

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS
September 14, 2020

Members Present

Holly Mills	Charria Campbell	Simone McKelvey
Margo Dirkson	Thomas Heard	Nathaniel Coleman
Harry Ingle	Nicole Williams	Katrina Ibezim
Krystal Akehinmi	Arthur Banton	Rosemarie Black
Joshua Egwuatu	Gregory Holt	Holly Mills

Members Absent

Ted Pelton	Troy Smith	Daniel Badoe
Robert Owens		

Proceedings

The Commission on the Status of Blacks met on Monday, September 14, 2020 using the Teams Meet format. The meeting was called to order by Margo Dirkson at 2:05pm.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved. Krystal Akehinmi made the motion. Harry Ingle seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from April 6, 2020 was made by Holly Mills. It was seconded by Rose Black. The motion carried unanimously.

Proceedings

Clarification of Role of CSB

Charria Campbell clarified the Role of CSB on campus here at TTU. A copy of the CSB policies and procedures are attached. She stated that TTU President Oldham had met with the students of RACE, RACE Plus, and other student Minority groups on Thursday, September 3, 2020 during dead hour to discuss the racial climate on campus. The Dean of Students also met with students on September 11, 2020.

Introductions of all CSB members present were made. It was suggested that each CSB member from last year who is still serving be given a name of newly hired Minority faculty, staff or Administrator to welcome them to the campus and to inform them about CSB. Those members who don't feel comfortable doing this may email Margo Dirkson stating their request not to be included on the contact list.

Dr. Robert Owens has a previous obligation that would not allow him to attend the 2pm, CSB meetings and asked that the meetings be held at 3pm. Margo Dirkson will send out a "Doodle Poll" to each member and ask what time is best to have the meeting. Based upon those results, the meeting may be changed.

Other Such Matters

Presentation to Rose Black, "Outstanding Diversity Advocate 2020". It was suggested that Margo, Holly, Charria, and Dr. Robert Owens present the plaque and a bouquet of flowers to Rose Black. Pictures will be taken and sent to Tech Times for publication.

Adjournment

A motion was made to end the meeting by Krystal Akehinmi. It was seconded by Arthur Banton. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 2:41pm. The next meeting will be on October 5, 2020. The time will be announced. The meeting will be held through Team Meets.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS
October 5, 2020

Members Present

Holly Mills	Charria Campbell	Simone McKelvey
Margo Dirkson	Robert Owens	Nathaniel Coleman
Harry Ingle	Nicole Williams	Jimmy Jones
Krystal Akehinmi	Arthur Banton	Rosemarie Black
Joshua Egwauta	Daniel Allen	

Members Absent

Ted Pelton	Troy Smith	Daniel Badoe
Thomas Heard	Katrina Ibezim	Gregory Holt
Qiera Bentley	Daniel Allen	

Proceedings

The Commission on the Status of Blacks met on Monday, October 5, 2020 using the Teams Meet format. The meeting was called to order by Margo Dirkson at 3:01pm.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with corrections. Holly Mills made the motion. Nicole Williams seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2020 was made by Holly Mills. It was seconded by Simone McKelvey. The motion carried unanimously.

Proceedings

New Minority Faculty and Staff Assignments

Margo Dirkson presented a list of newly hired Minority Faculty and Staff and the assigned CSB member who will communicate with them. Nicole noted that several recently hired individuals were not listed. Margo will request an updated list to include all newly hire Minority Faculty and Staff. Margo has mailed a hand-written note to each on the present list, and encourages CSB to welcome and help make their transition here at TTU a more favorable one.

Possible Engagement/Social Activities (COVID-19 Friendly)

One suggestion was to have a “Chat and Chew” monthly virtual meeting where every would bring their own lunch and virtually socialize. The committee thought that was a good idea. Other suggestions are welcomed and may be submitted to Margo.

Other Such Matters

Arthur Banton spoke of the “Eagle’s Flight” program. It was observed that Black Students were not doing as well in the remote learning situation. Dr. Alice Camuti in the College of Business and Graduate Assistant Isabel Badoe are the contacts for this project. Members of the African Student Union are volunteer tutors for the program. Dr. Robert Owens stated that any programs, grants, etc. regarding Minority Students should include the Director of Multicultural Affairs, Charria Campbell, at the table in the planning stages. Charria Campbell possesses a wealth of information and a source of many contacts that can be essential in such programs.

October 22, 2020

Cheya Thousand will present a virtual Wellness event to the RACE, RACE Plus, Man – UP, Women of Worth, and other groups on campus. The virtual event is scheduled in the Derryberry Auditorium at 11am – 12 noon. All are invited to join.

November 13, 2020

“Race to Tech” is an event where incoming freshmen can gather information about TTU, ask questions seek opportunities beneficial to them. The event takes place from 9am – 1pm.

Dr. Harry Ingle of the College of Engineering is working on a program to increase the enrollment and hiring of ethnic minorities and women in the College of Engineering. He will share the information with CSB and invite members to join him.

January 18, 2021

The celebration of the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is Monday, January 18, 2021. CSB members are encouraged to begin submitting ideas of how to honor Dr. King. In the past this was a week of service.

February 2021

Black History Month begins. Planning for MLK Day and Black History month will be placed on the agenda for November.

Adjournment

A motion was made to end the meeting by Arthur Banton. It was seconded by Rose Black. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 3:56pm. The next meeting will be on November 2, 2020 at 3pm. The meeting will be held through Team Meets.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS
November 2, 2020

Members Present

Margo Dirkson	Charria Campbell	Arthur Banton
Robert Owens	Nathaniel Coleman	Krystal Akehinmi
Thomas Heard	Holly Mills	Rosemarie Black
Daniel Allen		

Members Absent

Ted Pelton	Troy Smith	Daniel Badoe
Joshua Egwuatu	Katrina Ibezim	Gregory Holt
Qiera Bentley	Harry Ingle	Nicole Williams
Simone McKelvey		

Proceedings

The Commission on the Status of Blacks met on Monday, November 2, 2020 using the Teams Meet format. The meeting was called to order by Margo Dirkson at 3:03pm.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved. Rose Black made the motion. Holly Mills seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2020 with corrections was made by Holly Mills. It was seconded by Daniel Allen. The motion carried unanimously.

Proceedings

New Minority Faculty and Staff Assignments

Margo Dirkson is waiting for an updated list of Minority Faculty and Staff from Human Resources. Once that list is received, she will email it to CSB members. Anyone who has already reached out to a new Minority hire from the previous list is appreciated. Those CSB Members who have not made any contacts are encouraged to wait until the updated list from HR is emailed to the membership in the coming weeks.

The members of the Multicultural Affairs Alumni Advisory Council (MAAAC) Had planned to join this meeting. Unfortunately, that was not feasible. Ms. Franklin, Chair of MAAAC, and other MAAAC members plan to join the December 7th meeting at 3pm Central Standard Time.

MLK DAY and Week of Service

Monday, January 18, 2021 is the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of celebration. TTU classes will not be in session at that time. Krystal Akehinmi stated she liked the idea of volunteering and having a time of service to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Other suggestions included: speaking to Michelle Huddleston of the Service Learning Center about ways to serve there, having a prayer breakfast, and including a voter's registration campaign during the annual Alpha Phi Alpha silent march on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. Margo also stated that status and guidelines of the COVID-19 situation will play a major role in how the MLK plans progress.

Black History Month

Simone McKelvey suggested having a calendar listing of events for the entire month. Other suggestions were: showing a film series (that is approved by the copyright policies), as well as showing the movie "Hidden Figures". Charria Campbell added that Ada Haynes of Center Stage may have some extra funds that may be used in securing programs.

Chat and Chew

November 17, 2020 is the date agreed upon where CSB and others would eat lunch together in a virtual format. Margo design the flyer and provide it to Ms. Campbell or Ms. Johnson to distribute.

Other Such Matters

It was suggested by Charria Campbell that if there was going to be a committee formed to work on MLK Day activities, that it be formed before Thanksgiving so meetings can be scheduled.

"Race to Tech" takes place on Friday, November 13, 2020 from 9am – 1pm. This is an event where incoming freshmen can gather information and ask questions about TTU. The Office of Multicultural Affairs is participating as well as several Minority student groups.

Adjournment

A motion was made to end the meeting by Krystal Akehinmi. It was seconded by Arthur Banton. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 4:01pm. The next meeting will be on December 7, 2020 at 3pm. The meeting will be held through Teams.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS
December 7, 2020

Members Present

Margo Dirkson	Charria Campbell	Arthur Banton
Robert Owens	Nathaniel Coleman	Harry Ingle
Simone McKelvey	Holly Mills	Rosemarie Black
Ted Pelton	Jimmy Jones	
Michelle Huddleston (guest)		

Members Absent

Troy Smith	Daniel Badoe	Krystal Akehinmi
Joshua Egwuatu	Katrina Ibezim	Gregory Holt
Qiera Bentley	Nicole Williams	Thomas Heard
Daniel Allen		

Proceedings

The Commission on the Status of Blacks met on Monday, December 7, 2020 using the Teams Meet format. The meeting was called to order by Margo Dirkson at 3:03pm.

Approval of Agenda

A change in the agenda was made. "The Martin Luther King Jr. Events" would be discussed before the "Faculty/Staff mentoring program for students". The agenda was approved with adjustments. Simone McKelvey made the motion. Rose Black seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

Corrections to the minutes were noted by Charria Campbell. A motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2020 meeting with corrections was made by Rose Black. It was seconded by Simone McKelvey. The motion carried unanimously.

Proceedings

Martin Luther King Jr. Events

Michelle Huddleston from TTU's University Service Center stated that many students did not understand what the food pantry was about until

they volunteered. Having a week of service where faculty and students could volunteer in several areas is commendable. Several ideas were discussed. Among them were:

1. Restocking the main and auxiliary food pantries
2. Participating in the ongoing clean-up of the area that was hit by the tornado in March.
3. Social media ambassadors and students in graphic design could use their skills to work on posters, etc. to promote the MLK week of service events, as well as documenting/photographing volunteers in action working at the service areas.
4. Simone McKelvey suggested looking at Dr. Martin Luther King's specific goals and see if one of those goals could be met.
5. Select four minority businesses in town and have days where the community is encouraged to support them.

These suggestions and other options to volunteer were commented on. It was noted that volunteer groups would be limited to groups of nine people and COVID 19 guidelines would be followed.

The student chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc would have their annual silent March on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, the first day of school after the holiday break. The March begins at 11 am in front of the TTU Presidential residence and continues to Derryberry Hall.

Faculty/Staff mentoring program for the students

In 2019, the retention rate for returning TTU black students for their sophomore year was 80.8 %. This means eight out of every 10 students returned to TTU for their sophomore year. This was the highest rate of return since 2015. Students say they have people they feel they can talk to and be encouraged. Having a formalized Faculty/Staff mentoring program could positively grow the RACE program, RACE Plus, Engineering area, and more. This would be a positive effect on graduation rates.

The Faculty/Staff mentoring program is being proposed to be in place Fall, 2021.

Black History Month Activities

A Black History Month calendar was discussed. It may have a Black history month fact for every day of the month. The calendar may be emailed out daily or monthly. Other suggestions included a film series, and a speaker. Ted Pelton suggested using the library and "Kanopy.com" to obtain films

and show them within the limits of copyrights. How to have virtual showings is to be investigated. Arthur Banton suggested having a virtual watch party for viewing these films with a question and answer session afterwards. Harry Ingle stated if funds are needed to support this, the College of Engineering may be of assistance.

Center Stage

Center stage has provided funds for MLK and Black History Month activities, \$2,500 for each. The first event planned is on January 25, 2021 with Rasheed Cromwell. Other activities include a collaboration with WAKEN to host two events from February 22nd thru the 25th. The Amend Together organization will provide 2 events/sessions on February 22nd and 23rd. Additional information can be found at <https://www.amentogether.org/>

Holiday Chat and Chew

CSB had a great time at the last Chat and Chew that was held on November 17th, and another one has been scheduled. The Holiday Chat and Chew is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15th from 11:00am until 12:15pm. The discussion will be about the best holiday memories and traditions. CSB as well as others outside the Commission are welcome to join. Margo Dirkson will email a flyer with the meeting link information tomorrow (December 8th).

Other Such Matters

None discussed.

Adjournment

A motion was made to end the meeting by Arthur Banton. It was seconded by Holly Mills. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 3:58pm. The next meeting will be on January 11, 2021 at 3pm. The meeting will be held through Teams.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS
January 11, 2021

Members Present

Margo Dirkson	Charria Campbell	Arthur Banton
Robert Owens	Krystal Akehinmi	Ted Pelton
Rosemarie Black	Daniel Allen	Holly Mills

Members Absent

Troy Smith	Daniel Badoe	Nathaniel Colemon
Joshua Egwuatu	Katrina Ibezim	Gregory Holt
Qiera Bentley	Nicole Williams	Thomas Heard
Simone McKelvey	Jimmy Jones	Harry Ingle

Proceedings

The Commission on the Status of Blacks met on Monday, January 11, 2021 using the Teams Meet format. The meeting was called to order by Margo Dirkson at 3:07pm.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved. Holly Mills made the motion. Krystal Akehinmi seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the December 7, 2020 meeting with corrections was made by Holly Mills. It was seconded by Rose Black. The motion carried unanimously.

Proceedings

Martin Luther King Jr. Week of Service:

The Omicron Phi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Silent March in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19th, 2021. The March begins at 11 am in front of the TTU Presidential residence and continues to Derryberry Hall. Masks are required and social distancing will be observed.

Book Deliveries to the local Head Start Programs was discussed. The link is: ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wik/Head_Start_\(program\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wik/Head_Start_(program))).

TTU Food Pantry Restock (Main & Auxiliary locations) was discussed. Two teams would go out shopping. Charria Campbell would lead a group in the morning on Friday January 22nd, and Michelle Huddleston would lead a group of shoppers in the afternoon. It was noted that volunteer groups would be limited to groups of nine people and COVID 19 guidelines would be followed.

The NAACP "Virtual" Martin Luther King Day Celebration" was mentioned. More information to come.

Center Stage has approved Rasheed Cromwell to speak on January 25th at 6pm. Liz Kassera will provide more information as the contract and other arrangements are finalized.

Black History Month Activities:

CSB is encouraged to submit key facts of notable Black People who made an impact or contribution for Blacks. Twenty-eight individuals or key moments in history are needed for the February calendar.

Tentative Movie Nights were discussed. The movies CSB members spoke of were "Moonlight", "Hidden Figures", "The Night Tulsa Burned" and "Harriet". A committee was formed to look into the performance rights and other issues regarding showing the movies to a large group outside the classroom setting. Following COVID-19 guidelines was also discussed. The committee members are: Krystal, Akehinmi, Ted Pelton and Holly Mills. A suggestion was made to reserve the Back Door Playhouse for the viewing. Harry Ingle had previously stated that Engineering funds may be available to assist with the copyright viewing costs.

AmeriCorps will be here on January 21, 2021. They are encouraging volunteers to register to help continue with the clean-up efforts caused by the March 2020 EF4 tornado here in Cookeville, TN. They will return in March 2021 to resume the work.

Center Stage and Multicultural Affairs will sponsor Ms. Natilie Williams, PhD, On February 11th, 2021 at 11am. The title of her presentation is "Beyonce Was Not Built in A Day". More information is coming.

Black Business Focus

Dr. Robert Owens shared a link to Impact Cookeville in the chat. These are locally owned minority businesses. It was suggested that a day could be set up where each business could be patronized by TTU. The link is: www.impactcookeville.com/shop-local. It was mentioned that Simone McKelvey, who is a member of CSB, owns a business and she may be contacted in this outreach.

Spring Scholarship Banquet

The MPR has been reserved on Tuesday, April 6, 2021. More information to follow.

Other Such Matters

None discussed.

Adjournment

A motion was made to end the meeting by Krystal Akehinmi. It was seconded by Ted Pelton. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 3:58pm. The next meeting will be on February 1, 2021, at 3pm. The meeting will be held through Teams.