

**Commission for Blacks**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**March 4, 2015**

The monthly meeting of the Commission for Blacks was held on March 4, 2015 at the Black Cultural Center.

Co-chair Lilia Neville called the meeting to order at 12:05PM. Present at the meeting were: (1) Lilia Neville, (2) Robert Nobble, (3) Syed Kamal, (4) Mary Lee Stewart, (5) Katrina Oliver, (6) Aaliyah Johnson, (7) Marshall Steward, (8) Cynthia Manning, (9) Ronald McFadden, (10) Jennifer Dobbins, (11) Tanisha Jenkins, (12) Marcia Johnson Lane, (13) Susan Benner, (14) Yolanda Kirkpatrick, (15) Eric Stokes

**Approval of Minutes**

The Commission then started the proceedings of the meeting by approving the minutes of the February-2015 meeting. Marshall Steward made the motion to approve the minutes of the February-2015 meeting and Alecia Davis seconded the motion.

**Updates from Committees**

a. Bylaws committee

On behalf of the Bylaws Committee, Robert Nobles informed the Commission that the bylaws committee has discussed all proposed revisions. Major proposed revision concerns the co-chair position. The proposed amendments will have provision for a senior co-chair and junior co-chair structure where co-chairs are elected for two-year term and one co-chair is brought on board in the alternating year. Unless reappointed to serve another term at the end of the two-year term, the departing co-chair will serve as the immediate past chair.

The Commission discussed whether to include provisions for serving more than one consecutive terms as Co-Chairs. The commission members expressed opinion that if any person is interested in serving more than one term and gets approval of the commission through the election process, then there should not be any restrictions imposed on the provision of serving more than one term. Commission members also discussed on the language used to describe the senior and junior co-chair positions and considered it appropriate.

The Bylaws Committee will create a final version of the proposed amendments to the bylaws and present it to the commission for discussion and vote on the proposed amendments.

b. Faculty/Staff/Student committee

On behalf of the Faculty/Staff/Student committee Susan Benner provided update on the Quest Scholar nomination process. She informed the commission that Dr. Alderman is delighted to accept the nomination for quest scholar. However, he requested to delay the nomination for few weeks until his election to the national geographical society is confirmed.

c. Outreach/PR committee

On behalf of the Outreach/PR committee, Lilia Neville informed the Commission that she is working with Tara Davis to find a venue for the Trailblazer Series for the upcoming academic year. Currently the events takes place

in the Hodges Library Auditorium. However, the committee is looking for an alternate location that provides some space accommodation for the honorees to prepare before the start of the event.

### **Unfinished Business/Past Events**

- a. Trailblazer Series spring events & 2015-2016 planning

Lilia Neville informed the commission that Dr. Michael Nettles and Ann Blackburn Holt accepted invitation to be honored in the 2015-2016 Trailblazer Series. The response from Dr. Cynthia Flaming is still pending. However, Dr. Condredge Holloway declined the invitation.

The commission also received a proposal to consider honoring Dr. Michael Nettles's wife at the same event. Dr. Arie Nettles is an Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the Vanderbilt University and the Director of the Office of Inclusion and Health Equity. The Co-chairs of the commission discussed this proposal with VC Hall and he expressed his support for this proposal for honoring Dr. Arie Nettles. However, Dr. Arie Nettles is not available during the 2015-2016 series schedule. So she will be on the list for 2016-2017 Trailblazer series.

The Commission discussed alternative names for filling in the remaining slot for the 2015-2016 Trailblazer series. The names proposed are: Marvelene C. Moore (UT School of Music), Luther Kindall (UT College of Education, Health and Human Sciences) and Dr. Ronald McFadden.

### **Upcoming Events**

- a. Trailblazer Series: Valisia LeKae, March 26<sup>th</sup>

The upcoming Trailblazer Series event is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> and it will feature Valisia LeKae. Dr. Mark Dean will be honored in the Trailblazer Series on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

- b. BFSA Symposium, March 19-20

Alecia Davis provided update on the BFSA Symposium scheduled to take place on March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. She described the structure and timeline of different workshops/panel discussions planned during the symposium and urged everyone to register online for the symposium.

Lilia Neville also provided update on the African American read-in event. She describe the event as a very successful one with lots of active participation from faculty and students.

### **New Business**

- a. Everyone Matters Campaign (Tanisha Jenkins)

Tanisha Jenkins provided update on the upcoming Everyone Matters Campaign on March 25<sup>th</sup>. This is part of a national campaign organized by American College Personnel Association. Multicultural Student Life and Outreach center jointly organized this campaign for the first time at the University of Tennessee last spring. This year the campaign is being organized at the University on a bigger stage to involve a wider range of the campus community. This year's campaign will be co-sponsored Council for Diversity and Interculturalism (CDI), Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and the Office of Multicultural Student Life. The organizers are looking forward to have all the Chancellor's Commissions as well as senior level administration, faculty and staff involved with this initiative. The marketing material for the campaign will be generated by the Office of Communications. This year's marketing material will include several UT Branded Buttons. During the day of the campaign, there will be

multiple stations setup at different times throughout the campus. This will allow the members of UT community members will be able to stop by at those stations at their convenience to pick up Buttons, take selfie and write comments on their views on why everyone matters at UT campus every day. There will also be a rock painting event. To publicize the event, the organizers will also initiate a social media campaign with hash tag.

b. Awards

Syed Kamal prepared an information packet with information on the award nominees and an online voting form. Links to view the information packet and submit votes online were sent via e-mail to the commission members. Most of the members of the commission voted online. For those who did not vote online, a paper ballot was supplied at the meeting to vote. Several members of the commission reported about not receiving the e-mail. To rectify the issue, it was then decided that the e-mail will be resend specifically to those members who did not vote and voting deadline will be extended by one day. The deadline for reporting award winners to the Chancellor's Office is March 6<sup>th</sup>.

c. Co-chair nominations open

Lilia Neville will leave the position of co-chair at the end of her term and thus there will be a vacancy for a co-chair position. Lilia Neville informed the council that Syed Kamal will prepare an online nomination form that will allow commission members to submit their nominations.

d. Chancellor coming to May 2015 meeting

Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek will attend the Commission meeting in May. Lilia Neville noted that the discussion during the Chancellor's visit at the Commission for Women meeting was really interactive and engaging. The members of the Commission for Women prepared before the meeting to decide on the discussion topics and the questions for the Chancellor. Jennifer Dobbins commented that the Commission solicited questions from the member of the commission by e-mail and assembled all questions into a Google Document format to further review. So the Commission decided to follow similar procedure to prepare questions for the Chancellor. The commission members then discussed the best way to prepare and review the questions, how to decide on the priority levels of different topics and whether to present the questions to the Chancellor before the meeting. To best utilize the time during Chancellor's visit and facilitate an engaging and interacting dialogue with the Chancellor, the Commission members decided that a prepared question format best serves the purpose. Syed Kamal will generate an online form to collecting questions from the commission members and then the submitted questions will be discussed in Commission meeting in April to organize the questions into different broad topic areas and set priority level of different question. The commission also decided to submit the questions to the Chancellor beforehand to give him the best opportunity to prepare his substantiated responses to address the issues presented before him at the commission meeting.

e. Level of detail in meeting minutes

Currently the Commission for Blacks publishes the meeting minutes with a very high level of detail. The minutes reflects the total discussion with names of the speaker. This level of detail may not be comfortable for some members of the commission. So the commission discussed whether the level of detail recorded in this public document prevents members to openly engage in discussion. The general consensus was that the format of the minutes should be comfortable for all members. If someone wants to be on record, they can request to specifically specify their names to be recorded with their comments or proposals. Therefore to promote a more interactive and open discussion, the Commission decided to publish minutes in a concise format that will reflect the major discussion points and decisions instead of a transcript-like minutes.

## **Announcements**

### **a. Retention Workshop Update**

The specified barriers to retention does not uniquely maps to the solutions. The barriers and solutions related to different areas are all intermingled. To address this issue, Lilia Neville prepared a strategic planning document where major solutions are identified and then under each solution, it lists all the different barriers it addresses, the partners related to the solution and existing opportunities and threats for implementing the solution. In preparing this comprehensive strategic planning document, input from different feedbacks were combined and the author was careful not to subtract any aspects of the solution mentioned in the original feedback.

There are total 8 solutions listed in this strategic planning document. Even though there are some implementation aspects mentioned on the document, it is mainly a strategic plan in nature. To ensure robustness of this strategic planning document, it is important to review all contents specified under each solution. However, due to time constraint, it is not possible to do this review in the Commission meeting. So the Commission decided to conduct this review process in a separate meeting outside of the regular monthly meeting.

### **b. Barber Shop in Athletics**

The Commission briefly discussed the proposed Barber Shop space in Athletics and how it can be used as an avenue for local minority vendors to provide haircut service at the University. The Commission decided to gather further information on this issue and discuss in next monthly meeting.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15PM