



Presidential Task Force *for Opportunity and Equity*

March 31, 2022

Minutes

Attendees: Astin Cole, Kevin Coonrod, Brian Cornish, George Flowers, Joffery Gaymon, Norman Godwin, Dustin Johnson, Bridgett King, Kimberly Mulligan, Alexicia Richardson, Ebony Robinson, Melody Russell, Jared Russell, JoEllen Sefton, Bruce Smith, Alan Wilson, Jennifer Adams and Amy Weaver

- **Dr. Joffery Gaymom** – Need to create a debrief document for incoming president that summaries the work of what we’ve done and where we go.
- **Graduate Students Subcommittee Presentation**
 - Presentation posted on task force website.

Institute for African American and Black Studies Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Melody Russell

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

- We discussed whether we are definitely going to include the word “disparities” in the institute’s name. We concluded that we would.
- We continued to parse through the potential name of the institute.
- We want to be transparent in the name so it will reflect the institute’s mission.
- Absence of the words “Black” or “African American” in the title will not convey a descriptive purpose.
- The name should respect the specificity of the institute and also capture the needs, interests, and acumen of our research faculty.
- Examples of titles discussed:
 - Black Institute for Resolution of Disparities in Rural Alabama
 - Institute for Resolution of Black Disparities in Rural Alabama
 - Not discussed during the meeting, but proposed afterwards: how about replacing the word “Resolution” with “Eradication?”
 - African American Institute for Disparities (AID)
 - Auburn University Institute for Research in Black Disparities

- Our tentative focus is on Housing, Health, and Education Disparities
- Want may want to meet with the university's Health Disparities Research Initiative members. That organization is a cluster hire, and they have expressed an interest in working with our institute.
- We shouldn't be inventing something brand new. We need to bring our work to the people who will be working towards the institute goals. They can then take the existing concept and elevate it to an even more productive level.
- We need to aggressively seek to engage in best practices. What is a synonym for "best practices?"
- We need to beware of coming to our own conclusions as to what is best for community members. We need to promote community involvement and buy-in for those persons who are living in areas where health, education, and housing are issues.
- The CADC Rural Studio has done this well and provides a great example.
- We word-smithed the tweaked proposal in Box.
- We will engage in research through community involvement.
- Research and feedback have informed our recommendation.
- We need to be succinct and, towards the end especially, get directly to the point.
- What do donors and researchers want?
- What will the outcomes be? Most importantly, the institute is intended to benefit our communities through health, housing, and education.
- What will our research accomplish? In the proposal, we need bullets that will state what the institute will provide.
- The more focused we are, the fewer bullet points we will need.
- We want to foster community involvement.
- We should have one bullet for each of the constituents we want to impact.
- Our "broad impact" is going to be an important centerpiece of the proposal.
- As we talked, we tweaked the proposal to place "Impact" right after "Strategic Priorities."
- "Impact" is importantly different from our list of priorities.
- Faculty, community, students are the beneficiaries of the impact we wish to make.
- We have recognized possible collaborators who can make impact.
- We should consult the folks at the Rural Studio for tips on forming our institute and how our impact can be heightened. We discussed and formed a strategy for doing so.
- A list of scholars is in the research proposal, and they can be inserted under the "Faculty" section.
- We discussed where "empowerment," "empowering," and "partnerships" should be located in the proposal.
- We discussed putting the budget in the body of the proposal rather than as an appendix.
- We agreed to tweak further in our next session, and that we want to wrap up our proposal by the session after that. We will then be prepared to meet with Interim Provost Vini Nathan.

Graduate Students Subcommittee

Chairs: Dr. George Flowers and Dr. Jared Russell

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

- Reviewed previous meeting notes.
- Continued discussion of draft report and needed edits.