



Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative

2015 Retention Strategy Report

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Executive Summary

African American students, staff, and faculty at the University of Tennessee and members of the Knoxville community tend to see Knoxville as a transitory city. The majority of students and professionals view Knoxville as a city where they will reside for a small amount of time in order to obtain their degree or gain more experience before they head to bigger, regional cities.

The Commission for Blacks held several programs to identify barriers to and solutions for the retention of African Americans in Knoxville. From these efforts, this report to address retention was developed.

Eight solutions were found to be possible opportunities to address the retention of African Americans and Blacks in Knoxville: creating opportunities for cross-generational development; identifying avenues for political action and engagement; marketing and advertising of local events, cultural attractions, and resources; increasing persons of color participating on local planning boards; improving the reputation of East Knoxville; encouraging local business and entrepreneurship; creating an African American leadership organization and network; and, improving cultural climate and competency at UT.

Background

African American students, staff, and faculty at the University of Tennessee and members of the Knoxville community tend to see Knoxville as a transitory city. The majority of students and professionals view Knoxville as a city where they will reside for a small amount of time in order to obtain their degree or gain more experience before they head to bigger, regional cities.

In order to unpack this perception, the Commission for Blacks hosted a panel luncheon in November 2013, entitled “Engaging Your Community: Retention of African Americans in Knoxville.” During this panel, Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero, Knoxville Area Urban League President Phyllis Nichols, UT Vice Chancellor for Diversity Rickey Hall, and Community Development Leader Buzz Goss discussed laid the groundwork in identifying barriers to the retention of diverse young professionals.

To continue our efforts to retain talented students in Knoxville post-graduation, in February 2014, the Commission along with the UT student chapter of the NAACP jointly organized a panel discussion entitled “Retention of African Americans in Knoxville: Focusing on Undergraduate and Graduate Students at UT.” The panelists include the Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals President, Damon Rawls; US Bank Community Manager, Clarence Vaughn; and, Associate Director of Undergraduate Advising in the UT College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, Jamia Stokes.

The majority of our evaluations from the Fall 2013 event called for a hands-on, solutions-oriented workshop to follow up to this panel discussion. The commission led the planning efforts, but met regularly with a planning team. The planning team included three community members: Rev. Dr. John Butler, the president of the Knoxville’s NAACP chapter; Avice Reid, Executive Director of the Knoxville Police Advisory and Review Committee for the City of Knoxville and facilitator with Leadership Knoxville; and JoAnne Lavendar, CEO of Leadership by Design and facilitator with Leadership Knoxville. Our planning team also included members of UT’s Knoxville Black Faculty and Staff Association, UT’s Black Alumni Council, and the UT Institute for Public Service.

In November 2014, the Commission for Blacks hosted a workshop aimed at gathering Knoxville constituencies, such as African American entrepreneurs and leaders, local city employees, and University of Tennessee faculty, staff, students and alumni to collaboratively brainstorm and develop strategic tactics that address specific barriers to the retention of African American professionals in Knoxville. The specific barriers were identified by community leaders during our 2013 panel, and refined by the planning committee and commissioners.

Workshop participants worked in small groups to brainstorm and strategize solutions for each barrier. The Commission for Blacks employed the services of the local organization Leadership Knoxville for their expertise in moderating small group discussion. The facilitators ensured that the small group working sessions were not dominated by a few

strong voices, and that all participants had the opportunity to provide input and play a role in this collaborative retention effort.

At the end of the small working group sessions, each small group provided their tactics on a worksheet and gave a brief verbal presentation of their group discussion and proposed solutions.

From this half-day workshop, we synthesized the strategic tactics developed at the workshop into a report for the retention of young African American professionals in Knoxville to be executed by the Commission for Blacks and the Office for the Vice Chancellor for Diversity in partnership with local government and civic entities.

Mission

The mission and vision of this document is to guide the efforts for the Commission for Blacks (primarily) and the Office for the Vice Chancellor for Diversity (secondarily). Opportunities for partnerships with local government and civic entities are identified. The collaborative philosophy and position of the Commission for Blacks within the University of Tennessee will seek to leverage existing relationships to insure a community approach to the retention of African Americans is accomplished.

Goal

The primary goal of this report is to impact the retention of African Americans in Knoxville. Retaining Knoxville's students, faculty, staff, and professionals is a complex endeavor, and will require complex solutions and partners. We aim to participate by developing a retention strategy report to guide our efforts. As such, the secondary goal of this report is to guide the Commission for Blacks' future programming, financial commitments, and initiatives.

Retention Barriers

As previously mentioned, barriers to retention were identified by community leaders during our 2013 panel, and refined by the planning committee and commissioners.

During the registration process, workshop participants had the opportunity to self-select which barriers they were most interested in discussing at the 2014 workshop. Based on this self-selection, participants generated specific solutions to the following retention barriers.

City Climate

Knoxville can be seen as a transitory city with not much to do for young professionals that are not interested the "bar" scene. The city can be seen as sometimes unwelcoming,

and very divided along socioeconomic and geographic lines. What are some of the factors that might play a role in supporting this statement? Is there an alternative viewpoint?

UT Climate

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville currently has a 7% African American population. The racial and ethnic makeup of the university should be substantially more diverse and the cultural climate must be more welcoming to African Americans and other racial/ethnic minorities.

Community

The Black Alumni Council in particular has noted the number of alumni that have successfully opened businesses in Knoxville and the surrounding areas, but choose not to live here. The economy of these businesses is benefiting the pockets of other cities because these entrepreneurs are not living in the same area as their businesses. Exploring why there is a migration away from the East side of Knoxville would be beneficial.

Jobs

Knoxville has been said to have limited job prospects for UT graduates and young professionals looking to move to our city. How do we affect the local job economy when we are not the leader for job creation? Are there opportunities that haven't been explored?

Mentorship & Leadership

It is difficult to find an African American leader that has a succession plan in Knoxville. As a young leader, the opportunities for a more established leader to mentor you as rise up and/or provide an opportunity to you in the local ranks are few and far between. Knoxville's history in our country's civil rights movement is notable. The legacy of our African American leaders is historical and established. This has made it difficult to initiate change at the top of local long-standing organizations.

Social Entertainment & Engagement

The sentiment has been expressed that "if you don't like going to the bars, there is nothing to do." There is a social scene for college students and for families with children, but entertainment options & opportunities to engage socially for young professionals is lacking. What type of activities could be created to spark social interaction of this group?

Solutions

Following the 2014 retention workshop, solutions were generated through a two-step process. First, the data generated at the workshop was digitized and organized around each retention barrier. This digitized data then underwent qualitative analysis. This analysis generated eight solutions that are not limited to a specific barrier; each solution addresses multiple barriers.

Following this analysis, the commission met for hands-on working sessions to discuss and develop each solution. The potential the solutions presented below.

It is worthwhile to note that while only one solution specifically identifies the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the title, efforts towards all solutions can be undertaken at the university.

Solution #1: Cross-generational development

Solution #2: Political action and engagement

Solution #3: Marketing and advertising of local events, cultural attractions, and resources

Solution #4: Increase persons of color participating on local planning boards

Solution #5: Improve reputation of East Knoxville

Solution #6: Encourage local business and entrepreneurship

Solution #7: Create African American leadership organization and network

Solution #8: Improve cultural climate and competency at UT

Solution #1: Cross-generational development

Retention Barriers Addressed

- City Climate
- Community
- Leadership/Mentorship

Possible Tactics

- Put together a calendar of events already happening by partners and connect/publicize with UT community.
- Workshop: Practicing Job Talks and Panel Interviews
- Seminar: Professional Etiquette and Character
- Networking: KAUL YP Monthly Meeting
- Seminar: Financial and Retirement Planning
- Networking: Finding and Being a Mentor
- Seminar: Improving Your Credit
- Continuing education courses
- Workshop: Utilizing Technology & Resources
- Women in Higher Education Professional Development

Audience

25-65yr olds

Possible partners

Leadership Knoxville
Knoxville Area Urban League
Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals
Young Professionals of Knoxville
Knoxville Chamber of Commerce
Diversity Champions
Local community colleges
Big Brothers Big Sisters

UT Career Services
UT Office of the Provost
UT OIT
Knoxville Social Media Club
UT Office of Multicultural Student Life
UT Greek organizations
UT Black Alumni Association
UT Student Success Center
UT BFSA

Opportunities

- Knoxville Area Urban League offers a Financial Capacity Building workshop in February, April, June, August, and December. This would be an ongoing opportunity for the commission to partner.
- The Student Success Center would be a good partner for the “Workshop: Practicing Job Talks and Panel Interviews.”
- There are several ongoing opportunities within the community already. Leadership Knoxville offers professional development programming and Knoxville Area Urban League and Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals meet regularly.

Threats

- There is lack of a managing partner to oversee development endeavor from birds-eye view.
- Finding a balance between generic and specific workshops for our audiences will be difficult. There may be a need for some workshops to be customized and some areas where the general topic could be extended to personal situations.
- Not limit publicity of development opportunities to only African American and Black communities.
- Financial constraints for hosting programs.

Financial & resource costs

- Venue reservation
- Technical requirements for presentation
- Scheduling
- Administrative tasks
- Food
- Publicity/marketing, etc.

Measurement

- Comparison of quality and quantity of development programs over 3 year time period.

Solution #2: Political action and engagement

Retention Barriers Addressed

- City Climate
- Community

Possible Tactics

- Develop a political action committee (PAC) to influence political action.
- Community development grants
- Increase candidates willing to pursue to public office.
- Workshop: Importance of participating in local politics
- Seminar: Increase political literacy for historically underrepresented and marginalized
- Create networks to remove isolation mentality..
- Increase education and engagement about local and regional
- SGA & GSS voting drive
- Local Elections voting drives
- Diversify the SGA & GSS election ballots

Audience

25-65yr olds

Possible partners

Pre-established PACs

Baker Center for Public Policy

Knoxville city government

Knox County government

Knoxville civic organizations

Knoxville service organizations

Knoxville faith-based organizations

Knoxville-Knox County Community
Action Committee

Local businesses

Neighborhood

organizations/associations

UT Student Government Association

UT Graduate Student Senate

Opportunities

- The current mayor of Knoxville is supportive of diversity and inclusion efforts.
- Involve SGA commissioners to assist in diversifying SGA & GSS election process.

Threats

- There is lack of pre-existing opportunities.
- We need to look at SGA election process and see if SGA ballots are multiethnic. If SGA election process is not diverse, we ought to take action internally before making recommendations to the city about local elections.
- We have two local governments, county and city. This duplication makes it more difficult because of financial, education, bureaucracy, etc.
- African Americans have difficulty being elected outside of predominantly African American districts.

- Political climate is historically unwelcoming and exclusive to many candidates of color.
- Finding candidates of color with political agendas.

Financial & resource costs

- Undetermined, but likely high financial and human resource costs.
- Students' self-funding election efforts.

Measurement

- Number of African Americans serving in public office.
- Number of African American candidates running for public office.
- Number of African Americans serving on SGA and GSS
- Number of African American candidates running for SGA and GSS positions

Solution #3: Marketing and advertising of local events, cultural attractions, and resources

Retention Barriers Addressed

- City Climate
- Community
- Social/Entertainment
- Jobs

Possible Tactics

- Marketing Knoxville as a center for a variety of live music.
- Increase opportunities for networking hosting annual meetings of national organizations in Knoxville.
- Form coalition of community leaders to create a "Welcoming" organization.
- Host "Day of Welcoming" event.
- Social media campaign to improve image of Knoxville.
- Publicity of cross-generational development opportunities.
- Host more concerts and plays.
- Improve venues to develop and creates jobs.
- Expand and promote local talent.
- Combine events to reduce costs and build stronger partnerships.
- Invite free regional entertainment to city.
- Upscale African American or Black-owned restaurant and/or other businesses that address a market gap.
- Publicity for cultural attractions and diversity-related events in community.
- Create a civic organization for social diversity and cultural engagement.
- Develop needs assessment for social entertainment and cultural engagement.

- Develop “Black in Knoxville” app, website, and social media channels to market what already exists.

Audience

African American and Black residents in Knoxville

Possible partners

Visitor’s Bureau	UT Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management
Knoxville Chamber of Commerce	Knoxville Social Media Club
Knoxville Area Urban League	Maryville Black Arts Center
Knoxville Convention Center	The Emporium
Thompson-Boling Arena	Local artists and musicians
Dewhirst Properties (and other property management companies that own venues)	KUUMBA Festival
Knoxville faith-based organizations	UT Black Alumni Association
Knoxville cultural organizations	UT Greek organizations
Knoxville civic organizations	Tennessee Theatre
Knoxville service organizations	Bijou Theatre
Knoxville event planning companies	Visitor’s Center
	Mercury, The Village of Knox, & local publications

Opportunities

- There are cultural events and resources already in Knoxville. The city is committed to diverse cultural attractions.
- There are pre-existing relationships between organizations.
- Knoxville has several locations and venues for gatherings.
- There are two upcoming publications to replace MetroPulse.

Threats

- Loss of MetroPulse as community advertisement.
- Existing Knoxville promotions are limited to specific age groups and communities.
- Several progressive, multiethnic, multicultural events already happening and members of the African American community don’t know it exists.
- Arts and cultural events highlighting multicultural and multiethnic events are not marketed or publicized to diverse community groups, e.g., art exhibit on Women in Jazz at the Emporium Center for the Arts.
- Advertising and marketing pre-existing cultural events and resources may face tensions in providing unsolicited advice and/or efforts.
- There is a lack of dissemination of information.
- There is a lack of community buy-in.
- Entertainment tax is too high.
- There is a lack of a managing partner to oversee development endeavor from birds-eye view.

- Competition and/or lack of support plus high critique of others from African American and Black community.

Financial & resource costs

- Human resources to market and advertise in new and more diverse ways will likely be the largest cost. Events and resources already exist; extra costs should not be incurred by creating new events and resources.
- Human resource and financial overhead of all new endeavors.

Measurement

- Increase participation in local events and resources.
- Increase in African American or Black-owned entertainment venues and hospitality businesses.

Solution #4: Increase persons of color, specifically Blacks and African Americans, participating on local planning boards

Retention Barriers Addressed

- City Climate
- Community
- Leadership/Mentorship

Possible Tactics

- Involvement with Metropolitan Planning Commission.
- Writing letters to city and county governments.
- Research “movers and shakers” when it comes to planning boards. Then make efforts to join planning boards for airport, interstate, city, county, etc.
- Allocate financial resources in places to improve economic development in African American neighborhoods and communities.
- Look to Chattanooga’s economic development as a model.
- Look at process of contracting general contractors at the university .
- Identify who is engaged in university contracts/sub-contracts and identify which contracts are awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses.
- Measure and identify goals for university awarding contracts to minority- and women-owned businesses.

Audience

25-65yr olds

Possible partners

Metropolitan Planning Commission
 Beck Cultural Center
 Knoxville-Knox County Community
 Action Committee

Visitor’s Bureau
 Knoxville Chamber of Commerce
 Knoxville Area Urban League
 Knoxville city government

Knox County government
Tyson-McGhee airport
TVA

The Development Corporation of Knox
County
UT System

Opportunities

- There are planning boards already in Knoxville.
- A group in East Knoxville is meeting at the Beck Cultural Center about this topic. Members of the EAP and BFSAs are attending already. We can publicize this opportunity with interested people at UT.
- There was a previous existence of Economic Development Council in Knoxville (stemming from TVA). There may possibly be an opportunity to revive group of those interested in the improving the economic situation of disadvantaged groups in Knoxville.
- Leverage engagement of university's venture capital office.

Threats

- Process for gaining membership on planning boards will vary.
- There is a lack of knowledge about existence and operations of planning boards.
- Non-inclusive culture existing on planning boards meetings.
- Community organizations have historic feelings of rejection by university.

Financial & resource costs

- Human resources to research, join, and participate in boards will be the largest cost.

Measurement

- Increased diversity in planning boards membership.
- Increase African American and Black leadership of planning boards.
- Increase geographic and spatial planning and development in disadvantaged areas and communities in Knoxville.
- Increase the number of university contracts awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses.
- Increase the number of contractors and sub-contractors utilized by the university.

Solution #5: Improve reputation of East Knoxville

Retention Barriers Addressed

- City Climate
- Community

Possible Tactics

- Community development grants to bring financial resources to East Knoxville.
- City and federal grants
- Host a fundraiser to fund beautification efforts in East Knoxville.

- Offer business and tax incentives for opening a storefront in East Knoxville.
- Host a major, pre-established event in East Knoxville, like the Knoxville Marathon.
- Establish neighborhood associations
- Social media campaign to improve community image
- Marketing campaign among larger Knoxville population
- Free development and education courses in community centers in East Knoxville
- Improve schools
- Improve housing options and increase residential appeal
- Develop economic plan to empower businesses
- Workshop: Curb Appeal 101
- Workshop: Landscaping on a Budget
- Seminar: Home Improvements to Increase Property Values
- PR and pitch media on neighborhood improvements and business development efforts
- Host a forum featuring the community development position, Tank Strickland, for the City of Knoxville, as well as other city government leaders.
- Partner with city development to author federal grant proposals
- Think through allocation of grants and funds to disadvantaged areas most likely to have successful economic development.
- Ensure services provided to disadvantaged area is a desired service.

Audience

Knoxville residents

Possible partners

Knoxville Beautification Board
 The Development Corporation of Knox County
 Knoxville Community Development Corporation
 Neighborhood associations/organizations
 Knoxville Chamber of Commerce
 Knoxville Area Urban League

Knoxville city government
 Knoxville county government
 Knox County Schools
 After-school programs
 Community centers
 Local banks and credit unions
 Community leaders
 Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee

Opportunities

- The growth in the Old City, Happy Holler, and Old North neighborhoods all border East Knoxville. The gentrification and alternative, inclusive culture of these areas has the opportunity to spread to East Knoxville.
- City of Knoxville offers community grants, however information isn't widely marketed. Two grants are available, one in the \$25K range and another in the \$1M range.
- Leverage contacts and partnership within Mayor's office to gain information and host workshops/forums.

- City councilpersons have slush funds that can disperse financial support.
- Leverage existing community centers and previously established organizations.

Threats

- East Knoxville's demographics have a low socioeconomic status and lack economic support. Will need a large amount of financial resources to impact the neighborhood.
- Lack of community buy-in.
- Tactics for solutions are long-term and interest and commitment dwindle.
- Lack of a managing partner to oversee development endeavor from birds-eye view.

Financial & resource costs

Substantial financial resources are necessary. Major human resources are required to manage this large-scale, multifaceted effort.

Measurement

- Increase socioeconomic status of East Knoxville residents.
- Increase number of businesses and business districts in East Knoxville.
- Increase number of grants and financial support given to improve East Knoxville development.
- Increase economic development in East Knoxville.

Solution #6: Support local businesses and encourage entrepreneurship

Retention Barriers Addressed

- City Climate
- Jobs
- Community

Possible Tactics

- Business incentives
- Minority-owned and women-owned business directory and publicity campaign (supplier diversity within the university).
- Increase local businesses offering paid student internships that lead to post-graduation jobs.
- Increase local entrepreneurs offering mentorships to student entrepreneurs
- Encourage businesses incorporate recruitment programs and efforts.
- Create internal and external networks to promote job opportunities.
- Improve local university, corporate, and governmental network
- Encourage City of Knoxville Diversity Champions to raise awareness of economic advantages of industry and workforce diversity.

- Ensure quality of goods sold in East Knoxville is equivalent to goods sold in West Knoxville.
- Support African American and Black-owned businesses.
- Chamber of Commerce or Haslam College of Business host “Starting your own Business 101” or “10 things to do to start your own business” workshop for those without a business-related background.
- Promote engagement with Tennessee Small Business Development Center.

Audience

Local businesses

Independent entrepreneurs

National corporations needing facility sites

Established regional industries

Possible partners

Tennessee Small Business Development Center

Knoxville Area Urban League

Knoxville Chamber of Commerce

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Knoxville Community Development Corporation

The Development Corporation of Knox County

Knoxville Entrepreneur Center

Knoxville city government

Knox County government

Community leaders

Community centers

Local banks and credit unions

Local businesses and entrepreneurs

UT Haslam College of Business

UT College of Nursing

UT College of Social Work

UT College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

UT Career Services

Private industries

100 Black Men of Greater Knoxville, Inc.

Alpha Phi Alpha

UT BFSA and partnership organizations

TVA

Big Brothers Big Sisters

City of Knoxville Business Tax Office

Knox County Business Tax Office

Opportunities

- Business development grants.
- Established local industries.

Threats

- Business economy and economy of local markets.
- Ability to obtain loans and financial backing.
- UT’s goal is to recruit, retain, and then graduate. There is a lack of efforts to encourage alumni to join the local workforce.
- Fear of hiring African Americans and other persons of color.

Financial & resource costs

- Space, overhead costs, financial backing, affordability, and accessibility.

- Financial costs of supporting local businesses.

Measurement

- Increase number of locally owned businesses by persons of color.
- Increase number of 25-65yr old persons of color in Knoxville.
- Increase number of African American or Black business professionals in Knoxville.
- Monitor number of African American or Black students involved in business-related programs.
- Identify number of women-owned businesses.

Solution #7: Create African American leadership organization and network

Retention Barriers Addressed

- Leadership/Mentorship
- Community

Possible Tactics

- Create a new group for leaders.
- Structured term limits within leadership organizations.
- Encourage cross-generational leadership collaborative relationships.
- Host leadership fairs and conferences
- Offer leadership training for specific areas of service
- Monthly networking event featuring different professionals across wide range of expertise (lawyers, judges, community leaders, corporate leaders, entrepreneurs, doctors, administrators).
- Seminar: What is Leadership? What is Competency?
- Leadership Forum & Networking Event: Bridging the Gap between UT and Knoxville
- Local leaders directory to include senior leaders, new leaders, and student leaders
- Researching what it would take to establish or re-establish the East Tennessee Race Relations organization.

Audience

African Americans and Black residents of Knoxville and region

Partners

African American organizations (civic, civil rights, businesses)

Local media

Knoxville Chamber of Commerce

Diversity Champions

Community leaders

Beck Cultural Center

100 Black Men of Greater Knoxville, Inc.

National Coalition of 100 Black Women
Alpha Phi Alpha

UT Center for Leadership and Service

UT Diversity Leads

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater
Knoxville
Leadership Knoxville
YWCA
YMCA
Knoxville Area Urban League Young
Professionals

College of Law Institute for Professional
Leadership
UT Department of Education Leadership
and Policy Studies
City of Knoxville Martin Luther King Jr.
Commission

Opportunities

Members of pre-existing leadership organizations within Knoxville may serve as consultants and mentors to create new organization.

Threats

- Competition and selfishness among current organizations.
- Overlap in missions of organization (duplicating efforts within same community).
- Refusal of established leadership to create and execute succession plans.
- Lack of resources and training to prepare successors.
- Culture within community divided. Some not looking for change, some feel excluded from opportunities.
- Community buy-in.
- Time commitment.

Financial & resource costs

There may be a large financial and human resource overhead of starting up a new organization.

Measurement

- Creation of an organization.
- Establishment of regularly scheduled leadership programming hosted by and aimed at African American and Black leaders in Knoxville.
- Succession plans established within long-standing organizations.
- Increase in number of local African American leaders mentoring UT students (maybe even specifically Center for Leadership and Services students).

Solution #8: Improve cultural climate and competency at UT

Retention Barriers Addressed

UT Climate

Possible Tactics

- Increase financial commitment to hire persons of color and African Americans.
- Increase recruitment of African American and Blacks students.
- Retain and increase African American and Blacks students in senior ranking administration.

- Intentional retention of African American support and professional staff.
- Increase human and financial resources in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity.
- Create accountability measures for action plans and benchmarks for all campus units.
- Create diversity positions in all college administration.
- Highlight activities and increase awareness of African American and Black students, faculty, and staff organizations.
- Increase diversity and inclusion programming.
- Diversity and inclusion training for deans, directors, and department heads.
- Merge and/or establish diversity councils and committees.
- Increase communication and collaboration between diversity councils.
- Increase faculty and scholarship diversity.
- Create support system for African American faculty eligible for tenure.

Audience

UT students, faculty, and staff

Partners

All UT colleges, units, departments
 UT Human Resources
 UT Office of Finance and Administration
 UT Diversity Leads
 UT Foundation
 Philanthropists

UT Deans, Directors, Department Heads
 UT Undergraduate Admissions
 UT Graduate Admissions
 UT Office of Multicultural Student Life
 UT Diversity councils/commissions
 UT student, faculty, staff organizations
 UT Office of Fraternities and Sororities

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Opportunities

- Development and fundraising efforts.
- Previously established diversity programming and organizations.
- Renewed campus commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion.

Threats

- Financial allocations are disproportionately distributed. They are also limited by state government and philanthropy decisions.
- Changing cultural awareness is difficult and will take long-term planning, collaboration, and financial commitment.

Financial & resource costs

- Human resource and financial overhead of faculty and administration hires, creating new positions, student recruitment, and dialogue.

Measurement

- Increase African American and Black students, faculty, and staff.
- Retention of senior ranking African American and Black administrators.
- Increase diversity positions in all college administration.
- Increase resources available to Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity.
- Increase number of diversity and inclusion educational training opportunities.
- Establish support system for African American faculty.

Planning

Year One

In the first year following this workshop, the commission will make this report publicly available. We hope to receive input from other areas of campus and our community that were not involved in the creation of the report. While we do not intend to drastically modify the report after it is made publicly available, we do believe there may be slight revisions. The commission will also be tasked with creating the implementation strategy and timeline for many of the suggestions outlined within this report.

Our priority for the first year is to sustain our current areas of programming, the Trailblazer Series, create and implement the implementation plan for retention and improved campus relations, and engage campus policy makers on their efforts to support our retention solutions. We believe there are opportunities for the commission to engage campus leadership at our monthly meetings on the following topics:

- Undergraduate recruitment of African American and Black students

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- Faculty recruitment of African American and Black faculty
- Supporting the research and engagement of African American and Black faculty
- Supporting research and engagement designed to improve the societal experiences for African Americans and Blacks
- Diversifying suppliers to the university

Combining our retention solutions with information provided from institutional policy makers will allow the commission to re-focus programmatic and financial efforts within the next three years.

As part of the implementation plan, we will engage external organizations to help us implement strategies that address barrier(s) identified within this report. This will likely be new and existing community partners interested in the identified issues with the climate, progression, and retention of African Americans in Knoxville and at UT. During our process, we will request that the partnering organizations provide follow-up reports and recommendations related to tactical implementation.

The goal of year one is to identify a minimum of 2-3 solutions to focus on for the remainder of year one and leading into year two. The commission will refocus programming and finances around these solutions during year two. The secondary goal of year one is to provide an end of year report on the information gathered from policy makers and external organizations. While the commission already authors an annual impact report for the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, this additive end of year report will be specific to this document.

Year Two

The priority of year two will be to continue to implement tactics for the 2-3 barriers of focus identified within this report. A major task will be to establish baseline data for each tactic undertaken. Depending on the tactic, measurement following tactical execution will be implemented.

The goal of year two is to refocus and reinvigorate our programmatic and financial efforts, and enhance our ability to implement and measure the outcomes related to the retention and climate barriers identified.

Year Three

The priority of year three is to continue to enhance the implementation activities initiated during year one and two. Each tactic will be adjusted based on the prior year's evaluation. Measurement of the tactics will be sustained and reported to the stakeholders of CFB.

The primary goal of year three will be tactic implementation, assessment, documenting outcomes, and disseminating information related to the impact. We believe that with the data

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collected for each year, as well as the follow up reports from the community, the commission will be able to elevate our assessment of impact for the retention of African Americans in Knoxville and identify new barriers during the process.

Conclusion

African American students, staff, and faculty at the University of Tennessee and members of the Knoxville community view Knoxville as a city where they will reside for a small amount of time in order to obtain their degree or gain more experience before they head to bigger, regional cities.

The Commission for Blacks hopes our multi-year efforts to grow awareness around retaining African American professionals in Knoxville and retention strategy report developed to address barriers to retention will assist our campus and community in being more diverse and inclusive. We aim to have a lasting impact on policy, climate, and inclusion at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.