

**COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2014  
10:30 am – 12:00 pm  
GRADUATE LIFE CENTER ROOM B**

**Meeting Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Aaron Bond, Brian Bolton, Tom Brown, Larry Cox, Mary Beth Dunkenberger, Raifu Durodoye, Ross Edmonds, Melissa Elliott, Amer Fayad, Jack Finney, Lance Franklin, Paul Heilker, Hal Irvin, Marwa Abdel-Latif, Jennifer Nardine, Corinne Noirot, Tricia Smith for (Patty Perillo), Lester Schonberger, Amy Tanner, David Travis Jr., Pamela Vickers, Daron Williams, Thomas Olson for (Paul Winistorfer), Anne Zajac

**ABSENT:** Judy Alford (with notice), Gloria Bensen, Sam Cook, Noha Elsherbiny, Olivia Javornik, Bradley Klein (with notice), Mikayla Meyer, Gilda Machin-Scarpaci, Bill Ortega, Anita Puckett, Pamela White

**GUESTS:** Alicia Cohen, Marcy Schnitzer

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Aaron Bond called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. Aaron announced that this is the last full CEOD meeting of the year. The next meeting will be on January 26.

**CONFIRMATION OF THE ELECTRONIC APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 3, 2014**

Minutes are approved electronically with no response indicating approval.

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

Panelists: Alicia Cohen, Ross Edmonds, Jack Finney, and David Travis Jr.

Mary Beth Dunkenberger, representing the subcommittee on the CEOD charge and mission had suggested a panel on the history of CEOD to discuss the present, and what the future will be.

Alicia Cohen had been involved with CEOD since the outset as Assistant to the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, Ben Dixon, who also supported the commission administratively. Alicia served as the secretary for many years. She reported that the commission came about as a result of student protests on the history of Lee Hall, which was named for Claudius Lee, a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Out of deliberations arose an effort to get as many groups and perspectives a seat at the table as possible. As a result, it may have been one of the largest of the university commissions. She shared the initial (and current) charge of CEOD. Alicia noted some of the many issues CEOD has considered over time, including religious holidays, Policy 1025, harassment, disability leave geographically diverse students, USA Patriot Act, academic policies and practices, employment policies and

practices, partner hires, search committees, graduate student assistantships, research assistantships, media accessibility, child care, elder care, Blacksburg Christiansburg climate, socioeconomic status, etc.

CEOD also provided leadership for the annual diversity summit under then Dean of Students Barbara Pendergrass. The purpose of the summit was to gather feedback from the university community. Tom Brown recalled that prior to the summit, there was a campus climate team charged by the Provost, with appointments made by the Vice President for Student Affairs, chaired by the Dean of Students. This was well attended and effective, and generated a report for the Provost over a period of 6-8 years.

Ross Edmonds began serving on CEOD in its second year. This is his 10<sup>th</sup> year on the Commission. He noted that there were issues regarding Dean Karen DePauw and her partner and issues with the Board of Visitors taking down Affirmative Action and removing sexual orientation as a protected class. He also noted CEOD's involvement in HR related actions such as how diversity shows up in FARS and in staff evaluations. The development of the Principles of Community was a major issue requiring many meetings prior to its ratification, and still more on education for how to integrate them into classroom teaching, the workplace, and to get information out. Ross also noted that CEOD spent a lot of time talking about implementing the inclusive excellence model, and being involved in stages of the development of the 2010 Diversity Strategic Plan.

Jack Finney has little history with CEOD, but was available to discuss its present role. He reported that the President's Executive Council has charged Deans and Vice Presidents with coming forward with three initiatives, which are due this Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Inclusion Coordinators will then assemble a matrix for the Executive Council meeting on December 1<sup>st</sup>. By every unit taking on an initiative, it is expected that new activities and new energy will be generated. These initiatives will be assessed by a process that goes beyond compositional data. The new activities will be rolled out during the spring.

David Travis had previously been involved for about four meetings as interim Director for Equal Opportunity. He reported that there have been many questions about the model and how it will be evaluated. He invited CEOD to think about how it could be involved. Jack suggested that the model will involve an "advisory community," and that one suggestion is that CEOD could form the basis of this advisory body.

Questions were raised about how the new structure fits into university governance. Jack said that the Executive Council would convey policy initiatives to CEOD and appropriate commissions, but it is not an active part of governance.

Additional questions were raised about the motivation behind the new model, and what were the limitations of the old diversity framework. Was there a reason not to bring these concerns to CEOD? Some members were surprised that an action of this magnitude was not brought to CEOD for recommendations.

Jack said it was felt more progress could be made with a decentralized model. David Travis noted that there had been no authority given to the Vice President's office. With the President chairing the Executive Council, there is a greater sense of authority. Jack said that the change came in a time of transition to the new President, and that there was no intention not to inform CEOD. The idea of bringing the restructuring to CEOD became lost in efforts to move forward. Jack was not very involved in the process.

Another question was raised about where CEOD might become involved with the new model. Tricia Smith, as a member of the Inclusion Coordinators, was asked where CEOD might fit. She said the commission should not wait for a recommendation for how to move forward.

## **CONSTITUENT GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Aaron Bond requested reports from the working committees. Mary Beth said that the women's community was trying to develop a better understanding of faculty and staff classification structures. A group will meet in January to start collecting information to assess whether action is needed.

Tricia Smith announced the Donning of the Kente and Kwanzaa celebration on December 9; the Advancing Diversity conference on January 12; and the Martin Luther King Jr. keynote address on January 27.

Brian Bolton asked that people keep in mind as the university shuts down for break that international students can't go home and are here without dining halls. The Cranwell Center will be hosting a pie day tradition in partnership with the Graduate School on Monday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. Donations of pies are welcomed!

Marwa Abdel- Latif announced the upcoming Dance of Nations, sponsored by the Council of International Student Organizations, will be held on November 18, 7-8:30 in Haymarket Theater.

## **PRESIDENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY AWARD**

David Travis said that a call for nominations for the Presidential Principles of Community award will soon be released. He will include a description of the award in the CEOD minutes. CEOD will create a subgroup to evaluate nominations.

Tricia Smith asked if there was a reason why there isn't a student award. CEOD and CSA should sponsor such an award. Lester Schonberger will work on a draft. Jack Finney will advise on the wording.

Ross Edmonds made a motion that we send out the announcement for the award. Daron Williams seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting will be the CEOD Executive meeting on Monday December 1<sup>st</sup>, at 11:00 a.m. in the GLC Room C.