

Presidential Task Force Meeting Minutes
9/8/2020

General Ronald Burgess:

Called the meeting to order and reminded the Presidential Task Force committee members that it would have report outs from sub-committees on Thursday. He opened the floor before the committee was to be released to sub-committees.

Ombudsman C. Kevin Coonrod:

Shared with the committee that he had attended a meeting with faculty and they shared great interest in the Presidential Task Force Committee. He urged the group that the Presidential Task Force committee should do something that is bold, impactful and sustainable in its recommendations.

Coach Bruce Pearl:

Addressed General Burgess and the Presidential Task Force Committee for permission to allow Coach Gus Malzahn approximately 5 minutes to address the committee with information about the role out of the Auburn Athletics "Unity As One" marketing campaign. The marketing campaign is set to rollout on Thursday. He was excited about the effort and the potential impact that the campaign can make for students through recruiting and retaining black students and minorities. Sales from the promotional shirt and donations from constitutes such as Bo Jackson and Tim Cook to mention a few could fund the many recommendations that the committee are planning to make pertaining to students. He believes that this will be seen as a positive statement for Auburn University and will say a lot about the direction of the university.

General Ronald Burgess:

Stated that he felt that Coach Gus Malzahn addressing the Presidential Task Force Committee members was appropriate and that he would have Kim Brown reach out to his executive assistant to make sure that it is conformed on his schedule.

Dr. Melody Russell:

Asked Coach Bruce Pearl to clarify the terms black students and minorities.

Coach Bruce Pearl:

Stated that the Athletics Department had chosen the inclusive language of black students and minorities.

Dr. Melody Russell:

Shared with the committee that the term minorities is broad by definition and that more inclusive language uses the term underrepresented students when referencing minorities. This terminology is more aligned with current practices for inclusive language. She suggested that moving forward that the Presidential Task Force move forward with using underrepresented students in future references.

Dr. Joffery Gaymon:

Shared that the term minorities has been replaced with the terminology of underrepresented students or traditionally underrepresented students. The Office of Enrollment Services has developed an underserved diversity statement and details are included about that population here at Auburn University. This information can be found on The Office of Enrollment Services website.

Coach Bruce Pearl:

Thanked Dr. Melody Russell for bringing the topic up for clarification and stated that he would advocate for the language that the Athletics department are currently using be changed moving forward.

General Ronald Burgess:

Reminded the committee that Thursday will be report out and that we would hear from Dr. Vini Nathan and Mrs. Gretchen VanValkenburg then adjourned the committee to begin their sub-committee meetings. The next Presidential Task Force meeting will be via zoom, Thursday, September 10th at 3:30 pm.

Ada Ruth Huntley
Amanda Carr
Amanda Young
Amy Weaver
Angela Cannon
Bill Hardgrave
Bridget Graba
Bruce Pearl
C. Kevin Coonrod
Donielle Fagan
Elizabeth Devore
Gail Gauntt
Gretchen VanValkenburg
Gwen Whitlock
Ja'lia Taylor
Jaime Hammer
Jennifer Wynn
Joffery Gaymon
Katrina Akande
Kim Brown
Lastella Paradise
Madison Birckhead
Mellissa Watson
Melody Russell
Mya Strickland

Oladiran Fasina
Ronald Burgess
Ronny Isaac
Royrickers Cook
Sandy Krietemeyer
Seymour Irby
Sylvia Masango
Taffye Clayton
Timothy Fair
Vini Nathan