



# The Styles L. Hutchins Fellowship

INSPIRING THE FUTURE OF DIVERSE TALENT  
TO LIVE & WORK IN CHATTANOOGA

## HISTORY

Styles Hutchins was an educator, attorney, politician, entrepreneur and minister. Hutchins was originally from Lawrenceville, Georgia where he became the first African-American admitted to the Georgia bar. In his early twenties he grew frustrated with the racial atmosphere in Georgia and relocated to Chattanooga in 1881, where he found professional and political success. During his time in Chattanooga he opened and ran his own law practice at the age of 29, served in the Tennessee State legislature, and helped start and edit the first newspaper owned and operated solely by African-American men in Chattanooga -- The Independent Age.

In 1906, he was asked by Ed Johnson's father to serve as his son's attorney. As a result of this representation, Hutchins received death threats and was ultimately forced to flee the city that had been his home for nearly three decades.

## MISSION

Styles L. Hutchins Fellows will help to create a plan for Chattanooga to become a city where diverse talent can prosper after college and thrive as professionals through opportunities for upward economic mobility. This competitive fellowship will elevate fellows in community leadership roles and give them access to networking and learning opportunities.

While educational attainment has historically had the power to unlock workers' potential for better job opportunities and higher pay, we believe that in order to recruit and retain educated young black talent, our community must do even more to level the playing field for upward economic mobility and prosperity of blacks in Chattanooga. Fostering both diversity and inclusion will ensure that we build a strong and vibrant workforce citywide.





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## PROFILES



**Ryenne McDowell (Inaugural Cohort President)** is a junior majoring in Political Science with a concentration in politics and a minor in Spanish. McDowell has spent two years conducting undergraduate research for UTC, including an emphasis on gentrification in Chattanooga and the implications of it within the community. She assumes roles in various on-campus organizations including as a Youth Villages Scholar and her work as a Resident Assistant.



**Marquise Tate** is a senior majoring in Mass Communications with a minor in International Studies. He has worked as an academic coordinator for an elementary school in his hometown of Baton Rouge, LA as well as participating in volunteer work throughout the City of Chattanooga. He has served in several leadership roles on UTC's campus including the organization Brother to Brother on the Executive Team and as former President.



**Khadesha Gordon** is a junior majoring in Political Science and Public Service with a minor in Africana Studies. Her professional career goal is to work in the legal field. In addition to being a full-time student, Gordon also works part time outside of school. She's also been involved on campus with the NAACP executive board (secretary) and the Political Science Club.



**Dominique Malone** is an Investigator in the Impact Litigation Unit and the Capital Litigation Unit at the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta. She graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a B.S. in Criminal Justice and a minor in communications in December 2019. While at UTC, she was involved in several organizations including the Black Student Alliance, the Student Government Association, The Torch: Reborn, the Echo, NAACP, the Theta Rho Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Freshman Senate. She was honored as UTC's Homecoming Queen in Fall 2019.

# FALL 2019 COHORT INITIAL FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS



## The Styles L. Hutchins Fellowship

### THEMES

- Student Socioeconomic Backgrounds
- Mentorship
- Professional Networks and Career Opportunities
- Belonging: Representation, Social and Cultural Inclusion

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

**"The millennial generation is the demographic bridge to the nation's diverse future."**

The Brookings Institution's Millennial Generation Report published in 2008, states, "the 2020 Census will show that the post-millennial generation...will already be minority white. This means that millennials, now 44 percent minority, will pave the way for the generations behind them as workers, consumers, and leaders in business and government in their acceptance by and participation in tomorrow's more racially diverse America."<sup>(1)</sup>

The efforts to promote racial and social inclusion will support and reinforce the driving factors of our economy. Focusing on proactive measures can further engage millennial minority students would be mutually beneficial for a growing city and students of all types of backgrounds.

In 2017, a Politico survey <sup>(2)</sup> of American Mayors found that 85 percent of them considered attracting this desirable demographic one of their top 10 priorities. Nearly half of those surveyed identified cultural amenities as their cities' most important selling point, but the vast majority said the biggest obstacle to attracting and retaining millennials was a lack of affordable housing and reliable transportation public transportation.

### 5 WAYS SMALLER CITIES CAN ATTRACT (AND KEEP) MILLENNIALS

Improve ease of commuting



Increase abundance of affordable housing



Enhance the distinct quality of place



Boost efforts to engage local talent



Involve anchor institutions



### CULTURAL CITY BENCHMARK OVERVIEW

The Brookings Institution Millennial Generation report included data from various cities to show findings on not only who millennials are and what their contribution would be to the future, but also to where they are living. The report lists Houston as a city for highest millennial growth, Atlanta as having the greatest young black adult gain from 2015-2016, Charlotte among cities with the highest percentage of black college graduates, and Augusta for its high percentage of black population compared to most other top 100 largest metropolitan areas.

Each Fellow chose one of these cultural benchmark cities and assessed census data, scholarly articles, and official websites to gauge the city's culture, quality of life, and formal and informal efforts to attract and retain black talent in their respective cities. A glimpse of the findings is listed below.

### BENCHMARK CITY KEY THEMES



Historically black colleges and universities



Positive minority growth trend



Professional sports teams



Middle career, white collar job market



Robust black professional network



### RECOMMENDATIONS

In considering recommendations that could potentially **support the attraction and retention of black graduates - and eliminate perceived barriers to living, working and thriving in Chattanooga**, Cohort I focused on recommendations that could improve professional interactions and social and cultural inclusion of diverse students before they graduate, and intentionally integrate the University of Tennessee Chattanooga (UTC) into the downtown core highlighting what the city has to offer. While these recommendations are proposed by UTC students, it is important to note that the initial recommendations should serve as a first step in continuing conversations for placemaking strategies to build a better and more inclusive Chattanooga.



#### **Reimagine East M.L.K as a cultural hub through establishment of a cultural overlay district**

The City of Chattanooga should consider establishing a Cultural Overlay District encompassing a large portion of East M.L.K Boulevard. Establishing a cultural overlay would direct downtown development in a way that promotes balanced growth by virtue of historic, aesthetic, and environmentally beneficial qualities; to provide new and expanded facilities for small and minority business growth, community services; and culturally rich facilities and events.

##### **Additional Strategies Include:**

- Identify and repurpose vacant city-owned and other facilities to create spaces for thriving small minority businesses and cultural experiences.
- Reenvision the scope and expand the hours of the Bessie Smith Cultural Center beyond an event and museum facility to support more interactive programming designed with young diverse professionals to ensure appealing experiences and connection to black history in the city.
- Create a public art piece that serves as a pillar of black history and revival in the East MLK area.
- Work with the UTC College of Business and philanthropic partners to incubate student-developed business ventures to within the overlay district that reflect the needs and interests of UTC's diverse student population.



#### **Develop marketing strategies and centralized resources supporting career placement of diverse graduates**

The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce should partner to facilitate intentional promotion of Chattanooga as a preferred city for career advancement and a desired place for black graduates to work and thrive.

##### **Additional Strategies Include:**

- Create a digital resource guide for diverse newcomers as one-stop shop to include diverse organizations such as: young professional networks, minority-owned business enterprises downtown, faith based intuitions, beauty salons, healthcare providers, civic groups, and mental health counselors of color.
- Create a Chamber member business directory of companies that offer paid internships for college students categorized by college majors, salary, requirements and job descriptions with links to apply.
- In partnership with the UTC Office of Multicultural Affairs, plan and implement an annual employer bus tour to expose diverse graduates to all of the top employers in Chattanooga before their junior year of college.



### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### **Implement transit improvements as both a long and short-term solution for mobility and access**

The City of Chattanooga should consider reconfiguring transportation routes to increase student and surrounding resident's accessibility to the city center. Although CARTA and UTC provide free ride services to UTC students, travel time and logistics may discourage students from taking advantage of this service.

##### **Additional Strategies Include:**

- For longer term improvements, the city should educate the public and build strong advocacy efforts around transit reform.
- Create a route for the CARTA run electric shuttle to move through campus more efficiently to provide students and downtown residents greater access to downtown jobs, shops, dining and cultural experiences.
- Reestablish the city as the "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" by adding a rail/motor car to existing tracks to encourage student interaction to the city and downtown.



#### **Strengthen and expand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts at UTC**

When asked if students believed that Administration and leaders at UTC prioritize diversity and inclusion when making decisions for the University only 32 percent of African-American students responding to the Cohort I survey agreed with this statement compared to 63 percent of white students. Implementing the following strategies may help to improve the perception and knowledge about the D&I efforts of the University and create a greater sense of belonging.

##### **Additional Strategies Include:**

- Appoint a senior-level position by the Chancellor to address the full spectrum of a student centered diversity and inclusion plan beyond compliance and training aspects.
- Recruit and graduate a more diverse student body that reflects community diversity.
- Increase the recruitment of underrepresented faculty members.
- Create University programming to introduce students to the rich culture and history of Chattanooga and further establish connections between students and the community.
- Partner with local businesses to help close the funding gap created by recent state legislative actions disallowing funding going directly to student organizations for programming.
- Commission the Chancellor's Multicultural Advisory Committee and Urban League of Greater Chattanooga to build a collaborative mentorship model connecting diverse college students to professional mentors.

**Cohort II Fellows should review initial recommendations and connect with appropriate stakeholders to analyze and recommend a path forward towards implementation.**

**For successful implementation of these recommendations, we believe that it will take many stakeholders to include, government, nonprofits, educational institutions, civic leaders, philanthropic partners, private investors, and elected leaders coming together to help achieve our shared goals.**

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Urban League of  
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