

To: Community Leadership and Interested Individuals

From: Stu Murphy, Chair of Jeff City Human Relations Commission

Re: October 2007 Lincoln University Forums

Date: 1/15/2008

In this correspondence, I'd like to summarize the information from two meetings sponsored by the Jefferson City Human Relations Commission: "Creating Intentional Community," concerning how better to integrate the community and Lincoln University, and the April 10, 2007 Human Relations Commission Open Forum, also held at L.U.

What follows is a summary of the issues and solutions developed at these meetings for your review and consideration:

- Inadequate communication between the community and Lincoln University, resulting in each side looking at the other with a degree of misunderstanding. Examples of this include the community's perception of L.U. based on past events; perceptions that those in the Jefferson City area do not want students, faculty, and staff of color in the community; perceived and real racism on the part of the community towards L.U. students, faculty, and staff of color; and the perception that L.U. students isolate themselves and do not want to be involved in the community.
- Inadequate involvement between the community and Lincoln University resulting in a lack of understanding on both sides about what will improve the situation and, as a result, missed opportunities. It was noted that strategic planning seems to go on without enough input from all parties. While statements by all parties indicated an interest in becoming more involved with the other in economic and social development, this opportunity has not been fully realized.
- The Commission is encouraged by discussions between leaders of the community and Lincoln. However, in order to bridge the gap, the entire community needs more information about the nature of these discussions and the specific outcomes proposed and /or being implemented.

The Human Relations Commission recommends the following to improve the communication and involvement between the community and L.U.

- Continue to use well-established events or groups to facilitate communication, instead of creating new events/groups. These might include inviting a Lincoln representative to a few of the mayor's Saturday coffee events, having L.U. representation on city/county committees, and having city/county representation on L.U. committees.
- Create new forums to address community/Lincoln issues. These might include establishing economic development panels to address common goals, establishing police/community outreach on the Lincoln campus, and creating task forces or groups to identify and deal with issues of common concern to both the community and the University.
- Advertise/publicize actions taken to improve the situation(s). These might include publicizing what the administrators of the community and Lincoln are discussing when they get together, advertising the common issues/problems and what is being done about them, and heavily publicizing the positives that come out of the collaborations.

The members of the Human Relations Commission are ready to assist in any way possible in these efforts. We can be reached in City Hall at 634-6309 or humanrealitions@jeffcitymo.org

Thank you for your attention to these matters and interest in our efforts.