COMMISSION FOR BLACKS PRESENTS:

BLACK EXCELLENCE @ UTK

PROMOTIONS AT UT
The Commission for Blacks would like to recognize the following faculty and staff members of Color for their promotions within the University during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Dr. Janelle Coleman, Executive Director for Diversity & Engagement; Melvin Cox, Service Supervisor III; Tyvi Small, Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Engagement; Nakia Mitchell, Service Supervisor III; Vaughn Gusby, Maintenance Specialist I; Andrea Chandler, Service Supervisor III; NaQuaina Moore, Assistant Director of Multicultural Student Life; Talisha Adams, Director of Academic Inclusive Initiatives; Chandra Cobb, Service Supervisor III; Affoue Koffi, Service Supervisor III; Dr. Javiette Samuel, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Engagement.

NEW VOLUNTEERS
Commission for Blacks would like to recognize faculty and staff of Color that joined the Volunteer family during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Deonna Anderson, Clinical Instructor; Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin, SIF Lecturer; Marcia Spurgeon, Clinical Instructor; Dr. Robert Bland, Assistant Professor; Dr. Patricia Bamwine, Professor;
Felicia Dean, Assistant Professor; Dr. Shamika Dalton, Associate Professor & Associate Director; Dr. Estifanos Haile, Postdoctoral Teaching Associate; Jakia Marie, SIF Lecturer; Dr. Deadric Williams, Assistant Professor; Fatuma Guyo, Lecturer, Herman Graham III, Coach II; James Brumbaugh, Coach III; Shelton Felton, Coach III; Rachel Bell, Coordinator I-Football Recruiting; Akilah Laster, Coordinator II; Quannah Washington, Advisor I; Timothy Cutwright, Police Corporal; Dr. Stephen Puplampu, Research Associate II; Shenay Nolan, Coordinator II; Christa Gloster, Hall Director; Caleaf Davis Jr, Building Services Aide I; Dr. Emmanuel Mapeesa, Post-Doctoral Research Associate; Douglas Jones Jr, Building Services Aid I; Chiara Brown, Hall Director; Yasja Hemmings, Hall Director; Kyrus Brown, Building Services Aide I; Jarod Matheney, Manager; Akilah Martin, Radiological Technologist; Ladawna Williams, Professional Academic Coach; Cierra Burnett, Coordinator II; Lorna Hollowell, Education & Training Consultant; Bethena Fowler, Research Coordinator I; Jeffrey Smith, Regional Recruiter; Madisien Howard, Case Management Coordinator; Sherry Jones, Building Services Aide I; Amber Williams, Vice Provost for Student Success; Kevin Dickson, Building Services Aide I; Harold Stewart, Building Services Aide I; Stephanie Frierson, Administrative Specialist I; Lamar Bryant, Associate Dean; Christin Roberson, Assistant Director; Wesley Allen, Building Services Aide I; Robert Allen, Building Services Aide I; Valeda Brooks, Building Services Aide I; Patricia Goodman, Building Services Aide I; Chantryce Boone, Administrative Support Assistant III; Takia Faniyi, Administrative Specialist II; Monica Goodman, Recruitment Administrative Support Assistant III; Ahmad Marion, Police Officer I; Harold Middlebrook III, Building Services Aide I; Kayvecese Forbes, Service Aide I; Willis White, Service Aide I; Marquis Thomas, Service Aide I; Miyauna Cashy, Building Services Aide I; JaDarius Fuller, Building Services Aide I.
A three-time UTK alum, Dr. Javiette Samuel earned her Bachelor of Science in 1996, Master of Science in 1999, and Doctor of Philosophy in 2002. She serves as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement and Director of Community Engagement and Outreach. She is also an affiliated faculty member in the Department of Child and Family Studies. Dr. Samuel is an experienced engaged scholar with a unique combination of educational, interpersonal, and creative skills. She has worked with P-20 students, families, and underrepresented communities for nearly 25 years focusing on engagement, outreach, and evidence-based programs. She is especially passionate about addressing educational disparities; early warning signs of disengagement from school and learning; and mentoring. Dr. Samuel cultivates relationships with national, state, regional and local partners; works with units across campus to connect UT's knowledge with the community in mutually beneficial ways; identifies and tackles complex issues to help improve the well-being of our state's citizens; and partners with units across campus on initiatives that ensure access and are designed to address recruitment and retention of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. She is especially passionate about addressing educational disparities; early warning signs of disengagement from school and learning; and mentoring. Prior to joining UT in 2017 Samuel has served as a faculty member and Extension administrator at the University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, and Tennessee State University.

Career Lesson: Stay poised for new opportunities. Even if you are not seeking them when you are prepared for new opportunities they will often find you! Seek a mentor and serve as a mentor. Always reach back and bring someone along. Reach up to someone that has more experience than you that can help elevate you. And reach out bring those walking beside you along with you.

Fun Fact: I am the only child.

Favorite Thing to do in Knoxville: Visiting historical sites and exploring greenways and trails.
NEW VOL SPOTLIGHT: DR. ROBERT BLAND

I am a scholar of postbellum South with a particular interest in how African Americans produced and maintained a countermemory of the Civil War era that challenged anti-black ideas about the meaning of Reconstruction. I earned my PhD in United States history in 2017 from the University of Maryland. Before joining the faculty at the University of Tennessee, I was a professor at St. John’s University and the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to graduate school, I taught high school social studies and coached boys’- and girls’ basketball in Jackson, Mississippi.

Career Lesson: You are only as good as your scholarly community. Despite the fact that historians are judged by our ability to produce a single-person monograph, we are incredibly dependent on the conversations and feedback that we receive from friends, colleagues, librarians, archivists, students, and our broader communities. The ability to foster and build a robust community is as pivotal as having the time and space to write and research.

Fun Fact: I was once a highly ranked high school basketball player and played on the Five-Star Summer Camp team as Lebron James.

Favorite Thing to do in Knoxville: I’ve enjoyed a number of the community and cultural institutions in Knoxville, including the Carpetbag Theater, the Beck Cultural Center, The Bottom, the Knoxville Museum of Art, and the East Tennessee Historical Society.
2020-2021 Commission Leadership

James Williams, PhD, DM, CHE, CC
Commission Chair

Currently, Dr. Williams serves as an associate professor (tenured) at the University of Tennessee and is the owner of UNMASKYTP, LLC, training domestic and international leaders to dwell in joy while seeking curiosity in every pursued endeavor. He teaches mindfulness, various leadership tactics, and one-on-one coaching to build brighter leaders for the future. He has worked with leaders in Spain, South Korea, Bulgaria, China, and at many Fortune 100 companies.

Dr. Williams is also a professional actor, in multiple TV shows, such as Murder Chose Me and a SAG movie role, Marbles and Bullets, as Uncle Tom. He wrote four books, Check Your Life: Be Limitless and From Thug to Scholar are his most noticeable books. He has also published over 17 scholarly articles and delivered over 30 invited presentations to academic and industry leaders.

Dr. Williams has a passion for collaborating with unique individuals, and he is committed to seeing the positive attributes like and conflicting personalities; he believes all play a pivotal role in creating productive teams. Dr. Williams thinks leaders must generate strategies to demonstrate the value of all teammates.

Dr. Williams earned six degrees (two doctorates), Ph.D. from Iowa State University. He honorably served the United States Air Force, winning Airman of the Year. He played professional arena football for the Raleigh Rebels (2005-2006). Dr. Williams has industry experience in the dental, banking, sales, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, hotels, and education. He is also a Certified Hospitality Educator and trainer.

Dr. Williams was also recognized as a Top 15 Emerging Scholar of 2019 by Diverse: Issues in Higher Education. Dr. Williams also was a featured speaker for TEDx UTK in 2019. Best international mentor for Chinese Hospitality Education Initiative for the 2019 national championship in Shanghai, China.
Ryessia Jones Russell
Commission Vice Chair

Ryessia Jones Russell serves as one of the Vice Chairs for the Commission for Blacks for the 2020-2021 academic year. She has been a member of the Commission for 3 years. While being a member of the Commission, she has served as the Chairperson of the Faculty and Staff Committee.

Although she was born in Laurel, Mississippi, Ryessia often struggled to name one place home since she moved around often because her father was enlisted in the U.S. Army. She completed her undergraduate degree in Communication Studies at The University of Kentucky. She also graduated from the University of Louisville with a M.A in Communication Studies.

At the University, Ryessia serves as the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Programs in the Haslam College of Business. Specifically, she is responsible for honors student initiatives and program logistics for the Greg and Lisa Smith Global Leadership Scholars program. Furthermore, she serves as an academic advisor for honors students in the Haslam College of Business. Ryessia is an active member of NACADA and TennACADA. She is a former president of TennACADA (2017-2018). Because of commitment to the advising field, she was awarded the TennACADA Outstanding Advising Administrator in 2019.

Ryessia works to create a more diverse and inclusive culture at UTK and in the Knoxville Community. She currently serves on the Haslam College of Business Diversity Council, University Honors Committee, Advising Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and a member of Diversity Leads. She also is member of the Knoxville Chamber Ambassador Program and the Young Leaders’ Society. Furthermore, she is a Spring 2019 graduate of Leadership Knoxville.

Ryessia has resided in Knoxville since June 2016. She is married to Marcus Russell and together they have a daughter named Olivia. In the community, Ryessia is a member of the Knoxville Chamber Ambassador Program and the Young Leaders’ Society. Ryessia is also a Spring 2019 graduate of Leadership Knoxville. When Ryessia is not working or engaging the Knoxville community, she usually spends all of her free time with her family and watching TLC.
JaNay’ Turner
Commission Vice Chair

JaNay’ Turner serves as one of the Vice Chairs for the Commission for Blacks for the 2020-2021 academic year. A native of Nashville, Tennessee, she is a proud alumna of the University of Tennessee where she earned her bachelor’s degree in Psychology. Her work with the commission reaches back to her undergraduate years as a student leader advocating for the increase of diversity across campus. JaNay’ s advocacy work lead to her to becoming the recipient of the Gene Mitchell Gray Pioneer Award, presented by the commission.

For the past 15 years, JaNay’ has chased her passion of empowering youth and impacting the community. She has served in previous professional roles such as a behavior interventionist, case manager, and a college access coach.

Currently, JaNay' serves as a Coordinator for Diversity Recruitment at The University of Tennessee in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Her professional experience has taught her how strengthening lines of communication between communities can impact overall development, success, and achieve goals.

JaNay’ s passion extends outside of a professional lens. It is not uncommon to find her volunteering on a Saturday morning with the Knoxville Area Urban League where she currently serves as secretary for the KAUL Young Professionals and advisory board member to the National Achievers Society. However, as a “Vol for Life” (VFL), being a servant to the community is something that comes naturally to JaNay’. Uplifting, advocating, empowering, and being a catalyst for positive and equitable change for all underserved people is what gets her out of bed every day.

In her free time, JaNay’ enjoys spending time at home with her husband, Shawn, and their two dogs – Jazz and Grizz. JaNay’ is also excited to welcome a new addition to her family in December 2020.
2020-2021 Commissioners

Chair: James Williams
Vice Chair: Ryessia Jones Russell
Vice Chair: JaNay’ Turner
Antoinette Williams
Lyndsey Hornbuckle-Lampkin
Marcia McAllister-Spurgeon
David Kline
Robert Bland
Stefanie Benjamin
Devendra Potnis
Derek Alderman
DeOnna Anderson-Washington
Tanisha Jenkins
Tenea Lowery
W. Marcia Lane
Lexie Walker
Heather Ervin
Maddie Stephens
Dr. Andre Temple
Jennifer Sullivan
Joann Jeter
Jennifer Charles
Talisha L. Adams
Jessica Francis
Herbert Hobson
Izetta Slade
Yasja Hemmings
Celisse Lambert
Kathleen Modica-Forster
Madison Woods
Thura Mack
Thomas Andrew da silva Zeigler
LaTrice Wright
Stefanie Benjamin
DeMauri Mumphrey
Kaia Boyd
Nadia Powell
Trent Dickerson