

# IMPACT

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE   
KNOXVILLE  
OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR  
FOR DIVERSITY

## DIVERSITY IMPACT REPORT 2013 - 2014





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## FOREWORD

I present the first Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity Impact Report. This report highlights the achievements of the administrative units, the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, and the Commissions that comprise the office. This report is a slice of the growing diversity “footprint” at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville under the leadership and direction of Rickey Hall, the institution’s first vice chancellor for diversity.

The work-taking place in the administrative units, on the Council and Commissions is critical to the university’s mission and aligns with overarching institutional strategic priorities. The establishment of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and the recent approval of a system-wide diversity statement by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees signal the growing importance of diversity and inclusion to the institution.

In this report you will see the impact that each administrative unit, the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, and each of the Commissions made in the 2013-2014 academic year and get a glimpse into some of the initiatives that are being planned for the future.

We have truly achieved a great deal in a short period of time. None of these things would have been accomplished without the support of committed students, faculty, and staff. These accomplishments certainly would have not been possible without an incredible team of staff members in the administrative units reporting to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, and the Commissions. Thank you for your support and for making a difference in the lives of students and communities that have been historically underrepresented and/or marginalized.

# OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR DIVERSITY

## Background

Many, including members of the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism and the Commissions, advocated several years for a senior level position charged with leading and directing diversity and inclusion efforts for the University. In the summer of 2012 Chancellor Jimmy Cheek launched a search for a Vice Chancellor for Diversity. In November of 2013 Rickey Hall was appointed as the inaugural Vice Chancellor for Diversity. He officially began his duties on June 3, 2013. Administrative responsibility for the Educational Advancement Program, Multicultural Student Life, Office of Equity and Diversity, the OUTreach LGBT and Ally Center, the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, Commission for Blacks, Commission for LGBT People, and Commission for Women, transitioned to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity effective July 1, 2013.

## Staff

- Rickey Hall, Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Sarah Gonzalez, Administrative Specialist III

## Priorities

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity focused on establishing the office and better coordination of diversity and inclusion efforts taking place across campus. This included listening and learning as I met with students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders; reviewing current and previously implemented diversity initiatives to glean insight into campus culture and to decide where to launch future efforts; assisting with the recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty, and staff; and building deeper relationships with external communities to enhance communication and image and to develop broader support for University initiatives.

## Progress

All the work of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity was focused on creating a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive campus community. Since this was the inaugural year of the office most of the work was foundational. The following six c's guided the work of the office:

- Coordination of equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts taking place across the campus.
- Capacity building for diversity and inclusion across campus.
- Collaboration on diversity and inclusion efforts to have broader impact and to leverage university resources.
- Communicating about diversity efforts taking place on campus.
- Institutional commitment to ensure the work is sustained.
- Community building to ensure that all feel a part of the Volunteer family, especially those from underrepresented and marginalized communities.

This foundational work allowed us to build vital relationships that will enable us to better serve the campus community in the future.

### Vol Vision

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

This past year we encountered expected and unexpected challenges. The most significant of these challenges was the death of our cherished colleague, Dr. Marva Rudolph. Dr. Rudolph served as Associate Vice Chancellor and the Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED). For many years, she did the "heavy lifting" of advancing diversity and inclusion on campus. Her unexpected death affected many on campus.

Another challenge was capacity. There were and are many programs and projects we would like to implement and just do not have the time and capacity to do so. In some cases, we could have gotten a project off the ground, but would have not been able to sustain it. In the long run, that would have not been useful. In order for diversity and inclusion to be transformative, our efforts must be sustained. Over the next year we will pursue new collaborations in order to develop capacity across campus.

### Notable achievements

Some of our notable achievements include:

- Establishment of a new unit, including transitioning in three areas that previously reported to other administrative offices and giving one area an administrative home that previously did not have one.
- Aligned the work of the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism and the Commissions with the strategic priorities of the institution.
- Met with every collegiate dean and each vice chancellor. One critical focus of those conversations was to find out how we could work more directly with the colleges and administrative units to help them achieve their diversity goals.
- Created the UT, Knoxville Diversity Roundtable (diversity leads). This increased support and communication for diversity professionals across campus.
- Seized opportunities to meaningfully engage with students, especially around the topic of advancing diversity and inclusion on campus.

## Looking towards the future

We look forward to working more closely with the Office of the Provost and faculty on advancing diversity efforts in the academic programs. The first diversity summit, Collaborators for Change, will take place fall 2014. The summit is focused on helping diversity councils and committees across the University to be more effective. We are hopeful that the summit will lead to more capacity to advance diversity and inclusion in colleges and administrative units. Lastly, we look forward to development opportunities to raise external funds in support of diversity and inclusion efforts.

## Conclusion

While this past year was a bit of a whirlwind overall it was very productive. We remain hopeful that diversity will be embraced as an institutional driver for excellence. We look forward to refining and intensifying our strategic mission driven diversity and inclusion efforts in service to students, faculty, staff, visitors, and the local community.

# EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

## Background

The Program, which has been in existence at the University since 1978, serves 250 students, and is staffed with a Director (Ronald McFadden), Counselor (vacant), Tutor Coordinator (Celeste Brooks), Administrative Specialist (Donna Kirby), and two Graduate Research Assistants (Taotao Long and Tam’Ra-Kay Francis). The Program began as a part of Student Services, and was moved to the College of Arts and Sciences in 1986, then moved to the Provost’s Office in 2009, and then, finally, to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity in 2013.

## Program Mission

The Educational Advancement Program is a U.S. Department of Education funded TRiO program that is designed to provide support services to first generation, low-income students, and students with disabilities, that promote good academic standing, retention/persistence, and graduation. The grant is in the last year of a five-year cycle and funded at \$320,000.

## Priorities

The Program is guided by four standard U. S. Department of Education mandated objectives, and they are:

To ensure those 250 participants are served during the program year, and that two thirds of them be first generation and low income.

To ensure that 75 percent of the participants are in good academic standing (2.0>).

To ensure that 80 percent of the EAP participants persist from one year to the next.

To ensure that 70 percent of the participants graduate within six years.

There are two other self-imposed Program objectives:

To ensure that 80 percent of the participants enrolled in EAP special section classes achieve a passing grade.

To ensure that 80 percent of the EAP participants, who receive four or more hours of tutoring, achieve a passing grade in the course tutored.

## Progress Made and Impact

Sixty-seven percent of the EAP participants from the 2006 cohort graduated in 2013, maintaining a trend since 1989. Given the Program’s significant retention and graduation rates over the last 15 years, it is apparent that EAP contributes to the institutional diversity mission in helping to retain and graduate minority students.



## Vol Vision

Educational Advancement Program outcomes contributed to the achievement of Vol Vision Top 25 goals in improving retention, improving retention at targeted levels, achieving a six-year graduation rate of at least 80 percent, increasing the number who pursue STEM degrees, and increasing the number of first generation and low income students who are in good academic standing, who persist, and who graduate.

## Year-to-Year Retention Rate of 90 Percent or Better Over the Last 10 Years

The 2012-2013 EAP six-year graduation rate was 67 percent (122/84), which was an aberration (or regression toward the mean from the 10-year graduation rate (2000-2006) of 86 percent).

Fourteen first generation, low income, and underrepresented undergraduates participated in the initial Summer Research Institute, which provided services that promote engagement in research, enrollment in graduate school, and the attainment of a graduate degree.

## Challenges

As a consequence of federal sequestration, the Program lost seven percent of its operating budget, and has had to reduce some Program services and Pell Grant Supplements.

The 2015-2016 federal Department of Education SSS/EAP grant competition is scheduled for fall/winter 2014, and is guaranteed to present a challenge in our efforts to demonstrate a need for services, as preliminary data from the Alumni Association's Fall 2013 publication suggest that the number of first generation students has declined at the University of Tennessee.

Although federal regulations do not compel institutions to provide real and in-kind contributions, the policy of the secretary of Education is to require that grant applications respond to the inclusion of a Competitive Priority preference requiring applicants to describe "efficiency efforts, and the ability to do more with less," and we will be challenged in our ability to attain collaborations that support the vision of Student Support Services within the university community.

The strength of the UT proposal will be, in large measure, determined by the degree of support that can be allied with EAP in collaborations that have real dollar value. Continuous support for the Pell Grant Supplement grant-in-aid, financial support for the Summer Research Institute, waiving application fees for graduate school for Research Institute participants, support for a graduate school visitation initiative are all examples of collaborations that would enhance the proposal.

The per-participant cost for EAP (SSS) students is higher than the national average. Additionally, the grant's personnel cost (Director's salary) has impacted the Program's

ability to fund Program services, and to attract the best candidates for the position of Counselor.

The Program will have to redefine its recruitment strategy, as the change in the University's summer orientation schedule will negatively impact our ability to have personal contact with students before they start classes.

### Notable Achievements

In addition to achieving grade point average distribution levels, retention levels, and graduation rates higher than the University in general, the EAP Program also made commendable strides in the following instances:

- Two former EAP participants were selected as Chancellor Torchbearers.
- One participant was selected for having the best oral research presentation in the Humanities discipline at the 19th Annual SAEOPP (Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel) National McNair Scholars Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, June 2013.
- Fifteen percent of the Program participants achieved a GPA of 3.5 or better.
- One participant was selected as a Fulbright finalist.
- The initial Summer Research Institute successfully completed with 14 participants.
- Four current and former EAP participants graduated from the College of Nursing.
- A total of eight EAP participants were involved in Study Abroad.
- One EAP participant received the Congressional Black Caucus Internship, and one received the Hispanic Caucus Internship.

### Future

The Program will embark on a plan to expand the utilization of technology in facilitating Program services, recording attendance at events, Program evaluations, and tutorial and computer lab utilization.

We will celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Educational Advancement Program, and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Upward Bound, and the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

The Program's vision is to help establish a UT EAP/McNair TRiO Alumni Chapter in the spring of 2015.

# OFFICE OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

## Background

The University's Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) serves the Knoxville campus, Institute of Agriculture, 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 the University's non-discrimination policy 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 other campuses and UWA. Veterans are surveyed each year through an annual VETS 100 survey, and OED will be responsible during the upcoming year to also survey staff for disability responses. OED staff also provide training programs for departments covering equal opportunity and nondiscrimination, Title IX, sexual harassment, and other topics as needed or requested.

## Staff

- Jennifer L. Richter, Interim Director
- Katrina Oliver, Assistant Director
- Khadra Baskin, Administrative Coordinator I
- Tina Smith, Administrative Support Assistant III
- K. Tate Gray, Student Employee

## Priorities

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Office of Equity and Diversity moved from being a direct report to the Chancellor of the Knoxville campus to becoming part of a new administrative structure that allows alliance with other University offices and resources focused on Diversity. Under the umbrella and direction of a new Vice Chancellor for Equity and Diversity, OED prioritized working with the Vice Chancellor for identification of areas of compliance and inclusion where OED could have valuable input.

OED identified working with the Office of the Provost, Human Resources, and hiring units to identify ways to improve recruiting, promotion, and the retention of diverse faculty and staff as one of its major goals. Other major goals included helping the

University become more veteran friendly for students and employees, and addressing issues of civility.

## Progress

The Director worked closely with the new Vice Chancellor to provide input and information on the past and present efforts towards diversity and inclusion on the Knoxville campus. The Director updated the Vice Chancellor on compliance issues being raised on campus, as appropriate.

OED participated with the Vice Chancellor in a Disability Task Force review of practices on campus. An OED staff member served as a sub-committee chair. OED staff served on the Provost's committee to review on-line application processes and applicant tracking concepts to determine whether and how they might work as applied to faculty hires. This work is on-going.

OED staff members participated in a University-wide committee directed towards reviewing and addressing the issues being faced by our students who are veterans. Members of the office also participated in the annual roll-call of veterans, sponsored in part by the committee.

The Director served on the Bias Protocol committee, and raised the issues brought forth by students with regards to improving faculty ability to deal with diversity-related issues.

## Vol Vision

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. The Office of Equity and Diversity embraces both the broad policy goals of the University of Tennessee epitomized in its "Vision" and "Values" while also helping to provide the specific means to achieve these goals, which are summarized in its "Strategic Priorities." OED aids in **Value Creation** by ensuring a safe and respectful environment for students and faculty members from all walks of life regardless of race, sex, nationality, disability, or sexual orientation to come together to engage in the free exchange of ideas. The combination of diverse people from diverse backgrounds helps ensure that this University produces **Original Ideas** for the betterment of society in general, and the Office of Equity and Diversity is intimately involved in guaranteeing this diverse atmosphere. Moreover, it is these diverse individuals, who are leading the charge in innovation and scholarship that will become the **Leaders of tomorrow**.

The Office of Equity and Diversity embodies the values essential to the Volunteer Spirit. The values of OED broadly attempt to foster diversity, respect, and safety for the University of Tennessee and beyond. Perhaps our biggest contribution to the values of the University lies in its responsibility and commitment to diversity and mutual respect among diverse peoples. The Office further helps assist this integration by serving as the University's ADA Coordinator and working with faculty and staff in the pursuit of

providing accommodations and addressing accessibility needs of the campus community.

Last, the Office of Equity and Diversity helps advance the Strategic Priorities of the University of Tennessee, which are essential to furthering the University's Top 25 Vision. Most notably, our office is responsible for assisting the campus community in attracting and retaining a stellar and diverse faculty and staff through the oversight of rigorous search procedures. By ensuring that all applicant pools for faculty and staff positions are filled with diverse and qualified individuals, we help guarantee that the University has the best possible employees who are dedicated to the Vol Vision. Additionally, the Office of Equity and Diversity helps ensure that all students of the University may reach their full academic, social, and professional potential by affording them a safe and respectful atmosphere in which to learn and grow.

### Challenges

OED suffered significant staff losses during the 2013-2014 academic year. The loss of our long-time Director has been difficult to overcome for personal and professional reasons. The abilities and experience of the Director cannot be easily replaced. The loss of our Director came shortly after another professional staff member resigned to move to a progressively more demanding position. From mid-December 2013 until June 2014, OED conducted its responsibilities with one professional staff member. Because of this challenge in staffing, OED has had to dedicate its efforts to maintaining its responsibilities. Little time has been available to work towards future planning.

### Notable Achievements

OED is helping lead the way for the University to be fully compliant with the rapidly changing regulatory requirements of Title IX and Title VI. OED's value to the campus on a plethora of difficult issues is reflected in the campus' reliance on the office for information and advice.

OED is helping shape University policies and procedures for the comprehensive response to sexual misconduct issues involving faculty, staff, and students. OED has been vocal in the need for more information in this area, including creating a comprehensive website to address student and employee needs in the sexual misconduct arena.

OED investigated complaints and inquiries during the past year involving disability, race, national origin, sexual harassment, gender-related concerns, age, and religion. OED worked with students, employees and departments to educate, serve as an intermediary, or take action, when necessary, covering a wide variety of issues. Staff in OED were able to fulfill all significant functions during the last 7 months of the year in spite of significant staff losses.

## Looking towards the Future

OED looks forward to actively participating in the upcoming program review and carefully looking at the best ways to organize itself to best serve the University community.

OED will be identifying and filling staffing needs, and reallocating duties and responsibilities once staff is on-board.

OED is exploring options for revamping data-gathering for the Affirmative Action Plan. OED will be reviewing all systems including case management systems, database systems, website communication systems, and other record-keeping and report needs. OED will be working with Human Resources to provide the campus with the best possible instruction for staff-exempt searches conducted via Taleo.

OED will continue to take the lead for the campus in areas of Title IX compliance.

## Conclusion

OED has had to spend most of its capacity on “maintaining” its significant number of responsibilities this past year. The staff looks forward to increasing the capacity of its newest staff member who is in an Assistant Director role, and hiring another limited position to help during the upcoming year. Increased staff capacity will allow the office to move forward.

## OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL STUDENT LIFE

### Background

Multicultural Student Life, formerly Minority Student Affairs, has been an integral part of the University for over 25 years. The success of the programs and services offered, and the commitment to students were all ingredients that led to the University's decision to build a new Black Cultural Center. The new Center opened in June 2002 and is a testament to the University's commitment to its entire student population. The building that was previously known as the Black Cultural Center had many lives in the past. Initially, the building was a private residence, and then it was occupied by a number of different administrative units. Now and for the past 25 years, the Black Cultural Center is famous for its "home away from home" environment.

During the 1970's, the University of Tennessee's main campus experienced a steady increase in the number of enrolled African-American students. A growing concern for the students was a centralized place for them to assemble, discuss issues, interact and study. The students proposed a Center to provide programs and activities that met their unique needs. This recommendation faced opposition from the University as well as the local black community. Community leaders and representatives believed that the students were segregating themselves-which was contrary to the civil rights era. The students firmly believed that their commitment to secure a Center was just. The students questioned the existence of Fraternity Row and the Panhellenic Building which were not inclusive but exclusive. After two years of pursuing this noble cause and collaborating with the community and the administration, the Center was opened in the summer of 1976.

### Staff

- Tanisha L. Jenkins – Director
- Shawnboda Mead – Associate Director for Diversity and Multicultural Education
- Dametraus Jagggers – Associate Director for Retention and Student Engagement
- Diane Goble – Program Resource Specialist
- Carmanelette Rawls – Accounting Specialist
- Robert Hill – Facility Supervisor
- Denise Harris – Graduate Research Assistant
- Marlon Johnson – Graduate Research Assistant
- Kristin Greene – Graduate Research Assistant

### Priorities

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Office of Multicultural Student Life focused on the following three priorities: (1) understanding who we are and what we do in the Office of Multicultural Student Life and the Black Cultural Center; (2) building the Multicultural Student Life brand; and (3) continuing to revise and implement sections of our departmental strategic plan. With the addition of new full-time and graduate staff members, as well as, a change in the departmental reporting structure, it was important

for us to engage in dialogue about the history, purpose, values, vision, and mission of the Office of Multicultural Student Life and the Black Cultural Center.

As we move forward with the name change from Minority Student Affairs to Multicultural Student Life, we focused on building the brand of MSL, as well as, better connecting our programs and services and student organizations back to the office. We developed new publications and marketing materials that better communicated the purpose and mission of the Office of Multicultural Student Life. During the spring of 2012, Multicultural Student Life developed a five-year strategic plan to help guide the future of the office. As we transitioned to a new reporting structure this year, we concentrated on reviewing and revising our strategic plan while reflecting on the importance of moving MSL forward and continuing to provide a positive impact for students. The three main priorities for this year allowed MSL to truly go back to the basics in order to learn and build upon the office's foundation.

### Progress Made and Impact

The Office of Multicultural Student Life coordinates many programs and services to help cultivate a welcoming and inclusive campus environment. In the fall 2013, we launched the MSL Diversity Educators program with 4 undergraduate students who facilitated educational programs on building community, inclusivity, multiculturalism, and other special topics for interested organizations, offices, and academic classes. The primary goal of the MSL Diversity Educators program is 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. The MSL Diversity Educators facilitated 6 workshops this year and have recruited 9 new members for the 2014-2015 academic year.

During this academic year, 116 students completed the Safe Zone Training program. Safe Zone training is designed for students interested in becoming a UTK ally to LGBT communities. The training uses activities and discussion to encourage participants to reflect on their own attitudes about gender and sexuality and to become aware of different forms of discrimination faced by LGBT individuals. In an effort to continue conversations around inclusivity, the Diversity Dialogues Faculty Advisory Board was formed to help coordinate and facilitate the Diversity Dialogues and Kernel Konvos Film Series while engaging academic departments in MSL programmatic initiatives. There were 6 Diversity Dialogues and 5 Kernel Konvo films scheduled for the academic year.

### Vol Vision

In alignment with the Vol Vision, the Office of Multicultural Student Life has programs and services that positively impact the retention and graduation performance of UT students. These programs include but are not limited to the Multicultural Mentoring Program, tutorial 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 Office of Multicultural Student Life. In terms of impact on recruitment, MSL actively participates in on-campus admissions recruiting events. We have also hosted several school and community organizations in order to share information about the University of Tennessee and the Office of Multicultural Student Life with prospective students.



During this academic year, MSL has had the opportunity to work closely with 6 graduate students. We have hired 3 graduate students to serve as graduate research assistants for MSL and have had an additional 3 graduate practicum students from the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. MSL full-time staff and graduate assistants are involved both regionally and nationally in professional organizations that strengthen our capacity and productivity in research, scholarship, and service, as well as, actively involved on campus committees. Staff members are also engaged in outreach activities within the local Knoxville community that helps to enhance the reputation and recognition of our campus.

### Challenges

Some of the challenges that MSL has faced during the academic year include inconsistent service within our Academic Support Unit and a decrease in the number of students receiving tutorial services. The addition of a full-time Coordinator for Academic Support will help to enhance our academic services and provide us with a person fully dedicated to the academic success of students who will have oversight for the tutorial and book loan programs. Lack of involvement, participation, and attendance also served as a challenge for our Multicultural Mentoring Program (MMP) this year. Attendance and participation from both mentors and mentees were low at the majority of MMP sponsored events and activities. At the end of the academic year, only 15 out of the 50 mentors chose to return as a mentor for the 2014-2015 academic year. Despite the partnership with the Diversity Dialogues Faculty Advisory Board, attendance at the Diversity Dialogues and Kernel Konvo Film Series has also been a challenge.

An ongoing challenge has been the ability to establish a strong and consistent connection with student members of the Asian American Association, Native American Student Association and the Latino American Student Organization. While engagement with MSL and the student groups have shown signs of significant improvement, there is still a concern about the lack of engagement from the faculty/staff advisors of the student groups.

### Notable Achievements

The 2013-2014 academic year has provided numerous opportunities for MSL. Some of our notable achievements include:

- Hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Day of Dialogue: Campus-Wide Diversity Symposium
- Receiving approval for a Living-Learning Community in Morrill Residence Hall
- Having record attendance at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Black Issues Student Leadership Conference
- Receiving grant funding to enhance our programs and services from the Target Corporation, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and the University of Tennessee Parents and Families Fund
- Achieving 100% satisfaction in the quality of service, reservation process, operations staff, and overall experience at the Black Cultural Center from facility users

- In collaboration with the Student Success Center, we launched a pilot First-Generation Mentoring Program with 15 first-year students and 15 faculty/staff mentors

### Looking Towards the Future

As we look towards the future, MSL is excited about opportunities to continue to grow, develop, and thrive within the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity. The addition of a new full-time position within the Academic Support Unit will allow us to enhance our academic programs and services while providing consistent and efficient services to students. We anticipate the launch of our new mentoring program living-learning community in fall 2014 and hope that it will provide a positive experience that contributes to the engagement, retention and persistence of students of color. Our diversity and multicultural education programs continue to evolve and we look forward to the growth of the MSL Diversity Educators and the incorporation of the Diversity Certificate Program for students who attend a certain number of our diversity and multicultural education events. As we gain two new full-time staff members and two new graduate research assistants, MSL is committed to building a team that is truly focused on the success of students and the success of the Office of Multicultural Student Life.

### Conclusion

Overall the Office of Multicultural Student Life has had a productive and successful academic year. There has been a seamless transition from the Division of Student Life to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and an opportunity to further develop partnerships with the Educational Advancement Program, LGBT Resource Center, and the Office of Equity and Diversity. We look forward to continuing 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: LGBT & ALLY RESOURCE CENTER

### Background

Plans for the center began in the summer of 2008, when then Interim Chancellor Jan Simek met with the executive board of the Commission for LGBT People. After receiving a positive response from Simek, a Resource Center Committee was established within the Commission. In June 2009 the committee completed its study and issued a committee report outlining a proposal for a Center. During this time, a space in Melrose Hall was designated by Simek to be the location of the new Center. The Commission's executive board and members of the Resource Center committee met throughout fall 2009 to devise a plan for the space.

The OUTreach: LGBT and Ally Resource Center opened on February 25, 2010. The Center operated with the assistance of the Commission'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. In addition to the Commission's graduate assistant who works at the Center 20 hours per week, the Center hired two work-study students who work approximately ten hours per week, allowing the Center to be open approximately 46 hours per week.

### Mission and Purpose

The LGBT and Ally Resource 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 LGBTQQI 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 LGBTQQIA issues.

### Staff

- Director, 25% (Donna Braquet, Associate Professor)  
25% OUTreach Center Director and Special Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor. 75%  
Biology Librarian, University Libraries.
- Graduate Student, 20 hours/week, 10 month appointment (Charlie Clifton, 2013-14)
- 2 Student Assistants, 10-15 hours/week (Max Cross, Robin Lovett)

## Priorities

- Student Engagement & Development

The Center has been intentional in creating opportunities for student engagement and development. One such initiative is the OUTreach Ambassador Program. The program was piloted in 2013 and the formal program was established in Spring 2014 with a generous grant from Ready for the World and supporting grants from the Council on Diversity and Interculturalism (CDI) and United Residence Hall Council (URHC). Ten undergraduate students were selected as ambassadors for 2014—eight who identify as LGBTQQIA and two allies.

During the spring semester ambassadors worked together to develop strategic events for the upcoming year, allowing them to form a cohort and learn about the history and goals of OUTreach. In doing so, the ambassadors also internalized the Center's values, which allowed them to represent the Center and its mission to others. The ambassadors worked in small groups to create four 30-minute workshops that will be offered to residence halls as part of a newly formalized SpeakOUT! Program, a speaker's bureau for campus classes and organization visits. The ambassador workshops consist of the following: *More Than Marriage: Important LGBTQ Issues*, *Being an Ally*, *Intro to Trans\* Issues*, and *That's So Gay: An Introduction to Slurs & Stereotypes*.

As part of the program's promise for leadership development and peer networking experiences, ambassadors attended Vanderbilt University's Office of LGBTQI Life's *Out in Front Conference* and Middle Tennessee State University's *LGBTQ College Conference*. Ambassadors also participated on a Women's Coordinating Council sex education panel, a student panel focused on the political and personal meanings of the word 'queer,' and a Women's Studies class panel.

- Collaboration & Alliances

In order for OUTreach to expand its impact on campus, it has worked to develop partnerships with allied departments on campus, as well as groups and individuals in the community. OUTreach has been intentional in connecting LGBTQ students to strategic partners on campus such as Career Services, the S.E.E. Center, and the Student Success Center. As specific examples, Shane Bierma from the UT Department of Psychology facilitated a discussion on healthy relationships and shared information about their same-sex inclusive RelationshipRx program and interns from the Student Counseling Center and Student Health Center provided a session on the Trans\* Student Health Program. The OUTreach Center invited Tennessee Equality Project, the state's leading LGBTQ equality organization, to present its *Advocacy 101* training to students in preparation for the *Annual Equality Day on the Hill* and invited the Student Counseling Center to provide a LGBTQ specific *QPR Suicide Prevention* training session.

The Center and its ambassadors are currently working toward a stronger relationship with local gay-straight alliances in efforts to provide mentoring and role models, and to also market the resources available at UT to prospective students. OUTreach has made a new partnership with the organizers of Oak Ridge P-FLAG and several gay-straight alliances hosted the first annual Youth Pride Fest in May. Four OUTreach ambassadors

assisted on-site and served on a panel about what it is like being out in college titled, *It Gets Better*.

- Branding & Marketing

This year the Center has been intentional in creating a consistent look and feel to its flyers, website, newsletters, and social media. Our branding is centered on the Center's positive, supportive, and inclusive motto—"You belong here." Several new communication initiatives were undertaken this year including a new website, monthly newsletters, the addition of a Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram presence, a large banner and rainbow flag outside of the Center, and an dedicated OUTreach announcement list. The OUTreach logo was also updated to represent the Center's new administrative reporting line to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and UT branding such as *Big Orange, Big Ideas* was used within our marketing to strengthen our tie to campus.

In addition to outward marketing, OUTreach was intentional to include students in participative marketing campaigns by creating opportunities for students to share OUTreach's messages. A few examples of these are the *I Love Allies/I am an Ally* photo campaign and the *National Coming Out Day* campaign, which included painting the Rock, chalking the Pedestrian Walkway, and photo statements.

- Education & Awareness

OUTreach has a two-fold mission to provide a safe and welcoming environment for LGBTQQIA students and to improve campus climate through awareness, visibility, and education. This academic year has seen an increase in our educational efforts. For example, the Center was contacted by prospective students and faculty, community members, and parents seeking information ranging from questions about campus climate to trans\* supportive homeless shelters. Students also participated in increasing awareness on campus by representing the Center at nine information fairs and orientation sessions including Multicultural Student Life browse session, ME4UT weekend, and several InVOLvement fairs.

OUTreach held many educational events including webinars on how to support bisexual and transgender students, a LGBTQ History Month Film Series that included films about the AIDS crisis; marriage equality; Don't Ask, Don't Tell; Stonewall; and Harvey Milk. Many of these events piqued the interest of student journalists and the director was interviewed for articles that appeared in the Daily Beacon and TNJN.com.

In 2013-14 the director of OUTreach also served as the special assistant to Vice Chancellor for Diversity and as chair of the UT Faculty Senate's Benefits & Professional Development Committee. In these roles Braquet compiled several reports that were used to inform key personnel and departments on campus. The reports included researching, compiling, and analyzing data on the following policies at Top 25 institutions: gender inclusive housing, sick and bereavement leave, tuition discount or waiver for same-sex spouses/domestic partners, and faculty family leave. Additionally, Braquet compiled and analyzed benefit policies for Tennessee Board of Regents schools, as well as THEC peers of UT Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Memphis.

## Progress

The Center's mere existence serves to create a more welcoming and inclusive campus environment. Against the odds, UT's OUTreach Center serves as the state's only LGBTQ Center at a public institution. Although the Center strives toward being an office comparable to its longer established and better funded peers, our improbable establishment and persistence should not be forgotten or taken for granted.

In order to be seen as an equal and rightful campus partner, OUTreach has worked diligently to integrate into campus events and traditions such as Welcome Week, Homecoming, InVOLvement Fairs, FYS 101 textbooks, New Student Orientations, campus tours, RA training, and the Division of Student Life semester calendar. Having LGBTQ representation woven within the fabric of campus moves our community from being "other" to being a part of the Volunteer family. Given UT's history with banning the first lesbian and gay student group in the 1970's, to its resistance to including sexual orientation and gender identity to the non-discrimination statement in the 1990's-2000's, to its discouraging lack of leadership on domestic partner benefits in the 2010's, the campus needs to be reminded that LGBTQ students, staff, and faculty always have been and always will be part of the University of Tennessee.

In addition to integrating LGBTQ content into existing venues, the Center takes the lead on campus by providing LGBTQ specific programs and events, both those targeted for LGBTQ students, staff, and faculty, and those who are allies or potential allies. Large-scale events such as National Coming Out Week, LGBT History Month, Ally Week, Bisexual Awareness Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, OUTreach Birthday Celebration, and Lavender Graduation provide awareness, visibility, and education throughout campus.

## Vol Vision

One of Vol Vision's goals is to retain and graduate undergraduate students. Several years ago a study at UT revealed that a majority of students who did not persist cited that they did not feel a sense of belonging at the university. This finding is why OUTreach uses the double-meaning motto "You belong here," which both implies that LGBTQ students have a right to be at UT and that UT is a good choice for their education, but also that they 'belong' in terms of being supported by the Center and others who accept them as their full, authentic selves. Creating that sense of belonging is always at the forefront of planning and decision making. As a first year student mentioned to the director, "The OUTreach Center is what made the difference in me coming to UT or going to another school. I knew there was a place here where I would fit in."

Another Vol Vision goal is to increase the number and diversity of graduate students. While creating a sense of belonging for graduate students overall is difficult due to their lack of time, the intensity of their coursework, and the amount of time spent within their departments, the isolation felt by LGBTQ graduate students is even greater. In a real life scenario, a bewildered looking young lady walked past the Center several times one day before timidly walking in. OUTreach staff asked if they could help her and she remained quiet for a few more moments before saying, "I didn't know a place like this

existed. I was told that I would be fired for holding my girlfriend's hand on campus if they caught me." The staff assured her that that would not happen. This graduate student was from Washington, DC and had come to Knoxville and UT with such fear of the South and its discrimination that she was afraid to be out in her department or as a GTA for fear of losing her job and being kicked out of the program. This exemplifies the need for more resources for LGBTQ graduate students. The OUTreach Center has been working with students this semester to create a LGBTQ graduate student group for fall 2014 called *OUTgrads*.

## Challenges

- Funding

The OUTreach Center had a very modest programming budget of \$3000 for the 2013-14 year, which was supplemented by a \$5000 Ready for the World grant, two \$300 grants from CDI and URHC, a successful \$500 Impact Big Ideas campaign, and private donations which had accumulated in the R account over several years. The Vice Chancellor for Diversity also generously covered the operational costs of the Center's telephone, cable, web hosting, furniture and refurbishments, as well as Lavender Graduation and professional development for the director. In order to meet the needs of the students and create greater awareness, education, and visibility on campus, the Center's budget will need to be increased significantly. Compared to other similarly located institutions in the South that are in the top 25, the Center's current staffing and funding is dramatically small. Funding will need to be allocated toward a full-time director position, a full-time programming staff member, and at least a \$20,000 programming budget in order for OUTreach to move beyond its current level of service.

- Campus Climate

The OUTreach Center has operated in a limited, stealth mode until given a permanent administrative home in July 2013. Though stifling and overall detrimental to campus diversity and inclusion, members of the Commission learned to operate under this pretense due to years of both overt and inferred communications from different administrators. As OUTreach moves forward on campus by seeking collaborative partners, by increasing its visibility, and by being vocal on issues that impact LGBTQQA students, staff and faculty, it is anticipated that the Center will face challenges that may not be overt, but instead subtle, yet no less difficult. It is hoped that the Vice Chancellor for Diversity will continue to make changes on campus and begin to dismantle the campus' long-standing resistance to true inclusion.

## Notable Achievements

This year has been one of great improvement for the OUTreach Center. More has been accomplished in this one year than in the previous three years since the Center opened. Three main reasons have contributed to this which are: 1) having an administrative home with strong and supportive leadership, as well as administrative and budgetary assistance; 2) the director being given official appointment in both status and percentage of time; 3) the director now seeing herself as a student affairs professional which is accompanied by her involvement with student affairs units on campus, her

understanding of student affairs theory, and her participation in student affairs professional organizations and conferences.

The Center has moved from being a grassroots-feeling, drop-in space on campus to being a professional office that offers quality services and is open on a reliable and consistent basis. In the past, the Center was open 20 hours per week and the hours of operation varied based on the graduate assistant's class schedule. This year the Center was open 10:00 am-6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Two Federal Work Study students were hired in the spring semester that allowed the Center to expand Tuesdays and Thursdays to 9:00 pm. The director also had regularly scheduled hours that allowed her not only provide a presence, but to also observe and influence Center culture. Owing to the students' initiative and funding from the Vice Chancellor, the Center also underwent a huge aesthetic transformation this year including a more inviting layout, better use of space, additional movable seating, and comfortable, home-like design elements such as photographs, posters, pillows, plants, and paint.

Another distinct change from years' past is the level of involvement and impact that the director has been able to have with students. The director led trips to the Laverne Cox talk and the *Out in Front Conference* at Vanderbilt University, as well as the *LGBTQ+ College Conference* at MTSU. The director had weekly meetings with Ambassadors and attended weekly Rainbow Coffeehouse programs to learn about and listen to students' needs, viewpoints, and input. One outcome that speaks to the director's level of involvement was being asked to provide recommendations for ten students who were applying for opportunities such as FYS 101 peer mentors, diversity educators, internships, graduate schools, and Vol2Vol peer educator program.

Although the Center held dozens of events and programs this past year, these two meta-accomplishments—creating a safe and welcoming, professional office and providing an available, authentic, principled leader and role model for students—have been the most notable achievements for this year.

## Future

The future is bright and full of excitement as OUTreach approaches toward its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The nation is heading towards marriage equality. Americans have the highest understanding and acceptance of LGB citizens ever seen and trans\* issues are moving to the forefront. I see great possibilities for the Center and an LGBTQ-inclusive campus in the next five years. I envision the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a time for rebirth and expansion of the Center with the support and momentum in place that ideally would have existed at the time of its creation.

The short-term goals will be to further stabilize the Center and offer a full-range of services and opportunities to students— from prospective students in high school gay-straight alliances, to first year students, to upper class students, to graduating seniors, and ultimately to alumni. In order to accomplish this I will focus on two long-term strategic goals—Assessment and Fundraising.



In order to be successful in providing high-impact services and programs with limited time and funds, OUTreach will focus on assessing the needs of students, staff, and faculty, including those who identify as LGBTQ, those who identify as allies, those who are potential allies, and those who are resistant to inclusion. The director hopes that LGBTQ concerns will be part of plans for a larger diversity climate survey. Should a campus-wide diversity climate survey not be on the horizon, OUTreach would like to develop a LGBTQ survey so to provide baseline data and to inform future directions. OUTreach also will focus on incorporating assessment into its programs and events to be able to show impact, as well as for continual improvement. In tandem with assessment will be a goal toward more fundraising which will be accomplished by working with the newly founded LGBTQ+ Alumni Council, developing relationships with corporate affinity groups, strategic fundraising around milestone events and specific programs, and building relationships with prospective donors.

### Conclusion

The OUTreach: LGBT & Ally Resource Center realizes the hopes and dreams of alumni, staff, and faculty who never thought they would see the day of such permanent and official support from the university. This coming fall will mark the first time that all classes of students will have never know the University of Tennessee, Knoxville without the OUTreach Center. It is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to direct the Center and be part of this exciting time in the university's history. The OUTreach Center serves as the perfect example of the saying, "Where there is a will, there is a way." May our hope and determination for a better campus spur the entrepreneurial ingenuity, grassroots spirit, and steadfast resolve that we need to be even greater in the future.

# COMMISSION FOR BLACKS

## Background on Commission

The University of Tennessee's ("UT") Chancellor appoints the Commission for Blacks to advise on planning, implementation, and evaluation of University programs, policies, and services as they relate to Black students, faculty and staff. The Commission reports 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 faculty, staff, and students; encourages research to identify the problems and progress of Black faculty, staff, and students on campus; and encourages Black faculty, staff and student involvement in all aspects of campus life.

## Commission Composition

### ***Co-Chairs***

- Karla McKanders, Associate Professor in the College of Law, Co-Chair of Commission
- Lili'a Uili Neville, Interactive Art Director in the Office of Communications and Marketing, Co-Chair of Commission

### ***Membership***

- Margarette Davis, Graduate Student Representative
- Tara Davis, Community member
- Dawn Duke, Modern Foreign Languages and Literature and Africana Studies
- Marcia Johnson, Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism
- Shawnboda Mead, Office of Multicultural Student Life
- Harlin Miller, Student Representative
- Phyllis Moore, Alumni Affairs
- Judy McDonald, Facilities Services and Operations Building
- Richard L. Stokes, Human Resources Consultant
- Diane Tate, Student Representative

### ***Ex-Officio Members***

- Alecia M. Davis, Chair, Black Faculty and Staff Association
- David Golden, Faculty Senate President
- Rickey Hall, Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Joel Kramer, Co-Chair, Commission for LGBT People
- Phyliss Shey, Co-Chair, Commission for LGBT People
- Dana Wilson Morales, UT Knoxville Black Alumni Council President
- Mary Papke, Chair, Commission for Women
- Marva Rudolph, Office of Equity and Diversity, and Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Tyvi Small, Co-Chair, Council for Diversity and Interculturalism
- Tyler Johnson, Co-Chair, Council for Diversity and Interculturalism
- Maxine Thompson-Davis, Dean of Students, Division of Student Life
- Dan Berryman, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

## Priorities

The Commission for Blacks focused on the following priorities for the 2013-2014 academic year: (1) Increasing visibility and awareness of the Commission across campus; (2) Recruiting an engaged membership for the following years; (3) planning and collaborating with other university and community actors to create a community event working to bridge existing gaps between the community and UT; and (4) co-sponsoring a lunch during the MLK Jr. holiday which targeted faculty, staff and students involving a current and relevant discussion of issues affecting the African American community.

## Progress made and impact

On March 19, 2014, The Co-Chairs for the Commission for Blacks received a letter expressing concern regarding the lack of diversity on the UT cheerleading team, dance team and ball boys for the basketball team. In response to the concern, at the suggestion of Vice Chancellor Rickey Hall, the Co-chairs reached out to Fernandez West, Associate Director Thornton Center, to discuss how the Commission for Blacks could help increase the diversity on the teams. On April 10, 2014, the Co-Chairs met with Mr. West to discuss the letter. Mr. West was open to the idea of working with the Commission for Blacks to increase diversity. Mr. West connected us with Ms. Joy Postal-Gee, the director of the spirit teams. We communicated our concern from a staff member regarding the diversity of the cheerleading and dance teams. Ms. Postell-Gee invited us to observe and serve as judges in the 2014 try-outs for the mascot, cheerleading and dance teams at UT. After reviewing our schedules, Karla McKanders was able to attend the Friday, April 20, 2014 cheerleading try-outs to gain exposure to the process. She observed that the process was very equitable and fair. After the cheerleading try-outs, Ms. Postell-Gee stated that she would be more than willing to meet with us to further discuss how the Commission could help to increase the diversity on both the dance and cheerleading teams. At a future meeting, we intend to discuss how the Commission can contribute to targeted efforts to increase the diversity on the teams.

This year the Commission for Blacks worked to advance the scholarship of pre-tenured African Americans on campus. The Commission plans to select and nominate no less than two pre-tenured African American faculty members per academic year to be featured as Quest Scholars of the Week. The goal of nominating pre-tenured African American faculty members is to promote their scholarly activities and also raise awareness of the academic endeavors of African American faculty on campus. In connection with this project, the Commission selected Dr. Courtney Wright with the Communications Department to nominate in May and Dr. Louis Bertin with the Africana Studies and Anthropology Departments to nominate in August.

The Commission for Blacks has also worked to develop a strong relationship with the Black Faculty and Staff Association. We publicize and support each other's efforts and collaborate on the *Get To Know Me* project, an effort to create community amongst UT's Black faculty and staff. This project features two Black faculty and/or staff persons each month with the goal of creating a welcoming environment for African Americans on campus and facilitating community amongst African Americans on campus.

The Co-chairs have also been active participants in many important UT events supporting diversity and inclusion efforts. To that end, both Co-Chairs attended the Multicultural Welcoming Reception hosted by the Office for Multicultural Affairs in August of 2013. Lili'a Neville delivered a welcoming speech to faculty, staff and students present. Both co-chairs attended the Office of the Provost's Future Faculty Program on September 11, 2013 and the Knoxville MLK Commission's annual luncheon celebrating the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 20, 2014. Other appearances and service activities included attendance at the "Day of Diversity" summit, the Office for the Vice Chancellor for Diversity Fall 2013 open house, the LGBT OUTreach Center welcoming Fall 2013 open house, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Life interviews.

## Vol Vision

In alignment with the University's strategic plan, this academic year, the commission has strived to create a welcoming and inclusive environment on UT's campus that actively integrates the teaching, scholarship and service of African American faculty, staff, and students.

Our two main retention events in November and February align with the undergraduate, graduate, and faculty priorities. The November event focused on the bridging the gap between Knoxville's community of African American businessmen and women and the young professional group of graduate students, faculty and staff at UT. While our February event was geared towards promoting the retention of African American undergraduate and graduate students in Knoxville. Our efforts to incorporate no less than two submissions of African American faculty per academic year to be featured as Quest Scholars of the Week also aligns with the strategic priority of strengthening the research and creative activity of the university. And finally, the president of the Black Alumni Council sits as a voting, ex-officio member of the Commission. Her presence ensures that the Commission continues to support African American alumni.

## Challenges

Our greatest challenge this year has been attempting to recruit and maintain an engaged membership. Members of campus are not aware of the existence of the Commission for Blacks and its function. Our ability to target African Americans on campus is limited by our lack of knowledge of the names and number of African American faculty and staff on campus. It is our understanding that existing state and federal anti-discrimination laws prevent open access to this list. Accordingly, our efforts to reach out to interested members are limited to networking and access to African Americans on campus who have pre-existing knowledge of the Commission. One of our goals this year and in the future is to recruit a more engaged membership that actively participates in not only Commission events and activities, but the larger diversity and inclusion events on campus. We would like to increase our visibility so that African Americans on campus can use the Commission as a resource to create a more welcoming environment at UT.

To address this challenge, we used targeted social media efforts to engage interested members on campus and within the Knoxville community. At the beginning of the academic year, we updated our Facebook page and increased our activity on Twitter. We also invited interested members of the community to like our Facebook page. This

increased the number of Facebook page likes and Twitter followers associated with the Commission for Blacks social media pages. In an effort to maintain interest, we worked to insure that all Commission for Blacks activities, events, pictures and announcements were posted on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

### Notable achievements

This year we were able to host and partner with organizations on campus to create events that further our mission. The events included:

- An event geared towards bridging the gap between African Americans at the University and within the Knoxville community. Historically, the Commission has held this event annually to address tensions between the University and the African American community in Knoxville. In order to address this concern, on November 12, 2013 the Commission hosted a panel discussion entitled, *Engaging your City: Retention of African Americans in Knoxville*. The guest panelists included Madeline Rogero, City of Knoxville Mayor; Buzz Goss, community developer; Rickey Hall, Vice Chancellor for Diversity; and Phyllis Nichols, Knoxville Area Urban League president. WVLT's Sharee Gilbert moderated the event. The event was a huge success. Approximately 160 people attended. The panelists discussed the reasons behind Knoxville's problem retaining professionally educated African Americans. Panelists highlighted existing initiatives to market Knoxville and UT as a great place to begin a career and the advantages of choosing Knoxville as home. The panelists also discussed strategies to retain African Americans in Knoxville.

Following the discussion, the audience participated in a lively question and answer session. The general opinion emerged that "brain drain" is a critical issue for the city of Knoxville. Audience members opined that if Knoxville cannot retain diversity, the city will not reach its full potential of being a culturally rich and diversity place wherein people thrive and benefit from the environment. The panelists encouraged the facilitation of more conversations around retention that encourages engagement amongst African Americans and other diverse constituents in order to make advancements creating a city that is welcoming to all. The panel was recorded and can be found at <http://tiny.utk.edu/retentionpanel13>.

In connection with this event, Lili'a Neville, promoted the Commission and the Retention panel on local news station WVLT on November 11, 2013. In addition, Karla McKanders and Lili'a Neville were the featured guests on the Hubert Smith Radio show on November 10, 2013. Our 90-minute segment is available here: <https://soundcloud.com/wutktherock/hubert-smith-radio-show-11-10>.

- This year in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. ("MLK) Day, on January 21, 2014, the Commission partnered with the College of Law Community Committee to sponsor a panel discussion, entitled *Civil Rights Today: The Evolution of Activism*. The panel discussion focused on the current state of civil rights and how civil rights activism has evolved over the years. The guest panelists included Attorney Gordon Bonnyman, Co-Founder & Former Executive Director,

Tennessee Justice Center; Avon Rollins, Former Director, Knoxville's Beck Cultural Exchange Center; Cassie Watters, Union Organizer, United Campus Workers (UCW); and Estefania Chavez, Law Student, UT College of Law with Attorney Brenda McGee serving as the moderator.

- To add to our efforts to retain talented students in Knoxville post-graduation, in February 2014, the Commission along with UT's student chapter of the National Association of Colored People ("NAACP") jointly organized a panel discussion entitled *Retention of African Americans in Knoxville: Focusing on Undergraduate and Graduate Students at UT*. Similar to the November 2013 event, the discussion was geared towards the retention of African Americans in the Knoxville Community, but with a particular focus on targeting African American undergraduate and graduate students at UT. Approximately thirty undergraduate and graduate students of color participated in the event. The panel included: the president of the Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals, Damon Rawls; the Community Manager at U.S. Bank and Knoxville's Dr. Martin Luther King Commemorative Commission, Clarence Vaughn; and, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences associate director of undergraduate advising and native Knoxville, Jamia Stokes. Diane Tate, commissioner and president of our Student Interests Committee, moderated the event. Approximately 30 undergraduate and graduate students attended. The panelists engaged in an open discussion about the factors that influenced their decision to make Knoxville their home and how to engage the Knoxville community. After the panel discussion, students and audience members engaged panelists in a detailed question and answer session. The questions addressed various issues regarding settling in Knoxville, welcoming nature of the community, diversity, issues of racism, opportunities to engage in social activities geared towards young professional African Americans to job prospects in the city. The survey feedback from the audience showed that 82% of the participants rated the event as very good or excellent. While the event facilitated a robust discussion, participants emphasized the need for continued dialogue.

Part of our achievements in creating and sustaining a welcoming and inclusive environment is to support and build relationships with other campus entities working towards diversity and inclusion. To that end, the commission made a financial contribution to the Issues Committee to sponsor the Angela Davis event to kick off Black History Month on February 4, 2014. The Commission also financially contributed to UT's Black Faculty and Staff Symposium, which will take place in March 2015 which will include having a representative from the Commission will serve on the planning Committee. Finally, the Commission annually sponsors and collaborates with the Office of Multicultural Student Life on the Black Issues Conference during Black History Month. The Commission volunteers on the planning committee and makes a financial contribution.

## Looking towards the future

In the future, the Commission for Blacks hopes to continue to be a resource for African American retention-focused efforts and a source of facilitating an engaged campus community. In order to make progress on these goals, the Commission for Blacks is planning the following activities for the 2014- 2015 academic year:

- The Commission is collaborating with the Office of Multicultural Student Life to plan the annual Multicultural Welcoming Reception. The goal of this reception is to create a welcoming environment at the beginning of the academic year for existing and new minority faculty members. This year the Commission will be involved in helping to plan the reception and work to target different minority faculty, staff, students and administrators to increase attendance.
- The Commission is collaborating with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity in the inaugural *Trailblazers Series*. The goal of the series is to invite African American speakers who have had or are having a significant impact in their fields and promoting diversity, inclusion, equity and principles of anti-discrimination at the University of Tennessee.
- The Commission will have another retention event geared towards developing a strategic plan with concrete solutions to address the retention of African Americans in Knoxville in November 2014.
- The Commission will continue with its goal of highlighting the scholarship and activities of African American faculty, administrators and staff on campus through nominating a minimum of two African American professors to be Quest Scholars per academic year.
- The Commission will collaborate with the Office of Multicultural Student Life to organize and host UT's African American Hall of Fame induction ceremony. In October 2014, Dr. Marva Rudolph will be inducted posthumous into the UT African American Hall of Fame.
- The Commission will continue its dialogue with UT's athletics department to aid in efforts to increase the diversity of the cheerleading, dance and ball boys.
- We have also discussed the possibility of reaching out to the Office of Research and Engagement to plan a spring/summer faculty development retreat to focus on developing the scholarship of African American and minority faculty members on campus.

More generally, the Commission for Blacks, as charged, will continue to respond to issues of diversity involving the African American community on campus. We will also continue to select the awardees for the annual Chancellor's Honors Banquet and work with the Office of Multicultural Student life to select minority graduate and undergraduate Students for the Annual Carl Cowan Scholarship.

## Conclusion

The Commission for Blacks intends to live up to the challenge of remaining informed and taking action on concerns specific to the African American community at UT and encouraging African American faculty, staff and student involvement in all aspects of campus life. The Co-chairs will continue to serve in their capacity during the 2014-15 academic year in order to ensure the fulfillment of our future goals, our efforts to recruit

an engaged membership, and to contribute in any way we can to the overall success of diversity and inclusion efforts at UT.



## COMMISSION FOR LGBT PEOPLE

### Background on Commission

Three UT employees met with Chancellor Crabtree in December 2005 to express concern about the campus climate and the need for an official channel for LGBT students, staff, and faculty to work for equitable treatment on campus. Crabtree agreed that it was time to form a commission for LGBT issues that mirrored the long-standing Commissions for Blacks and Women. The Commission started on November 7, 2006.

The Commission's first meeting was held on December 12, 2006. George Hoemann, long-time administrator at UT was elected Chair, and Mehra and Braquet, who both joined the faculty in 2004, were elected Vice Chairs. The Commission had the following standing committees: Executive Committee (leadership and committee chairs), Communications Committee, Equity Committee, and two ad-hoc committees: Research Committee and Membership Committee.

### Commission composition

#### Voting Members

- Joel Kramer, Co-Chair, University Housing
- Phyliss Shey, Co-Chair, Student Success Administration
- Wendy Bach, College of Law
- Melissa Bartsch, Counseling Center
- Penny Beasley, Undergraduate Business Programs
- Keith Becklin, Student Activities
- Tayler Brock, Undergraduate Student
- David Byrd, Clarence Brown Theatre
- Ole Carmel Chase-Greenwood, Undergraduate Student
- Pam Durban, Undergraduate Business Programs
- Leticia Flores, Psychology
- Luke Garton, Arts & Sciences Advising
- Jessica Hay, Psychology
- Allison Heming, Graduate Student
- Annazette Houston, Disability Services
- Juliet Meggs, Graduate Student
- Kelly Mihalik, UT Police
- Diana Moyer, Center for the Study of Social Justice
- Jenny Moshak, Athletics
- Elizabeth Owen, Enrollment Services
- Erin Read, Community Liaison, Alumnus

- Paige Rupe, Undergraduate Student
- Tracy Trentham, Undergraduate Student

#### Ex-officio Voting Members

- Melissa Ashburn, Chair, Exempt Staff Council (Municipal Technical Advisory Service)
- Jake Baker, Student Government Association President
- Donna Braquet, Director, OUTreach LGBT&A Center (University Libraries)
- Charlie Clifton, Graduate Student Assistant, Commission for LGBT People
- David Golden, President, Faculty Senate (Food Science and Technology)
- Karla McKanders, Co-Chair, Commission for Blacks (Law)
- Lilia Neville, Co-Chair, Commission for Blacks (Creative Communications)
- Mary Papke, Chair, Commission for Women (English)
- Michael Porter, President, LAMBDA Student Union
- Martin Walker, Graduate Student Senate Representative

#### Ex-officio Nonvoting Members

- Dan Berryman, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resources
- The Late Marva Rudolph, Associate Vice Chancellor, Office of Equity & Diversity
- Maxine Thompson Davis, Dean of Students
- Pia Wood, Director, Center for International Education

#### Immediate Past Chair

- Keith Kirkland, Clarence Brown Theatre

#### Priorities

The commission shall recommend changes in policy or procedure relative to the concerns of lesbian, gay, Bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, or asexual people, make recommendations concerning new and existing academic, professional development, and extracurricular programs, recommend and encourage research to assess the status of LGBTQQIA people at the University of Tennessee and compare their status with that of LGBTQQIA people at other institutions and agencies, advise and consult with all university officials on the needs and status of LGBTQQIA people, and provide information and support to the campus and community on commission and university programs and activities related to LGBTQQIA people.

#### Progress made and impact

The Commission has provided support to the OUTreach Center, Sex Week, Safe Zone, Lambda Student Union, and Outstanding Seminar. The Commission began a mentorship program for students, faculty, and staff and an alumni network. The

Commission has also participated in tabling at admissions events, Welcome Week, and the OUTreach Center is pointed out in the undergraduate campus tour. There is a Safe Zone map overlay on the campus map. The Commission is currently working on a letter to be sent to the Chancellor regarding gender neutral/family bathrooms. We are requesting family restrooms be included in all future new buildings and renovations.

### Vol Vision

The primary mission of UT includes outreach and engagement. Embedded in the three-part vision of UT is value creation through economic, social, and environmental development targeted to an increasingly global and multicultural world. At UT our values include broad diversity, including people of all races, creeds, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical abilities, and socioeconomic groups; a culture that appreciates and respects faculty, staff, and students and that acknowledges their interdependence and the vital role of every member of the Volunteer family; engagement with our local and extended communities, embracing intercultural and global perspectives.

The Commission serves students, faculty, and staff at the University and seeks to improve the status of lesbian, gay, Bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, or asexual people at UT. Through the work of the Commission we endeavor to ensure that UT's mission, vision, and values include **everyone** who works and/or studies here.

### Challenges

Our biggest challenge this year was the transition of moving the responsibilities and activities of the OUTreach Center from the commission and under the VC for Diversity. A large part of our previous years commission work revolved around fund raising for the Center, activities, staffing, etc. In addition, the transition to working with the VC for Diversity began just prior to the start of the fall semester, not allowing us much time to re-think our action items for the year. We managed to work through these two challenges somewhat but were also hampered by the lack of interest of most commission members on assisting with committee work. We eventually restructured our meetings to be working meetings to get something accomplished, which worked better than relying on committees that did not meet. We plan to utilize this summer to structure the committees more formally and provide action items in advance so that they can have a clearer understanding of what is expected.

Another challenge was only having our GA time for the meetings since he was engaged at the OUTreach Center. We are looking forward to the new GRA structure that will allow us to have more use of our GRA.

### Notable achievements

Our achievements this year have been in the creation of the mentoring program and the alumni network. We have also completed the re-design of our website. We continue to support Outstanding, Lambda, Sex Week and Safe Zone. Our greatest achievement has been working with the Vice Chancellor for Diversity in revising demographic questions that will be asked on the campus faculty/staff survey this year. The Commission is also

represented on the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism, which allows for some coalition building.

#### Looking towards the future

We will continue building the alumni network and mentor program, as well as continue support of Outstanding, Sex Week, the OUTreach Center, and Lambda. We anticipate that with more time available from our GRA we will be able to begin building an archive of LGBT related UT history – an LGBT archive. We plan to finalize and present the letter on gender neutral/family restrooms and follow that project through the process until we secure approval. We also plan to conduct research and continue advocating for partner benefits for faculty and staff. Currently the responsibilities for Safe Zone reside with Student Activities (for faculty and staff) and Multicultural Student Life (for students). We would like to consider consolidating them and have the Commission manage Safe Zone under the auspices of the VC for Diversity. We would also like to begin the exploration of adding other options to the undergraduate and graduate admission application demographic questions and gender-neutral housing options. We want to find ways to connect with GLSEN groups at high schools, and to connect with similar groups at other institutions of higher education in the state of Tennessee.

#### Conclusion

This past year has been one of transition. We anticipate that with the Commission and OUTreach Center aligned more realistically, this will afford us the opportunity to accomplish much more to ensure that our students, faculty, and staff are treated equally.

## COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

### Background on Commission

The Commission for Women at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is, according to its bylaws, a body appointed by the Chancellor and now reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity to extend advice on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of university programs, policies, and services designed to improve the status of women on the campus.

### Commission Composition

- Mary Papke, Chair – Faculty, Department of English
- Betsy Adams – Office of the Provost
- Melissa Ashburn – Institute of Public Service
- Jake Baker – Undergraduate Student Representative
- Dan Berryman – Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resources
- Priscilla Bright – Executive Director, Human Resources
- Rachel Chen – Faculty, Department of Retail, Hospitality and Tourism
- Joy DeSensi – Associate Dean, Graduate School
- Hillary Fouts – Faculty, Department of Child and Family Studies
- David Golden – Faculty Senate
- Rickey Hall – Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Noriko Horiguchi – Faculty, Department of Modern Foreign Languages
- Christina Hunt – Undergraduate Student Representative
- Joel Kramer – Commission for LGBT People
- Thura Mack – Faculty, Libraries
- Karla McKanders – Commission for Blacks
- Stephanie Metz – Graduate Research Assistant
- Jenny Moshak – Associate Director, Sports Medicine
- Lili'a Uili Neville – Commission for Blacks
- Taryn Norman – Faculty, Department of English
- Cynthia Peterson – Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences
- Jennifer Richter – Office of Equity and Diversity
- Phyliss Shey – Commission for LGBT People
- Leigh Shoemaker – Office of Creative Services
- Wendy Syer – Assistant Director, Center for International Education
- Rosa E. Thomas – The SEE Center
- Maxine Thompson Davis – Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Life
- Cheryl Travis – Faculty, Department of Psychology
- Martin Walker – Graduate Student Representative

### Progress Made

The Commission recently revised its bylaws to acknowledge its relationship to the new Vice Chancellor for Diversity. In addition, the Commission revised the section on the graduate assistant in response to changes in that position recommended by the Vice Chancellor and, as well, doing some general “housekeeping.” The Commission needs,

however, to make important changes in its bylaws and operations. Currently the bylaws mandate a membership of twenty-four voting members, including eight ex-officio members, the majority of whom do not consistently attend meetings, thus skewing numbers for quorums or majority rules. Further, if one adds in the non-voting ex-officio members to the required membership roll, the Commission would number at least twenty-eight members, an impracticably large number. Most importantly, the Commission needs to insure that there is a proportionate number of faculty members, exempt and non-exempt staff, and students from a selection of colleges. I will charge a Bylaws Committee to do a thorough review of the bylaws, to reconsider the number of commissioners necessary for representation of constituents, and then to work with a new Membership and Communication Committee to advertise the Commission more extensively and to invite applications from across the campus. Luckily, because of interest expressed to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, we appear to have a proportionate membership for the coming year.

### Priorities

The Commission for Women's main purpose is to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive campus environment with special attention given to the needs of women. By doing so, it hopes to support in concrete ways Vol Vision. It needs to continue to step up in regard to advocating for women on campus, be those women in student, faculty, staff, or administrative positions. As the above discussion indicates, the Commission hopes to advertise itself more prominently and to recruit energetically new members who are committed to working in a positive way on gender issues and their impact on university life, productivity, and excellence.

### Vol Vision

As I mentioned above, the Commission needs to do a thorough review of its procedures and priorities and make subsequent changes in the bylaws. I see this not as simple housekeeping but as an exciting opportunity to bring the Commission into the twenty-first century and in accordance with the university's Vol Vision and push for the top 25. Certainly the Commission will continue to monitor and make policy that has direct impact on women, such as the Standard of Practice Regarding Faculty-Student Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships, the call for lactation rooms in all planned buildings, continued work on work/life balance, and a celebration of women on campus and in UTK history. We will also continue to offer a variety of events in Women's History month; this year a Women's Studies class under the direction of Taryn Norman created a presentation on UTK women of the past, present, and future for the library display case; Cynthia Peterson hosted a panel focusing on being a woman in the STEM fields; Stephanie Metz organized a creative reading by women faculty and graduate students in the English department; and Rosa Thomas hosted a talk on women and sleep given by Dean Lee.

### Looking Towards the Future

The Commission for Women will continue to sponsor, through funding provided by the Chancellor, outstanding women to apply for and to attend a Higher Education Resource Services Institute. This program has attracted a great deal of positive attention and

helps prepare women for advancement into administrative and leadership positions. Last year, the UTK HERS participants still on the campus met to share information about the experience and then formed a reading group focusing on material aimed particularly at women who would be leaders. That group continues to meet. The Commission also provides two awards specifically for women. This year the Commission hopes to invite last year's Notable Woman awardee—and if possible the awardee from the previous year who was her student—to deliver an informal talk about gender issues in her field; the Commission also hopes to celebrate the awardee at a reception in her honor.

I have spoken recently with undergraduate and graduate students who will be invited to become commissioners this year; these students are energized and wish to reach out to other women in their fields and class, in the sciences and in the humanities and, in general, across the campus. I hope the Commission will assist them in such grassroots activities.

In addition, this year, the Commission will pursue making broader connections, first with other Tennessee schools that have similar commissions and then with those SEC schools that also pay especial attention to gender issues through a commission, organization, or office. We could learn a great deal from such meetings, such as best practices in advocating for women on campus, and would be the lead university to attempt such exchanges of information. On this campus, the Commission would like to see better attention paid to the need to recruit women candidates to Governor's Chairs and the positive celebration of women from the school's history through such venues as the naming of buildings or rooms in buildings after these women pioneers.

## Conclusion

While the Commission has in the past attempted to insure that the history of UTK women was not simply erased, it would be a good if demanding project to research and begin sharing that history broadcasting of information and continuous public acknowledgement of the important contributions women have made and are making to the University of Tennessee. In all these new projects, we hope to contribute in meaningful ways to the university's drive for excellence and a campus environment and reputation that is inviting to all and hostile to none.

# COUNCIL FOR DIVERSITY AND 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.

## Council Composition

The Council is currently updating its bylaws that will go into effect for the 2014-15 academic year. The current membership for 2013-2014 is as follows:

### Required Members

- Mary Papke-Commission for Women
- Lili'a Neville/Karla McKanders-Commission for Blacks
- Phyliss Shey/Joel Kramer-Commission for LGBT People
- Maxine Davis-Student Life
- John Zomchick-Academic Affairs
- Paul Troy-Student Government Association
- Damien Pitts-Graduate Student Senate
- Annazette Houston-Office of Disabilities Services
- Pia Wood-Center for International Education
- Eric Stokes-Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- Marva Rudolph-Office of Equity and Diversity
- Herb Byrd-Human Resources
- David Golden-Faculty Senate
- Tyler Johnson (Co-Chair)-Athletics

### Appointed Members

- Alecia Davis-Black Faculty and Staff Association
- Anton Reece-Student Success Center
- Rita Smith-Executive Associate Dean, Hodges Library
- Tyvi Small (Co-Chair)-Director of Diversity and Community Relations, CBA
- Carolyn Hodges-Dean, Graduate School
- Mike Wirth-College of Communication & Information
- Angela Batey-Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences
- Margie Nichols- Vice Chancellor for Communications
- Adam Cureton-Faculty, Philosophy
- Althea Murphy-Price-Faculty, School of Art
- Sandy Mixer-Faculty, College of Nursing
- Tim Hiles-Faculty, School of Art

### Ex-Officio

- Rickey Hall-Vice Chancellor for Diversity



- Brian Thomas-Graduate Research Assistant

### Priorities

As stated previously, 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 is through advisory actions or actively participating in supporting and moving forward diversity and inclusion initiatives with other groups on campus.

### Progress

2013-14 brought some changes to Council as a result of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity position joining campus in 2013. We developed The Dr. Marva Rudolph Commitment to Diversity Award, Supported the Council for LGBT People in their drive for gender neutral/family restrooms, worked with Human Resources to help address the demographic info of the employee engagement survey and revised the by council bylaws.

### Vol Vision

The Council's purpose and charge is to serve as an advocate to improve the overall campus climate for staff and students through diversity and inclusion initiatives. The Council's work, both directly and indirectly, impacts and fully supports the goals and mission of Vol Vision.

### Challenges

A consistent challenge identified by the Council is the inability to get campus and UT System administration to expand the format of survey tools to be more inclusive of underrepresented populations. As it currently stands, campus and UT System surveys do not reflect, or include, the multiple constituencies that are part of the make up on each campus.

### Notable Achievements

The Council began working on a campus award to recognize an office, program, or department that has demonstrated outstanding leadership and made consistent contributions to advancing diversity and inclusion on our campus. The office, program, or department receiving this award will have implemented diversity and inclusion initiatives that are linked to their mission and are sustainable. The award was named The Dr. Marva Rudolph Commitment to Diversity Award as a way to honor Dr. Rudolph after her untimely death earlier this year.

### Looking Towards the Future

As mentioned previously, the Council is in the process of updating its bylaws to take effect for 2014-2015. The addition of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity has brought about better structure and communication amongst all the Commissions and Council on campus that fall under this position's oversight. As a result, the Council has been able to participate in the planning stages of some campus programming and events coming this year related to diversity and inclusion. The opportunities in this capacity will continue to grow with this new structure.

## Conclusion

This past academic year was a positive year for the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism. There is renewed energy and momentum for positive change, and to improve existing practices, with the addition of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity not only for this Council, but for all councils, commissions, and staff and students on our campus. As part of this momentum, the Council, as a whole, has the potential to have a more physical presence on campus than it has in the past. The updated bylaws and membership structure for 2014-2015 provide great promise for this to occur. The Council has positively evolved, adapted, and pressed forward since its inception and continues to be an advocate for learning, understanding, and change in advancing diversity and inclusion on our campus.