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Commission for Blacks

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Commission for Blacks: Minutes
March 24, 1999

The Commission for Blacks met on March 24, 1999 in the fifth floor conference room of Andy Holt Tower. Members present included Roberto Benson, Alan Chesney, Judy Jackson, JoAnn Jeter, Jocelyn Milton, Latha Reddy, Mary Robinson, and Rosa Emory Thomas. Members reviewed the minutes of the March meeting. An approval was granted for the minutes.

The Chair reported on a conversation with a new faculty member from the Electrical Engineering department and suggested that the Commission for Blacks should reaffirm their dedication to mentoring promising new minority faculty members. Ms. Judy Jackson commented that mentoring should be the focus of each department and not the responsibilities of the Commission. Mr. Alan Chesney suggested that the members of the Commission become involved in outreaching so that new Electrical Engineering faculty members will be encouraged to attend the meetings of the Commission and become acquainted with the members as an alternative means to mentoring. He, further, stated that the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) is currently in the process of providing a list of all the new minority hires to the Commission for Blacks.

Dr. Benson stated that the College of Engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the College of Engineering at the Tennessee State University have national rankings for African American graduates that outscore some of the more prestigious universities such as Stanford University.

Dr. Benson provided a copy of an article from an electrical engineering magazine on Mark Dean, Ph.D, the recipient of a Golden Torch Award recognized as the Distinguished Engineer of the Year. Dr. Mark Dean received a Bachelor's degree at the University of Tennessee in 1979, a Master's degree at Florida Atlantic University in 1982, and a Ph.D. at Stanford University in 1992. He holds more than 20 patents, three of which are part of IBM's original nine PC Patents. He is the third African American who was elected to the Inventor's American Alumnus Hall of Fame and is the only African American IBM Fellow. Dr. Benson stated that the African American alumnus from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville should be recognized for their outstanding achievements. He told the present members that he would meet with the Chancellor to discuss why Dr. Mark Dean has not received any recognition from the University.

In regards to old business, Dr. Benson led the members for discussion on the parameters of the Black Faculty Staff Association Position Paper. Marva Rudolph, Alan Chesney, Dennie Littlejohn, and Ron McFadden were scheduled to meet March 26, 1999 to discuss progress on plans for the BFSFA conference.

Dr. Benson told the members to begin thinking of individuals who have exhibited exemplary performance as potential nominees for the Charter Day awards. Copies of the nomination form for the Gene Mitchell Gray Pioneer Award for students and the Hardy Liston, Jr. Symbol of Hope Award for faculty, staff, alumni, and friends were distributed

to the present members. Ms. Jocelyn Milton reminded members that the deadline to submit nominations for the Charter Day Awards is May 1, 1999.

Furthermore, Dr. Benson stated to the members that a registry of African American candidates should be developed in which a pool of candidates and their resumes are categorized based upon interest and skill levels for the purposes of identifying and tracking valuable African American candidates for key positions on campus.

Lastly, Dr. Benson reported on the following position announcements: Head of the Department for the Materials Science and Engineering in the College of Engineering, Recreation Coordinator of the Student Affairs Division, and Financial Analyst of the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for April 21, 1999.