



1973

1973 Report of Interview with Graduate School of Planning

Commission for Blacks

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE 37916
COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION

TO: Hardy Liston, Chairman, Task Force on Blacks

FROM: Mary Rose Gram

DATE: November 13, 1973

RE: Report of Interview with Graduate School of Planning - Oct. 30, 1973
Task Force on Blacks

Mr. Jim Spencer, Acting Director, Graduate School of Planning, talked with Roy Knight, Marvin Peak and Mary Rose Gram from the Task Force. The Master's degree in planning requires 72 hours of course work. Since 1965 there have been approximately 107 graduates of whom three were black. Currently there are 65 to 70 students in the program of these 6 are black students. There are 6 full time equivalent faculty and 1 part-time faculty. The faculty includes no women nor blacks. The faculty recruitment is related to specific professional skills which are related to the needs of the teaching program. The professional organization, The American Institute of Planners, which credit programs in planning has an affirmative action plan.

Faculty Recruitment - In 1972-73 there was one permanent and one part-time temporary faculty person added. This position was advertised and recruited on an informal basis. There were 50 applicants, of these 2 were black. One of whom did not meet the requirements for a Master of Science degree and experience.

Recruitment of Students - Contacts have been made through the TVA Regional Planning Office, Fisk University and Tuskegee University. The students for the program come from Social Science, Engineering, Architecture or Liberal Arts. Entrance requirements include two letters from recommending professor and one from a planning agency. Faculty from the School Planning have taught at Knoxville College without salary. A Master's degree in City and Regional Program Planning has been approved at Fisk University. Several years ago when there were three black graduate students in the program, they did not feel that the curriculum of the school was meeting their needs regarding Inner City Planning and they presented several demands to the faculty. Of these students eventually one dropped out, one finished his degree and one did not complete his thesis. The general philosophy of this school is that the master's degree is for the preparation of a generalist and if the people want to get special expertise in Intercity Design or Environmental Design that further work experience and formal educational experience is necessary; therefore, the demands of these black students were not relevant to the planning of the curricula in this school.

TO: Hardy Liston
November 13, 1973
Page 2

For students who do want a more specialized program of some nature, it is possible for an inter-university program to be developed such as specialized work in Alabama with Urban affairs.

It may be necessary to change the advising procedure to encourage more students to complete their thesis. Many complete all the course work but do not complete their thesis. In general, it takes more than 2 years to complete the program by the time the students have completed their thesis. There is a non-thesis option which requires a 3.5 GPA plus a course in research methods; however, the philosophy of the school is such that they believe that research as a base for decision making is more valuable for meeting the needs of the future.

Placement of Students - The school maintains a file of graduate students. Positions are advertised.

Affirmative Action - Mr. Spencer is acting director of the program and in certain aspects is hindered by his lack of permanency; however, he is committed to firming up contacts in black schools and visiting black campus'. In particular, he is concerned about the writing skills of the students in planning. He is very concerned because of written reports, oral presentations, etc. by which the ideas of the planners are presented to the political bodies which must act on these plans.

MRG/jh