



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



2

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MEMORANDUM

TO: TACIR Commission Members

FROM: Harry A. Green *Harry*
Executive Director

DATE: June 30, 2009

SUBJECT: TACIR's Sunset Review

TACIR's first sunset hearing before the Joint Committee on Government Operations was held in June 2008. The only issue raised at the meeting was the lack of staff diversity. TACIR staff described TACIR's recruiting process and presented its diversity action plan at a second sunset hearing in July 2008.

Following the hearing, staff began implementing the diversity action plan. Some of TACIR's employees are graduates of Tennessee State University's College of Public Service and Urban Affairs (TSU) so one element of the plan was to survey students in the program to determine their diversity, their familiarity with TACIR, and their career goals. The results of the *Student Satisfaction & Needs* survey were reported to TACIR in May 2009.

The survey results show that few TSU graduate students are interested in a career in public policy research or in working for state government. Sixteen percent of survey respondents were seeking employment in state government while 44 percent were looking for employment in the federal government. Only 12 percent were interested a career in research. Of these survey respondents, only one was interested in a career in research in state government. The rest were interested in pursuing research careers in federal government, non-profit organizations or business. Thus, TACIR has a very small applicant pool to draw from at TSU. However, as a part of the diversity action plan, the TACIR staff has been taking steps to increase TACIR's profile at TSU and other universities around the country.

TACIR's recruitment efforts include advertising with nine Tennessee universities, three universities in surrounding states, 19 historically black colleges and universities around the country, Yahoo.com Hot Jobs website, and WorkplaceDiversity.com. All vacancies are also posted on the TACIR website. Additionally, we place advertisements for open positions in the Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville newspapers. In general, only advanced degrees are considered.

TACIR's diversity action plan has been a success. In December 2008, TACIR received approval from the Department of Human Resources to fill two of our four research staff vacancies. TACIR was able to hire two well-qualified ethnic minorities to fill the vacant positions. They are both graduates of the economics program at Middle Tennessee State University. One has a master's degree in economics, and the other has a Ph.D. In hiring these two individuals, TACIR has not only enhanced its staff capabilities, but it has also increased the diversity of the staff.

A new sunset bill, SB 355/HB 1035, was introduced this legislative session. An amended version of the bill was passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Bredesen on May 21, 2009. It extends TACIR for four years until June 30, 2013.

A more complete document and the TSU study are available upon request.