

Commission for Blacks
Wednesday, January 7, 2015
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Minutes

Call Meeting to Order

[Lilia Neville calls the meeting to order at 12:03]

Attendees

(1) Lilia Neville, (2) Robert Nobles, (3) Syed Kamal, (4) Mary Lee Stewart, (5) Tara Davis, (6) Crystal Hardeman, (7) Katrina Oliver, (8) Ronald McFadden, (9) Susan Benner, (10) Joanne Hall, (11) Marcia Johnson Lane, (12) Aaliyah Johnson, (13) Jennifer Dobbins, (14) Cynthia Manning, (15) Dan Berryman

Approval of Minutes

[Marcia Johnson Lane makes a motion to approve the minutes of December-2014 meeting. Ronald McFadden seconds the motion. The commission unanimously approves the minutes.]

Update from Committees

a. *Faculty/Staff/Student committee*

No Update

b. *Bylaws committee*

Robert Nobles: Bylaws committee had a meeting and discussed the possible changes in the bylaws. Firstly, the Bylaws states that the commission is appointed by the Chancellor. We discussed whether it should be replaced with “appointed by Vice Chancellor for Diversity”. Since the commission reports to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, we need to consult with VC Hall on how to describe the appointing authority on our bylaws.

Another substantial issue that we discussed is that the bylaws refers to the status of “blacks” on campus. We discussed about replacing “blacks” with “individuals who are classified in the Black racial/ethnic group”. How do you feel about this?

Lilia Neville: I think the additional words to identify blacks are appropriate. Last year the Bylaws committee proposed changing the name of the commission to Commission for African-American Faculty, Staff and Students. However, VC Hall thought that the word “Blacks” is a more inclusive identity. So we accepted his opinion and left the name unchanged. I think the addition of the proposed language to characterize “blacks” falls in-line with VC Hall’s thoughts about using a more inclusive term. For the language, who identify or self-identify may be used instead of “who are classified”.

Susan Benner: We can use the words “who Identify”

Dan Berryman: There are issues of mixed races. So “who identify” encompasses the issue of how a person of mixed races chooses to identify him/her.

Robert Nobles: For Government classification, all sub-classes of blacks are classified as blacks. Universities or institutions may do it differently. I agree that using “African-American” may be limiting. Individuals may not be African American, but may be blacks and represented by the commission. So Individuals who identify or self-identify is a welcome revision for the bylaws committee.

Susan Benner: “Individuals who are identified” covers both self-identification and identification by third-party. If “self-identify” is used, it only means self-identification and rules out identification by others.

Robert Nobles: So we have Individuals who self-identify vs. individuals who are identified.

Dan Berryman: I think “who self-identify” is better language.

Tara Davis: Implication of the Self-identification is important.

Robert Nobles: OK, this change will be incorporated and we will vote on that in the next meeting. You will have chance to review all the changes before we submit it to the VC Hall.

In terms of representation, several groups have been removed as per recommendation by VC Hall. We removed those representation from the bylaws as well. We have also removed ex-officio representation of Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity. We added representatives from SGA, Graduate Senate, TLSAMP and PEER. Is there any other groups that should be included?

Lilia Neville: Removal of the OED director came from VC Hall. Previously Marva Rudolph, as the OED Director, was in charge of attending meetings of all commissions. With the creation of the office of VC Diversity, VC Hall wanted to take the burden off of OED Director.

I think we need to discuss with VC Hall about removing his representation from the commission. Ronald McFadden is present here at the meeting at VC Hall designee.

Robert Nobles: The way I was thinking is that having a voting representation from VC Diversity office means that his office is a voting member on a commission that reports to his office. From my experience working at the university level, if I have a committee that reports to me, I can be a non-voting member, but not a voting member.

Lilia Neville: So we may think of having VC Diversity Representative as non-voting ex-officio member on the commission.

Ronald McFadden: I think non-voting ex-officio representation was the way it was designed.

Robert Nobles: So we change the VC Diversity from a voting ex-officio to a non-voting ex-officio. Any other changes?

Lilia Neville: I think UT student run chapter of NAACP may be included

Susan Benner: Are you talking about the NAACP Knoxville Chapter?

Lilia Neville: I was thinking more about the Student-run UT Chapter of NAACP. Although, we can also think about the Knoxville Chapter as well.

Ronald McFadden: About representation from the PEER program, is it student representation or someone from the administration?

Robert Nobles: I am not sure, Susan Benner may shed some light on this.

Susan Benner: Since it is mentioned in the student representation section, I think this is meant to be someone from the student organizations.

Ronald McFadden: If it is for student representation, then we need to think about the active status of the student organizations. There are student organizations that are not active. But there are also some student organizations that are very active. For example, Law Black Student organization is very active and have a wider representation than PEER.

Jennifer Dobbins: I am a law student and I can confirm that the Black Law Student Organization is very active.

Robert Nobles: Then should we specify certain organizations or one representation from these group of organizations?

Tara Davis: If we are adding student organization representations, then to be within the membership number limit, we may think about removing graduate and undergraduate representatives such as SGA and GSS.

Lilia Neville: Representation from SGA predates me; so I don't know when and how exactly it was included. But I reached out to the Graduate Student Senate leadership myself and asked whether they want to have representation on the commission. My idea was that we have undergraduate representation from SGA and it is logical to have graduate student representation as well. GSS leadership also thought that having their representative on the commission is important as well. For other organizations that we are discussing here, I think that we need to reach out to them and check whether it is mutually agreed to be important. Some organization may be interested, but some organization may say that they do not have enough members to have representation on the commission.

Robert Nobles: We also need to confirm whether the representation from PEER and TLSAMP is actually student representation or it is staff representation.

Tara Davis: Adding all those student organization may take us exceeding the number 15 membership limit.

Robert Nobles: On this point, we need to decide exactly how many student representatives that we want.

Susan Benner: If we are restricted by a membership limit, we can think about establishing group named friends of CFB. They will not be invited to have a seat in the commission, but we can distribute information to them and have a liaison relationship.

Ronald McFadden: This approach will then broaden the scope and reach of the commission.

Lilia Neville: We have 3 official student members on the commission: 2 from SGA and 1 from GSS.

Robert Nobles: Then we can have these 3 and add others as friend of CFB.

Ronald McFadden: if friends of CFB model followed, then I will suggest adding Student Success Center and Educational Advantage Program into the list.

Susan Benner: I think this will be a better model.

Robert Nobles: Yes, I think so too. This way we can add PEER and TSLAMP in the friends list.

Moving on to the meeting issues, Bylaws stipulates that the Co-chairs attend meetings of other commissions. I think it can be a daunting task. Bylaws also stipulates that we have executive committee meeting before the general body meeting.

Lilia Neville: Sub committees meets on their own. However, we had the requirement of having executive meeting before the general body meeting. So Sub-committee chairs had two monthly meetings to attend-

executive committee meeting and general body meeting. Also we always did not have sufficient agenda. So to reduce workload, last year we added the “as necessary” terms for the executive committee meetings.

Joanne Hall: The executive committee meeting description has both “regular monthly” and “as necessary” terms in the language. Can it be contradictory?

Lilia Neville: Yes, this is a good point. Using both words are not necessary. We should remove the words “regular monthly” from the language as it contradicts with “as necessary”.

Susan Benner: Once other point is that if we remove OED from commission, they should not be in the executive committee as well.

Lilia Neville: I think so too. However, we may want to include the designee of VC Diversity office there. OED and HR designee was in the executive committee because VC Diversity office was not in existence at that time. So we should include VC Diversity designee in those places.

Robert Nobles: Currently the Chairs meet with VC Diversity every month. Will this meeting be extended to include the executive committee members as well?

Lilia Neville: No, executive committee was not intended to have a meeting with VC hall. Chair’s meeting with VC Hall is separate from executive committee meetings. Chairs get the task orders from VC Diversity in those monthly meetings.

Robert Nobles: If this is so, why then VC Diversity or his/her designee is included in executive committee meetings to tackle the task orders.

Lilia Neville: Yes, your line of thinking makes sense.

Joanne Hall: Faculty Senate bylaws also have provision for including designee from the higher-up administrations.

Susan Benner: It may be redundant for VC Diversity to be included in the executive committee and also including executive committee in the monthly meetings.

Robert Nobles: Moving on to the next item: Co-chairs becoming immediate past chair after the end of the term and one of the co-chair progressing to assume the leading role- how will that work? What will be the role of co-chair elect?

Lilia Neville: Chair, immediate past chair, chair-elect....these positions were created in the bylaws before we had co-chairs. Last year was the first year for us to have co-chairs. I really like the CDI model of co-chair position. CDI has the co-chair model for a while now and the way they structure is that one co-chair is the senior co-chair and other is the junior co-chair. This way there is always some overlap and no one has to start from a vacuum. Additionally, co-chair responsibilities has grown over time. So it helps to have co-chairs to leverage the task loads. I suggest that we look at the CDI bylaws to see how they structure senior chair junior chair relationship.

Robert Nobles: Syed can provide us access to the CDI bylaws.

Ronald McFadden: it may be helpful to look at the chair-elect model as well. The Chair-elect will be sort of vice-chair and will play a shadow role and will not have much responsibility. Then when they become the chair, they will assume the full responsibility with experience about this role.

Lilia Neville: To me, this sounds like what we currently have here. For me the past-chair was not that involved. I vow to stay involved to help as immediate past chair at the end of my term. However, I just want to point out that we had problems with that model. So a new model may be worth trying.

Robert Nobles: In the bylaws, it is stated that reappointment is permissible. So past chairs can be recycled.

Joanne Hall: How is appointment done now?

Lilia Neville: We take nomination from the commissioners and then we vote at the commission meeting. Whoever gets the highest vote, we send the name to VC Diversity. VC Diversity then makes appointments. This is the same procedure that we followed when Robert was elected as co-chair.

Robert Nobles: Right now, it appears to be just a voting process. We may need to insert the language to reflect the confirmation by VC Diversity in to the bylaws.

Susan Benner: This section of the bylaws sounds like to have a mix and match type of situation. We have the immediate past-chair model and we also have the co-chair model. The bylaws needs to pick specific route of succession.

Robert Nobles: We will review the suggestions in bylaws sub-committee meeting and provide you an update in the next meeting. Only other question is about the quorum, which we can discuss with all other updates in next meeting. Syed will distribute electronic version for review.

Lilia Neville: Thank you Robert and the bylaws committee members for your work.

c. Outreach/PR committee

No Update

Unfinished Business/Past Events

a. Retention Workshop update

Lilia Neville: We provided update on the feedback that we received in our last meeting. Syed is working on to digitize the solution worksheet. So in our February meeting, we hope to provide a detail report on the feedback.

b. Trailblazer Series spring events & 2015-2016 planning

Lilia Neville: We have two upcoming events in the trailblazer series in February and March. This discussion actually belongs to the new business section of the agenda. We are looking for the speakers for the next years' series. I have talked with VC Hall about two prospective speakers. First one is Dr. Michael Nettles. He has a political science degree and recently appointed to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans. I suppose this is where majority of our budget will go for his honorarium. The other person is Condredge Holloway, who was the first African American quarterback and the first African American baseball player. He was inducted into several state halls of fame and subject of ESPN documentary produced by Kenny Chesney. So these are the two names that we have in mind: both are men, one from social science and one from athletics. I strongly feel having two women to fill the rest of the slots. I envisioned to have a gender equality as well as some balance in the field of expertise/discipline. Theotis Robinson suggested the name of Brenda Peel. She was first African American student to get undergraduate degree from the university. Theotis Robinson was the first African American Student to be admitted. Brenda Peel was the first African American to get a degree. If you have suggestions for any other names, please let us know. I was thinking about

reaching out to Phyliss Moore in alumni affairs to get names of prospective female speakers. It does not have to be a name of an alumni.

Tara Davis: There was a women who was awarded at the alumni awards. I forgot the name. She is in journalism. Phyliss should be able to get the name.

Lilia Neville: if you have any suggestion for any speaker or see any article about someone interesting, please let us know. Even if they are located far, we can do some fund raising to have them on campus to speak at our trailblazer series. We want to reach out to them in spring or at the latest by summer.

The other suggestion VC hall has is to increase the length of the event to 75 minutes.

Upcoming Events

- a. *Black Issues Conference, February 7th*

Lilia Neville: Registration is available online. It starts at 9AM on February 7th. It is a great event and I recommend registering.

- b. *Trailblazer Series: Mark Dean, February 26th*

Lilia Neville: Mark Dean will speak at the Trailblazer Series event on February 26th at the Hodges Library Auditorium.

New Business

- a. *Spring Newsletter*

Lilia Neville: We will publish our newsletter in spring. Robert and I meet in December and came up with a tentative lineup for the newsletter. Some standard items from last year that we will repeat is announcement of the winners of the awards, a small column from the Co-Chairs, an article on our retention efforts and results from the workshop. Last year VC Hall wrote an article reflecting on his first year on campus. This year, we may ask him to write about civility on campus. Chancellor Cheek attended the CDI meeting in December and civility was one of the main focus of his speech. So we thought this issue may be a timely topic to focus on. We had a student article last year. So we may ask our student representative Kaylyn Harris to see if she would be interested in authoring an article. One thing she may write about is how the student have become engaged on campus events based on the recent national issues. I have not reached out to her yet. She may have different topic in mind as well. I also thought it would be nice to highlight the Quest scholar that we have nominated. Robert suggested an article from the Stride group. Stride is a faculty-led group and they focus on the implicit bias in hiring process. We may also do an article on the Trailblazer series and we may ask our moderator Hallerin Hill to author the article reflecting on his experience of moderating the interview of the trailblazer speakers.

If any of you have any suggestion, have any idea for any article or even want to author an article, please feel free to let us know.

Robert Nobles: If authoring is daunting, then one can be interviewed and placed into the article.

- b. *Awards Criteria*

Lilia Neville: Awards nomination process will start soon At this point we are working on reviewing the awards nomination criteria. Tanisha Marchbanks is the chair of our awards committee. They will work on updating the criteria. Awards information will be available at honorsbanquet.utk.edu.

c. *Black History Month Calendar submission extension*

Lilia Neville: We spoke about this calendar in our previous meetings. We originally set deadline for event entry submission for December 5th. However, we did not receive any submission. So we pushed it back to January 20th. VC Hall gave us some suggestion about possible contacts for events entry. ORNLA has a version of BFSa and we have reached out to them. We have also contacted Knoxville MLK commission. We asked them whether they have any programs that they would like us to include in the calendar. We have 6 events for calendar. We are opening it up and extending more time so folks can know about it and submit entries. Please let us know if you know of any event that can be included in the calendar.

Announcements

Lilia Neville: VC Hall is hiring a communications manager for his office. I have been selected as one of the two finalist candidates. VC Hall is inviting all units that reports to him to come to this open interview and participate. Please feel free to come to the interview. You will receive e-mail announcement on the dates and times of the interview from VC Hall's office.

Dan Berryman is leaving us as he is taking position elsewhere. We sincerely thank Mr. Berryman for his service on the commission. And thank you for the wonderful e-mail that you shared with us.

Dan Berryman: I really enjoyed being here. Knoxville community and UTK was phenomenal experience for me. Having worked in phoenix for 15 years and being a community college student, I am looking forward to taking position in the administration of a community college in Phoenix area. Thank you all.

Tara Davis: MLK celebration will be next week.

Lilia Neville: I have a press release on this. Syed sent an electronic announcement on listserv. That's all we have for today. Wishing you all happy New Year.

Adjourn

[Lilia Neville adjourns the meeting at 12:55PM]