

The endowment will help to foster courses like that on American racism and others like it, and is being created to serve the University of Pennsylvania community in general and the School of Social Work.

The Black Men at Penn have already created several programs, including an annual Fighting Racism Award for graduating students who demonstrate a commitment to fighting racism; an annual book scholarship to an African-American student, based on financial need; and an annual stipend for a doctoral candidate that demonstrates a commitment to research, study and practice of fighting racism.

2005

Profiles in Courage Mural Arts Project Gallery

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April 1, 2008

Philadelphia Tribune

"Nutter taps 15 for diversity commission"

Regan Toomer

Headnote

CHANGING CONSTRUCTION

Deadline set for Sept. 1 to create inclusive plan

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter announced his 15 appointees to his Advisory Commission on Construction Industry Diversity, pushing forward in the city's efforts to make the local construction trades more diverse.

The appointees include: Bernard E. Anderson, Emily Bittenbender, A. Bruce Crawley, Sharon Dietrich, Sharmain Matlock-Turner, Philadelphia Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller, Walter Palmer, Robert Reinstein, Joe Sellers, Narasimha Shenoy, Carl Singley, Sam Staten Jr., Anthony Wigglesworth, state Sen. Anthony H. Williams and Mario Zacharjasz.

Singley would serve as Chairman of the Commission.

Nutter solicited candidate recommendations from elected officials, building trades leadership, community organizations and other interested stakeholders.

"The membership of the commission represents an inclusive effort to identify a diverse set of leaders in our community who will commit themselves to setting an effective course for change," Nutter said.

The Advisory Commission was established by Nutter's Executive Order No. 5-08 on Feb. 4, in response to concerns about a lack of minority participation in the building trades.

The commission is charged with conducting a comprehensive analysis and review of the construction industry in Philadelphia and with developing a comprehensive program to increase the participation of women and minorities by Sept. 1. Their goal is to achieve a workforce that reflects the overall demographics of the city.

The commission was also a response to City Council's efforts in December 2007 to call on local unions to submit their demographics to receive bids for the Pennsylvania Convention Center expansion.

Councilmembers passed legislation in December that requires the city's local unions to have 40 percent diversity to receive major private or public bid contracts, such as those for the Convention Center.

When Philadelphia City Council received diversity plans in February from most of the city's trade unions, councilmembers approved the plans, mainly due to pressure from Gov. Ed Rendell, but not all unions complied.

Four unions, Local 98 Electricians Union, Operating Engineers Local 542, Roofers Local 30 and the Carpenters Regional Council did not submit any numbers indicating how they would make their unions more diverse.

Out of those unions, only one, Local 98 Business Manager John Dougherty answered why the union did not comply after Council deliberated to approve 15 union diversity plans.

Dougherty said he is "not at all" worried about his union being punished for not submitting their numbers, saying the issue was a political one.

Nutter said the Convention Center board has the authority to decide what to do regarding the non-compliant unions and that he would support their decisions. Crawley, who is the former chair of the local African-American Chamber of Commerce, said that he looks at the task before him as a commission member as a business issue.

"People understand that this city's economy can't fly unless African Americans and minorities are involved in one of the most vital industry sectors in the city," Crawley said. Singley said the commission intends to meet this week and the members would be organizing and planning.

He said the commission would be conducting a disparity and utilization study where they would collect demographic information on all that are interested in getting contracts with the Convention Center expansion.

"I am actually optimistic that virtually all of the major labor unions will cooperate and will be committed to working with the mayor's advisory commission and I fully expect that they will. I think our task is going to be to make the case for inclusion," Singley said. "Once we collect the information that's necessary to show that there is a strong pool of ready, willing and able qualified women and minorities who want to enter the building and construction trades, I am confident that most of the trades are likely to be receptive to those initiatives."

May 2, 2008

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