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UT Inclusive Leadership Academy (UTILA) and Intercultural Development Inventory, COVID-19
This year has been unprecedented to say the least! COVID-19 has turned our campus, state, country, and world upside down. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery has exacerbated the systemic racism that already disproportionately effects the black community. Despite it all, the Commission for Blacks is still persevering!

During a recent meeting, members discussed hosting a virtual round table series to address the needs of students, staff, and faculty who have been affected by the pandemic and current events. The commission identified three main concerns as food security, mental health, and financial strains. We are currently planning a webinar series to address these issues.

During this year, we have worked diligently to advise the Chancellor and eventually the newly formed Division of Diversity and Engagement; celebrate students, faculty, and staff; and coordinated a Joint Commissions Awards Ceremony.

The leadership team participated in workshops, attended speaking engagements; engaged in professional development; and supported other initiatives. We collaborated with the Office of Multicultural Student Life and other areas to provide opportunities to demonstrate mattering and belonging, while celebrating black excellence.

Last year, we provided leadership for an ‘All Commissions Luncheon,’ designed to provide a platform to interact and network; share and celebrate the work that has been done thus far; discuss ways that we can collaborate on initiatives; and support each of the commissions and CDI. Because of COVID-19 we were able to once again provide leadership and collaboration with the Division of Diversity and Engagement for an ‘All Commissions and Council’ Awards Ceremony.

We will continue to work towards advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion on Rocky Top!
Growth of the Vice Chancellor’s Office of Diversity and Engagement

In the fall of 2019 Chancellor Plowman announced Tyvi Small would permanently continue in his role as Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement. He began serving as the interim vice chancellor for diversity and engagement in December of 2018. Under Tyvi’s guidance, our campus has been able to launch new faculty and staff training programs such as the Intercultural Development Inventory and UT Inclusive Leadership Academy as well as provide colleges with the framework to create a diversity action plan and co-create the new Research Development Academy. In effort to hollistically meet UT’s land-grant mission, the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach was realigned to the new division under the leadership of Dr. Javiette Samuel. The Office of Equity and Diversity was also added to the division.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING SESSIONS

CFB participated in reflective sessions in the spring that gave individuals the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the division’s mission, vision, and values.
Events, Awards & Recognitions

AFRICAN AMERICAN HALL OF FAME

The African American Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony took place on November 2, 2019. Dr. Carolyn Hodges was inducted. The Hall of Fame recognizes African Americans that have demonstrated service, scholarship, and development to African Americans at the University of Tennessee and have taken on leadership roles in enhancing concerns related to African American on campus, in Knoxville, and within Tennessee. The Commission for Black participated in this event hosted by Multicultural Student Life.

COMMISSION LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATES IN CHANCELLOR’S INVESTITURE

Sharon Couch, Javiette Samuel, and James Williams were active participants in Chancellor Donde Plowman’s investiture, which began with a procession of campus and system administrators, the Board of Trustees, deans and faculty delegates from each college, and other campus representatives. It concluded with a private dinner in the Haslam College of Business.
Tyvi Small, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement hosted the Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators to strengthen UT’s relationship with black elected officials. A collaboration with Representative Rick Staples, elected officials had an opportunity to meet with President Boyd, Chancellor Plowman, students, faculty, and staff and attended the UT-Memphis basketball game. Their trip concluded with an engaging dinner in the Baker Center with presentations by Dr. Javiette Samuel, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement and Dr. Shea Kidd Houze, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students. During this time, students had an opportunity to interact and network with the caucus. The CFB leadership team participated.
CFB PARTICIPATES IN MLK PARADE

More than 200 UTK students, faculty and staff participated in the 2020 MLK Day parade. Among some of the participants were Chancellor Donde Plowman, Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics Phillip Fulmer, UT System President Randy Boyd, and dozens of campus organizations.
CFB co-sponsored the 3rd Annual Celebration of Black Excellence. The event honors the culture, legacy, and accomplishments of African Americans that have contributed to the University of Tennessee. The attendees experienced musical performances and short orations by students. The event also featured “Collecting Histories” an art exhibit by Floyd Jones and Mary Sabol.

Javiette Samuel and Dr. James Williams presented breakout sessions. The first event took place in 2005 and has continued to grow over the last 15 years.
CFB PROVIDES LEADERSHIP FOR CHANCELLOR’S JOINT COMMISSIONS AND COUNCIL AWARDS CEREMONY

Due to COVID-19, the Annual Chancellor’s Awards Banquet was cancelled. In an effort to celebrate honorees, CFB provided leadership, organized the logistics, and content for a virtual ceremony. The Commission for Blacks, Commission for Women, Commission for LGBT People, and CDI honored award recipients on May 8. Chancellor Award recipients for the 2019-2020 year are Allen Heaston and Dr. Brandon Winford.

GENE MITCHELL GRAY PIONEER AWARD RECIPIENT

This award recognizes the outstanding, pro-active contributions of students who serve the campus community and promote diversity and inclusion. This year’s recipient, Allen Heaston - a recent graduate of the Law School, has demonstrated service, leadership, social advocacy, and a commitment to the spirit of cultural enrichment and the appreciation of differences on campus.

During his time at the University of Tennessee he has served in a variety of leadership positions such as Vice-President of the Black Law Student Association, has participated in the Institute’s Leading as Lawyers partnership with Australia’s Queensland University, and worked as an intern with the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Equal Opportunity Compliance Department. He also served as a Graduate Research Assistant in the Division of Diversity and Engagement during the 2019-2020 academic year where he worked on several projects and participated in the Student Advisory Board.
The award recognizes outstanding, pro-active contributions of faculty and staff members who serve the campus community and promote diversity and inclusion at UT. The recipient openly expresses his/her beliefs in a diverse university community and has made consistent contributions on issues of diversity and inclusion.

Dr. Brandon Winford, the 2020 recipient, has demonstrated a commitment to the development of individuals in our community through cultivating and enriching the human mind and spirit.

Dr. Winford’s research focuses on the relationship between civil rights and black capitalism. He is the author of John Hervey Wheeler, Black Banking, and the Economic Struggle for Civil Rights, he co-organized a fund-raising campaign which initiated the annual Fleming-Morrow lecture in African-American history, and he helped create the UTK #BlackHistoryMatters Film and Discussion series in 2015-2016. Additionally, he has hosted three distinguished scholars of Black business history through the UT Humanities Center Visiting Distinguished Scholars Projects, has given guest lectures at local high schools, and coordinated exhibitions at Knoxville’s Beck Cultural Exchange Center.

Winford is also one of two African-American historians to receive the Lillian Smith Book Award. This honor recognizes works that examine issues of race, social justice, civil and human rights, and the education and socialization of young people. The awards are administered by the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia. Dr. Winford was honored for his book John Hervey Wheeler, Black Banking, and the Economic Struggle for Civil Rights (University Press of Kentucky, 2019).
Congratulations to the 2019-2020 Black Torchbearers!

Taylor Washington
Mustafa Ali-Smith
JENKINS AND SLADE AWARDED DOCTORAL DEGREES

Tanisha Jenkins, PhD
Director
Multicultural Student Life

Izetta Slade, EdD
Executive Director
Human Resources

SAMUEL AND WILLIAMS PROMOTED AND TENURED

Javiette Samuel, PhD, CFLE
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement

James Williams, PhD
Associate Professor
Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management

National Scholars Visit UT

Dr. Christine Stanley shared current research on invisible labor in the academy, with particular emphasis on the experiences of minoritized faculty at predominantly white colleges and universities. She drew implications for institutional policies, practices, and processes. The CFB leadership team and commissioners participated in the events.

Dr. Larry Roper, Professor in the School of Language, Culture and Society and Coordinator of the College Student Services Administration program and the undergraduate Social Justice Minor at Oregon State University came to UT to provide a series of workshops and engaging opportunities. Dr. Samuel and Sharon Couch were active participants in the sessions.
The Division of Diversity and Engagement, in partnership with Human Resources co-sponsored several initiatives including the Intercultural Development Inventory Qualifying Administrator Training (IDI) and UT Inclusive Leadership Academy (UTILA). Dr. Javiette Samuel, Co-Chair, and commissioners Dr. Tanisha Jenkins and Dr. Izetta Slade were in the inaugural IDI class. IDI helps individuals understand and broaden their cultural competence. Certification is required to administer and analyze reports. The inaugural cohort completed their certification in the summer of 2019. Groups may request training by contacting DDE or HR.

Members of the inaugural UTILA class included Sharon Couch, immediate past Chair, Dr. Javiette Samuel and commissioner Thura Mack.