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Commission for Blacks Meeting Minutes February 25, 1998

Commission for Blacks

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**COMMISSION FOR BLACKS
MINUTES: FEBRUARY 25, 1998**

The Commission for Blacks met at the Office of Diversity Resources and Educational Services (DRES) on February 25, 1998. The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm by committee chair, Roberto Benson. Members present included: Roberto Benson, Rosa Thomas, Joann Jeter, Marva Rudolph, Kadesha Washington, and Susan Mee. Two Graduate Assistants with the Office of DRES, Sami Randolph and Tonya Boga, were also in attendance.

II. Minutes of the January 28, 1998 meeting were distributed and reviewed. No changes were proposed for the minutes. Thus, the minutes were adopted as printed and distributed.

A question was posed to Dr. Benson concerning the Daily Beacon's request to do a feature article about the Commission. Dr. Benson reported that at this time he has not heard anything further from the Daily Beacon representative. He stated that he would follow up on the article because he believes an article should be written to address misconceptions about the commission and perhaps general misconceptions concerning African American faculty and students. Misconceptions were discussed later during the meeting. One misconception that was mentioned was that some faculty and students erroneously believe that UTK will accept any African American faculty and student that it can find and give them a "free ride" at the University of Tennessee. By "free ride" it is meant that the students receive an all expense paid education and unqualified faculty are hired and/or paid more than their colleagues.

III. Chairperson's Report

A. Dr. Benson stated that he met with the Chancellor on February 19, 1998 and discussed many things. One item addressed was the tracking of UTK faculty--salaries, longevity, and promotions. The aforementioned factors are not meant to be an exhaustive list. The Chancellor informed Dr. Benson that no one has ever requested such information before and that no such compiled information existed. However, Dr. Synder assigned Marianne Woodside to address the monumental task. Dr. Woodside's task is to:

1) build a model to collect the data. The Institutional Research Department at UTK will be utilized in developing the model.

2) collect data, starting with the current faculty and staff make-up. Initial data will focus on African American faculty and staff and then be applied to all faculty and staff so that we will have comparative information.

B. Dr. Roberto Benson announced that he will remain as CFB chair for another year.

IV. Old Business

A. APEC/NAPEC

Marva Rudolph stated that NAPEC (Non-Academic Program Evaluation Committee) began meeting in October of last year as opposed to APEC(Academic Program Evaluation Committee) which began their meetings earlier during the year and met throughout the summer. It will be awhile before we will begin to hear anything substantial from NAPEC. Once information becomes available, the CFB should pay close attention to the information and provide needed input because many staff persons are employed within the programs being evaluated.

There was discussion regarding the two campus climate committees. One committee is the Chancellor's Positive Climate Committee. The purpose of that committee is to identify and coordinate the various campus programs dealing with issues of diversity. One of the things the Committee is exploring at this time is the use of the Change Model Program which was developed for UTK by Camille Hazeur and Dhyana Ziegler. The Change Model program was initially set up to have ongoing dialogue among faculty, administrators and staff. The Committee is also exploring ways to deal with low morale on the campus as well as to monitor change.

The other Climate Committee is a subcommittee of the ACPB. It is chaired by Dr. Maxine Thompson with the purpose of (1) evaluating the five year plan and (2) making suggestions in programs that address climate concerns.

C. Black Staff Development Fund (BSDF). Attica Scott will begin the program in the fall.

D. Black Faculty and Staff Conference. A meeting was held on Thursday, February 19, 1998 with members of the BSDF, DRES, and Attica Scott to discuss ways these two groups could provide financial assistance for the BFSA Conference.

E. Standing Committees - Report

1. Committee for Community Concerns: Rosa Thomas met with Art Gatson. She asked if he wanted to attend another meeting with the Commission for Blacks and he declined to do so at that time. Art Gatson also spoke with Joann Jeter. Joann announced that Art Gatson wanted to speak with Dr. Benson concerning some matters. Dr. Benson stated that he would speak with Art Gatson.

2. Rosa Thomas has scheduled a meeting with Debby Shriver to discuss the Diversity Award. The meeting is scheduled for February 26, 1998 at 10:00 am at the Office of Human Resource Management. Jo Milton, Rosa Thomas, Margie Russell and Debby Shriver are scheduled to be in attendance at this meeting. Rosa expects that the award will be in place by next year.

V. New Business

A. Student Concern Committee -- Dr. Benson requested feedback on whether or not the committee thinks that the Student Concern subcommittee should be further subdivided to include both Undergraduate and Graduate representation. This would mean adding additional student seats. No objections were made to this suggestion. Dr. Benson will work on making the necessary adjustments, additions, etc.

B. Relationship between Commission for Blacks and Black Faculty and Staff Association. Those present indicated that it might be helpful to have a better working relationship between the two groups. It was suggested that some type of initial contact might be made between the two Chairs to discuss and explore the programming agendas and focus of each organization. It was also suggested that we consider having a discussion forum on an issue common to both organizations such as a discussion about Blacks at White Institutions.

It was acknowledged that both organizations share some of the same goals including recognizing the “unsung hero” and increasing recruitment and retention results.

VI. Position Announcements.

Joann Jeter informed that Committee of two positions available in the Department of Career Services that were not listed in the announcement.

VII. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.