

COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY
MONDAY, DECEMBER 5th, 2016
10:30 am – 12:00 pm
GRADUATE LIFE CENTER ROOM B

Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Mike Bowers, Tom Brown, Lynn Byrd (for Sandra Muse), David Clubb, Mary Beth Dunkenberger, Amer Fayad, Rosemary Goss, Ellington Graves, Deyu Hu, Bradley Klein, Robin Lawson, Sarah Leftwich (for Jack Finney), Erika Meitner, Jennifer Nardine, Menah Pratt-Clarke, Chris Saunders, Elizabeth Spingola, Christine Tysor, James Venable, Pamela Vickers, Lisa Wilkes, Betty Wilkins, Daron Williams, John Gray Williams.

ABSENT: Melissa Elliott, Logan Glascoe, María del Carmen Caña Jiménez (with notice), Nicole Johnson (with notice), Stefanie Metko (with notice), Mahek Nigam, Patty Perillo (with notice), Takumi Sato (with notice), G. Don Taylor (with notice), Sean Zhang.

GUESTS: Mercedes Ramírez Fernández, Marcy Schnitzer, Leemar Thorpe, Diane Zahm.

WELCOME

Mary Beth Dunkenberger called the meeting to order. She asked for a volunteer to attend the University Council meeting later in the afternoon, as the official CEOD representatives will be absent. Robin Lawson agreed. Mary Beth requested a motion to approve the December 5 meeting agenda. Ellington Graves moved and Jennifer Nardine seconded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mary Beth presented the minutes from the November 7 meeting. James Venable moved for approval of the minutes; Chris Saunders seconded. The minutes were approved.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Mary Beth reported that Raifu Durodoye has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship through Harvard University, and has left Virginia Tech. There are two openings, the Vice Chair for CEOD and one of the at-large memberships. Mary Beth has established a Qualtrics survey for potential members, and the Membership and Governance committee will consider applications. Mary Beth also asked for volunteers or nominations for the Vice Chair position. A vote will be held at the February 6 meeting. The Vice Chair will assume the Chair position on July 1.

PRESENTATIONS

Lisa Wilkes, Associate Vice President for Administration, provided a high level overview of Human Resources restructuring. Sibson Consulting has been brought in to facilitate planning for the restructuring. There are working groups:

- HR Executive Committee: consisting of the President and senior leaders with roles with HR, charged with looking at the vision. This group has suggested that a new Chief Human Resource Officer should be positioned at high level, perhaps a Vice President.
- HR Advisory Committee: including representatives from each Senior Management Area, meets twice monthly to review a decentralized approach that will ensure consistency to policies and practices.
- HR Project Teams: addressing leave practices, the service center, and benefits.

These entities are considering reforms at three levels: a Strategic group which formulates proactive measures to address issues such as recruiting, benefits, retention, and diversity/inclusion; a Consulting function which will consist of Business Partners operating within each Senior Management Area; and an Administrative function dealing with day-to-day HR operations.

A key item to be addressed is Equity and Access. Lisa noted that our new AVP for Equity and Accessibility, Kelly Oakes, will arrive on January 10.

Question: What is the timeline for implementation?

The President has asked to complete the process by May at the latest to inform HR, determine the title of the leader and where they will report, and conduct a national search.

Question: Would the issue of performance evaluation and promotion fall under the Strategic area?

The Strategic area will look at compensation/benefits, and review practices at other institutions to help attract and retain candidates.

Question: Which functions might move from our current HR structure?

This has not been discussed or decided.

Question: Will a specific plan be put out for comment period?

In January Sibson will do a briefing for the Academic Council, public comment will occur later.

Diane Zahm, Chair of the Faculty Senate committee on Faculty Ethics, who is now chairing the working group on creating an Ombuds office. Currently, Virginia Tech has a number of resources - honor system, judicial, conflict resolution, Committee on Faculty Reconciliation, faculty review, Graduate Ombudsperson – and these entities may not be working as well as they could. The Faculty Senate has conducted a review of processes. The Committee on Faculty Reconciliation and Committee on Faculty Ethics are seeing more and more cases, but many things are coming to these committees because people just don't know where to go otherwise. Virginia Tech is one of only a few among its peer campuses that does not have an Ombuds office - 80% of SCHEV peers do. An Ombuds

office is kind of like a concierge service, where people can talk informally, confidentially, and without records kept, to help determine who on campus can address their issues. A person can then be directed to the appropriate committee/office/role. As currently envisioned, it will be just for faculty, but eventually will include all of campus. The Graduate Ombudsperson and other committees will remain intact to see how the new Ombuds office works with these groups. The Ombuds would report to the President. The committee is finalizing the proposal, and then a resolution will go through governance to get commission approvals. Student Government Association representatives want a similar function for undergraduate students, but the proposal is for two staff initially, which won't be enough to serve students. Still under consideration are the office location and functions. Realistically, it will also receive contacts from parents, job applicants, alumni, etc.

Question: Will the position keep track of issues?

These offices do they keep track in order to ensure issues are resolved, and will also track the kinds of problems received, and how many people they have served.

Question: How will this office work with Dean of Students office?

The Dean of Students is an advocate office, an Ombuds position is not. Logically, the Ombuds would make referrals to the Dean of Students.

Question: When can we expect a resolution?

A resolution will likely be presented in February.

Question: Why is the Graduate Ombudsperson viewed as separate?

Currently, Dean DePauw does not want to move the position, but this may change after the new Ombuds office is in operation for a while.

WORKGROUP REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS

Pathways Workgroup:

Ellington Graves reported on feedback from the 15 Day Review and significant changes to the proposal from last reading. He reviewed the comments received through JIRA and the survey process, and addressed specific themes from the comments. Ellington has met with faculty, and will be meeting with students and the Office of Assessment. Learning indicators have been revised based on feedback from a majority of colleges. A public information session is being planned. He outlined the pros and cons of the US requirement, and an Integrative v. Core Learning area, and requested feedback from the CEOD membership.

Question: Why is the focus on US diversity, when a global perspective on diversity is also crucial based on the current political climate?

Counter-question: How do we ensure we are challenging students to clean up their own house?

This may not be an either/or; courses can still address the US in comparative perspective. The original CEOD resolution, passed by University Council in the Spring, specifies diversity in US. The new learning area does not replace the Intercultural and Global integrative outcome.

Question: How can the College of Science participate?

Members of the joint working group who are in the College of Science suggest that it may not play a significant role in this learning area.

The proposal will go to UCCGE on December 7 for review. Mary Beth proposed an e-vote for the second reading of the revised proposal.

Faculty/Staff Equity Workgroup:

No report.

Gender Identity and Banner:

John Gray Williams has spoken with University Legal council, and the committee has begun reaching out to specific departments named in the Dear Colleague Letter. This data will determine how the committee moves forward. The committee is also seeking an update on the Banner upgrade.

Governance and Recognition:

The work group is examining past years' minutes to see how groups are represented on CEOD. They will also be reviewing the Principles of Community Award applicants.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of bias related incidents at the university and how to report incidents: Tom Brown reported there has been an uptick in bias related incidents with 8 this semester, 5 around the election. These included postings on social media; Hispanic/Latin@ students being yelled at by Trump supporters; graffiti incidents in residence halls; and inappropriate banners for football games. He many incidents go unreported. The Division of Student Affairs is clarifying bias incident reporting for students. There is a protocol is for how DSA employees respond. The bias reporting information on the DSA website has been changed to be more user friendly. Another uptick in incidents may occur during the inauguration.

Question: How should faculty respond if a student reports an incidence of bias?

Incidences should be reported to the Division of Student Affairs.

Question: An email went out to students, but faculty did not receive it. Can this message be forwarded to faculty?

Question: At one point the Graduate School had reporting information on its website, but this appears to have been lost on the current website. Can information be sent to Graduate Program Directors and Coordinators?

Reaffirming Principles of Community:

Mary Beth noted that the Faculty Senate recently passed a re-affirmation of the Principles of Community, and presented a similar document for CEOD to review and approve. Brad suggested adding to the first line -- "and other religious minorities." Mary

Beth called for motion in support of the reaffirmation. Erika Meitner moved; Liz Spingola and Betty Wilkins seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

FULL MEETING ADJOURNMENT AND WORKGROUP GATHERINGS

The meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcy Schnitzer
Office for Inclusion and Diversity