

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, October 13, 2008

Minutes

Present: Mikhelle Taylor, Craig Brians, Brad Klein, Ray Plaza, Rick Shingles, Ross Edmonds, Maxine Lyons, Kirk Wehner (for Hal Irvin), Jean Brickey, Daphne Rainey, Yolanda Machado-Escudero, Shirley Cline, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Pat Hyer, Kathy Lloyd, Fred Piercy (for Sue Ott Rowlands), Anna LoMascolo, Dennis Welch, Kevin McDonald, Aditya Johri, Debbi Morgan, Jonathan Moore, Tricia Smith, Guari Chicker (for Ingrid Ngai)

Absent: Kim Beisecker, Stevan Jackson, Elisa Sotelino, Ashley Smith, Virgilio Centeno, Taris Mullins, Kelly Oaks

Guests: Maggie Sloane, Jamie Penven, Frances Keene, Elizabeth Gilboy, Jennie Reilly

I. Call to Order

The agenda was adopted.

II. ADA Update

October 20 is the Disability Awareness Awards Reception at 10:00 a.m. in the Torgersen Museum Room with Hal Irvin as the keynote speaker. There will be demonstrations in the Assistive Technologies Lab in 1180 Torgersen from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and a talk by Dr. Ellie Sturgis at 1 p.m. on working with employees and students with psychiatric disabilities.

III. American Indian Update

American Indian Heritage Month is from October 15 to November 15. One of the featured events is “Changing Models of Education” discussion forum on November 4 at 7:00 p.m. in the Black Cultural Center. The discussion will look at some of the innovations that tribal schools have made in terms of language immersion programs, technology and the difference in worldview and structure that underlies teaching from an indigenous perspective.

IV. Presentation on changes to Policy 1025

Maggie Sloane shared information regarding which of the SCHEV peer institutions have inclusive policies regarding genetic information and gender identity/expression. Additionally, an article from Michigan State University was distributed with information on the process they went through to add gender identity to the non-discrimination provisions of their Anti-Discrimination Policy. The majority of SCHEV institutions have adopted a more inclusive policy and/or the state law includes it. The recommendation is to include in the list of 10 protected areas gender identity/expression and genetic information. It was suggested that clear definitions and explanation of differences between gender identity/expression and sexual orientation be included as an appendix but not part of the actual policy. An accommodation that might arise as a result is the need for gender neutral bathrooms. Another concern was how this revised policy might affect areas that have specific dress codes like the VT Police. While housekeeping does have a dress code, they have gone to a gender neutral uniform. The request was made for a presentation of the actual language for policy change and resolution to be brought to the commission for a vote. Simultaneously, Maggie should visit with other groups for feedback and input. The hope is that the CEOD would be the host commission for the resolution and policy change with support/endorsement from other commissions.

V. Taskforces

Daphne shared the list of taskforces and members signed up for each. She charged the taskforces to determine goals for the year and, if appropriate, identify speakers for the commission.

VI. Announcements

The LGBT Caucus is sponsoring a movie on Saturday at 7 p.m. in the GLC Auditorium titled, "Another Woman." Monday, October 20 is the Celebration of Diversity at 7:00 p.m. Haymarket Theatre. Saturday, October 25 is the Renaissance Gala, a fundraiser for the Christiansburg Institute. Invitations will be sent as an attachment to members. October 21 from 3-6:30 p.m. is the Chocolate Festival, a fundraiser by the Women's Center to support the Free Clinic of the NRV. There will be more than 2,000 servings of chocolate. Tickets are available at the Women's Center. If you have difficulty getting there, please let Anna know and she can arrange to get you tickets.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m. for taskforces to meet.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen
Secretary to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity