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Memo: Subcommittee Findings Pertaining to Task Force Recommendations (20, 21, & 22)

Commission for Blacks

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Black/Staff Subcommittee
FROM: Mike Fitzgerald
DATE: April 3, 1990
SUBJECT: Subcommittee Findings Pertaining to Task Force Recommendations (20, 21, & 22)

RECOMMENDATION 20

A formal program should be implemented to raise the awareness of all faculty and staff with respect to both the legal responsibility and moral obligation we share in the matter of harmonious race relations and non-biased treatment of all students and co-workers.

FINDINGS

In 1988 the Chancellor promised that the Central Program Council, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, and the International House, working with the Office of Affirmative Action, will be charged with developing programs throughout the year to reflect the spirit of recommendation 2 (relating to the creation of structured, broad-based programs aimed at sensitizing all students to the despicability of racism.

The Central Program Council (CPC) in February was asked what Academic Year 1989-90 programs were being offered that related to cultural and racial diversity. The staff-person who answered the call forwarded us to the Office of Minority Student Affairs--suggesting that the CPC does not have, or does not think that it has, or has not trained its staff to know or think that it has, a responsibility in this area!

The Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) reported a variety of events and speakers that focus on African-American heritage and culture, but there is no indication that this program is developed or implemented in coordination with the other units mentioned by the Chancellor. The International House (IH) during the 1989-90 AY is sponsoring an impressive array of programs centered on the appreciation of cultural diversity. Further, the IH sponsors staff development training for student staff in the Dean of Student's office, training for secretaries for working with people who are of a different culture, and supported cross-cultural training for Resident Assistants in university housing.

Based on a conversation with the secretary of the Office of Affirmative Action (OAA), it does not appear that the OAA formally participates in the development and execution of programs mentioned by the Chancellor. - [unclear] OAA has been doing training for the past

We find that the university has not entirely implemented the letter or spirit of Task Force Recommendation 2. Most especially, the kind of structured, integrated, program for sensitizing students recommended by the Task Force does not appear to have materialized. Further, the adequacy of current staffing and budgetary resources for the affected offices needs to be determined. Finally, some assessment of the quality of existing programs needs to be undertaken. Progress has been made but we are unsure as to how much and to what result.

The Chancellor promised that the summer 1988 student orientation program would include a component for students which reflects the Task Force's concerns. It was promised that the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Provost would address "these issues" in the discussions they host for the parents of incoming students.

Mr. Clay Brown, Director of Student Orientation, reports that the letter and spirit of the Chancellor's pledge has been kept since 1988. Mr. Brown reports that a racial awareness component has been added to the Student Orientation Assistant (SOA) training program; that a cultural diversity component has been added to the summer orientation program; and that parents are advised of UT's commitment to cultural diversity and racial equality during Dean of Students Jerry Askew's presentation. It should be noted that the cultural diversity component for students is conducted with the help of the Office of Minority Affairs and the Center for International Education.

We find that significant progress has been made toward the implementation of Task Force recommendation 9. Further assessment of the nature and quality of the existing program should be undertaken in the future.

The Chancellor in 1988 indicated that Recommendation 10 would best be addressed by the faculty and the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate agreed to do so. The Chancellor further promised that new faculty would be provided with information regarding Task Force concerns about faculty attitudes toward minority students. Because Handy Williamson was asked to investigate this recommendation I did not gather information relating to it. The Faculty Senate Professional Development Committee in 1988-89 reviewed this Task Force Recommendation and concluded that the university administration should sponsor regular, possibly annual, workshops and/or seminars for faculty on race relations to be conducted by trained professionals. This recommendation, and others, were included in a Committee Report that was approved by the Senate in October 1989. We do not know the status of the recommendations since.

Dr. Joseph Trahern, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, reports that no formal university program of the type envisioned by the Task Force has been instituted or discussed in detail.

Overall, with the exception of the summer orientation program, it does not appear that the University has made significant progress in implementing either the letter or the spirit of Task Force Recommendation 20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission indicate its very strong concern for the lack of progress to date in implementing Recommendation 20, related recommendations, and past Chancellor's promises. The Commission should issue a statement of commendation to the Office of Student Orientation for its efforts regarding the implementation of Recommendation 2. The relative progress made by the Office of Student Orientation suggests what can happen when responsibility for action is fixed.

Given the breadth of their Recommendation 20 responsibilities (as linked by Recommendation 2), the closest attention needs to be paid to the present level of staffing and resources being allocated to the Office of Minority Affairs and the International House. The contribution of the International House in particular seems striking relative to its staff and budget; the Commission should issue commendations to both of these organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 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.

FINDINGS

According to Assistant Vice Chancellor Bert Sams, is what "University Awards" exist, how they are awarded, and numbers of awards since 1981:

Mace Bearer (9): A faculty award, one per year, in which the chancellor selects the awardee based on the recommendation of the Provost's staff.

Distinguished Service Professors (12): A faculty award with a fixed number of total awardees; i.e., appointments are made only when a vacancy occurs through resignation, retirement, or death. Awardees selected by the Chancellor based on the recommendation of the Provost's staff.

Chancellor's Research and Creative Achievement Awards (44): A faculty award in which nominations are solicited from the university community by the Research Council. A Research Council screening committee makes recommendations to the Chancellor who selects the awardees.

National Alumni Association Outstanding Teacher Awards (37): A teaching faculty award where nominations are solicited from the university community and alumni by a screening committee appointed by the Alumni Office. The Screening Committee makes recommendations to the Chancellor who selects awardees.

Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Service to the University (23): A faculty award in which a committee solicits nominations from the university community and makes recommendations to the Chancellor who selects awardees. In 1988 the Task Force on Race Relations received this award.

Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Community Service (17): A faculty award in which nominations are solicited from the university community by a committee that makes recommendations to the Chancellor who selects awardees.

Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Service to the University (39): A staff award in which nominations are solicited from the university community by a committee that makes recommendations to the Chancellor who selects awardees.

Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Service to the Community (4): A staff award in which nominations are solicited from the university community by a committee that makes recommendations to the Chancellor who selects awardees.

Thus, between 1981 and 1989 a total of 194 "University" Awards have been made. None of these appears to be "honorary" in that all are supposed to reflect distinguished service or achievement based on an assessment of nominations and committee deliberation. The procedure for the Mace Bearer and Distinguished Service Professors awards is troubling. These awards are based on the nomination of what used to be the Provost's staff. This is a small group and the potential for its inadvertently missing the contribution of minority faculty seems

quite high in comparison to other awards, where nominations are typically solicited from the university community at-large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The original Task Force recommendation does not mention the numerous awards presented by Colleges, Schools, and Departments around campus. We recommend that awards given by every UT-K unit be incorporated into the language of recommendation 21. We further recommend that the process by which all UT-K units make awards be fully specified and provided to the Commission annually. We recommend that each year the Commission be provided with a summary, by race, of the number of UT-K award recipients. We recommend that the Chancellor's Office immediately review the procedures by which the Mace Bearer and Distinguished Service Professors awards are determined to assure fair and full consideration of all groups on campus.

RECOMMENDATION 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 handicapped.

FINDINGS

In 1988 Chancellor Reese reported that "this recommendation has not met with significant enthusiasm ... by currently-established groups, nor by the administrative staff. The general feeling (and my own) is that several groups -- the Commission for Women, the commission for Blacks, and the Adaptive Living Committee -- already have general "oversight" responsibilities for matters dealing with equity; and the creation of yet another committee seems redundant and insensitive to demands on the time of the individuals who would likely be involved."

Based on brief telephone interviews with members of the Commission for Women (10 of the 34 members were interviewed) and the Adaptive Living Committee (6 of the 13 members were interviewed) it appears that:

1. The creation of a University Civil Rights Commission is a good idea "in principle," if it would not duplicate the efforts and purposes of already existing organizations. The most common concern is over whether a general commission might fail to sufficiently attend to the special needs and situations of specific groups (blacks, women, or the handicapped).
2. People are uncertain as to exactly what such an organization would do. There is a sense that an "umbrella" organization could consolidate the concerns of, and focus attention on, women and the handicapped in a way present groups cannot. At the same time, there is concern for just how independent and powerful such an organization would need to be in order to accomplish anything. People do not see the creation of a Civil Rights Commission as alleviating the need for separate organizations devoted to the concerns of women and the handicapped.
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3. The Commission, according to those interviewed, could usefully:
 - Serve as a board for resolving discrimination complaints
 - Provide a clearinghouse for information and programs dealing with discrimination

--Coordinate the activities & concerns of the Commissions for Blacks and Women and the Adaptive Living Committee

--Help recruit minority and handicapped students

--Conduct workshops to deal with multi-cultural issues

--Promote research and data gathering on discrimination at UT, as well as in his area and region

--Conduct an assessment of the present status and needs of UT women, minorities, and handicapped

Recommendation 22 is not a sufficient basis upon which to elicit detailed opinions about a Civil Rights Commission. Until a proposal for the Civil Rights Commission detailing its organization, duties, powers, and relationship to other organizations is forthcoming, people simply are not sure what to think of the idea. Recommendation 22 needs to be considered in relationship to exactly how the Commission for Blacks ultimately decides to resolve the question of assigning administrative responsibility for race relations at UT. Exactly what are we going to recommend to the Chancellor? A Civil Rights Commission could be the administrative and enforcement organ for the pursuit of equality, equal opportunity, and the appreciation of cultural diversity at UT. Or, for example, this might well be done by a Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs, as per Recommendation 7.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that no further action regarding Recommendation 21 be contemplated until the administration has made clear its plans for implementing an integrated approach to dealing with race relations at UT-K. At that time, we recommend that the question of a Civil Rights Commission be reconsidered as necessary.

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[illegible]