Workgroup Members
Tammy Hedges, Co-Chair
Kathy Johnson, Co-Chair
Ted Townsend, Co-Chair
Nikita Bell
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Katie VanLandingham
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Workgroup Goals

The goals of this workgroup are to identify ways to better visibly acknowledge and recognize diversity on campus; receive, review and vet recommendations for signage, references and/or names on campus buildings for possible renaming opportunities; advance all recommendations with strong support to the appropriate campus entity/entities and the state, if policy requires such; and review and address any changes in policies, procedures and/or marketing materials.
1. Placed a marker at Jones Hall where the office of Dr. Miriam DeCosta Sugarmon, the first Black faculty member was located.

The ceremony and marker unveiling took place on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 11 a.m. with attendance by state, city, alumni, community and campus representatives.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wellesley College, later earning her MA and PhD degrees from Johns Hopkins University, Miriam DeCosta Sugarmon was denied entrance to then-Memphis State University in 1957. In 1966, she became the first Black professor at the University where she taught Spanish, was the advisor to the Black Student Association and helped organize the Faculty Forum.
2. Renamed the Alumni Mall the **Luther C. McClellan Alumni Mall** in honor of our first Black graduate.

The marker unveiling and naming ceremony took place on Friday, September 17, 2021 at 11 a.m. The ceremony was attended by supporters from the state, city and campus community along with various alumni including the surviving members of the Memphis State 8.
Eight students, known as the Memphis State Eight, integrated Memphis State University in 1959. Luther C. McClellan was the first African American graduate, receiving his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics in 1962 and later earning his MBA from Monmouth University. McClellan was a Major in the Air Force, employed as a Mathematician by the Federal Aviation Administration and retired as a Program Director.
3. Renamed the University Center the **Maxine A. Smith University Center**. As one of the most prominent building on campus, it proved an appropriate option to honor the legacy of Maxine A. Smith. The dedication ceremony took place on Friday, October 29, 2021 at 10 a.m. The ceremony was attended by civil rights activists, community leaders and the family of Maxine A. Smith.

In 1957, Smith was denied admission to pursue graduate studies at the University of Memphis because she was Black. Among her many notable efforts, Smith went on to become involved with the NAACP, where she was executive secretary; assisted in desegregating Memphis public schools; served on the Memphis Sanitation Strike Committee; and was the first African-American elected to the Memphis City Board of Education. She later was appointed by Gov. Ned R. McWherter to the Tennessee Board of Regents, which served as the governing body for many public colleges and universities across Tennessee, including the UofM.