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Letter: To Chancellor Reese About Ad Hoc Committee on the Minority Scholarship and Assistant Fund Issues

Commission for Blacks

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
2014 LAKE AVENUE
BOX 8820 UNIVERSITY STATION
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37916

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

TELEPHONE (615) 974-3775

June 3, 1977

Chancellor Jack Reese
The University of Tennessee
506 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, TN 37916

Dear Chancellor Reese:

During the Spring Quarter a Commission for Blacks Ad Hoc Committee on the Minority Scholarship and Assistance Fund has endeavored to become informed about the financial resources (loan, scholarship, fellowship, work-study) which are presently available to minority students at UTK and to formulate suggestions concerning how such resources might be increased. It has become clear during the deliberations of the Commission for Blacks over the past two years that one of the major problems confronting minority students on our campus is financial, and that anything that can be done to increase the financial resources available to minority students would be singularly contributive to the welfare of those students and to the programs and life of the University.

Included in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee has been an inquiry into the present status and future prospects of the Tony Wilson Scholarship Fund. This fund, started several years ago in honor and memory of a UTK student, athlete, and track star whose life came to an all-too-early end, has received wide support across the UTK campus from students, faculty, and staff. The understanding that the Tony Wilson Scholarship Fund, when it reached the appropriate minimum balance, would be an additional resource available to minority students at UTK was widespread among those who actively supported the Tony Wilson Marathons, benefit concerts, and related endeavors. Upon inquiry, the Ad Hoc Committee discovered that the Tony Wilson Scholarship Fund has a current balance of over \$19,000 and that, when the balance in the fund reaches \$25,000, earnings will be available for scholarship distribution; that the Fund is under the jurisdiction of the UT Department of Athletics; that earnings from the Fund, when available, will provide UT athletic track scholarships; that, though minority student athletes will be among those eligible for these scholarships, the scholarships will not be designated specifically

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for minority student athletes. It was further ascertained that monies raised in recent years by the Tony Wilson Marathons have been divided between the Knoxville Track Club (co-sponsors of the marathons; presumably, this portion of these monies was added to the general fund of that organization) and the Tony Wilson Scholarship Fund. In view of the widespread misunderstanding across the UTK campus concerning the prospective use of monies contributed to and raised for the Tony Wilson Scholarship Fund, the Commission for Blacks recommends that a clarification of the status and prospective use of the monies in this Fund be issued to the UTK campus and be made available to other persons who have had a substantial interest in this Fund.

The Ad Hoc Committee further learned that the Minority Scholarship and Assistance Fund at UTK, instituted in 1972, has a current balance of \$4,228.69 (as of March 31, 1977). Financial assistance for minority students from this Fund will not even be available until the Fund balance reaches \$10,000 and there are earnings from this balance. Faculty members at UTK have the opportunity to contribute to the Fund by a payroll deduction plan. In the interest of the enlargement of the monies in this Fund, which the Commission feels should be an important priority on our campus, the Commission recommends that prospective participants in the UTK Capital Gifts Campaign, during both the campus and public phases of that campaign, be made aware 1) of the present status of the Fund and 2) that gifts, or portions of gifts, to the Capital Funds Campaign may be designated for the "The Minority Scholarship and Assistance Fund" at UTK. The Commission also feels that it is important to prepare for the distribution of scholarship and financial assistance monies ultimately to be made available by earnings of this Fund by establishing a committee to work with the Office of Financial Aids in defining guidelines and procedures for the most effective use of the financial resources for minority students thus to be made available.

We shall appreciate your directing attention to these recommendations, and shall be glad to work with you in any way we can to enhance the resources available to UTK minority students for scholarships and other forms of financial assistance. It should be noted that the UTK Office of Development (Mr. David Rule has been most helpful to the Ad Hoc Committee) and the Office of Financial Aids (Ms. Carolyn Cuddy provided extensive information about resources presently available) have been most cooperative in working with the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission for Blacks in exploring these matters.

Chancellor Jack Reese

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I might mention also that Jack Williams and I have met and discussed the possibility of the Commission for Blacks' working cooperatively with him or his representative in the Capital Gifts Campaign, particularly to promote and increase the Minority Scholarship and Assistance Fund.

Sincerely,

Betty J. Cleckley

Chairperson, Commission for Blacks

BJC/sjh

cc: Stanley Lusby

Chairperson, Ad Hoc Committee