

COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY
Executive Committee Meeting
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM, Thursday, November 9, 2017
Graduate Life Center Room B

MINUTES

PRESENT: Menah Pratt-Clarke, Kelly Oaks, Lisa Wilkes, Jack Finney, Patty Perillo, David Clubb, Pam Vickers, Julia Ross, Jennifer Nardine, Matthew Gabriele, James Venable, LaTawnya Burleson, John Gray Williams, Khaled Hassouna, Maria del Carmen Caña Jiménez, Robin Queen, Kimberley Homer, Valencia Turner, Mayank Periwal, Jeena Sajimon, Chris Saunders, James Spotila

ABSENT: Tom Brown, Erika Meitner (with notice), Robin Lawson, Melanie Darden, Prateek Mishra, Ellington Graves, Mae Hey, Rosemary Goss, Christa Miller, Elizabeth Spingola, Christine Tysor (with notice), Takumi Sato (with notice), Michele Waters

GUESTS: Tracy Newton, Alexa Parsley

WELCOME

Deyu started the meeting at 10:31 AM.

INFORMATION UPDATES

We now have all of the seats filled and are excited to welcome Prateek Mishra, representative from The Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs, LaTawnya Burleson, representative from The Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs, and Jeena Sajimon, representative from The Council of International Student Organizations.

The minutes from October's meeting were approved with no corrections at 10:32 AM.

There was a short follow-up discussion on branding and the university master plan. Representatives from University Planning were in the gallery at the meeting and were able to hear a question posed about how best CEOD can improve its communication and outreach plans.

Andrew Peck, President of Virginia Tech Jewish Student Union, sent out a formal letter to address issues of white supremacy on campus. Ellington's workgroup has been working on this and has drafted a letter in response, which is available on Canvas and via email. Once Ellington's group is comfortable sharing the solution they have put together, it will be shared with the group.

The Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies has composed a resolution to incorporate an inclusion and diversity education component into graduate education. It is available to view on Canvas and via email. They plan to make each department/program consider this, and wants CEOD to provide some form of feedback before they move forward. Deyu has created a Discussion forum on Canvas to post feedback on this resolution.

To address how CEOD can be a better organization, Deyu put together a graphic and further explanation is listed below:

1. We want to ensure CEOD is inclusive: representative of each kind of body of students, as well as faculty and staff. This is something the Governance and Recognition workgroup is posted to consider.
2. The suggestion of less information sharing and more discussion.
3. Covering topics of hate/religious freedom, and systematic suppression.
4. Areas where CEOD can make a difference and have a large impact: we want workgroups to be encouraged to think about concrete, deliverable products deliverable by the end of the academic year and establishing yearly goals and priorities.
5. We need to increase awareness of CEOD on campus.
6. We need to work to be involved earlier in university initiatives and want to create impact beyond University Council. If we want to tap into getting involved early in diversity-related initiatives, we need to be sure to have a point of contact and have a comprehensive understanding of our action plan.
7. Folks would like to see outside presenters visit CEOD and share in meetings.
8. How do we move forward from here?

WORK GROUP UPDATES

Diversity in Academic Missions: This workgroup has been spending time on the Pathways Curriculum that was approved last year. There is a lot of work to be continued, which will cut across academic and social lines. They also wrote a letter in response to the Jewish Student Union's letter about issues of white supremacy on campus.

Human Resources: They spent their first meeting looking at different issues they covered last year and had discussions about potential areas of concern, and have decided to focus on three areas:

1. *Orientation and on-boarding as part of an HR transformation project.* They want to ensure that what they are doing is inclusive and plan to have the orientation coordinator come talk to the workgroup. They are also scheduling a mock orientation in the spring, where feedback from other CEOD members will be welcome.
2. *Campus accessibility.* Pam Vickers and Lisa Wilkes plan to discuss at next meeting what the plans are in the master plan in terms of access.
3. *Leadership and professional development programs.* This goal is to determine whether all of the programs offered through UOPD are diverse, and to invite members from UOPD to come to CEOD and discuss/listen to thoughts.

The workgroup is also sharing their agendas and meeting notes on Canvas, and they meet at 9:30 AM before regularly-scheduled CEOD meetings.

Governance and Recognition: This workgroup has been meeting to discuss the criteria for being a caucus and having voting rights in CEOD. CEOD is a representational body and the caucuses have more of a structure, so the workgroup has thought about and recognized some concerns that have been raised about membership and connecting that to confidentiality. They are working to ensure CEOD is a representative voice without violating aforementioned concerns, and have been framing definitions around caucuses.

The workgroup has also been having discussions on raising perimeters to prevent CEOD from getting too big, working to establish where the line should be drawn, as CEOD should not be approached by a particular group and it not have a plan in place.

Lastly, they are beginning conversations about creating and establishing a timeline for Principles of Community awards.

PRESENTATIONS

Council of College Deans:

As a group, they do not necessarily have a place in the governance structure, but they do get together once a month independently to talk about current campus events that deans should be discussing. They also meet monthly with the Provost.

They have been talking a lot about destination areas, faculty hiring, and the PITT model.

Anything that happens around diversity and inclusion that is happening in academic units are things the Council will bring to CEOD, and this will vary monthly.

Faculty Senate:

The purpose of the Faculty Senate is to create an effective faculty organization that can enter into partnership for shared responsibility and cooperative action between the faculty, administration, staff, and students in order to promote the general welfare of the university. They do not have a formal role in governance and are more of an advisory group. They have representatives from every campus unit.

Their priorities were largely surrounding concerns of the former Provost and encompassed concerns of promotion and tenure, governance, implementation of initiatives, and eFARS. They will continue to be points of conversation moving forward.

Faculty Senate represents the faculty at large and partners with all other constituencies to ensure that governance is truly shared amongst all.

Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs:

The Commission is charged to study, formulate, and recommend to University Council policies and procedures affecting the working conditions of classified and university staff and to promote staff participation in the University community.

They research and advise on leave issues, which include but may not be limited to changes to the winter closing schedule. They also research and advise how to better support lower pay-band employees, as well as updating the Career Staff Achievement Awards.

Commission on Student Affairs:

The Commission on Student Affairs is charged to study, formulate, and recommend to University Council policies and procedures affecting graduate and undergraduate student life and morale. Areas for consideration include: student relations with peers, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and the community; student organizations, social life, and recreation; employment, placement, and counseling; residential life, health, safety, and quality of student-related services; and other matters affecting student life.

Their top three priorities for the year are to ensure the student voice is heard in areas where decisions directly affect students, to define Student Budget Board's role within CSA, and to make sure the university's policies represent the current reality of student life and our Principles of Community.

CSA is purposely diverse in an attempt to continually represent both the view of the majority as well as underrepresented communities. Most conversations at CSA are about how major decisions tend to neglect the views of those who do not speak the loudest.

Commission on Faculty Affairs:

Charged to study, formulate, and recommend to the University Council policies and procedures affecting faculty employment and professional standing of the collegiate, library, and extension faculty. Areas for consideration include: commencement, academic freedom and faculty morale; procedures for appointing, evaluating, disciplining, recognizing, and promoting faculty, including department heads and chairs; tenure, benefits, academic and personal leave, and extra-university professional activity; and matters of equity and diversity that affect the university's professional environment.

Their top priorities for the year are to focus on the promotion and tenure process, equity in access to large-scale research facilities and teams, retiree health benefits, and faculty morale, recruiting, and retention.

The priorities of CFA directly overlap with CEOD's charge related to recruitment, retention, and advancement of faculty in context of inclusion and diversity, equity in promotion and tenure and compensation, diversity advocacy on search committees, and prioritization of faculty effort.

Student Government Association:

The Student Government Association was established by the Student Body of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in order to provide an effective organization for the administration of student activities, to promote academic freedom and academic responsibility, to establish and protect student rights, to foster awareness of the student's position in the campus, local, state, and national communities, and to provide a liaison between the student body, faculty, and administration.

Their top priorities for the year are to increase student representation of students by creating more pathways for student participation in student government; allow more voices to be heard in town halls and open forums, foster stronger relationships with administration and use those relationships to advocate on behalf of students, improve outreach efforts to students – rebuilding relationships with other student organizations, constituent groups, and students, and to create meaningful programming and legislation.

SGA has an Equity and Inclusion Executive Committee to create inclusive student programming and they are increasing student input in administrative decisions and policies that affect students.

Graduate Student Assembly:

They are a representative democracy that advocates for 6,000+ graduate student voices on 4+ Virginia Tech campuses. They convey the many and varied needs of grad students by way of representation on a variety of university committees, and they provide small grants, research-sharing opportunities, and social events to encourage inter-departmental engagement. Some examples of these include the Graduate Research Development Program, the Travel Fund Program, Cap and Gown Loan Program, GSA Research Symposium, and more.

Their top priorities are to connect graduate students across campus, ensure safe and accessible spaces are designated for underrepresented students in the Master Plan, and to create/promote anti-bullying initiatives to protect students in both personal and academic life.

This year, GSA founded their External Advocacy Committee, which will focus on promoting an inclusive environment for all graduate students and communicate their activities and ideas across campus and beyond.

Council of International Student Organizations:

They represent and promote international student organizations and their interests, serve as a liaison between international student organizations and the university administration, campus organizations, wider university, and the Blacksburg community. They also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of information, coordinate collective activities of the international community by promoting cultural awareness ideas and diversity, and they support the integration of international students within the university campus.

The top three priorities for the year are integration, awareness, and communication.

CISO has representation of varied levels of voice from the most diverse communities that exist within the student community, and has increased inclusion of otherwise marginalized student groups.

International Caucus:

The purpose of the International Caucus for Virginia Tech Faculty and Staff is to serve as an advocacy and support group for faculty and staff at Virginia Tech who identify as international, do work pertinent to international communities, and/or are interested in participating in conversations relevant to those who identify as international and those who do the pertinent work.

The caucus functions as a liaison to the university community on issues relevant to international faculty and staff, international scholars, international students, international research and

education, and is committed to supporting Virginia Tech's "serving the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community."

Their top three priorities for the year are to create pre- and post-arrival orientation resources for new international faculty and staff, create an awards committee to honor an international student from each college at future International Student Cultural Achievement Ceremonies, and to co-sponsor/collaborate with international/cultural student groups to provide education to faculty/staff about diverse cultures.

TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CEOD members were posed with considering the problems and challenges the Commission is experiencing and what specific knowledge, skills, and resources CEOD and its membership needs to meet.

The group also considered core information every member should know, e.g. mission/vision, charge, history, basic understanding of policy and procedure, etc.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

We are still looking for Nominations and self-nominations for Vice Chair of CEOD. Please send in those nominations to Deyu at dhu@vt.edu.

We anticipate and look forward to work group reports at every meeting.

If there is anything you would like to see on the agenda, please email your suggestions to Deyu at dhu@vt.edu.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 PM and the next meeting will be on Monday, December 4th, in the Graduate Life Center Meeting Room B.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexa Parsley, Secretary of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity