

# IMPACT

**2014-2015**  
**DIVERSITY**  
**IMPACT**  
**REPORT**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

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OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION



# IMPACT

## 2014-2015 DIVERSITY IMPACT REPORT

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## FOREWORD

This is the 2nd annual Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity Impact Report. Each year, this report will detail the accomplishments and challenges of the administrative units that report to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, and the Chancellor's advisory Commissions. In addition, this report reflects the ongoing work and impact of the university's inaugural Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Rickey Hall.

Each of the units and offices reporting to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity design their annual priorities to support the university's strategic plan and goals. It is critical to our institution's excellence that we prioritize diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in our every action and intention. This report shows how we have been accountable for this responsibility as well as how we intend to continue to sustain and improve our efforts.

As I embark on the third year of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity's existence, I want to thank the faculty, staff, students, and community members that support my office, my vision, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I cannot do great work without the support of these individuals and I am greatly indebted to their desire and commitment to make our campus more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive.

Rickey Hall  
Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion

# EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

## BACKGROUND

The Educational Advancement Program (EAP) Student Support Services is a US Department of Education funded TRIO Program whose purpose is to provide support services to 250 first generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities. EAP promotes good academic standing, persistence from year to year, and graduation. Student Support Services (SSS) is the third TRIO created by the 1965 Higher Education Act in 1968. The University of Tennessee received its first SSS Competitive Grant in 1978-1979. A grant proposal for a new five-year period (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2020) is currently pending.

## STAFF

- Ronald McFadden, Director
- Celeste Brooks, Tutor Coordinator
- Derrick Shepard, Counselor
- Donna Kirby, Administrative Assistant
- Taotao Long, Graduate Research Assistant
- Tam'ra-Kay Francis, Graduate Research Assistant

## 2014-2015 PRIORITIES

The program is required to report annually to the Department of Education on the extent to which federal objectives are achieved. The following objectives align with the mission and vision of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in its intent to recruit and retain a body of diverse undergraduate students.

- To ensure that the program serves 250 students, 2/3 of who must be first generation and low income or students with disabilities.

- » Program evaluation data reveals that 68 percent of the 271 participants served were first generation, low income, or students with disabilities.

- To ensure that 80 percent of the participants are retained from one year to the next. This data cannot be calculated until Fall 2015.

- » 2013-2014 data reveals that 95 percent of the participants returned in the fall of 2014.

- To ensure that 80 percent of the participants graduate within six years, this data has not been calculated to date, since official graduation data has yet to be received.

- » 76.8% of EAP participants from 2008-2009 cohort graduated in 2014

The Educational Advancement Program promotes the university's vision by recruiting first generation and low-income students from multicultural backgrounds, and providing opportunities for student participants to engage in service learning within the Knoxville Public Schools and other agencies that serve youth.

Additionally, the Educational Advancement Program promotes and encourages student participants to pursue research opportunities both at the undergraduate and graduate level that broaden their understanding and creation of new ideas and concepts.

The Educational Advancement Program promotes leadership development for its student participants by the creation of the EAP Student Advisory Council, which provides

advice and assistance in the implementation of program services. Moreover, the program provides information and guidance relative to issues and concerns regarding equality of educational opportunities, and encourages verbal and written advocacy for the same.

Having been in the vanguard of promoting diversity and inclusion for more than three decades, EAP continues to promote academic excellence and create an inclusive and welcoming environment that encourages and assists disadvantaged students in becoming part of the university community.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Outstanding achievements of the program for the 2014-2015 year include:

- The program celebrated its 35th year of existence at UT with a luncheon program for 100 current and former EAP and McNair participants, faculty, and staff in December 2014.
- A total of 121 (55%) EAP participants achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and 56 participants (25%) achieved a GPA of 3.5 or higher.
- A total of 49 current and former participants graduated in 2014-2015.
- Three former EAP participants received the Chancellor's Gene Mitchell Gray Award awarded by the Commission for Blacks.
- The program sponsored a ten week Graduate Records Examination preparation class for 23 students during the Spring 2015 semester.
- With the support of the Office of the Provost, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, the Office of Research and Engagement, and the Vice President

for Diversity, the program conducted a summer research institute for 15 undergraduates during the summer 2014.

- Two program participants received the Courage to Climb award given by the Division of Student Life.

## CHALLENGES

The program is challenged by the need to expand opportunities for participants by utilizing technology to convert and improve its ability to deliver services. These include greater utilization of Banner, GradesFirst, and online workshop utilization. Other challenges of the program for the 2014-2015 year include:

- Identifying sources for matching institutional funds to aid in effectively leveraging grant funding.
- Completing the UT McNair Comprehensive follow-up study which will include the challenge to find funds to complete this project.
- Completing UT McNair alumni profiles for marketing and communication purposes.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The program will:

- Streamline its tutorial application to attract more tutors.
- Require tutoring for all participants in the instruction component.
- Restructure its intake process to include more academic diagnostic assessment.
- Expand its collaboration with the Student Success Center, to engage in comparison control group analysis of program participants who are first



generation and low income.

- Expand its collaboration with TLSAMP taking advantage of their fall research conference.
- Expand its collaboration with Career Services, requiring participants to complete career inventories as part of their academic plan requirement.

## CONCLUSION

A grant proposal for a new five-year period (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2020) is currently pending, but EAP eagerly looks to the 2015-2016 academic year to continue support services that promote good academic standing, persistence from year to year, and graduation for first generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities.

The Educational Advancement Program will continue advancing diversity and inclusion by promoting academic excellence and student research, and creating an inclusive and welcoming environment that encourages and assists disadvantaged students in their efforts to achieve success at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



## OFFICE OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

### BACKGROUND

The university's Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) serves the main Knoxville campus, Institute of Agriculture, Athletics, University-wide Administration, Institute for Public Service, and a consulting role with the UT Space Institute. OED fulfills multiple compliance functions required by university policy, state and federal law and regulations, and various legal mandates related to civil rights, equal employment and opportunity, and affirmative action. OED provides leadership and services that promote the institution's mission of creating and sustaining a learning environment that is welcoming to all and hostile to none.

The Office of Equity and Diversity's responsibilities include applying and investigating complaints of discrimination filed on the basis of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), national origin, religion, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability or covered veteran status. Staff in OED serve as the campus Title IX Coordinator, Title VI Coordinator, and ADA Coordinator. OED monitors, trains and provides direction for the campus search procedures, along with preparing the campus Affirmative Action plan. OED writes the annual Title IX plan covering all campuses and University-wide Administration. Veterans are surveyed each year through an annual VETS 100 survey, and individuals with disabilities are also offered the opportunity to self-identify disabilities. OED also conducts training and workshops in the areas mentioned above.

## STAFF

- Jennifer Richter, Interim Director
- Katrina Oliver, Assistant Director
- K. Tate Gray, EEO Investigator
- Khadra Baskin, Administrative Coordinator
- Tina Smith, Administrative Support Assistant

## 2014-2015 PRIORITIES

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Office of Equity and Diversity prioritized (1) working with the Office of the Provost towards making appropriate changes in the search structure for faculty, (2) guiding the university through the creation and review of a new sexual misconduct policy, and (3) addressing staff capacity issues identified in the office.

OED worked closely with the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and various academic departments who are experienced in conducting faculty searches to determine ways to modify the current search process while still maintaining the integrity of the institution's hiring practices and goal of diversifying its faculty and administrative staff. Changes were developed and will be implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year. OED and the Office of the Provost have developed a plan for training and the roll-out of the changed procedures. OED's Assistant Director worked closely with staff exempt searches during the 2014-2015 year to streamline information needs and create communication routes with heavy users of the search process.

OED's Interim Director led a 25+ member Task Force in the review and revisions of a

comprehensive sexual misconduct policy and procedure. The Task Force met nine times in meeting sessions open to all members of the university before ultimately creating the permanent policy. The new policy was accepted by the Chancellor, reviewed and accepted by the Board of Trustees, and will be implemented in the fall under the guidance of OED. The impact will be campus-wide for all faculty, staff and students.

OED's work, support and guidance is sought by every area of campus. Demands have exceeded capacity and with that recognition, OED brought on a new Assistant Director and EEO Specialist during the 2014-2015 academic year. Both staff members have taken on specific tasks and are developing specific expertise. The Assistant Director has taken over the review of all staff searches, Title VI responsibilities, the VETS 100 report, and assists in other OED areas such as complaints, training, etc. The EEO Specialist has worked with ADA accommodation issues, data requests, processing complaints, and training.

Along with these staff additions, OED has posted a new position for a Coordinator position with primary responsibility for ADA coordination. Additional priority will be placed on filling a position for an ADA Coordinator/EEO Specialist.

Current staffing will be reviewed to assess the skills and abilities of the OED staff, and to make a determination as to how best to use the skills and abilities to forward the current needs of the university. Plans will be put into place to assist staff in receiving appropriate training in the event that the staff member will take on new or different tasks.

OED's priorities and their alignment with Vol Vision and the university's efforts towards

achieving Top 25 status continue in their significance for the upcoming year. The Office of Equity and Diversity's commitment to diversity, respect, and fundamental fairness directly advances the University of Tennessee's vision of becoming a Top 25 public research institution. Specific tasks that contribute to this effort include the efforts described earlier, such as the creation of the sexual misconduct policy (working towards a harassment free environment) and the revisions made for faculty searches (to encourage continued efforts in seeking out diverse candidates while minimizing unnecessary paperwork).

## CHALLENGES

Our challenges included identifying and filling staffing needs; exploring ways to create a more capable and vigorous database in order to supply data and reports; and finding time to work with Human Resources to help departments with the Taleo online hiring system.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

OED led the way in the revisions of the University's sexual misconduct policies by first educating the upper administration about the need to address issues presented on a national scope, and next by chairing and guiding a Chancellor's Task Force to examine and revise the campus interim policy on sexual misconduct. OED was instrumental in identifying the need for and helping create a "one-stop" website with resources and information geared towards students seeking reliable information about what to do in the event of a sexual assault.

OED successfully worked with the Office of the Vice Chancellor to prepare for and carry out an external review of the office, its

responsibilities, its staffing and functions. The review was conducted over several months during fall semester 2014.

OED served as the "point" office for a comprehensive on-campus Title IX review conducted by two federal agencies and involving ten agency investigators. OED coordinated the efforts between colleges, departments, administration and the general counsel's office for the two-day review involving 100 interviewees.

## LOOKING FORWARD

OED looks forward to moving forward with changes in all of the areas noted as priorities, along with taking steps to educate the university community in our office areas of expertise, including Title IX and ADA accommodations.

Stability in staffing and the development of a more robust reporting management system will provide the opportunity to move forward with planning and implementation of inter-office processes as well as processes external to the office.

## CONCLUSION

OED is in a position to move forward during the upcoming year. Staff brought on board last year are able to contribute in substantive ways, and the addition of a new staff member will help increase capacity of, specifically, the Associate Vice Chancellor and Director. A very difficult year is behind us and we are prepared to take on the priorities identified in this report.



# OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL STUDENT LIFE

## BACKGROUND

The Office of Multicultural Student Life (MSL), has been an integral part of the University for over 25 years. Multicultural Student Life contributes to an inclusive learning environment by enhancing institutional efforts in retaining and graduating students prepared for a diverse global society. We promote the academic success, equality, and leadership development of students through programs and services that holistically address cultural, educational, and civic growth.

## STAFF

- Tanisha Jenkins, Director
- Crystal Hardeman, Associate Director for Diversity and Multicultural Education
- Dametraus Jagers, Associate Director for Retention and Student Engagement
- Jenny Wirth, Coordinator for Academic Support
- Diane Goble, Program Resource Specialist
- Carmanette Rawls, Accounting Specialist
- Robert Hill, Facility Supervisor
- Lucy Boateng, Graduate Research Assistant
- Ashley Redix, Graduate Research Assistant
- Kristin Greene, Graduate Research Assistant

## 2014-2015 PRIORITIES

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Office of Multicultural Student Life focused on the following four priorities:

- Fostering community within our office, within the student organizations that we directly advise, and with the campus and the greater Knoxville community.
- Impacting generations through dedicated service by celebrating MSL milestones and telling our story through assessment.
- Transforming the lives of students, faculty, staff, and community members through the various programs and services that we offer.
- Understanding who we are and what we do within the Office of Multicultural Student Life and the Black Cultural Center. As we welcomed two new full-time staff members and two new graduate research assistants, it was important that we continue to focus on the impact of MSL while upholding the history, mission and values of the Office of Multicultural Student Life.

In alignment with Vol Vision, the Office of Multicultural Student Life provides programs and services that positively impact the retention, leadership development, civic responsibility and engagement, and academic performance of undergraduates. These programs include but are not limited to the Multicultural Mentoring Program, the tutorial and book loan services provided by our Academic Support Unit, leadership development provided through the involvement in student organizations directly advised by MSL, as well as, on-campus jobs within the Black Cultural Center and the Office of Multicultural Student Life. The Office of Multicultural Student Life had

the opportunity to partner with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life to pilot the Tri Star Academic Success program that is aimed at providing additional academic support to students who are involved in the Multicultural Greek Council or the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

MSL actively participated in on-campus admissions recruiting events, as well as offering an interest session during the New Vols Experience (new student orientation). We hosted and participated in several school and community pre-collegiate programs to share information about the University of Tennessee and the Office of Multicultural Student Life with prospective students.

MSL full-time professional staff and graduate research assistants are actively involved both regionally and nationally in professional organizations that strengthen our capacity and productivity in research, scholarship, and service, as well as being highly involved on campus committees. Members of the MSL team hold elected leadership positions in professional organizations, serve as committee chairs, have been chosen as professional scholars, and have written articles for publication in professional journals. Staff members are also engaged in outreach activities within the Knoxville community that help to enhance the reputation and recognition of our campus.

The Office of Multicultural Student Life coordinates many programs and services to help cultivate a welcoming and inclusive campus environment. The Diversity Educators program aims to increase awareness of diversity-related issues while creating a dialogue that explores the campus definition and perception of diversity, and cultivates a welcoming and inclusive environment. This academic year, we had eight MSL

Diversity Educators (twice the number of the 2013-2014 year) who facilitated fourteen educational programs on building community, inclusivity, multiculturalism, and other topics for interested organizations, offices, and academic classes. This year's Diversity Excursion to the Women's Hall of Fame, Beck Cultural Center, and Alex Haley Farm was successful with eleven students participating. Additionally, there were forty-seven mentors in the Multicultural Mentoring Program and fifty first-year students who participated in the newly launched MMP "Connect" Living-Learning Community.

During this academic year, twenty-six students completed the Safe Zone Training program. In an effort to continue conversations around inclusivity, the Diversity Dialogues Faculty Advisory Board helped coordinate and facilitate the Diversity Dialogues and Kernel Konvos Film Series while engaging academic departments in MSL programmatic initiatives. There were four Diversity Dialogues and two Kernel Konvo films scheduled for the academic year.

## CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges that MSL faced this academic year included a 13% drop in tutoring appointments as compared to 2013-2014. Due to building construction, the tutoring satellite location at Clement Residence Hall was closed this academic year.

In an effort to provide support for male students of color, we launched the "Conversations Among Brothers" Males of Color Initiative. There was a continuous struggle to gain buy-in and participation from male students of color for this new initiative.

An ongoing challenge has been the ability to establish a strong and consistent connection

with students interested in being actively engaged in the Asian American Association and the Native American Student Association.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Office of Multicultural Student Life celebrated several achievements throughout the 2014-2015 academic year. Some of our notable achievements include:

- Hired the inaugural Coordinator for Academic Support.
- Celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the African American Hall of Fame.
- Celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the Black Cultural Programming Committee.
- Received grant funding in the amount of \$7,000 to enhance our programs and services from the Target Corporation and the University of Tennessee Parents and Families Fund.
- Received \$5,000 in funding to support the purchase of new books for the Book Loan Program.
- In collaboration with the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and UT Foundation, helped secure a significant financial gift for the Black Cultural Center.
- Tripled the number of students that utilized resources from the Book Loan Program.
- Added a new tutoring location in Pendergrass Library on the Ag Campus.
- Certified 14 tutors through the College Readiness and Learning Association (CRLA).
- In collaboration with the Center for Leadership and Service, launched the Leadership and Diversity Certificate program.
- Revitalized the Latin American Student Organization.
- In partnership with the OUTreach Center, implemented the Queer/Trans People of Color discussion group.
- Launched the Multicultural Mentoring Program “Connect” Living-Learning Community in Morrill Residence Hall.
- Along with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, developed a new partnership with Project GRAD through the Early College Awareness Program.
- In collaboration with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, hosted the Latino Welcome Reception and Latino Art Exhibit for Hispanic Heritage Month.
- Sponsored three undergraduate students to attend LeaderShape.
- Gained approval for an academic course for the Diversity Educators.
- Implemented the AdAstra software for event reservations in the Black Cultural Center.
- Processed over 1,000 reservations in the Black Cultural Center.

## LOOKING FORWARD

As we look towards the future, the Office of Multicultural Student Life remains excited about the potential to continue to flourish and thrive. The addition of a full-time Coordinator for Academic Support has already impacted our programs and services. The Academic Support Unit will continue to enhance services for students while being more efficient and consistent with our tutorial services, multiple tutoring locations, and book loan request and distribution process. We are motivated to devote time to revitalizing the Asian American Association and the



Native American Student Association while continuing to develop a strong foundation and membership base for the Latin American Student Organization. As we move forward with new initiatives and ideas to enhance the impact of the Office of Multicultural Student Life, we will continue to remain intentional and strategic in strengthening partnerships with academic and non-academic departments across campus and within the community. In an effort to not over-exert the MSL staff, we will look at additional ways to build capacity to best support the work that we do.

The future also provides us with an opportunity to celebrate thirty years of peer mentoring and the 40th anniversary of the Black Cultural Center. We will develop a plan to communicate with alumni, students, faculty, staff, and community members the ways in which they can join the 40th celebration of the BCC.

## CONCLUSION

The Office of Multicultural Student Life has had a productive and successful academic year. There has been a seamless transition for our new professional staff and graduate research assistants. Our growing pains cause us to reflect on our work and personal motivations. As we enter into the 2015-2016 academic year, we are optimistic about developing further as a team that is focused on the success of students and the overall success of the Office of Multicultural Student Life and the Black Cultural Center. We will continue to have a positive impact on the campus community while promoting the academic success, equality, and leadership development of students through programs and services that holistically address cultural, educational, and civic growth.



# OUTREACH: LGBTQ+ AND ALLY CENTER

## BACKGROUND

The OUTreach: LGBTQ+ and Ally Center opened on February 25, 2010. The Center operated with the assistance of the Commission for LGBT People's graduate student and budget, as well as a volunteer director (Donna Braquet) from February 2010 to August 2013. In June 2013, the Center became an independent unit in the newly created Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity. In August 2013, Vice Chancellor Rickey Hall and Dean of Libraries Steve Smith agreed to the 25% appointment of Donna Braquet as Director of the Center and Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor.

The LGBTQ+ and Ally Center works to provide a safe and welcoming environment for UT's diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual communities. As a physical symbol of UT's commitment to diversity, OUTreach provides support, resources, and a community space for UT's LGBTQIA and ally students, faculty, and staff, as well as anyone who seeks to learn about sexual orientation or gender identity. OUTreach achieves this by sponsoring programs and events that raise awareness, increase visibility, and engage in advocacy regarding LGBTQIA issues.

## STAFF

- Donna Braquet, Director
- Abel Howard, Graduate Assistant (resigned in February)
- Four Federal Work Study Student Assistants
- Eight Discussion Group Leaders,

volunteers

- Twelve Ambassadors, volunteers

## 2014-2015 PRIORITIES

### Student Engagement & Development

During the 2014-15 year the center continued to engage undergraduate students in leadership opportunities with its second cohort of ambassadors in the Ambassadors Program. This year the center provided opportunities for ambassadors to take on leadership roles in newly formed discussion groups and on a social media committee. These identity-based discussion groups provide space for students to discuss various important aspects of themselves with others. The discussion groups have been well received and have brought students to the center that had not otherwise attended our events.

Involving undergraduate students in our social media platforms has allowed us to project an authentic student voice on Tumblr and Instagram. The social media committee allows students to be involved in promoting the center in a way that is relevant to other college students. Because of this, our social media platforms have garnered many new followers. Our LGBTQIA students expect to see themselves represented and expect to have a platform for their voices.

Both of these initiatives contribute to the Vol Vision goal to engage undergraduate students based on a changing profile. Certainly, LGBTQIA students have always been at the university, but we view the idea of "a changing profile" as the students who now come to UT expecting LGBTQ+ support, services, and resources.



The center provided opportunities for graduate students as well. The center's graduate assistant created the first ever LGBTQIA graduate student organization at the university this academic year, and the center's director served as its faculty advisor. The center also continues to provide opportunities for graduate student practicum experiences. This year we provided placement for a College Student Personnel graduate student who helped lead ambassadors and spearhead our public relations. These efforts speak to the Vol Vision's goal to expand services for graduate student engagement and success.

### **Collaboration & Partnership**

Engaging in meaningful outreach is a goal of Vol Vision. This year the center collaborated with several organizations on issues related to LGBTQIA students. With the Office of Multicultural Student Life, the center piloted a Queer/Trans People of Color (QTPOC) discussion group. Word is spreading among students and we hope to formalize the program in fall 2015.

OUTreach worked with Sexual Health Advisory Group (S.H.A.G.) to provide a weekly comprehensive, inclusive, and peer-led sexual health class. The center co-sponsored a career panel with Career Services; a healthy relationships panel with Knoxville Family Justice Center, the Center for Health & Wellness, and the Counseling Center; and, a screening of *The New Black* with Multicultural Student Life, VolOUT, and the International House.

The center is dedicated to reaching out to the community and sharing its resources and expertise. We are proud to be the only LGBTQIA center at a public institution in Tennessee and because of this we realize our

responsibility as leaders. The director was invited to present at Middle Tennessee State University's LGBTQ statewide conference on how to grow and maintain quality programming for LGBTQIA students on Southern campuses. And, for the second year in a row, student ambassadors participated in the annual Youth Pride Fest, an event for middle and high school students held in Oak Ridge. Ambassadors served on a panel about how being LGBTQIA "gets better" once in college.

### **Education & Awareness**

Vol Vision calls on us to improve departmental and campus climate and culture for faculty. However, we believe that campus climate is important to all members of the community including students, staff, and faculty. Several of this year's initiatives contribute to making campus more inclusive. The center promoted a social media campaign during National Coming Out Week in October by offering rainbow flags to campus. To our delight, more than 25 campus departments and organizations requested to host rainbow flags in their offices. Staff and members took pictures with the flag, posted them, and tagged them with the hashtag, #youbelonghere. This is a program that we will continue, as it is a positive and meaningful way to involve campus in Coming Out Week festivities.

In September 2014, the center hosted its first Center Awareness Day with an ice cream social. More than 80 students, faculty, and staff attended. Center Awareness Day is a national observance for LGBTQIA community and campus centers to promote their services and resources. Awareness raised about the center was highly successful. As such, this will continue each year as a signature event.

The center revised two of its programs in the academic year to provide more venues for discussion, dialogue, and debate on issues of diversity, intersectionality, and inclusion. Our very popular ‘pizza nights’ were rebranded into Dinner Dialogues, which added important learning opportunities to students’ love of free food. Additionally, our Rainbow Coffeehouse, informal weekly social hours for students, were transformed into inQUEERies. inQUEERies is a weekly hot topics discussion session where students can explore issues important to their identities and communities.

## CHALLENGES

Staffing proved to be a challenge this year. Our graduate assistant resigned shortly into the spring semester and several student assistants also resigned. Fortunately, student ambassadors and the director volunteered to staff the center and our hours of operation were not reduced. However, this exposed how the center is quite vulnerable by not having any full-time staff. With only a part-time director and no full-time staff, disruptions in staffing cause the center to redirect its effort and energy from its strategic goals to merely trying to keep the door open.

With the addition of several programs this year, space limitations proved to be challenging. All rooms within the center (main room, study room, and meeting room) are well used throughout the day. Weekly programs like student discussion groups, inQUEERies, Dinner Dialogues, and Sex Ed Queered, caused space concerns. Some of the programs attract many more students than the center can accommodate, thus the Humanities Center room in Melrose Hall’s second floor needed to be reserved. Additionally, meetings and discussion groups often displaced students using smaller rooms

for studying or socializing.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

This was a milestone year. We celebrated five years of the center’s accomplishments on campus. Over the past five years the center has evolved from a room that served as a drop-in space with haphazard hours of operation to a full-fledged office that offers an array of programs, services, and resources. Today, the center is a vibrant space that is creating change on campus. It is a hub of activity, of learning, of acceptance and of inclusion. To fuel the continuing work of the center, we have embarked on a “5 for Five” fundraising campaign. The center has had more than 100 individual donors, with one alumnus giving \$5,000.

The center was integral to the formation of the LGBTQ+ Alumni Council this year. The director has worked for several years with Alumni Affairs and several recent alumni on the initiative. The creation of the council allows for an opportunity to engage LGBTQIA alumni who may have felt marginalized while at the university years ago. The council also has the capacity to connect current students to mentoring and professional networking with alumni. This year the University of Tennessee, Knoxville joined the vast majority of top 25 schools that have LGBTQIA alumni organizations. That, certainly, is an achievement that will serve the university for years to come.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The center plans to continue its platform of various student programs and signature events. At the same time, we look to work with coordinators of Safe Zone to find a permanent home for the program. The center has always been a natural fit for Safe

Zone, but capacity concerns have been an issue. However, an important and high-profile program like Safe Zone deserves a permanent home and dedicated staff with the expertise and resources to build upon its good foundation.

The center plans to completely revise its publicity materials by working closely with the newly hired communications director in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity. The university's move to a new logo has precipitated the need for new materials. However, something that is not new is the center's struggle with its ever-expanding name due to our commitment to be inclusive of all identities. We will work with the communications director to find a name and branding that is symbolic of our space and inclusive of all those whom we serve. We feel fortunate to have a communications expert available to us as and look forward to the center having cohesive, polished print and electronic publicity materials.

## CONCLUSION

The 2014-15 academic year was another stellar year for the center. OUTreach has expanded greatly under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Hall and a permanent administrative home. The center continues to provide programs and services on par with centers around the country with far more resources and staff. We accomplish this with outstanding ambassadors and volunteers, and genuine partnerships and collaborations with campus units. We continue to provide students a safe and inclusive space on campus where they can be their full, authentic selves. Whether it is the student who came out at age 10 to loving parents or the student who was kicked out of their home when coming out at 17, we continue to make certain that all students know, you belong here.

# COMMISSION FOR BLACKS

## BACKGROUND

The University of Tennessee's Chancellor appoints the Commission for Blacks (CFB) to advise on planning, implementation, and evaluation of University programs, policies, and services as they relate to Black and African American students, faculty and staff. The Commission reports administratively to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity. The Commission also makes suggestions for new and existing academic and extracurricular programs related to Black and African American faculty, staff, and students; encourages research to identify the problems and progress of Black and African American faculty, staff, and students; and encourages Black and African American faculty, staff and student involvement in all aspects of campus life.

## COMPOSITION

### Co-Chairs

- Lili'a Uili Neville, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Robert Nobles II, Office of Research & Engagement

### Members

- Alecia Davis, Department of Psychology, BFSA Representative
- Tara Davis, Community member
- Marcia Johnson, Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism
- Kaylyn Harris, Student Representative
- Susan Benner, College of Education, Health & Human Sciences

- Yolanda Kirkpatrick, VolsTeach
- Marshall Steward, Athletics
- Cynthia Manning, Human Resources
- Tenisha Marchbanks, Community member
- Eric Stokes, Undergraduate Admissions

### **Ex-Officio Appointments**

- Melissa Shivers, Dean of Students
- Tanisha Jenkins, Office of Multicultural Student Life
- Mary Lucal, Human Resources
- Ron McFadden, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Joanne Hall, Faculty Senate
- Mary Lee Stewart, Exempt Staff Council
- Dana Wilson-Morales, Black Alumni Council
- Aaliyah Johnson, Student Government Association
- Janna Casperson, Graduate Student Senate
- Mary Papke, Commission for Women
- Joel Kramer, Commission for LGBT People
- Phyliss Shey, Commission for LGBT People

## **2014-2015 PRIORITIES**

### **Raised Awareness and Engagement with the Commission**

We looked to create and sustain partnerships in order to grow awareness about the

commission and assist with recruitment of future members, and extend the capacity of the commission.

2014-2015 saw a record number of partnerships with organizations on campus, as well as the opportunity to co-sponsor the Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professional's annual Cork Savvy fundraiser.

Increasing the awareness of the commission aligns with the Vol Vision: Top 25 undergraduate, graduate, and faculty/staff priorities. We focus specifically on UT's African American students, faculty, and staff, and our work helps to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus environment for these constituents. However, too few people on campus know of the commission's existence and good work. Continuing to raise awareness of our existence, mission, and relationship with senior administration, as well as produce and sustain commissioners, will positively impact the climate and culture for African Americans at UT over time.

### **Retention of African American Professionals**

Our efforts to assist in the retention of African American professionals in Knoxville ties directly into the faculty and staff priority of the Vol Vision: Top 25 strategic plan. The university is taking strides to recruit talented and dedicated faculty members and the commission seeks to support this effort. We focus on improving the departmental, campus, and community climate and culture for African American professionals in order to assist the overall retention of faculty and staff of color at UT.

We concluded our two-year focus on retention programming with a planning document to guide our retention-related

efforts for the next three years. This focus directly aligns with the Vol Vision: Top 25 undergraduate, graduate, and faculty/staff priorities. Instead of simply advising senior administration on concerns and tactics, and letting the university's strategic plan bear total responsibility, the commission endeavors to set forth its own plan and tactics to improve the retention of African Americans.

This endeavor makes it clear to our campus and the Knoxville community that the Commission for Blacks values the contributions of African Americans and does everything in its power to assist with the retention of African American professionals at UT and in Knoxville.

Eight solutions were found to be possible opportunities to address the retention of African Americans and Blacks in Knoxville: creating opportunities for cross-generational development; identifying avenues for political action and engagement; marketing and advertising of local events, cultural attractions, and resources; increasing persons of color participating on local planning boards; improving the reputation of East Knoxville; encouraging local business and entrepreneurship; creating an African American leadership organization and network; and, improving cultural climate and competency at UT.

### **Highlight the Accomplishments of African Americans**

We initiated an annual speaking series to highlight the accomplishments of African Americans at UT—or alumni of UT—that are trailblazers in their disciplines or for their strides in the fields of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. This speaking series drew half-dozen partnerships with administrative and

academic units, and received a Ready for the World Initiative grant.

Additionally, we began an effort to highlight the scholarship and creative activity of African American faculty, and research that impacts the lives of African Americans in our society. The commission nominated three individuals to be honored by the Office of Research and Engagement as Quest Scholars. Two individuals are African American faculty members, and the third individual is a nationally renowned scholar for his research on Civil Rights memorials and slavery and plantation heritage tourism sites.

The Trailblazer Series and the Quest Scholar initiative directly supports the Vol Vision: Top 25 research and engagement priority. The commission elevates the outreach, scholarship, and creative activities of notable men and women that are no longer at our university through the Trailblazer Series and rising men and women that are currently at our university through the Quest Scholar honor. These efforts assuredly improve the climate and culture for African American faculty and staff at the university. Not only do we show African American faculty and staff that their work is valid, valuable, and noticed, but we show the entire campus community. The Trailblazer Series received substantial attention through *Tennessee Today* and *The Daily Beacon*, while all Quest Scholars are honored on [www.utk.edu](http://www.utk.edu), [quest.utk.edu](http://quest.utk.edu), and through *Tennessee Today*.

## **CHALLENGES**

The commission's most notable challenge during the 2014-2015 year was related to maintaining and recruiting active commissioners, including leadership on the commission. Active steps were taken during the year to improve recruitment, retention,



and value of service on the commission. During the Fall, Lili'a Neville served as the chair for the commission and Robert Nobles II joined her in January to co-chair the commission.

Additionally, in 2014-2015 we recognized that service on the commission should represent the university and department's commitment to diversity. During the year, strategies were created to engage commissioners and their department supervisors/head during the recruitment phase to ensure the commitment to diversity is shared and pervasive throughout the university.

During this previous year we increased the engagement of commissioners by having each commissioner serving and leading one of the 4 subcommittees: 1) Faculty, staff, and students interest committee, 2) communications and engagement committee, 3) awards committee, and 4) bylaws committee. This increased activity of commissioners requires more support and structure to ensure the intended processes are efficient and intended outcomes are realized. It is envisioned that during the upcoming year, additional subcommittees will be established, with additional support, to increase the visibility and impact of the commission.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The commission applied for and was awarded two grants to support programming efforts. The Ready for the World Initiative grant supported the inaugural year of the Trailblazer Series and the UT Reach grant supported the Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative workshop.

The commission concluded two years of programmatic efforts oriented towards the

retention of African Americans in Knoxville by authoring a three-year planning document. This plan will guide the retention efforts of the Commission for Blacks and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity as they relate to African American professionals living in the Knoxville area.

The commission had an unprecedented number of collaborations this year that raised awareness of the commission and extended the capacity of our efforts. The commission participated in the following partnerships and collaborations during the 2014-2015 year:

- Office of Multicultural Student Life: *Multicultural Welcoming Reception, African American Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Carl Cowan Scholarship selection, BFSA Power Hour, Black Issues Conference, Black History Month Calendar*
- Black Faculty and Staff Association: *BFSA Power Hour, Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative workshop*
- Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals: *Cork Savvy Wine Tasting and Fundraiser*
- College of Communication and Information: *Ida B. Wells and Beyond Conference*
- The Volunteer Channel: *Trailblazer Series*
- Department of Theatre: *Trailblazer Series*
- Department of Psychology: *Trailblazer Series*
- College of Law: *Trailblazer Series*
- UT System Office of the President: *Trailblazer Series*
- College of Engineering & Office of Diversity Engineering Programs:

### *Trailblazer Series*

- SunTrust Bank, Inc.: *Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative workshop*
- Leadership Knoxville: *Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative workshop*
- Austin East High School Catering Program: *Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative workshop*
- Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity: *Trailblazer Series, Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative workshop*

And finally, the most notable of all our achievements is receiving the highest number of commissioner applications in the past five years. We received twenty-four applications for the 2015-2016 year. We believe this is due to our priorities, partnerships, and programming, but more specifically we believe it is because these efforts are noticed as meaningful, and transformative.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The commission looks eagerly towards the 2015-2016 year to continue our Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative. We intend to distribute our Retention of African Americans in Knoxville Initiative strategic plan to workshop attendees and other constituents over the 2015 summer and begin the 2015-2016 fall semester with a finalized document.

Our main priority for next year is to sustain our current efforts to promote scholarship of African American faculty and research that impacts African Americans, our current areas of programming, e.g., the Trailblazer Series, and engage campus policy makers on their efforts to support our retention solutions.

We believe there are opportunities for the commission to engage campus leadership at our monthly meetings on the following topics:

- Recruitment of African American and Black undergraduate and graduate students.
- Recruitment of African American and Black faculty.
- Research and engagement of African American and Black faculty.
- Supporting research and engagement designed to improve the societal experiences for African Americans and Blacks.
- Network of diverse suppliers to the university.

Combining our retention plan with information provided from institutional policy makers will allow the commission to provide continued focus to our programmatic and financial efforts in the following years.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Commission will live up to the challenge of remaining informed and taking action on concerns specific to the African American community and encouraging African American faculty, staff and student involvement in all aspects of campus life. This year ends with Lili'a Neville completing her second year as co-chair. Robert Nobles II will continue to serve as co-chair during the 2015-16 academic year and appoint a co-chair to begin in January 2016. We look forward to continuing to advance diversity and inclusion efforts at UT.

# COMMISSION FOR LGBT PEOPLE

## BACKGROUND

The Commission's first meeting was held on December 12, 2006. The Commission for LGBT People is a body appointed by the chancellor to advise on planning, implementation, and evaluation of university programs, policies, and services designed to improve the status of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people on the Knoxville campus.

The commission, in its role as an advocacy group, is committed to the protection and advancement of LGBT students, faculty, and staff at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

## COMPOSITION

### Co-Chairs

- Joel Kramer, University Housing
- Phyliss Shey, Student Success Center

### Members

- Alexandria Chiasson, Undergraduate Student
- Andrew Currey, Undergraduate Student
- Pamela Durban, Undergraduate Business Programs
- Terrica Durbin, Nursing
- Luke Garton, Arts & Sciences Advising
- Erin Harvey, Career Services
- Mark Hector, Psychology
- Allison Heming, Graduate Student
- Shannon Herron, Graduate Student
- Annazette Houston, Office of Disability Services

- Anna Masson, Office of Disability Services
- Ben McClendon, Graduate Student
- Joe Miles, Psychology
- Alex Miller, Management
- Jennifer Morrow, Educational Psychology and Counseling
- Jenny Moshak, Knoxville Community Member
- Corinne Nicolas, Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center
- Elizabeth Owen, Enrollment Services
- Kirsten Pitcock, Arts & Sciences Advising Services
- Alissa Reeves, Diversity, Haslam College of Business
- Briana Rosenbaum, College of Law
- Terry Silver-Alford, Theatre
- Ed Smith, Student Health
- Emma Smith, Undergraduate Student
- Bethany Tognocchi, University Housing
- Jennifer Watson, Graduate Student

### Ex-officio

- Lynn Sykes, Exempt Staff Council
- Kelsey Keny, Student Government Association
- Donna Braquet, OUTreach: LGBTQ+ and Ally Center
- Jennifer Dobbins, Graduate Research Assistant, Commission for LGBT People & Commission for Women
- Joanne Hall, Faculty Senate

- Lili'a Neville, Commission for Blacks
- Robert Nobles II, Commission for Blacks
- Mary Papke, Commission for Women
- Tucker Hyde, VOLout
- Vacant, Graduate Student Senate
- Mary Lucal, Human Resources
- Erin Bennett, Division of Student Life

## 2014 - 2015 PRIORITIES

Our top priority for the past year was seeking support for a policy recommendation to the Chancellor regarding gender-neutral, family-style restrooms from the other commissions, diversity committees, supporting units, Faculty Senate, and Student Government Association. This effort impacts the retention of our LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff and supports the Chancellor's desire to make campus "welcoming to all and hostile to none" by ensuring the basic human dignity of members of the campus community and visitors to the campus.

The commission's other priorities include:

- Build an archive of University of Tennessee, Knoxville LGBT history.
- Continue to conduct research and advocate for partner benefits for faculty and staff.
- Temporarily manage Safe Zone for one year .

These priorities address the university's desire to attract and retain diverse undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff by raising awareness of the challenges and concerns faced by the community and helping to support community members.

They also impact efforts to advance

inclusivity on our campus by showcasing the proud history of LGBT individuals on our campus, seeking equal benefits for all employees, and conducting training that empowers individuals to create safe and open environments for LGBT members of UT's community.

## CHALLENGES

One challenge we faced this year is the loss of several former commissioners due to "burn out" or leaving UT. Our current commissioners are enthusiastic and engaged, but without deep historical knowledge of campus LGBT+ related issues. Another challenge was the inability to provide more Safe Zone opportunities for faculty and staff. The need is there, the demand is there, but the Commission will have to work in the future with the Vice Chancellor for Diversity to find a permanent home for Safe Zone and to find ways to increase the number of Safe Zone trainers.

The LGBT Professional Mentorship Program provides a safe space for LGBTQ students to share their experiences and to grow professionally and personally. The program pairs LGBTQ students with LGBTQ faculty or staff for professional development and growth, as well as meaningful, professional relationships. Unfortunately, the mentorship program is experiencing low demand. There are a number of faculty/staff who have volunteered as mentors but have a dearth of potential mentees. The program manager reports that they are working on ways to improve.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Commission successfully completed the letter sent to the Chancellor regarding the need for gender-neutral restrooms in campus facilities. The Student Government

Association and Faculty Senate each passed a resolution supporting gender-neutral restrooms. Dave Irvin, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services, indicated that new buildings and major renovations on the Master Plan will include gender-neutral restrooms. The Commission will continue to coordinate with Facilities Services to ensure access for all. One goal is to target “building neighborhoods” and determine where gender neutral restrooms are needed most.

The Dean of Students assigned a staff member to review language in Hilltopics to ensure gender neutral language is used, as there are over 100 instances of gendered language throughout the document.

We continue to support the OUTreach Center, OUTstanding, VolOUT (formerly Lambda Student Union), LGBT Professional Mentorship Program, Lavender Graduation, and SEAT with funding and/or consultation.

Our Equity Issues committee co-sponsored a career panel in March with the OUTreach Center. Professionals on the panel included a WUOT broadcaster, an attorney, a veterinarian, a high school educator, and a nuclear engineer.

We had representation from the Commission at the first Diversity Summit for the University of Tennessee System in April. One commissioner was a panelist and another was a presenter.

## LOOKING FORWARD

We will continue building the alumni network and collaborate with the new Alumni Council. We will conduct assessments to improve and develop the mentorship program, as well as, continue support of the OUTstanding Conference, SEAT and Sex

Week, the OUTreach Center, and VolOUT. We will continue to advocate for gender-neutral restrooms in new construction and renovations across campus. We plan to reach out to colleges about LGBT+ inclusion in their diversity efforts and begin to develop a chart of liaisons across campus. We also plan to continue advocating for partner benefits for faculty and staff.

Currently the responsibilities for Safe Zone reside with the Commission (temporarily for faculty and staff) and Multicultural Student Life (for students). We will engage the OUTreach: LGBTQ+ and Ally Center about the possibility of consolidating them and have the program housed with the center. We would also like to explore opportunities to implement gender-neutral housing and name change policies in Banner and Volcard.

## CONCLUSION

This past year has been both frustrating and exciting. We were frustrated as we learned SEAT lost funding for some Sex Week events that appeared to be exclusively related to LGBT-themes. SEAT showed their resilience and was able to achieve their goals and we look forward to their future endeavors.

We had a very successful effort in making a gender-neutral restroom policy recommendation to the Chancellor. This work opened the door for us to work with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Services and we will continue to do so.

It has been an exciting past year and we look forward to our continued work advocating on behalf of LGBT students, faculty, and staff at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



# COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

## BACKGROUND

The Commission for Women is appointed by the Chancellor to advise on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of university programs, policies, and services designed to improve the status of women on the Knoxville campus of the University of Tennessee. Its main purpose is to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive campus environment with special attention given to the needs of women.

## COMPOSITION

### Co-chairs

- Mary Papke, faculty
- Joy DeSensi, faculty

### Members

- Breanna Andreu, undergraduate student
- Rachel Chen, faculty
- Alina Clay, undergraduate student
- Margaret Lazarus Dean, faculty
- Hillary Fouts, faculty, CFW vice-chair
- Pat Freeland, faculty
- Noriko Horiguchi, faculty
- Kendall Jagers, undergraduate student
- Mallory Ladd, graduate student
- Kierstyn Lamour, graduate student
- Thura Mack, faculty, CFW vice-chair
- Stephanie Metz, graduate student
- Shelley Newman, faculty
- Leigh Shoemaker, staff
- Dixie Thompson, faculty
- Jessica Welch, President of Graduate

Student Senate

- Women's Coordinating Council designee

### Ex-officio

- Melissa Ashburn, Exempt Staff Council
- Joanne Hall, Faculty Senate
- Kelsey Keny, SGA
- Joel Kramer, LGBT Commission co-chair
- Mary Lucal, Human Resources and Employee Relations Council
- Tanisha Jenkins, CDI co-chair
- Lili'a Uili Neville, Commission for Blacks co-chair
- Robert Nobles, Commission for Blacks co-chair II
- Jennifer Richter, non-voting, Office of Equity and Diversity
- Phyliss Shey, LGBT Commission co-chair
- Melissa Shivers, non-voting, Dean of Students
- Wendy Syer, non-voting, Center for International Education

## 2014-2015 PRIORITIES

Our top priority for the year was making sure the policy on student-faculty relationships that was initiated by the CFW last year would move forward through the Faculty Senate and be included in the body of the most recent Faculty Handbook. The policy, after several revisions, has been approved and will appear as policy in the current Faculty Handbook.

A second priority was to support the call for more family-friendly, gender-neutral restrooms initiated by the Commission for

LGBT People. Upper administration has made a commitment to include family-friendly, gender-neutral restrooms in all new facilities as well as consideration of inclusion in renovation projects. The CFW also pushed for greater visibility on maps and university guides for these newly designated restrooms as well as for lactation rooms. The CFW appreciates the commitment to increasing the number of lactation rooms on campus.

A third priority was to engage student involvement within the CFW more effectively. A student Caucus was formed and met regularly to determine what issues were of most importance to them. The CFW also supported student commissioner Mallory Ladd's organizing UT's first annual Women in STEM Research Symposium, focused directly toward graduate and undergraduate students.

A fourth priority is to recognize exceptional achievement by women at UT through the Angie Warren Perkins Award and the Notable UT Woman Award, both presented at the Chancellor's Honors Banquet. The CFW will also continue to sponsor, through funding provided by the Chancellor, outstanding women to apply for and to attend a Higher Education Resource Services Institute, thus advancing potential leadership possibilities on campus for those women.

A fifth priority is to draw attention to Women's History Month through a variety of events that would appeal to a broad audience of students, faculty, and staff. This year CFW focused specifically on events featuring women in STEM fields and women in the visual arts. Both sets of events drew significantly upon graduate student participation in addition to faculty engagement.

All of these priorities address the

university's desire to attract and retain diverse undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. They also address the continued need for promoting a welcoming environment for all on the UT campus, increasing awareness across campus of issues of particular concern to women, and advancing women into leadership positions on campus.

## CHALLENGES

The greatest challenge for the CFW in recent years has been recruiting members and chairs. The CFW advertised a call through *Tennessee Today* in late spring that elicited a large number of staff and faculty applications. Students currently on the CFW also nominated several students who wish to actively participate in the CFW. Next year the CFW will be co-chaired by Mary Papke and Hillary Fouts, with Fouts scheduled to take over as chair the following year. Aggressive recruitment will be key to keeping the CFW representative of all women's concerns on the campus. On a campus level, higher administration also needs to help recruit outstanding women to UT through more Governor's Chairs held by women, as well as more leadership positions staffed by women, particularly women of color, and by the positive celebration of women from the university's history through the naming of buildings or rooms after these women pioneers.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Some achievements have already been listed in the Priorities section. Along with the other Commissions and Council, the CFW has advanced the inclusion of family-friendly, gender-neutral restrooms in all future building plans and renovations, as well as the inclusion of lactation rooms and the public advertising of the availability of

both on campus. The CFW presented two awards to two outstanding women at the Chancellor's Honors Banquet, bringing to the attention of the campus and the public the important work that both staff and faculty women do: the Angie Warren Perkins award to Deborah Welsh, head of the Department of Psychology, and the Notable UT Woman of the Year award to Ann Robinson-Craig, director of budget, College of Arts and Sciences. The student caucus within the CFW proved to be a fertile ground for determining and addressing issues of concern to the upper administration. The CFW also supported the first STEM Symposium aimed toward women on the UT campus, made possible through the hard work of commissioner Mallory Ladd.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The CFW will continue to monitor issues related to sexual misconduct and work with administration toward the implementation of new policy on faculty-student relationships. The CFW will also continue monitoring the administration's commitment to increasing the number of family-friendly, gender-neutral restrooms and lactation rooms on campus. The CFW remains concerned about maternity/family leave policies as these are currently implemented (or in the cases of graduate students are nonexistent). The CFW continues to monitor the impact of the removal of the Lady Vol designation on women in athletics, on the university, and on community relations. The CFW would also like reports of salary comparison between male and female workers (staff and faculty) to be reinstated and shared with the campus community. With the help of new leadership, the CFW hopes to follow through on plans to pursue broader connections, first with Tennessee schools that have commissions similar to the CFW and then with those SEC schools that also pay special attention

to gender issues through a commission, organization, or office.

## CONCLUSION

The CFW remains ever engaged with, devoted to, and vigilant concerning the status and treatment of all women on the UT campus.





# COUNCIL FOR DIVERSITY & INTERCULTURALISM

## BACKGROUND

The Council for Diversity and Interculturalism is a body appointed by the Chancellor to serve as an advocate to improve the campus climate for diversity and inclusion. The Council advises the campus administration on creating and sustaining a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive campus climate to all groups.

## COMPOSITION

The membership for 2014-2015 is as follows:

### Co-Chairs

- Tyler Johnson, Athletics
- Tanisha Jenkins, Multicultural Student Life

### Appointed by Chancellor's Commissions

- Commission for Blacks: Lili'a Neville
- Commission for LGBT: Phyliss Shey and Joel Kramer
- Commission for Women: Mary Papke

### Appointed by Vice-Chancellors of Respective Areas

- Student Life: Annazette Houston
- Academic Affairs: John Zomchick
- Athletics: Tyler Johnson (Co-chair)
- Communication: Margie Nichols
- Development and Alumni Affairs: Mikki Allen (UTFI/TN Fund)
- Diversity: Tanisha Jenkins (Co-chair)
- Finance and Administration: David Kent

- Human Resources: Herb Byrd
- Research and Engagement: Robert Nobles II

### Appointed by Constituency Groups

- Student Government Association: Sahba Seddighi
- Graduate Student Senate: Robert Truka
- Faculty Senate: Brian Ambroziak

### At-Large Appointments

- Tyvi Small, Haslam College of Business
- Mike Wirth, College of Communications
- Carolyn Hodges, Graduate School
- Eric Stokes, Undergraduate Admissions
- Adam Cureton, Philosophy
- Sandy Mixer, College of Nursing
- Angela Batey, College of Arts & Sciences
- Tim Hiles, School of Art
- Pia Wood, Center for International Education
- Lee Dalton, Military Science and Leadership

## 2014-2015 PRIORITIES

As outlined in our purpose, the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism is a body appointed by the Chancellor to serve as an advocate to improve the campus climate for diversity and inclusion. The Council's advocacy role is reflected in its actions whether it be through advisory actions or actively participating in supporting and moving forward diversity and inclusion initiatives with other groups on campus.

The 2014-2015 priorities focused on three specific areas. One was to increase CDI financial support and participatory presence for events held on campus that promoted diversity and inclusion. Another priority was to seek out representatives from across campus to meet with CDI and engage in dialogue regarding events and issues that were prominent at the campus and national levels. The final priority for 2014-2015 was to encourage and increase CDI member participation at events on campus and in the local community that focused on diversity and inclusion.

The Council's work, both directly and indirectly, impacts and supports the goals and mission of Vol Vision, specifically within the concept of "Original Ideas that advance society through discovery, inquiry, innovation, research, scholarship, and creative activities." CDI's priorities this past year aligned with the strategic priorities of Vol Vision which emphasizes working towards recruiting and developing a diverse body of students and attracting and retaining diverse faculty and staff. It is through the efforts of CDI that we support this vision and strive to have a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

## CHALLENGES

A consistent challenge identified by the Council is the inability to influence whether the campus and UT System administration will expand the format of survey tools to include questions to obtain metrics for underrepresented populations. As it currently stands, the campus and UT System surveys do not reflect, or include, the multiple constituencies that are part of the make up on each campus.

During this past year, it has become more evident that there is a lack of diversity

initiatives and programming commitment at the departmental level across campus and within some areas of the administration. A handful of colleges and units are making great strides in advancing diversity. However, there is not a collective effort across campus to promote diversity and inclusion with employee development and programming.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Council began working this year under its updated bylaws and new membership format which contributed to a broader representation of faculty, staff, and students. The graduate assistant support for the Council was also restructured creating improved effectiveness and efficiency in its communications and operations.

With the help of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, the Council was able to provide financial support for events held on campus by various colleges, departments, and units. These groups submitted formal proposals and awards were based on how the event supported Vol Vision to promote diversity and inclusion on our campus.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The Council continues to serve as an advisory group that advocates for diversity and inclusion and plans to increase its financial support for events across campus to support that initiative. There has been discussion about increasing the Council's presence across campus as a resource for assisting colleges, departments, and units that are working towards creating diversity committees and wish to establish dedicated diversity and inclusion programming.

## CONCLUSION

The Council for Diversity and Interculturalism



carried forward the renewed energy and momentum for positive change that was created in the previous year. Collaborative efforts from all councils and commissions continue to grow and are noticeably visible in our campus community. This is not to say this past year's events from around our nation, and locally, have not brought about difficult challenges. However, these same events have increased a desire for dialogue and reflection which opens the pathway and creates opportunities for positive change.

## OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR DIVERSITY

### BACKGROUND

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity was established on June 3, 2013 when the inaugural Vice Chancellor officially began the roles and responsibilities of the position. The office has administrative responsibility for the campus-wide commissions and the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, the Educational Advancement Program, the Office of Multicultural Student Life, the Office of Equity and Diversity, and the OUTreach: LGBTQ+ and Ally Center.

### STAFF

- Rickey Hall, Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Sarah Gonzalez, Assistant to the Vice Chancellor
- Lili'a Uili Neville, Communications Director

### PRIORITIES

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity focused on establishing more intentional and collaborative efforts across the sub-units and the campus, leveraging existing resources, building capacity, communicating diversity and inclusion efforts, and engaging with alumni and donors.

There was progress on each priority. The sub-units started seeking ways to be more collaborative. An example of a successful collaborative effort was the Office of Multicultural Student Life and the OUTreach: LGBTQ+ and Ally Center working together to show the documentary, *The New Black*.



The Office of the Vice Chancellor had successful collaborations with the departments of Religion and Sociology, the Graduate School, and the Commission for Blacks to name just a few. These collaborative efforts allow the office to leverage limited human and financial resources and to be good stewards of university funds.

In terms of building capacity, the Vice Chancellor requested and received an additional position in the Office of Equity and Diversity. The position will allow the university to better comply with increasing legal mandates set out by state and federal law and regulations. Additionally, a Communications Director was hired in the Vice Chancellor's office. This position develops and leads the office's internal and external communication strategies, marketing, and promotion to ensure effective communications across the sub-units, across campus, and with external constituencies. The Communications Director is critical to the Vice Chancellor's efforts to advance diversity and inclusion at the University of Tennessee.

The office was successful in communicating and highlighting diversity efforts and initiatives taking place across campus. The office published two print publications. "Diversity by Design," is a sampling of diversity efforts taking place across the campus community and, "Women with Big Ideas," celebrates the contributions seven women faculty and staff members are making on campus and in their respective fields. In addition to these publications, we publish a quarterly newsletter that highlights students, faculty, and staff; events; and inclusive practices.

Over the past year the Vice Chancellor has spoken to alumni in the District of Columbia,

Atlanta, Nashville, and Memphis. He has also worked closely with development officers on securing gifts for the units. These efforts led to a transformational gift to the Office of Multicultural Student Life and a significant gift to the OUTreach: LGBTQ+ and Ally Center.

We believe that diversity and inclusion contributes to the total academic experience and must be a part of all aspects of the institution. For that reason we assert that all our work aligns with the University's strategic priorities. Specifically our work assists the university in recruiting, retaining, and graduating diverse undergraduate and graduate students; attracting and retaining stellar diverse faculty and staff; and improving the resource base.

If UT Knoxville wants to be the leading public higher education institution in Tennessee and a Top 25 public research institution, it must be a leader in institutional diversity. It is our contention that a higher education institution cannot be excellence without embracing and leveraging diversity.

## CHALLENGES

As a new unit, one challenge is incorporating the Vice Chancellor and the office into the university day-to-day organizational activities. Diversity, inclusion, and the Vice Chancellor should be central to institutional strategy and overall operations.

Another challenge is the tendency to believe diversity focuses solely on students. In actuality, diversity and inclusion should touch every aspect of the academic enterprise. When diversity is incorporated into every institutional function, it creates the opportunity for an excellent institution that is robust, dynamic, and innovative.

As a small office, human and financial resources continue to be a challenge. However, this and other challenges will not prevent the office from advancing diversity and inclusion. We will continue to seek external funding, be innovative, and pursue new collaborations on and off campus in order to expand the campus “diversity footprint.”

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Some of our notable achievements include:

- Held the first UT Knoxville Diversity Summit.
- Successful external review of the Office of Equity and Diversity.
- Revamped the Access and Diversity Staff Retention Fund, which is now the Diversity Professional Development Fund for Staff.
- Successfully secured gifts to support diversity offices and initiatives.
- Successful collaboration with City of Knoxville on celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act.

## LOOKING FORWARD

We look forward to the second Collaborators for Change diversity summit, which will take place September 25, 2015. In the coming academic year, We look forward to new education and training and community building initiatives that will be implemented and to the development of meaningful diversity metrics that will allow the campus to better understand our progress. Lastly, we look forward to building on development opportunities to raise external funds that were initiated this past year.

## CONCLUSION

Hopefully, the work undertaken by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and its sub-units inspires others on campus to assist in advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Tight financial and human resources create an environment where collaboration and partnership to affect change are necessary. We urge you to consider how you may assist one of these units with a challenge or how you may partner and collaborate with a program, unit, or office outlined within these pages to achieve a mutual goal.

Diversity is everyone’s every day business and we are all part of the Big Orange family. We thank you for taking the time to read this report and reflect on how you can be the difference that makes a difference.





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE

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OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION

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