible time. Equipment, capital and program needs should be prioritized and a funding strategy confirmed. This strategy should include a specific timetable for addressing the needs as prioritized.