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# The 1999 BFSA Professional Development Conference for Faculty and Staff Final Report

Commission for Blacks

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***The 1999 BFSA  
Professional Development Conference  
for Faculty and Staff***

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***Final Report***

***Submitted: July 30, 1999***

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***The University of Tennessee  
Black Faculty and Staff Association  
Knoxville, TN***

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## *Preface*

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This report was compiled to facilitate continued improvement in the annual BFSA professional development conferences and related deliberations. While planning for the 1999 BFSA conference it was discerned that access to corporate memory and processes could improve efficiency in conference planning and implementation. It was further intuited that the lack of tractional records might undermine abilities to systematically press for advancement on issues important to BFSA constituents'. The most important issue being distributional equity within the university. An example of the problem is absence of quantifiable data makes it difficult to track the university's progress (or the lack thereof) in meeting desegregation goals. Deliberate obfuscation has effectively thwarted efforts to obviate deficiencies. At the same time both the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) and the University of Tennessee Commission for Blacks (UTCOCB) continue their pleas for UTK to live up to judiciously established mandates.

Some key sections of this report are the Workshops and the roundtable discussions. Too be sure the speeches by Dr. John Morrow, Mr. George Fraser and the Reverend Matthew Jones hit the mark in calling for institutional fairness; self-help type capital formation in the community; and illuminating the historical and continued lack of openness at the university. Workshop presentations on affirmative action, coupled with the focus of round table discussion crystalized unambiguous take home messages for all attendees.

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## **FINAL DRAFT**

*Revised--(7-28-99)*

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# **The 1999 BFSA Professional Development Conference Report**

### **The Conference Theme:**

The 1999 Black Faculty and Staff Association's (BFSA) conference theme, ***Fully Engaged: Professional Preparedness for the New Millennium***, was proposed by a member of the Executive and Workshop Planning committees. Upon review and consideration, it was approved and adopted by the Conference Planning Committee. The intent of the theme was to: 1) project positive and professional energy, focused on self-improvement, 2) inculcate a spirit of self-direction and self-help, and 3) engender a pro-active stance and disposition regarding affirmative action issues at the University. The intent was realized, and the theme was well received by the participants. In the coming year, a similar and effective theme will be proposed, stressing the cumulative value of professional development initiatives.

### **The Conference Facilities:**

The site of the conference was The University of Tennessee Conference Center (UTCC), located at 600 Henley Street in downtown Knoxville, Tennessee. The UTCC maintains a full-time onsite staff to assist with planning, delivery and post-event needs of client meetings. The UTCC was convenient to the transportation venues available to conference participants and perhaps the most cost-effective state-of-the-art facility available. Given the size of the facility, it was possible to host the plenary sessions, the concurrent workshops and the luncheon functions without significant disruption. Given the positive experience with the UTCC, it is likely that the BFSA will propose holding the 2000 Professional Development Conference at that location.

### **The Conference Plenary Session:**

The opening or plenary session was chaired by Dr. Ronald B. McFadden, Director of UTK's Educational Advancement Program (EAP). Words of faith were delivered by Rev. Matthew Jones in which he admonished and challenged the University to do better by the Black Community in Knoxville and in the state. The featured speaker was Mr. George Fraser, President of Success Corporation and a best selling author, and motivational speaker (*see Appendix A for bio*). Mr. Fraser encouraged participants to be pro-active about self-development and capital formation. He cautioned that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for Blacks should be about building and retaining wealth, job creation and effective intergenerational transfer. At one point he paraphrased the noted philosopher (Godfather of Soul), Mr. James Brown, in stating that

the new attitude should be... "I don't want nobody to give me nothing, just open up the door and I'll get it myself." The address was appreciatively received. Mr. P. Scheuer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance, was invited to give the official welcome and greetings on behalf of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK).

**The Conference Workshops:**

The 1999 BFSA Workshops Committee was comprised of three volunteers who participated in a general meeting of the organization: Ms. Katrice Jones-Morgan, Ms. Tia M. Doxey and Dr. Handy Williamson, Jr.

The Workshop Planning Committee used a meeting of the Conference Planning Committee as a focus session for brainstorming topics, issues and possible workshop themes. Subsequent to the focus session, the Workshop Planning Committee met to summarize and discuss feasible directions, issues and benefits expected from the workshops. The six titles that appear in the official program were selected, and appropriate descriptions were developed. The descriptions were designed to give the potential participants some notion as to expected outcomes and benefits from the conference (*see Appendix B*).

The 1999 BFSA PDC workshop panelists were selected from among colleagues on campus and within the community who would have the technical competence and the desired representational status. The panelists were contacted and presented with synopses of the respective workshops. Upon agreeing to conduct the workshops, panelists were sent written materials. Follow-up calls were made to help coordinate and synchronize the workshop materials and form panels (*see Appendix C*.)

**The Conference Luncheon:**

The conference luncheon was chaired by Ms. Attica Scott. The Rev. Dr. Lonnie McIntyre gave the luncheon invocation. The official welcome was extended by Dr. John Peters, senior Vice Chancellor and Provost (UTK). Dr. Peters stressed the importance of continued professional development and encouraged the organization to continue with productive activities. He stated that the University continues to pursue ways to increase the number of under represented minorities on campus. He noted that while some progress has been made, much remains to be accomplished.

The luncheon keynote speaker was Dr. John Morrow, the Franklin Professor of History at The University of Georgia (*see bio in Appendix D*). He was introduced by Dr. Cynthia Fleming, Professor of African-American Studies at UTK. Dr. Morrow, having served many years on the faculty at UTK and a number as Department Head, was able to couch his comments in rather

accurate and familiar terms. Dr. Morrow cautioned that the University's failure to achieve meaningful progress on desegregation stems from entrenched racism and indifference.

The Awards Committee recognized Dr. Nebraska Mayes for his many years of yeoman service to higher education in Tennessee and across the nation. Accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Helen Mayes, a retired UTK staffer, Dr. Mayes accepted the award with grace and deep humility. Awards were available for presentation to workshop panelists and other significant contributors to the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Due to time constraints, the awards had to be delivered later and under an alternate venue. The musical segment was provided by students from UTK, accompanied/assisted by Ms. Tia Doxey. Also on hand for recognition was Mr. T. Martin, the National Championship Quarterback for the Tennessee Vols. Mr. Martin extended thanks for the recognition and acknowledged the contribution of teammates and community supporters.

***The Conference Roundtable Discussions:***

The conference roundtables were planned to give participants the opportunity to focus collectively on issues of major concern. There was the expectation that the discussions would focus on and around the recommendations made to the UTK Chancellor and contained in a Task Force Report. That discussion was overtaken by a shunted focus on the embattled and vulnerable African and African-American Studies Program (AAASP). Participants expressed several viewpoints: 1) closing the AAASP would be a disservice to students; 2) the AAASP's difficulty lies in the structural arrangement; 3) the AAASP's problem is institutional — too few faculty available in related departments to teach courses; and 4) the AAASP's problem lies in staffing — there is no secretarial support for the program.

Brief discussion relating to the *position paper* revealed that there had been no administrative response. Increasing numbers of Black faculty and staff are leaving, not being replaced, resulting in a deficit of representation among department heads, dean, vice chancellors and above. Recent opportunities to rectify this problem during searches and hires resulted in no net gains, e.g., all of the hires in the English Department have been white.

The discussion of *Title VI/Affirmative Action* yielded the call for: 1) vigilance and confrontation to keep meaningful issues alive and satisfactorily resolved; 2) publicizing all over the state "hidden agendas" and underhanded racism; 3) demanding accountability for priorities and decisions made — "put people on the spot" to get them to acknowledge what they are doing; and 4) be on the offensive and be assertive.

Relating to the *UTK Chancellor's Commission for Blacks*, discussants asserted that the BFSA could make itself more effective by asking the right questions and demanding acceptable answers. Some of those questions would be: 1) What does the Commission for Blacks do and what should it be doing? 2) Why does the Commission not raise relevant issues that concern

Black folks? 3) Are most Black folk at UTK compromised in some way? 4) What is happening with regard to Title VI? 5) Why are there more Black folks leaving the University than are being replaced? 6) What does DRES do and what should it be doing?

Finally, the discussion relative to *Geier vs. Sundquist* (see *Appendix E*) raised questions regarding the numbers being reported, lack of public knowledge regarding progress and the general lack of openness.

### **The Conference Registration:**

There were approximately 150 persons registered for the Professional Development Conference. Faculty, staff, administrators, students and visitors from the local communities were noticeably well represented in the conference throughout the day. Each of the six workshops were well attended, and evaluations were positively encouraging. The design and compilation of the conference program, registration flier and workshop descriptions were proposed by members of the Planning Committee. The final program document was generated by Mr. Alden Coleman and reproduced by the Graphic Arts Department. The registration activity was facilitated by Mr. Coleman who included a feature to allow participants to register and track registration via the Internet. Already the call for the registration for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual BFSA Conference in 2000 has gone forth (see *Appendix F for registration form*).

### **The Conference Budget:**

The conference was supported by funds provided through DRES and the UTK OHRM. Total funding in the amount of \$11,078.00, was provided from this source. Those funds covered costs of honoraria and expenses for the keynote speakers, the conference lunch, transportation, refreshments for breaks, printing and binding expense, equipment rentals, awards, and miscellaneous items (see *Attached Budget in Appendix G*).

Nonbudgeted expenses included the time cost for those employees who voluntarily planned and facilitated the conference. Leveraged value arose in the form of professional workshops presented by local experts and community organization representatives, at no charge to the University.

### **The Conference Logo:**

The logo was proposed as a symbolic icon that would focus the energetic intent of the 1999 conference. It was also crafted to reflect diversity, dialogue and cohesiveness. It accomplished all three. Because of the initial receptivity of the logo, it was decided to affix it to the custom designed conference certificates, to the program and to the newly redesigned BFSA Webb page. The BFSA recognizes the power contained in symbolic imaging (see *Appendix H for logo*).

**The Conference Poem:**

A poem selected for the occasion was penned by Mr. Nelson Mandela, outgoing President of South Africa and world renown opponent of apartheid and injustice. The poem, entitled "Our Deepest Fear," was included as a vehicle to speak to the hearts and minds of BFSA's membership and to those who value its purposes (*see Appendix I*). If but a few individuals read the poem and take it to heart, they will likely be positively encouraged to use their talent and "light" to serve in ways to mold The University of Tennessee into an institution of true greatness — a great institution where all citizens of Tennessee are welcomed, encouraged and valued. A few short days following the conference, the same poem was echoed from the lips of a young, brilliant and fabulous Bearden High School senior class president, who happened to be female and African-American. Her words resonated well in the hallowed halls of the UTK Thompson Boling Arena. Within the mind of the one who proposed the conference poem, the essence of the senior class president's rendition will remain.... "*our presence automatically liberates others.*"

**The Directory of Key Conference Participants:**

A Directory of Pre-Registered Participants (DPP) was developed and displayed on the BFSA Webb page to allow for planned networking and preconference contacts (*see Appendix J*). The DPP allowed the committee members and interested persons to share knowledge of the rate, volume and diversity of participation. It also allowed the Planning Committee the opportunity to gauge needed modifications in space, food, and materials needed. Special requirements were also posted to assure appropriate accommodation for the physically, visually and hearing impaired participants.

**Conference Publicity and Press Releases, Etc.:**

The Conference Publicity Committee endeavored to have the activity well publicized. An article appeared in the *Context* regarding Dr. John Morrow's speech and professional accomplishments. Also, an announcement appeared in the April 1, 1999, issue of UT's *Staff Stuff* on page 2.

**Collaborating and Supporting Organizations:**

A number of organizations collaborated in a variety of ways to make the conference a success. Some provided direct and hands-on involvement, while others encouraged participation. Those organizations are listed in alphabetical order below:

***Within the University:***

- College of Arts and Sciences
- Community Partnership Center
- College of Law

- Computing and Academic Services
- Diversity Resources and Educational Services
- Educational Advancement Program
- Hodges Library
- Institute for Agriculture
- Office of the Chancellor
- Office of Human Resource Management
- Space and Facilities Management
- Black Cultural Center
- UTK News Center
- University Housing

***Within the Knoxville Community:***

- Hampton and Associates
- Knoxville Coca Cola
- Knox County Commission
- Knoxville Police Advisory Review Commission
- Knoxville Young Men's Christian Association

**The Conference Mailing List:**

The conference mailing list was generated from a number of entities, including DRES, OHRM and the Black Cultural Center.

**BFSA Web Page Rendition of The Conference Report:**

The report is available on the BFSA Webb page at <http://web.utk.edu/~bfsa/default.html>.

**The BFSA Planning Calendar :1999-2000**

One outcome from the 1998-1999 BFSA Conference Planning Committee's deliberation was the early initiation of the planning process for the 2000 BFSA Conference. Hence, the planning calendar was to begin during the current process and preregistration for the next conference was to be possible this year. The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual BFSA Conference is to be held on April 28, 2000. The second item was a planning meeting slated for May 14, 1999, at which the outcome of this conference and the framework for next year will be discussed. Main events for the year 1999-2000 calendar are: 1) the year 2000 BFSA Conference, 2) the quarterly workshops, 3) regular meetings, 4) meetings with the Chancellor, 5) meetings with the Desegregation Monitoring Committee, 6) meetings with community organizations, 7) the Faculty/Staff Christmas Craft Show and 8) social and networking activities.

**Conference Evaluation Results:**

The workshop committee took the lead in developing evaluation instruments for the workshops, roundtables and for the conference. (see *Appendix K*). The instruments were passed out and collected by workshop facilitators.

**Workshop Evaluations** — Regarding the workshops, the intent was to gather feedback on several factors (organization, subject coverage, complexity of materials, applicability of subjects, duration, adequacy for established needs, style of presentation and facilitation, and likelihood of recommendation) and use it to improve future offerings. Several existing instruments were evaluated and a composite version emerged from the committee. A total of 110 workshop evaluations were completed and returned. Those results are presented for the respective workshops next.

The workshop on *Financial Fitness* was evaluated by twenty-two participants, 90 percent of which felt that the workshop was well organized. Similarly, participants evaluated the workshop's subject matter coverage as excellent (86 percent); Only 27 percent felt that the material was too complex, while 90 percent felt it to be applicable. The workshop quality exceeded expectations of 64 percent of participants, and 90 percent would recommend it to others. Finally, over two thirds of participants felt that the facilitation was excellent.

The workshop on *Healthy Self Outlook* was evaluated by thirteen participants, with over 90 percent indicating that it was well organized., with good subject matter coverage and high subject matter applicability. Forty six percent felt that the materials were to complex, while 38 percent felt that it was ok. While The respondents were equally divided regarding the length of the workshop, over 76 percent felt that the presentation style and facilitation were excellent. Similarly, over seventy five percent would recommend the workshop to others.

The workshop on *Technological Mastery and Y2K* was evaluated by thirteen participants, with 85 percent feeling that it was well organized and 70 percent indicating good subject matter coverage. While more 60 percent felt that the material was too complex, eighty five percent felt that it was applicable. Nearly a third of the respondents felt that the workshop was too long and more than two thirds felt that it met their needs. Eighty five percent felt that the presentation was excellent and 70 percent indicated similar sentiment regarding facilitation. The workshop would be recommended to others by around 70 percent of the respondents.

The workshop on *Professional Advancement* was evaluated by 17 participants, and 88 percent felt that it was well organized. While over 80 percent felt that subject matter coverage was excellent, only 35 percent felt that it was too complex. While 88 percent felt that the subject mater was appropriate, less than 25 percent felt that it was too long. Eighty eight percent said that

the workshop exceeded expectations and that the presentation style and facilitation were excellent. Similarly, 88 percent would recommend it to others.

The workshop on *Community Relations* was evaluated by 22 participants, with 86 percent commending it as well organized and 82 percent indicated excellent subject matter coverage. While about half felt the complexity was about right, over 80 percent felt that it was applicable. The duration was felt too long by less than 50 percent, while over two thirds felt that it met their needs. The presentation styles were commended by 86 percent and 95 percent felt that facilitation was excellent. Eighty six (86) percent of the respondents would recommend it to others..

The workshop on *Affirmative Action* was evaluated by 23 participants and over 86 percent felt that it was well organized. Eighty three percent felt that subject matter coverage was excellent and 60 percent felt that it was complex. Applicability of subject matter was rated as excellent by 87 percent of the respondents. While 26 percent felt that it was too long, 91 percent said that it met their needs and exceeded expectations. Presentation style was rated as excellent by 87 percent, facilitation was rated as excellent by 74 percent and over 85 percent would recommend the workshop to others.

***Roundtable Evaluations*** — Participants were asked to evaluate the roundtable based on: organization, subject matter coverage, complexity of materials, applicability of information, duration, relevance, and ability to recommend to others. Approximately 33 persons responded to the evaluation with the following results: 78 percent felt that the roundtables were good to excellent, and 96 percent felt that the subject coverage was adequate and well organized. Ninety-six percent felt that the roundtable discussion had the appropriate level of complexity, while 93 percent felt the material was applicable to current needs. Fifteen percent of the participants felt that the roundtables were too long, while 9 percent felt they were too short. Overall, the roundtable discussion met the needs of 60 percent of the respondents. Over 80 percent would recommend the roundtable discussion and experience to others.

Participants were given the opportunity to provide written comments regarding the roundtable strong points, weak points and additional insight felt needed. The segments below carry almost direct transcription of the participants' feedback:

The strong points were — The forum was open and allowed for group sharing and individual comments. The subject matter and the setting were conducive to good discussion and audience participation. The seminar underscored the importance of Blacks coming together to develop a stronger community presence. The workshop was good and now the ball is in BFSA's court to organize, focus on main issues, ask for/demand more than we currently have and be creative. It is time to stand firm together, allowing participants to join the program.

The weak points were — The subject matter did not relate to everyone in the audience, and the speakers should have been timed. One participant was allowed to talk too long about matters of nostalgia and diverted the coverage of one subject for too long. Too many people left before the roundtable started, and too many Black faculty and staff members were absent. The subject was too broad, and the forum was too open for full participation.

Additional comments were provided and characterized next. The roundtable discussion should not be based on UT specific issues if you are inviting non-UT faculty and staff to attend. Perhaps the name of BFSA should be changed to the Black White Faculty Staff Association (BWFSA). The BFSA Conference is a good thing, and BFSA, as an organization, should remain a viable force at UT and in the community. I have enjoyed all of the past conferences. Somehow, this was the best ever. Many congratulations and thanks to the folks who got this conference funded, organized and presented. (I think that is important for me to say that I am a white person, and that I appreciate being welcomed to participate in and benefit from this every year.)

**Printed Materials and Documents Generated for The Conference :**

A number of working documents were developed to facilitate the conference planning and implementation. Many of these items are standard but were not made available from previous years. Hence, the committee found it necessary to develop the instruments from scratch. This consumed considerable effort and added to the overall effort. In an effort to harvest the energy expended this year for future use, the various documents are catalogued and maintained in an appropriate file format and are to be presented to the incoming Planning Committee. Those documents are: The Banner, The Hold Date postcard, the Registration Form, the Workshop, Evaluation Form, The Roundtable Evaluation Form, Conference Flier, The Conference Program, The Conference Certificate, The Conference Name Badges, The Conference Signage, The Conference Webb Page, The Conference Facilitators Guide, The Conference Correspondence Log, and The Conference Luncheon Program.

A conference banner was developed and displayed strategically to attract attention to the conference and encourage strong participation. The banner is maintained for use in the future. Other documents generated were (*see Appendix L*):

**Lessons Learned from Conference Planning and Implementation:**

It is better to provide lead time for planning and for scheduling the involvement of key individuals. Dissatisfaction can be a positive commodity when used to achieve constructive and purposeful ends. Employees are willing to devote time to a voluntary activity for which they will receive permission and recognition. Employees have tremendous and untapped abilities that are underutilized due to the nature and structure of the work environment. Employees like to be involved in planning and decision making, rather than being told what to do. Faculty and staff have the capacity to achieve tremendous results in circumstances where mutual respect and trust are allowed to flourish. Employees are eager to learn and engage in professional development activities that will benefit themselves and the University. Diversity issues remain a major concern among employees at the University. The University of Tennessee at Knoxville has not done a competent job of achieving the desegregation goals of *Geier v. Sundquist*. The University has not done a credible job of being forthcoming with plans, outcome and statistics related to desegregation.