

Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity

July 8, 2021

Minutes

Attendees: Katrina Akande, Michael Brown, Mikayla Brown, Chacolby Burns-Johnson, Angela Cannon, Taffye Benson Clayton, Astin Cole, Kevin Coonrod, Brian Cornish, George Flowers, Joffery Gaymon, Norman Godwin, Bridgett King, Kimberly Mulligan-Guy, Jared Russell, Melody Russell, Joellen Sefton, Bruce Smith, Ariyan Tooley, Gretchen VanValkenburg, Rett Waggoner, Alan Wilson, Jennifer Adams, Kim Brown and Amy Weaver

Updates

- Chacolby Burns-Johnson – chair of Black Alumni Council
 - Council will be on campus tomorrow and Saturday to plan for the next year.
 - Dr. Harold Franklin scholarship
 - \$10,000 raised to date for annual scholarship
 - Four \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded for upcoming school year
 - Black Alumni Council had a mixer with Black Student Union on July 7 and had close to 60 attendees.

Equity & Social Justice Center

Chair: Dr. Melody Russell

Members: Katrina Akande, Michael Bennett, Michael Brown, Taffye Clayton, Kevin Coonrod, Robin Jaffe, Kimberly Mulligan, Jared Russell, Jailin Sanders, Joellen Sefton, Kamden Strunk, Giovanna Summerfield & Gretchen VanValkenburg

- We were told by a subcommittee member that some community members have expressed an interest in broadening our proposal so that more groups will be included. They suggested that we may have a better chance at the institute concept being approved if we do broaden the scope of the institute. A draft of a proposal was submitted for our review and consideration.
- The following comments were made during the discussion on the above referenced suggestion and proposal:
 - What does it mean to be a faculty member of the institute? How would the funds be apportioned between the faculty member's work in the institute and with the faculty member's department? We may want to have a proposal put together for an appeal to departments' support for the institute.
 - We may want to set forth the expectation that scholarship funds will be shared between colleges, department and the institute. We will be more competitive for grants because of the institute. Departments will have access to more funds as a result of institute work. "Indirects" will come back to the institute. A proposal section on continued funding sources and contribution would be a good place to include that. Suggestion was made that we include a list of potential funders as an appendix to the proposal.

- What would a business plan include? How can we have a business plan that will complement our proposal? A 5 to 10-year business plan was stated to be the most realistic time frame for a business plan, as opposed to a three or five-year plan. There is a difference between an operational plan and a business plan, it was stated. We want to have consistent funding sources. A member said \$333,333 to \$500,000 would probably be enough to get the institute off the ground, without including a facility. The director's job would be to grow and develop future funding.
- We have talked about partnerships with Alabama A&M with our Extension partnership, as well as Tuskegee University. Can we have memberships in our institute? Can partners at other institutions become members?
- A member stated that it sounds like a conceptual shift of the institute is being proposed so the focus will include other historically excluded groups. There was a concern that excluding some groups but including others may cause problems when broadening the scope.
 - A lengthy discussion ensued about the focus of the institute; whether it should remain concentrated on the African American/Black experience or whether it should be broadened to include other groups.
 - We discussed ways in which the proposal could include other groups or pave the way for other groups to be included in the future.
 - We also discussed strategies for submitting our proposal to those individuals whose approval will be needed.

Graduate Student Subcommittee

Chairs: George Flowers and Jared Russell

Members: Cheryl Seals, Bridgett King, Alan Wilson, Vinicia Biancardi, Astin Cole, Brian Cornish, Dustin Johnson, Bridgett King, Ebony Robinson, Cheryl Seals, Aariyan Tooley and Alan Wilson

- Summary and review of previous meeting's minutes (meeting held June 10th, 2021)
 - Meeting highlights
 - Proposed action steps
- Reviewed data regarding Black/African American graduate student enrollment (by college and degree program)
 - 9 years of data
 - 15th class day Fall 2021 – new data will be available
 - Fairly static across university
- ACTION STEP: Identify “strong” programs that have been successful at recruiting AND retaining AND advancing (graduating) students
- ACTION STEP: Add columns with % (compared to overall student enrollment numbers)
 - Total #s/% AND Total Domestic #s/%
 - Change in % from 2012 – 2020 (Total #s/% AND Total Domestic #s/%)
 - How to identify strong?
 - Box plot style of presenting information
 - Drop-out rate / lack of completion
 - When did these students leave the program?

- Location of degree program across time of evaluation (some programs moved to different college)
 - Question: Average age of Black or African American graduate students?
- ACTION STEP: Place data (and documents) into Box for sub-committee to access
- IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS: Obtain data for degree *Time to Completion*; graduation data
 - Attention to context of respective programs (for example: social sciences versus STEM programs)
 - COVID-19 retention issue?
- Degrees awarded across 2011-2021 through 2020-2021
 - Data seems problematic
- Financial packages for students (school versus industry)
- ACTION STEPS: Include the deltas for all student populations (provide insight into why there is a decline)
- ACTION STEPS: Identify students who are on assistantships (impact of financial aid on retention)
 - % on assistantships
- Survey discussion:
 - Target population for survey will be: Include all those who identify as Black/African American AND include an identifier question
 - Add other demographic questions: country of origin, in-state vs out-of-status, HBCU?, location of origin, full-time or part-time employment, in-school full-time or part-time status, marital status, dependents, student loan debt from UG, etc.
 - Data regarding use of financial aid for UG vs. Grad students; How much financial support is allowed; are you a dependent vs. independent from parents
 - Reliance on: a) FAFSA; b) Parent income; c) Assistantship; d) etc.
 - Online vs traditional on-campus question: Reach out to Dr. B. King for a survey item
 - Eligibility criteria for students (need to be discussed and contextualized)
 - Federal government sets levels of funding support
 - CONCERN: Keep survey short and to the point
 - CONCERN: Data analysis technique
 - CONCERN: Platform to host the survey
- Timeline: Shooting for early Fall 2021
- Indicate the mode(s) of program delivery that most accurately describe your program (check all that apply):
 - In person instruction only
 - In person instruction with online coursework available
 - Primarily online (students have to come to campus at least once)
 - Completely online (students never have to come to campus)
- Primary areas for survey: intrinsic, community, cultural, socioeconomic
- Survey development: Question Dump for committee using Google Sheet
- Sub-committee: King, Astin, Ebony Robinson, Sefton, Russell, Flowers