

COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH, 2013
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
GRADUATE LIFE CENTER ROOM B

Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Aaron Bond, Dannette Gomez-Beane, Tom Brown, Catherine Cotrupi, Nicole DaDamio, Ross Edmonds, Amy Hogan, Hal Irvin, Marwa Abdel Latif, William Lewis, Mark Managuio, Lesley Moyo, Wornie Reed, Susan Rosebrough, Laura Rugless, Emily Satterwhite, Sherri Simmons, Guy Sims, Yannis Stivachtis, Jody Thompson, Mary Ellen Verdu, Leighton Vila

ABSENT: Chris Atkins, Rick Barrow, Sam Cook (with notice), Amer Fayad, Jermaine Holmes (with notice), Corinne Noirot (with notice), Jacqueline Nottingham, Bill Ortega, Sue Ott Rowlands, Cris Thompson, Alasia Washington

GUESTS: Marcie Bishop, Samantha Boyd, Justin Graves, Perry Martin, Pam Vickers

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair Yannis Stivachtis. Motion to adopt the agenda was approved.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 17th, 2012 MEETING

Motion to accept minutes for December 17th, 2012 was approved.

III. DISCUSSION WITH THE PROVOST (WE PROVIDE THE PROVOST WITH INFORMATION REGARDING CEOD ACTIVITIES INCLUDING WORKING GROUP UPDATES)

Chair Yannis Stivachtis commented on the two major points that were discussed in the fall semester, the university religious holiday calendar, and a concern related to the 2012 homecoming activities. He outlined accomplishments of the first semester and encouraged members to continue with an outline of plans for the spring semester.

Provost Mark McNamee was welcomed as guest speaker. Chairs of the strategy working groups reported on their processes, progress, and plans for the rest of the semester. Dr. McNamee spoke about the university's strategic planning process. He mentioned specifically that they were gathering one-page documents from the colleges and senior management and anticipates proposals being completed by the end of the month. Dr. McNamee thanked the commission members for their work.

IV. UPDATES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Dr. William Lewis encouraged members to read the 2012-2013 winter issue of the VT Magazine which featured several articles on diversity activities at Virginia Tech.

Dr. Lewis asked Dr. Wornie Reed to comment on the Dialogue on Race Community Summit that was held on January 19th, 2013 at the Blacksburg Community Center. Dr. Reed reported that the focus of the dialogue was to understand what it means to be an African American in Montgomery County today. The main objective of the summit was to participants in a productive dialogue regarding persisting racial problems in the county. The decision was made last fall to do the meeting as part of celebrations of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Reed reported that 80 people had registered for the meeting, but over 100 people participated. A wide range of people from across the county were in attendance including the Blacksburg and Christiansburg Chief of Police. Participants were divided into groups of four to discuss one of six issues raised at the meeting. The people committed to continue in the working groups, and report on the issues raised at a larger meeting in six months. CEOD members were encouraged to join the meeting.

V. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENT AND UPDATES

CEOD presentation schedule & guidelines for spring 2013 has been posted on the scholar site.

Dr. Guy Sims asked Dr. Wornie Reed to speak about the Willie Lynch Letter program that will occur during Black History month on February 13th at 6:00pm, in the Black Cultural Center. Dr. Reed will present this program on behalf of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The William Lynch speech is an address purportedly delivered by William Lynch to an audience on the bank of the James River in Virginia in 1712 regarding control of slaves within the colony. The letter purports to be a verbatim account of a short speech given by a slave owner.

Leighton Vila provided that he is in the early stages of preparing a draft of state of the Asian American student body along with several students.

VI. LGBT PRESENTATION AND Q&A

Ross Edmonds handed out hard copies of a power point presentation and information regarding the LGBT Scholarship and Ally of the Year Award. Ross spoke about the LGBT Caucus at Virginia Tech and how it was formed in 1992. He spoke about the importance of the Lavender Ceremony that was first organized in 2008 which is a celebration of the academic achievements of LGBT students here at Virginia Tech. The LGBT Caucus also supports a student scholarship which is a one-time gift available to students who are rising seniors in good standing (2.5+ GPA) attending Virginia Tech on a full-time basis.

Catherine Cotrupi commented on the LGBT Caucus meeting that was held with President Steger regarding top concerns of the LGBT community. She reported on the status of the Senate Bill 701, the climate survey, continued on the safe zone growth, and discussed wider community support. She suggested reaching out to delegate Nick Rush in support of Senate Bill 701.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

The first draft of reports by working groups will be submitted to the chair for distribution to the appropriate university administrators by April 1st, 2013, the final draft of reports will be submitted by May 6th, 2013.

Meetings for the remaining spring semester will be held in GLC Room B.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am, with sub-groups convening. The next meeting will be held on February 18th, 2013 at 10:00 am, GLC Room B.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Bishop
Recording Secretary, Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity