



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Presidential Task Force *for Opportunity and Equity*

June 23, 2022

Minutes

Attendees: Angela Cannon, Astin Cole, Kevin Coonrod, Brian Cornish, George Flowers, Joffery Gaymon, Bridgett King, Melody Russell, Ebony Robinson, Cheryl Seals, JoEllen Sefton, Bruce Smith, Gretel Thornton, Alan Wilson, Jennifer Adams and Amy Weaver.

- **Institute for African American and Black Studies 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 would like to present our PowerPoint to the President's Task Force and General Burgess at the regular Task Force meeting on July 28. We also want to arrange to present the PowerPoint to Interim Provost Vini Nathan.

We agreed to have an extra subcommittee meeting on July 14.

In today's meeting, we reviewed the timeline for steps needed to present the PowerPoint to the President's Task Force, to President Roberts, and to the Secretary for the Board of Trustees.

- The next two Board of Trustees meetings are on September 16 and November 11.
- If we want to present to the Board on September 16, we will need to ask President Roberts to review our proposal at the latest by August 3 to give him time to review, question or comment, and then make the decision whether to include it on the Board's agenda for September 16.
- If we target November 11 as our presentation date to the Board, we will need to have the proposal to President Roberts by at least September 28. In either case, we will need to have our

Board materials in Secretary Jon Waggoner's hands a month before the respective Board meeting.

In our substantive discussion during the meeting, it was stated we need to focus the narrative as it is aligned for Black economic development.

- We should buttress this theme in the PowerPoint, a member noted.
- We have a critical mass of faculty with resources through grants already that can be accentuated more stated another, and we need to tailor that to the needs of the people of Alabama

We discussed many questions from subcommittee members. How do we want to close the loop with our faculty who participated in the listening sessions? Will we focus on the faculty members whose research is most aligned with the objective of the institute, or will we look more broadly than that? How involved will the academics be in the presentation?

- Which faculty are able to work with us? Should we be asking the deans to endorse? A discussion was held regarding focus on deans and focus on faculty researchers and how that focus should be prioritized.
- Will the institute director be the best person to recruit those faculty who will be associated with the institute?
- Will hiring the director be the number one priority for initial steps of the institution? We need a hiring plan for hiring a director.
- Day 1: Have a hiring committee who will pursue the hiring of the institute director.
- We need buy-in from the institution. Deans and provost need to be committed and supportive of the institute. It was noted that the institute is an excellent and intentional way to develop cluster hires.

We need support for our institute's major themes: grant funding; support of deans; potential faculty that could support the themes; who are potential benefactors who will relate to our themes?

Who do we need to incorporate into the institution?

- When we present, we need to have faculty members and potential benefactors that we can say are enthusiastic about the institute and are enthusiastic about beginning work with the institute.

We will tweak the presentation and adapt it to our themes of advancement; workplace development; and health disparities.

- What are the specific needs of the institute and who will we look for in the faculty to meet those needs?
- What are we going to do and how are we going to do it?

We need to identify the specific individuals in specific research areas that we have as resources.

Our university money will have to be collaborative money with big outside donors.

- We will struggle with the indirect cost issue.
- We need to be able meet the needs of potential faculty member researchers: i.e., what's in it for me?

We may want to propose a virtual institute for the initial stages and then an interdisciplinary platform involved with a physical structure for subsequent stages of the institute's existence.

We made the following assignments to subcommittee members:

- Review of potential donors and speak to development personnel;
- Review our list of faculty researchers and look to their resource areas;
- An email to one of our members regarding what a strengthened business plan will look like. How much will we need to ask for? What is the going rate for a director?
- Finally, a blanket assignment was given to all subcommittee members: how can we change the language in the PowerPoint introduction to reflect how we are focused specifically toward the themes of health disparity, technology, workforce development, etc.

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

- The Graduate Students Subcommittee did not meet.