



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing an enthusiastic letter of support for the funding proposal for the 2014–2015 Trailblazer Series being submitted to the Ready for the World Initiative proposal awards committee by the Commission for Blacks.

Focusing on the professional achievements of African Americans at a predominantly White institution inherently supports efforts for intercultural programming to enhance the undergraduate academic experience. This focus aligns with the Ready for the World Initiative's goal of bringing intercultural experiences to the university.

One of our most important responsibilities as educators and administrators is to provide our undergraduate students with the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and ability to compete in today's global society. The Trailblazer Series will serve this purpose by providing our students with an opportunity to learn about diversity and the complexity of diversity issues from leading figures who are influential in shaping our perspectives on civil rights, interculturalism, and inclusion.

The format of the series will also lend itself to an intercultural experience. Local radio and television personality Hallerin Hilton Hill will moderate all four events in an interview-style format. He will then facilitate a question and answer period between the audience and speakers. This discussion between renowned African American trailblazers and students, faculty, and staff provides access to interactions that can positively impact our community's intercultural competence.

The speakers for the 2014–2015 series have backgrounds in law, public policy, diversity, inclusion, computer science, electrical engineering, psychology, theatre, and the arts. Their varied academic backgrounds facilitate a contemporary understanding of how racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity is core to our professional and personal growth, and recognizes the possibilities to engage diversity in our individual disciplines. Additionally, because the trailblazers are part of the UT community, they will be able to tailor their stories of growth to our campus community.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of the Commission for Blacks as they seek external funding to support the inaugural 2014–2015 Trailblazer Series to highlight the accomplishments of African Americans in the UT community. Any programs that help our students and community to generate a contemporary understanding and valuing of interculturalism will benefit our campus climate at large.

Sincerely,

Rickey Hall  
Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion

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