

Presidential Task Force

9/3/2020

General Ronald Burgess:

Called the meeting to order with a welcome and opened the floor to Dr. Melody Russell to share information from an email that was sent to her and Dr. Joffery Gaymon and later shared with General Ronald Burgess.

Dr. Melody Russell:

Shared that she had attended the first Auburn Black Caucus (ABC) Meeting of the Fall semester and the group had questions regarding the 2016 Climate Study recommendations. There are concerns about transparency and accountability. The question of who will be held accountable for the implementation of the recommendations made in the past and the future. So, she would like the committee to address accountability of the committee recommendations as the strategies are still developing.

There was a request from Dr. Ivan Watts to view past and future agendas and minutes from the Presidential Task Force meetings. He also asked that they be made public for all constitutes.

Dr. Joffery Gaymon:

Shared that she also had attended the (ABC) Meeting and agreed that there was a lot of concerns about transparency and accountability around the 2016 Climate Study and the Presidential Task Force.

Dr. Melody Russell:

Suggested to the committee that they pull together highlights and report out. She asked that future Presidential Task Force meetings proceed with a formal agenda to assist with archiving and cover any topics that are felt to be priority.

Dr. Joffery Gaymon:

Suggested that the committee consider developing high-level summaries and themes to be shared. She also shared that she had looked at other universities' committees similar to this one and majority used high-level summaries.

General Ronald Burgess:

Agreed that the committee should have achieved notes and summaries that can be shared publicly. Committee members can share agenda items with Kim Brown to prepare an agenda for the next and future meetings.

Dr. Taffye Benson-Clayton's Office of Inclusion and Diversity will be responsible for the notes and anonymizing them.

Dr. Taffye Benson-Clayton:

Shared that in her experience that committees tasked with a charge similar to this committee typically uses high-level summaries to report out meeting information.

Introduced Amanda Carr to the committee and shared that she will be assisting the committee with compiling high-level notes of the Presidential Task Force meetings until October 1, when Sylvia Masango will resume her committee role.

Gretchen VanValkenburg:

Proposed that the summaries be shared on the Presidential Task Force website once they are ready and a link should be dedicated to sharing this information.

Reported that since the letter from President Gogue about the Presidential Task Force request for recommendations and ideas, input has increased as a result. The group has focused this week on the Landing Page development and the online submission form. They are working on a strategy to disseminate the submissions to the appropriate person/group to respond. They are preparing to let the committee see the work done so far next week.

Auburn Alumni Association is in the process of updating their Diversity and Inclusion pages and will also share the completed link on this page as well.

Ombudsman C. Kevin Coonrod:

Posed the question will the committee be able to review the summaries prior to them being published.

General Ronald Burgess:

Stated that he will appoint 4 or 5 committee members to approve the final version of the summaries before they are circulated or published. He will provide the names to committee members that will take on this charge.

Ms. Ada Ruth Huntley:

Shared that the SGA would also like to add the Presidential Task Force website link on their website once it is ready.

General Ronald Burgess:

Charged the committee with a homework task to think about what needs to be done next. Thinking ahead about a plan and long-term strategy with a timeline. Think about topics or subject matters like educational trainings, recruiting and retention for faculty, staff and minority students.

Coach Bruce Pearl:

Reported that the Athletic Department has been strategizing to assist the University in ways to increase the number of black athletes present and help them see more individuals like them at Auburn University. They have current initiatives like voter registration that is currently going on and other social justice initiatives in the works. He also shared that they have created a marketing campaign "Unity As One" with promotional items for purchase such as T-shirts that will raise funds for this effort. We should see this rolling out next week pending all final

approvals. They are currently also hoping that some prominent donors will also give to these efforts.

General Ronald Burgess:

Shared his excitement at the graphics for the marketing campaign “Unity As One” and spoke on the potential impact seeing the campaign on billboards, TV commercials, social media and other promotional outlets.

Ms. Elizabeth Devore:

Urged the committee to consider and think about a process for committee members rotating off or needing to transition.

She posed the question to Coach Pearl, to please clarify recruitment and retention for students or student athletes.

Coach Bruce Pearl:

Responded that Athletics efforts are for all students.

General Ronald Burgess:

Adjourned the committee to begin their sub-committee meetings. The next Presidential Task Force meeting will be via zoom, Tuesday, September 8th at 3:30 pm.

Melody Russell
Ronald Burgess
Amy Weaver
Kim Brown
Ada Ruth Huntley
Amy Weaver
Angela Cannon
Bill Hardgrave
Bruce Pearl
C. Kevin Coonrod
Donielle Fagan
Elizabeth Devore
Gretchen VanValkenburg
Jaime Hammer
Ja'lia Taylor
Joffery Gaymon
Katrina Akande
Lastella Paradise
Madison Birckhead
Mya Strickland
Oladiran Fasina
Ronny Isaac
Royrickers Cook
Seymour Irby
Sylvia Masango
Taffye Clayton
Vini Nathan
Amanda Young
Bridget Graba
Gail Gauntt
Gwen Whitlock
Jennifer Wynn
Mellissa Watson
Sandy Krietemeyer
Timothy Fair