



Presidential Task Force *for Opportunity and Equity*

September 30, 2021

Minutes

Schedule re-arranged so that members have the opportunity to participate in the Presidential Search Advisory Committee Listening Session from 3:00pm – 4:00pm.

3:30- 5:00 p.m.

Subcommittee Meetings

Institute for African American and Black Studies Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Melody Russell

Members: Katrina Akande, Cori Akins, Molly Boudreaux, Michael Brown, Taffye Clayton, Kevin Coonrod, Norman Godwin, Robin Jaffe, Kimberly Mulligan, Jared Russell, Bruce Smith, Lady Frances Hamilton, Scott Bishop, Giovanna Summerfield & Gretel Thornton, and Jackson Thomas

- We want to have two new listening sessions on October 29. Good times to hold them might be from 9 to 11 a.m. and noon to 2 p.m.
 - Who do we want to reach out to ask to attend the listening sessions?
 - We have a great list of excellent researchers for the various important research areas pertinent to our mission. We decided to include all persons from that list for the next round of listening sessions. We also want to notify their deans and department heads, to keep them in the loop.
 - The more people we can include, the better our identity will be. We want to be able to cohesively pull people together.
- We would like to ask Gretchen Van Valkenberg or possibly Norman Godwin to reach out to Lakami Baker as a possible drafter of our business plan. More details and excitement from potential researchers and collaborators will inform the business plan.
 - Prospectively, we want to submit a proposal for approval of the institute at the February 4 Board of Trustees meeting.
 - That means we must submit our documents by January 5.
 - Final steps will entail finishing the business plan, having a good list of potential, interested donors, and having narrowed the focus of the institute. Prior to submitting that proposal for consideration, we would like to meet again with Provost Hardgrave and then President Gogue with a refined proposal.

- We may want to review aspects of Auburn University's McCrary Institute for Cyber and Critical Infrastructure Security as a model for our own institute and refine them for our purposes.
- We are focused on research, and this will benefit students because they will be part of the research and scholarship.
- See below some potential questions for listening sessions:
 1. How can an institute help you do what you do, better?
 2. What are your perspectives on how you can help this institute and how it can help you?
 3. How are you being funded?
 4. Which entities are amenable to funding for our goals? Do you have funding sources that we can use for our list of donors and funding sources?
 5. What percentage of listening session attendees generate grant funding for their research? How are you organizing your funding and how can the institute help you?
 6. How have you gone about securing funding and how can the institute help you gain funding?
- Can we come up with a project that is interdisciplinary, and how can the intersections tie us together better?
- A member commented on Tessa Carr's Mosaic Theatre. Their students performed remarkable research into the Black history of Tuskegee University. That story is a good example of how the institute can help our students gain research experience that will make an impact.
- Should we have a sub-committee for fundraising? That unit could research and identify potential donors, and we could designate committee members to approach those donors. We should also ask our university development professionals to point our way to potential donors, and to advise us of donors we should not approach.
 - We might want to have a central grant writer to organize the grant writing process.
- Consider the intersection of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and art, and how that affects all things.
 - We have a museum and a performing arts center, and our sister institution across the state does not. Having the arts facilities is one way to distinguish the institution from other institutions.
 - STEM provides the means with which to improve lives in Alabama.
 - The arts provide us the opportunity to discuss the civil rights component of our institute. With the arts we have history, political science, and literature to help us discuss what has happened and how we might go about improving lives. Arts such as music, dance, and theatre tell the stories of where we have been and where we want to go. The inclusion of civil rights may help us sell the proposal, as it may be attractive to decision makers.
- Homework Continue to think of listening session questions and potential granting sources and donors.

Graduate Student Subcommittee

Chairs: George Flowers and Jared Russell

Members: Olasubomi Akintola, Akilah Alwan, Mikayla Brown, Chacolby Burns-Johnson, Angela Cannon, Vinicia Biancardi, Astin Cole, Alexicia Richardson, Sedighe Zamani, Brian Cornish, Dustin Johnson, Bridgett King, Ebony Robinson, Cheryl Seals, Aariyan Tooley, Jordan Branchman and Alan Wilson

- Reviewed previous meeting's notes and recapped next steps.
- Discussion on data review and analysis for climate survey data.
Two groups reported progress
 - Quantitative analysis group – Bridgett, LaStella, Alan
 - Qualitative analysis group – Jared, Cheryl, Ebony, Angela
- Focus group process and format discussion:
 - The draft of invitation with dates and zoom link will be prepared.
 - A list of eligible students (our survey list) will be used to invite participants.
 - The meetings will be virtual, with about 10 sessions.
 - Participants will self-select meeting
 - A registration link will be set up (Qualtrics?)
 - There will be 4 – 8 participants per session.
 - There should be at least 2 committee members at each session (1 to facilitate and 1 to take notes)
 - 5 – 7 questions (max) that are used for each session
 - Questions are to be based on responses from survey and seek to identify action items.
 - Dr. Dustin Johnson prepared a statement to include in the invitation disclosing how data will be used informed consent, and confidentiality statement.
 - Timeline: Plan to send out invitations to focus groups by October 22
 - We will make individual sessions available if requested.