

DATE: July 25, 2013

SUBJECT: Diversity in Teaching Grant Awards, 2013-2015

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In 1989, the General Assembly passed HJR 36, which called for a variety of remedies to correct the underrepresentation of African-Americans and Hispanics among public school teachers in Tennessee. The resolution reflected the legislature's belief that bringing more minorities to the teaching profession would supplement the education of students through diverse instruction and would provide role models for minority students. One of the suggested remedies to the underrepresentation was the development of a matching grant to support pilot projects designed to expand the recruitment pool of minorities preparing to be teachers.

With the settlement of the *Geier* desegregation lawsuit, and in light of current federal laws, the Minority Teacher Education program has evolved into the Diversity in Teaching program. THEC remains committed to the overarching goals of the program as previously administered, though some operational elements of the program must shift to ensure proper compliance with federal law. Race can no longer be used as the primary criteria in determining program eligibility. Additionally, the proportionality of minority teachers to minority students can no longer be a governing principle of the program.

Although changes to the program are necessary by law, there continues to be a need to address the shortage of underrepresented groups among the teaching ranks and to nurture teachers who embrace diversity as an instructional tool. Therefore, Diversity in Teaching grants were awarded to institutions whose proposals demonstrated a commitment to achieving that ultimate end, regardless of race. Proposals emphasized curriculum and retention strategies that will enable students to progress through teacher education programs, on passing the PRAXIS examination, and ultimately, on obtaining licensure.

The Diversity in Teaching Advisory Committee met on May 16, 2013 to review and evaluate the proposals. The committee included the following individuals:

- Gloria R. Gammell (University of Tennessee)
- Deanna Morris-Stacey (Tennessee Board of Regents)
- Patrick L. Meldrim (TICUA)
- Terrance Gibson (Tennessee Education Association)
- Kathryn Meyer (THEC)
- Penny Shelton (THEC)

The Advisory Committee recommended the following projects for funding in the 2013-15 cycle:

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga \$120,000
Each One, Reach One
Project Director: Sandy Cole

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga will use Diversity in Teaching funds to continue the Each One Reach One program in partnership with Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE). Each student will be given a scholarship that covers partial tuition and a textbook stipend. UTC will: (1) recruit 12 teacher candidates that reside in Tennessee and often lack access to financial support; (2) recruit candidates for HCDE critical need areas (3) focus on clinical experiences to prepare participants for the realities of education; (4) emphasize diversity as a vital instructional tool; (5) provide early intervention and preparation for the PRAXIS exam and other academic hurdles; and (6) offer supports and resources that assist individual students with unique needs and forge a community of learners through a cohort model.

University of Tennessee at Knoxville \$140,000
Diversity in Teaching Intern Program
Project Director: Jamia Stokes

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville will utilize funds for 30 teacher licensure students from underrepresented populations. The funding will be used to provide stipends for these interns and offset other educational expenses incurred during the internship year. Students selected to participate in this program have already completed the undergraduate teacher licensure program and are ready to enter the graduate level teaching internship.

Lee University \$120,000
STEPS: Systematic Techniques to Equalize Personnel in Schools
Project Director: Gary Riggins

The Diversity in Teaching funds at Lee University will be used for scholarships and Praxis exam fees for students. This program will fund 10-15 undergraduate or graduate students. The purpose of the STEPS program is to recruit, prepare and support teacher candidates who are committed to diversity in Tennessee P-12 schools. Priority will be given to minority candidates, candidates preparing to teach high need content (science, math, and special education) and individuals who are committed to working with diverse or underrepresented populations.

Program directors convened at THEC on July 1, 2013 for a mandatory technical assistance workshop, and will be closely monitored by THEC staff during the entirety of the funding period.