

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF BLACKS
December 7, 2020

Members Present

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

Members Absent

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

Proceedings

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

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of the Minutes

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

Proceedings

Martin Luther King Jr. Events

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

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

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

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

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

Faculty/Staff mentoring program for the students

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

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

Black History Month Activities

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

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

Center Stage

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

Holiday Chat and Chew

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

Other Such Matters

None discussed.

Adjournment

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