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Draft of the CFB-BRAC Response to the 1990 CFB Task Force Report

Commission for Blacks

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July 7, 1999

TO: Members of the CFB-BRAC Committee

FROM: Marva

SUBJECT: Draft of the CFB-BRAC Response to the 1990 CFB Task Force Report

Enclosed please find the DRAFT report as it stands to date. I have tried to summarize our ever-evolving discussions. The enclosed is to give us a common point of departure so that we can make changes as needed. Remember, the meeting is scheduled for Friday (July 9, 1999—noon—4th AHT). Maxine Thompson will provide information from the Student Issues Sub-Committee at the meeting.

Please review so that we can use our time wisely.

As always, thank you for all the help and time you have given to date. See you on Friday.

**DRAFT: PROPOSED RESPONSE FROM THE CFB & BRAC TO
RECOMMENDATION MADE IN THE CFB TASK FORCE REPORT OF
1990**

During the 1998-1999 academic year, members of the Commission for Blacks (CFB) and the Black Recruitment and Retention Advisory Committee (BRAC) came together as a joint body to review Task Force Recommendations proposed by the CFB in 1990. The purpose of such review was to assess the progress of African Americans at UTK. Based on such review, CFB-BRAC offers the following updated initial report.

The original 1990 CFB recommendations are noted in bold. The update follows immediately after each identified recommendation. Since some of the recommendations are still under discussion, we present this update as a report in progress.

INITIAL 1990 RECOMMENDATION AND 1999 UPDATE:

#1: The Task Force urges the adoption of a specific student infractions provision forbidding the use of racial slurs, epithets and related activities. We further propose that said policy be printed in the Standards of Conduct which appear in *Hilltopics*. Analogous provisions should be listed as part of the Personnel Policies. Said provision should be published in the University Work Rules.

#2: We recommend structured, broad-based programs aimed at sensitizing all students to the despicability of racism. We further remind the University that old patterns will be sustained and perpetuated if our students are not sensitized.

#3: The Task Force recommends that the University step up its efforts to effectively and completely integrate the Athletic Department and associated programs including cheering squads and bands.

#4. The Task Force recommends that the University develop a minority vendor program which will increase minority business relationships with the University.

The University has taken steps to fulfill this recommendation through the efforts of Morris Wilson (Assistant Director, Business Services) in Purchasing. However, we offer the following recommendations:

- a. Review the vendor bidding process to determine the extent and effectiveness of efforts to recruit minority participation.
- b. Develop a relationship between UTK (Morris Wilson, Assistant Director, Business Services) and the Knoxville Partnership Office (John Jackson, Director of Small Business Development).
- c. Make every effort to secure African American and other minority bidders for the new Black Cultural Center project and other capital improvement projects at UTK.

#5. The Chancellor of the University, in cooperation with the President of the University, should call a series of meetings with the 's top leadership (business, political, religious, educational and social) to discuss the urgent importance of making Knoxville a community which minority opportunity is a reality. The University should immediately begin developing sensitivity training sessions in cooperation with community-based organizations.

On-going efforts are being made to accomplish this objective. There is a continued effort to involve African Americans in a number of campus committees and advisory groups such as the: Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Excellence (ACE), Chancellor's Associates which coincidentally has an African American Chair-Elect; a newly formed Task Force with the Black Alumni Associates to look at UTK recruitment and

retention issues; and the involvement of community leaders in the BFSA professional Development Conference.

The Commission for Blacks should continue to serve as a conduit for the recognition and involvement of various community-based groups (such as Project Change, NAACP, Knoxville Urban League) that seek to build a minority-friendly community. The Community for Blacks should consider the possibility of including a community representative as an on-going member of Commission.

#6. The Task Force urges that the University widely publicize among students the procedures for students filing complaints with the University Ombudsperson. Furthermore, the functions of that office must be clearly and publicly articulated.

#7. The Task Force recommends that the University bring together under the leadership of a high level University administrator all special programs related to minority student interest. The Task Force proposes that UT immediately move to hire a Vice-Chancellor for Minority Affairs.

There was much discussion regarding this recommendation and more discussion is needed. However, there was general consensus on the following:

- a. Sustained campus-wide diversity requires the shared commitment of the total University community—all faculty, staff, and students. No single individual or office should bare the sole responsibility of diversifying the UTK campus.
- b. High level administrators should be held accountable for efforts toward diversifying their respective areas of responsibility. There should be clearly defined methods to help monitor and assess the efforts and progress made by such administrators and their areas of responsibility. The offices of Human Resources Management, Diversity Resources and Educational Services, Provost and Senior

Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and Minority Student Affairs can help develop a tool for identifying and evaluating such efforts.

- c. The offices of Diversity Resources and Educational Services (DRES), Minority Student Affairs, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and others should continue to develop program and activities aimed at addressing this issue.

#8. The Task Force suggests the universalization of sensitivity training programs for all employees. The Task Force urges that such programs be coordinated with the Commission for Blacks, the Black Faculty and Staff Association and other concerned groups.

This recommendation is strongly supported and various efforts have been initiated to address it. In the broadest sense of diversity, there are such on-going programs as the Religious Diversity Committee, Disability Awareness Training, and various programs on AA/EEO, Sexual Harassment, and ADA offered by DRES. On the issue of race specifically, there are such on-going programs as Project Excel and others offered the Multicultural Center, FOCUS, and programs offered by DRES on diversity issues in general. However, although much has been done, there is a need for additional steps. We recommend the following:

- a. The Office of DRES should identify and disseminate information campus-wide describing the various UTK programs and activities that provide diversity training—type, subject matter, suggested audience, etc. In addition, the Office of DRES should conduct an informal survey to assess the various efforts by other higher educational institutions to compare UTK's progress on this issue and gather any new ideas. This information should be made available to the campus by the Summer of 2000.
- b. Diversity training should be provided to all UTK persons--faculty, staff, students and particularly to persons in managerial, supervisory, and administrative positions. Strong support should come from managers, supervisors, and administrators (department heads) to encourage persons within their reporting areas of responsibility to participate and support such training.

- c. Diversity training should be provided both as a separate type of training, stressing dialogue among participants, and as a topic incorporated within other types of on-going training. The common message is that diversity is and should be an integral part of everything we do at the University.

#9. The Task Force urges that the orientation program for all students include a strong component which emphasizes cultural diversity and individual student obligation to obey the laws of the country, the state and the University with respect to racial equality. Further, the Task Force urges that this same emphasis be a part of the orientation which the University offers for parents.

#10. The Task Force recommends that the administration take immediate steps to address the issue of faculty attitudes toward black students, and to provide a forum through which faculty can confront and forge solutions to this problem.

This recommendation is still under discussion. However, it is noted that Recommendation #10 is directly related to previously identified recommendations particularly # 7, #8, and #9. We note here the importance that department heads and high level administrators can play in developing and promoting positive attitudes toward diversity of ideas, cultures, and populations.

#11. UTK should aggressively seek funding for competitive undergraduate, graduate and professional minority scholarships. These scholarships should include a financial commitment for the duration of the respective degree programs.

It is noted that the University has done much to address this recommendation. Currently available are the following programs: African American Achievers Program, the Minority Engineering Program, the Coca

Cola Minority Scholarship, the Pilot Oil Minority Scholarships, the Black Graduate Opportunities Program and others sponsored as a result of the Geier Stipulation of Settlement.

Despite these efforts, the need continues to exist for financial assistance to persons of under-represented groups. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the University:

- a. continue to aggressively seek new and innovative funding sources; and
- b. thoroughly evaluate existing programs to determine if improvements can be made to use the money in a more effective manner.

#12: The Task Force recommends that the University move to create a recruiter position within the personnel department whose responsibilities would include the development of a black applicant pool for openings.

This recommendation was implemented. At this time, we do not suggest that any additional action be taken on the recommendation particularly in light of the following:

- a. A specific person was identified to fill this role and was located in the Office of Human Resources Management. Activities and programs initiated under this individual have now become a part of the on-going process at the Office of Human Resources Management.
- b. The Office of Diversity Resources and Educational Services has initiated a database consisting of minority applicants who have applied for positions at UTK. Such a database will become an on-going referral resource to existing departments as they conduct job searches for staff exempt, faculty, and administrative positions.
- c. Recruitment and retention of minority faculty, staff, and students, should be the responsibility of all UTK persons. Individuals should willingly serve on search committees where they can provide input and monitor the process of recruiting minorities for job vacancies.

Appropriate offices and individuals will monitor and help direct activities and programs.

- d. The Black Recruitment and Retention Advisory Committee (a requirement of the Geier Stipulation of Settlement), the Commission for Blacks (a Chancellor's advisory body), and the Black Faculty and Staff Association (volunteer group comprise of Black faculty and staff) should coordinate efforts to achieve this goal.

#13. The Task Force recommends that the Chancellor move to universalize a valuable policy introduced by the Provost of the University whereby performance with respect to affirmative action and equal opportunity objectives becomes one measure of the evaluation of deans and directors. The Task Force recommends that this policy be made applicable to all employees who have supervisory or administrative responsibility for other employees or for students.

This recommendation is strongly supported and relates to previously mentioned recommendations #7, 8, 9, and 10. It is also recommended that the offices of Diversity Resources and Educational Services, Human Resources Management, and the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs develop an evaluation tool and process to address this recommendation. Evaluations should include objective measures that help determine types of efforts made, as well as the results/achievements (hires, promotions, training, retention). There should be incentives (example: budgetary rewards) to departments to help encourage more aggressive efforts to diversify.

#14: We propose that a budgetary pool should be set-up for recruiting blacks to the faculty and staff.

The University supports the idea that financial and other resources for professional development should be made available to help recruit, hire, and retain black faculty and staff. The Black Graduate Opportunity Program (BGOP), and Black Staff Development Program (BSDP), and other

programs offered as part of the Geier Stipulation of Settlement exist to help with this endeavor.

It is noted that:

- a. better oversight and dissemination of information is needed.
- b. information (progress reports) regarding the various programs, requirements, and expenditures should be made available to the Chancellor and campus on a regular basis.

The Office of DRES should work with the respective campus units/administrators that administer funds for this purpose and provide regular progress reports to the Chancellor and campus community.

- c. activities/programs should be coordinated where possible to help maximize use of limited resources.

#15. It is recommended that the University widely publicize procedures for filing complaints of racial discrimination in the Office of Affirmative Action.

This recommendation is being addressed. Currently, all complaints of discrimination must be centrally filed with the Office of DRES (formerly known as the Office of Affirmative Action). Information regarding filing complaints of discrimination is disseminated through various means to include the following:

- a. published in *Hilltopics*, the *Faculty Handbook*, *UTK Personnel Policies*, and *DRES* brochures.
- b. information provided at orientation of all new employees
- c. educational workshops provided to all new department heads and faculty
- d. educational workshops/training programs provided by DRES to First Year Studies, workshops for GTAs (particularly English and Math), invitations to various classes by faculty and departments.

- e. hand-outs disseminated at least twice per year through the pay envelopes of all UTK employees

#16. The Office of Academic Affairs should develop a program by which all students are to select either one elective that emphasizes Afro-American history or a cultural studies course that deals with multi-ethnic and multi-racial experiences. In addition, the Provost and appropriate officers of the University should charge the respective deans with the responsibility of urging their faculty to develop all University courses in such a way as to reflect the multi-racial and multi-cultural character of American society.

It is assumed that the object of this recommendation is to develop and encourage persons to be aware of the diverse cultures and ideals that surround us. To do this, there is agreement that the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs can work to include at least one course in the general University requirements that emphasizes African-American history or a cultural studies course which deals with multi-ethnic and multi-racial experiences. Perhaps each degree program would have a cluster that identified African American courses as acceptable and encouraged electives.

There are many courses available that provide exposure to diverse cultures, history, and ideals. The courses should be identified and information should be disseminated so that students, faculty, and departments are aware of the available options. It is suggested that Dr. Faye Julian (Dean, Undergraduate Programs) be contacted to help in this endeavor.

#17. Particular considerations that factor in the decision to hire specific minority persons should be considered in the continuation and promotion process.

This recommendation is strongly supported in that it stresses the need for our employment efforts to be full-circle. It is important to recruit minority faculty and staff. It is equally important to train, promote and retain

minority staff and faculty for continual employment and professional development at UTK.

It was recommended that concrete, rather than anecdotal, information was needed to show the progress (career paths) of African American faculty and staff at UTK. Representatives from various offices (Commission for Blacks, Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, DRES, Institutional Research and Assessment, and Human Resources Management) are developing a mechanism to address this need. The initial information will target African American faculty but the process, when refined, can be used to track all faculty and staff. Information gathered will indicate such things as “average” time it has taken African American faculty to progress from one level to another, problems encountered, positive efforts of assistance made by the respective departments, etc. Such information can help identify programs/activities that work and those that do not. Resources (personnel and financial) can be channeled more efficiently.

#18. The Task Force recommends the establishment of a Race Relations Institute. The Institute would engage in interdisciplinary, scholarly inquiry into matters of race and culture in American society. The Institute scholars would consist of present University faculty members, visiting scholars, and, as resources permit, full-time distinguished fellows.

This recommendation is still under review and discussion.

#19. There should be a review of the Grow Your Own Program for its effectiveness. The program should be more widely publicized and an advisory committee of representative persons should immediately be established to assist in the determination of grant awards.

This recommendation is being addressed. There are three Grow Your Own Programs at UTK. Each has a selection committee, composed of representatives from across the campus, that identifies participants and monitors their progress. It is noted that:

- a. the programs can be better publicized.
- b. an educational campaign regarding the positive outcomes of these programs and participants is needed. Currently, the university community does not seem to appreciate the value of these programs and participants.

This recommendation is closely linked to many recommendations already discussed. See recommendations #8, 10, 11, 13, and 17.

#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.

This recommendation seems to repeat the intentions of other previously mentioned recommendations to include #1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 16.

#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.

The University has made strides toward this goal. The number of African American faculty and staff that have received University awards has increased in all aspects since the 1990 report. The University has made a conscious effort to ensure minority representation on all committees charged with identifying recipients of University awards. In addition, the Commission for Blacks has instituted various awards recognizing African American faculty, staff, and students through the African American Hall of Fame, the Hardy Liston, and the Gene Mitchell Gray awards. We recommend the following additional steps:

- a. recognition by each of us that we should make a concerted effort to nominate African American faculty, administrators, staff, and students for university awards;
- b. the Commission for Blacks should continue to monitor university awards to see if African Americans are being “tracked” or “limited” or only certain types of awards; and
- c. the Commission for Blacks should continue to serve as a nominating body for African Americans for University awards.

#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 handicap.

This recommendation is still under discussion. Various programs, groups, and offices exist to address the issues of: discrimination (Office of DRES), diversity (Office of Minority Student Affairs, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Office of DRES), and special concerns (Commission for Blacks, Commission for Women, Black Recruitment and Retention Advisory Committee, Positive Climate Committee).

Positive things can happen when groups of diverse interests come together in one body to dialogue, plan, and share/coordinate ideas and resources. However, in such situation, there is also the possibility to minimize or dilute the importance of the individual concerns. Therefore, more discussion is recommended for #22 as to intent and implementation.