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COMMISSION FOR BLACKS

Task Force Report on Race Relations
University of Tennessee, Knoxville Campus

Subcommittee Report on the Community

Recommendation #4

The Task Force recommends that the University develop a minority vendor program which will increase minority business relationships with the University.

Findings

The Subcommittee interview Mr. Morris Wilson, Assistant Director, Small and Minority Owned Business Enterprises Program, Office of Business Services, the Purchasing Department, and reviewed a number of documents provided by that office.

- the Purchasing Department is in the process of visiting each department on campus to promote the University's Small and Minority owned Business Enterprises (see attachments.)

- Mr. Wilson provided a copy of the December 1989 compilations of Purchasing Department transactions with minority vendors. The report, which is a monthly compilation by buyer of bids requested, bids received, and bids awarded to minorities and women at the University of Tennessee for the month of December 1989 revealed that 20 minority vendors were awarded bids totaling \$179,739 out of 45 bids for purchases received. In addition, the

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report indicated that the total dollar amount of awards made to minorities and women was \$1,341,499 for the six-month period ending December 31, 1989. Although the total dollar amount exceeds the University's projected goal for minority and women purchasing, it is 47% (\$1,186,535) below the total for last year (see Appendix C.)

- the Purchasing Department works with the Urban League and the Office of Minority Business Enterprises and the East Tennessee Minority Suppliers Development Purchasing Council.

- a Directory of Minority Vendors shall be published March 1, 1990.

- the University has an unofficial policy to set aside \$25,000 for minority vendors in 1989-90.

- as of July 1, 1990, the state will adopt a 10% of total state expenditures set aside for minority vendors.

- Wilson feels that University department heads should be responsible for identifying small, minority, and women vendors.

- there is a need to educate minority vendors in the methods used to complete the bidding process. This is reflected by the small percentage of returned bids by minorities.

- the University of Tennessee made 180 million dollars in purchase in 1988-89; 24 million was spent with small businesses; 3.2 million was spent with minority and women businesses. The 1990 goal for minority and women purchasing is 7.7 million.

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Recommendation #5

The Chancellor of the University, in cooperation with the President of the University, shall call a series of meetings with the City of Knoxville's top leaders (business, political, religious, education, social) to discuss the urgent importance of making Knoxville a community in which minority opportunity is a reality.

Findings

The subcommittee has identified twenty-five leaders from the African-American community in Knoxville who are to provide feedback in regard to their perception of the extent to which the University of Tennessee has used its influence to improve the minority community's involvement in University matters and in the Knoxville Metropolitan area (see list.) The community leaders will be interviewed using a brief questionnaire format developed by the committee (see Questions.)

Subcommittee recommendation

Although the formal interview process has yet to be completed, informal conversations with community leaders have provided a few recommendations:

- the University should offer the use of its venture capital office to help encourage and identify one or more minority business persons to initiate an entrepreneurial ventures by African-americans in high visibility areas of the county (Cumberland Ave. Strip, Westtown Mall, Easttown Mall.)

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Subcommittee Recommendations:

1. The disparity between the number of bid requests and bids awarded, in addition to comments made by Mr. Morris Wilson suggest that minority vendors are in need of additional education regarding University bid procedures.
2. The University's Office of Public Relations and the Conference Department should be directed to assist the Small and Minority Owned Business Enterprises Program in the effort to both publicize and educate potential and existing minority vendors regarding the current and 1990 set-aside initiatives.
3. The University should provide information about the sub-contractors working on the Parking Garage. This state contract and subsequent others (Computer Science Engineering Building, Law School) should be bound by minority set-aside provisions.