

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, April 20, 2009 – Cascades Room – The Inn
Meeting Minutes

Present: Jean Brickey, Ross Edmonds, Pat Hyer, Hal Irvin, Brad Klein, Anna Lomascolo, Maxine Lyons, Yolanda Machado-Escudero, Kevin McDonald, Jonathan Moore, Ray Plaza, Daphne Rainey, Rick Shingles, Guy Sims, Debra Stoudt (for Sue Ott Rowlands), Mikhelle Taylor, Dennis Welch

Absent: Kim Beisecker, Craig Brians, Carson Byrd, Sheila Carter-Tod, Virgilio Centeno, Shirley Cline, Stevan Jackson, Aditya Johri, Deborah Morgan, Taris Mullins, Ingrid Ngai, Kelly Oaks, Ashley Smith, Patricia Smith, Elisa Sotelino, Tamim Younos

Guests: Karisa Moore, Jennie Reilly, Susanna Rinehart, Maggie Sloane

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order Daphne Rainey, Chair of the Commission. Minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

II. Welcome of Guests

Daphne welcomed guests to the meeting.

III. Disability Awareness Month/Diversity Awards

Jennie Reilly talked about recent efforts to update Policy 4075 which is the University's accommodation policy. Jennie is looking to bring the revised version of this policy to a future CEOD meeting for review and ultimately approval for forwarding to University Council.

IV. Athletic Diversity Initiatives Update

Daphne reminded commission members to review the Committee on Equal Opportunity in Athletics Annual Report that is part of the NCAA review process. Daphne indicated that Natalie Hart would be answering questions on this plan at the May 4th meeting.

V. Discussion on Chronicle of Higher Education Article

Discussion was held on recent articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education which focused on criteria related to diversity within the faculty promotion and tenure process at Virginia Tech. Discussion was held as to what extent had Virginia Tech policies been changed verses being reinterpreted. Confusion as to the facts was noted, as was the need for greater communication on this issue. Comments also centered-around whether the Chronicle article represented the Virginia Tech policies and subsequent actions appropriately. The fact that the high-profile nature of the article has led to many strong feelings towards this issue was also talked about at length. Kevin noted that the article has brought forth a prominent debate as to whether diversity is viewed in higher education as an ideology or as an institutional imperative.

VI. Ideas and Insights Potential Issues for Next Year

Daphne asked from the commission members about their thoughts on areas of emphasis for next year. Ross noted that the work of the LGBT Taskforce should continue. Jennie talked about the possibility of a disability studies program being developed and some initial discussions had taken place.

Kevin discussed development of a Diversity Leadership Awards program and the possibility of having CEOD's active leadership in developing these awards perhaps in conjunction with the Diversity Summit and/or with the ADA awards.

Daphne reported on the National Science Foundation's Presidential Awards and that Virginia Tech should consider collecting bits and pieces of information on various mentoring programs on campus for purposes of seeking recognition.

Yolanda spoke about the need for resources for Graduate Students who are pregnant and greater awareness of what services are available. Pat indicated that the Graduate School has made some progress in working on this issue. Anna indicated that the Women's Center will be working with Graduate School to continue to address this need among the graduate student population.

Ray asked about how the Asian-American community could be better supported next year and that greater inclusion and focus on the Asian population was needed. Daphne talked about the Campus Diversity Integration Task Force and that they will be continuing to discuss how to better connect with the breadth of groups and programs at Virginia Tech and how to better cross divides between various groups.

Maxine and Jean discussed the need for greater communications between different groups and that in particular greater communication to and among the staff population was needed.

Guy Sims talked about a recent reception with the Ron Brown Scholars and indicated a need for more representatives to meet with potential students who are part of this program.

VII. Announcements

Ray announced the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence is sponsoring a workshop on how to include diversity in grant proposals. There is also an upcoming Latino Constituency Conference on May 1st and 2nd that is open to the Tech community. Ray also announced some changes to his responsibilities at Virginia Tech. Rick thanked Ray for his ongoing work on behalf of diversity at Tech.

Brad Klein spoke about upcoming an upcoming workshop that is open to the Tech community on agricultural industry safety, particularly as it relates to migrant workers.

Ross announced the upcoming Lavender Ceremony – May 14th 3pm at the Old Dominion Ballroom in Squires. The ally of the year award will be announced there as well.

VIII. Other Business

PR Task Force Report: Dennis and Maxine presented recommendations on ways to better promote the work and goals of CEOD. Included in this report were recommendations for both printed and web-based materials as well as suggestions for how PR needs could be addressed in future years.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Perry D. Martin
Secretary to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity