

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
Minutes for October 7, 1997, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, J. Bryant, T. Calasanti, S. Camden, C. Dietrich, W. Dougherty, M. Flynn, R. Giddings, B. Gillespie (for D. Travis), T. Hergert, E. Holford, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, D. Lisker, L. Moore, J. Quesenberry (for R. Myers), N. Parker, V. Reilly, L. Smith, L. Woodard.

Call to order: Chair Donna Lisker called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Pat Hyer informed the committee of one of Tech's many diversity initiatives, wanting to know how the EOAA Committee wishes to participate, or at the least, to inform them of the university's overall efforts. The idea for this project started with Joyce Williams Green (Director, Black Studies Program) who is interested in instructional technology. She proposed that Tech collaborate on this technology with HBCUs and asked Provost Meszaro to personally contact these institutions to ask for their participation. Meszaros agreed and decided to enlarge the project with collaboration in other areas, depending on the interests of the HBCUs. Twelve institutions responded favorably: five from Virginia (Norfolk State University, Virginia State University, Hampton University, Virginia Union University, St. Paul's College); four in North Carolina (North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Winston-Salem State University, Livingstone College, Fayetteville State University); West Virginia State College; Delaware State University; and University of Maryland-Eastern Shore. The suggestion was well-received, and they met to discuss partnership in many areas. Hyer said these efforts will be included in the academic agenda part of Tech's University Plan Update for 1996-2001; they represent a commitment to increased recruitment and retention of minority faculty, staff, and students with specific goals and strategies. The agenda will soon appear on a web site. Task forces are being formed to study how to foster a supportive working environment for minorities.

The HBCU project is conceptualized in three parts, the first being the instructional technology initiative. Second is a pipeline project aimed at recruiting more HBCU students to Tech's graduate programs. Third is the intention to improve Tech's campus climate by recruiting and retaining more minority students. Since the twelve HBCUs met last June, they have written grant proposals to foundations and federal agencies/departments and have attended Tech's instructional technology programs in order to adapt ideas for use in HBCUs. In return, some Tech faculty wish to collaborate with them on developing black studies courses in areas currently lacking expertise. There have been disciplinary collaborations involving minority-underrepresented departments. Project members want to pursue faculty and student exchanges and research collaborations, going in both directions (to Tech and to HBCUs). Ellie Sturgis, Elyzabeth Holford, and Delores Scott have begun visiting participating institutions to learn firsthand how to encourage and nurture minority student success. To increase visibility, a web site concerning the initiative will be constructed. Tech faculty and graduate students have made visitations to national fairs and are coordinating coverage on behalf of the university. Minority winners of major school fellowships are being wooed to Tech. These are just some of the attempts at becoming more aggressive about minority recruitment. The university will host a conference in 1998 of top students and faculty from the nation's 90 HBCUs with the goal of training them to successfully apply for grants and fellowships.

Existing diversity initiatives include the Black Graduate Student Organization, which attempts to encourage recruitment of minorities; the EOE is an exceptional opportunity program for minority recruitment run by the provost's office; the Women and Minorities Artists and Scholars Series which brings in speakers who share their perspectives; the ABD (All But Dissertation) Fellow Program which invites doctoral students to Tech for pre-faculty experience, mentoring, and possible faculty appointments; the Affirmative Action Incentive Grants which provide seed money for affirmative action activities; the Black Caucus composed of faculty and staff; also many student programs, including mentoring and tutoring, and the Multicultural and Black Cultural Centers. Hyer ended by inviting the committee to join the diversity effort.

Overview of EOAA Office and committee's role: EOAA Office Director Elyzabeth Holford said last year the committee attempted to educate itself and become familiar with issues on campus so that members could inform their constituents. She described the EOAA Committee as having university-wide representation. It is part of the governance system; if it proposes any formal policy recommendations, its route is through the Commissions on Faculty Affairs and Staff Affairs and then to University Council, although it can take some concerns directly to the president. The EOAA Office investigates compliance issues and complaints. The office is responsible for compiling the university's Affirmative Action Plan for state and federal inspection. It also makes colleges and departments aware of their affirmative action goals and in return encourages them to discuss their affirmative action initiatives with the office. It composes and publishes biannually the newsletter Diversity News . Another responsibility is oversight of faculty searches. The office performs outreach with training programs such as Project SAFE (Sexual Assault Facts and Education) and sexual harassment training. Disability issues are handled by the office's Americans with Disability Act Coordinator. Elyzabeth closed by reminding members that the issue of affirmation action is still viable as are the reasons that make its existence necessary.

Subcommittees--roles and responsibilities: Chair Donna Lisker asked members to fill out a form stating their names and what constituencies they represent, and what issues they consider most important for the committee's attention. She then distributed the charges for this year's EOAA subcommittees (of which there are two). They read as follows:

Policy Subcommittee: Is charged with the responsibility to address EOAA-related policy and procedure issues which affect the university community. This subcommittee may suggest, review, revise, and otherwise initiate appropriate policy legislation for consideration by the full EOAA Committee. This group will also be the receiving group for policy issues referred from outside the larger committee.

Programming and Outreach Subcommittee: Is charged with the responsibility of selecting and securing a variety of informative presentations of material for the monthly meetings of the full EOAA Committee. This requires identifying individuals and groups throughout the campus who work to achieve EOAA-related goals. These informative presentations should focus on dissemination of challenges or successes pertinent to the overall committee charge. Members of the larger groups can then inform the constituencies they represent.

As in the past, each subcommittee will select a chair to guide them and address the entire committee on activities.

Other business: Leo Smith suggested that the Programming and Outreach Subcommittee invite representatives of the various African American student and faculty organizations to discuss campus climate and diversity initiatives.

Larry Moore commented on undergraduate research opportunities for minority students (juniors and seniors) with a grade point average of 2.75+. They will work with faculty so they may examine career opportunities. He added that there will be internships this summer not dealing with science. Lastly, money has been received for travel costs in HBCU/Tech exchange programs.

Ron Giddings thanked the EOAA Office for its support of the Institute of African American School Development, a student retreat wherein discussions cover a range of topics such as personal concerns, the university's climate, and self-motivation.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe EOAA Committee Secretary

Next meeting is November 6, 1997

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
Minutes for November 6, 1997, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, E. Braaten, T. Calasanti, S. Camden, R. Conners, C. Dietrich, C. Easterwood, M. Ellerbrock, R. Giddings, R. Grayson, T. Hergert, E. Holford, A. Kidd, B. Lockee, L. Moore, A. Myers (for R. Myers), N. Parker, R. Rios, L. Smith, D. Travis.

Call to order: Chair Lisker was not present. Holford conducted the meeting and called it to order at 4:08 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Subcommittee reports: Programming and Outreach Subcommittee selected Lockee as their chair. She informed members that Dr. Joseph Oxendine, Chancellor for the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, would be speaking November 8 on higher education opportunities for Native Americans. Smith reported that the group discussed the survey distributed to members at the October 7 meeting. They will base their programming on those aspects of campus climate and diversity that particularly interest members, as reflected in the survey results. They also intend to feature some of Tech's minority student groups. Giddings reported that the Policy Subcommittee talked about recent incidents of insensitive behavior on campus and how they pertain to diversity. They also spoke of the types of policies they could write concerning campus climate and sensitivity issues. Holford added that they will direct the entire committee to web sites containing relevant policy materials, at Tech and other institutions. They did not select a chair.

Diversity Roundtable initiative: Holford said these group discussions are loosely structured and are not an official university body; rather, they are an opportunity for people concerned about diversity issues to address them in an informal manner. Associate Dean of Students Pendergrass was the impetus for the project; Darlene Grega (Director of the Cranwell International Center) and Holford are assisting. The first two sessions revolved around the topics of race and racism. The format may include case studies and shared reading; the sessions will not examine the broad overview of any particular issue, but will be more directed and specific. A listserv will be developed and perhaps a chat room. The roundtable is currently open to faculty and staff, but as its trust level and confidence rise in talking about the issues, it may someday invite students. The meetings have been held at noon in Squires for one hour or more and are presently held monthly. The next one is scheduled for December 3, Brush Mountain Room B, Squires. Lunch is provided.

Results of members' surveys from October meeting: Copies were distributed to members. Chair Lisker divided the responses into three categories intended to suggest areas in which the subcommittees can concentrate. Holford asked members if they felt they should recognize any other issues. Dietrich felt that keeping his fellow graduate students abreast of EOAA issues and programs was important and said he would look for methods of dissemination. Holford then reminded members of the importance of carrying such information back to their constituents; if their colleges or units don't have a format for reports from committee members, they should create one that will reach not just individual diversity committees, but the constituency at large. Sending the minutes of meetings to faculty electronically was suggested.

Ellerbrock asked whether these survey questions could be put to the campus at-large as a way of gauging its climate. Holford said the constituency idea behind the EOAA Committee might be a more appropriate method of achieving the same thing, i.e., each representative put the

survey questions to their respective colleagues and then report the results to the entire committee. This would enhance the members' responsibility to accurately represent the concerns of their colleges/units.

Ellerbrock then asked for clarification on the character of Tech's campus climate and how Tech arrives at such conclusions. Holford said the university compares itself to peer institutions. But as for judging the tenor of campus climate, that is a matter of individual perception, and to quote Gidding, "depends on where you are sitting." She said there is no way to simplify the issue.

A discussion on Tech's campus climate ensued. Among the comments: The university engages in many self-studies, but should conduct one on diversity-related issues. Campus climate is not entirely objective, it is largely subjective, and the community should hear the experiences of those individuals who find it dissatisfactory. The administration should take a firmer stance regarding those who violate acceptable codes of behavior; it should explicitly state that it will not tolerate offensive actions and that disciplinary measures will follow.

Other business: Moore distributed application forms for the Undergraduate Research Experience for Under-Represented Virginia Tech Students, a grants program under the aegis of the Provost's office. Address any questions to Dr. Moore. Deadline is December 8.

Holford encouraged members to attend and participate in President Torgersen's November 10 open forum, "Campus Climate: A Dialogue." This will be the first in an ongoing series.

In closing, she cautioned members not to feel overwhelmed by recent campus events, but at the same time to realize the committee's responsibility to challenge these things and to keep diversity issues before the entire campus community.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Holford adjourned the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe EOAA Committee Secretary

Next meeting is December 4, 1997

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Minutes for December 4, 1997, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, E. Braaten, J. Bryant, T. Calasanti, C. Dietrich, W. Dougherty, M. Ellerbrock, M. Flynn, R. Giddings, R. Grayson, P. Hyer, D. Lisker, B. Lockee, L. Moore, R. Myers, N. Parker, B. Pendergrass, V. Reilly, R. Rios, L. Smith, D. Travis, S. Trulove.

Call to order: Chair Lisker called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of minutes: Minutes of the October 7, 1997 and November 6, 1997 meetings were approved.

Subcommittee reports: Lockee reported that Programming and Outreach discussed possible topics for presentation to the entire committee. Representatives from various on-campus organizations would address the members, two per meeting, each speaking for 10-15 minutes. She read the suggestions aloud and asked those present to vote for what they felt would be most informative, or to propose any ideas of their own. The topics include hearing from: (1) the person(s) coordinating the search for the new Vice President for Diversity position; representatives from (2) the Black Caucus; (3) the student/faculty Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance; (4) the Multicultural Center; (5) the Asian-American Student Union; (6) the YMCA Native American organization; (7) the group for students with disabilities or their Dean of Students representative; (8) the Women's Center or Women's Studies Program; (9) the Black Organizations Council; (10) the Arabic Student Association; (11) Circulo Hispanico; (12) the Jewish student/faculty organization; (13) the Council of International Student Organizations; and (14) the committee studying the student conduct code. Within the context of these presentations, the subcommittee considered asking the ethnic representatives to address any religious concerns they may have.

Reilly suggested that two meetings be entirely devoted to student panels consisting of several organizations; they could be asked their perception of the campus climate and what solutions they would offer, followed by an open discussion with the committee. This would foster an interchange among the diverse campus groups. Members agreed, and Lockee asked them to draw up group combinations that might produce interesting exchanges.

Regarding the new vice presidential position, members decided to invite both President Torgersen and the chair of the search committee to speak to the committee about the job's description, how much authority it entails, and how the search will be conducted. Members may forward to Chair Lisker any questions they would like submitted ahead of time to the president and search committee chair or they may reserve them for the actual meeting. Lisker said she has already offered to President Torgersen the committee's assistance in the search process.

Braaten reported that the Policy Subcommittee proposes making an index of policies as an operational manual. Secondly, they would group the policies and divide them among themselves for review, looking for lapses or areas needing redress, and then bring them to the committee at large. Thirdly, they may conduct a survey or access already existing ones. Overall, their goal is an overall examination of the university's policies, from top to bottom, and to instill in them a factor of accountability.

Report on Diversity Roundtable initiative: Chair Lisker spoke of the December 3 roundtable, which focused on the president's diversity initiatives. In particular, attendees discussed solutions to individual overt acts of discrimination versus structural (systemic, institutional)

types of discrimination, and how to educate people about the latter component. They also expressed how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the president's recommendations. The new vice presidency and the support it will need was another topic. Members stressed that the roundtables are opportunities for conversation on a personal, informal level. They are held the second Wednesday of each month at noon in Brush Mountain Room A, Squires.

Diversity Summit: Pendergrass announced that, as part of Tech's Academic Agenda, the Division of Student Affairs is sponsoring a Diversity Summit. It will be held on January 19 (Martin Luther King Day) from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Owens Banquet Hall. This will be a real dialogue on diversity and is an opportunity for eclectic groups (in terms of status, ethnic, cultural, or racial identity) within the university community to share their perspectives. A unique format, the "Kiva," will be used, which is designed to facilitate and moderate discussion of controversial issues; it allows many voices to be heard on a topic of interest to many segments of the population. Participation will involve approximately eight homogeneous groups, each with 8-10 individuals, discussing a set of prepared questions. Each group will select a spokesperson to share the group's sentiments to the larger group. Audience members will include deans, vice presidents, and administrators, but it will be open to the public only in so far as they fit into the representative groups. The Diversity Summit will be made official, and its significance recognized, by being held every year on MLK Day.

President's diversity initiatives: Due to time constraints, Chair Lisker moved this item to the January agenda to allow for a more substantive discussion. She urged members to read President Torgersen's "Address on Campus Climate," which appears on Tech's web site, and to think of any questions they may have for him, should he appear before the committee.

January meeting date: Due to the holiday break the January meeting was moved from the 8th to the 15th, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Thereafter, the committee resumes its set schedule of meeting on the first Thursday of the month.

Other business: For informational purposes, members received copies of the EOAA Committee's 1996-97 Annual Report, written by last year's chair, Lynne Schaefermeyer. As for the letter sent to President Torgersen expressing concern over the low number of minority faculty and students, a response has not been received from his office.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe  
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
Minutes for January 15, 1998, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, E. Braaten, S. Camden, C. Easterwood, R. Giddings, E. Holford, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, B. Lockee, L. Moore, B. Pendergrass, V. Reilly, R. Rios, S. Trulove.

Call to order: Chair Donna Lisker was absent; Elyzabeth Holford chaired the meeting, which she called to order at 4:05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of minutes: Minutes of the December 4, 1997 meeting were approved.

Black History Month activities: Kim Butler, Coordinator of Multicultural Programs, was introduced. Besides acting as coordinator, she supervises the Black Cultural Center and the Multicultural Center, both in Squires. In addition, she oversees the Black Organizational Council and the Asian-American Student Union. She began the outline by distributing Black History Month calendars to members and noted two changes: the January 24 activity, "Athletic Activism," has been moved to February 25; and February 4th's "A History of America's Civil Rights Movement" will now be held at the Black Cultural Center. She asks members who have student contacts to please make the calendars available to them. They can be obtained at the EOAA Office, Black Cultural Center, University Bookstore, Women's Center, Squires, and elsewhere.

Subcommittee reports: Braaten reported that the Policy Subcommittee decided what it will do for the rest of the semester. They will examine the process of faculty searches, review completed searches to discover if they were effectively advertised and the type of applicant pool they attracted, and interview search committee chairs. They will meet twice a month to complete this project and report their findings and possible recommendations to the committee-at-large by semester's end.

Lockee reported that Programming and Outreach has also scheduled the remaining semester. President Torgersen is slated to address the committee in March regarding the hiring process and job description for the vice president for diversity position. Hyer asked if they were still interested in inviting search committee chair Dean Robert Bates to appear also, and noted that if this were to occur in March the search would then be well underway with little chance of input from the EOAA Committee. Holford, a member of the search committee, shared information about the process. She said the first meeting was held January 14. They received their charge letter from the president, and Bates laid out the parameters. Presently, the quest is for a full reading of three names with recommendations but no ranking. Torgersen composed a draft advertisement, which was a topic of discussion at that initial meeting; it will soon be ready for publication. Faculty, staff, and students make up the search committee. All meetings are confidential to protect the names of candidates (internal and from outside institutions) from being known.

Lockee asked if the EOAA Committee would be involved in the search. Holford said the process is like any other for a vice president, i.e., the committee has no role. Pendergrass added that usually a university-wide forum is convened in which everyone is invited to participate and provide feedback.

Furthermore, Lockee asked how the VP would interface with the committee once he/she is installed. Holford said she doesn't know at this point exactly what type of interaction will ensue, and the successful candidate will probably shape that. Moore suggested that the committee's bylaws could be amended to make the VP an ex officio member. Hyer asked members to consider how much more they want to know about the search: were they satisfied with



Holford's explanation, do they want monthly updates, or do they want to meet with Bates? After discussion, members agreed that Lockee would invite Bates to the February meeting.

Lockee continued with the subcommittee's other plans. For February, they may present a women's issues forum in which they would invite Susan Anderson to represent Womanspace--the Women's Undergraduate Network, Holly Sowell to discuss programming for Women's Month, and likewise Donna Lisker for the Women's Center. They would each speak for ten minutes and then field questions; thus the meeting would be split with Bates. April may be devoted to a students' groups forum; they would present their perspectives on racial, gender, religious, and sexual orientation issues in a panel format. A field trip to the Special Services Lab (for those with disabilities) in Newman Library is a possibility for May. Moreover, future meetings may be held in the Black Cultural Center, Multicultural Center, and Women's Center.

President's diversity initiatives: Holford broadened this item to include an update on the provost's and others' initiatives also. As the president announced at his forum, a committee to review student policies has been formed and has met four times (Holford is a member; Lannie Cross is the chair). They are currently analyzing the student handbook. Per the forum, a student advisory committee to meet regularly with the president is in the formative stage. The president discussed other forums for conversation and discussion; he will sponsor one on classroom climate to include a panel of faculty and students, among other events, and will be chaired by the provost. The EOAA Office is helping to organize the president's annual Campus Climate conference; Henry Louis Gates may be the keynote speaker.

The provost has initiated and formed, in accord with the university plan, a work group on campus climate; it will review the programs and climate for minorities and women. It comprises eight people, Holford chairing, who either work in the field or have access to relevant information, plus graduate students and research associates. It has a fourfold plan: 1) to do a thorough university-wide program review, examining funding and whether the programs are structurally positioned to succeed or fail; also to study their histories and assess similar past programs; 2) to conduct a comprehensive climate review via a university-wide survey this semester, through the Center for Survey Research; it will involve all faculty and staff, all minority students, and a sampling of women and male students; the group will also utilize focus groups; 3) they will do a university policy review to concern "fringe" policies or loosely defined ones, such as departmental practices thought to be policies but which actually are not, or conversely, those that should be; 4) they will use status indicators to ascertain who we are and where people are and what they are doing in the university. Much of this information is on hand but hasn't been compiled into a readable, usable format and brought before the administration on a regular basis. Also, this information is intended to assist the new VP for diversity.

Hyer said she will prepare the annual data on faculty hiring and employment and five-year trend of the same, a part of the university's Affirmative Action Plan, by February. She may mail it to members or present it at a later meeting. Holford will mail the EOAA Office's annual report to members probably before the February meeting.

Other business: Chair Lisker would like to move the April meeting from the 2nd to the 9th.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Holford adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe  
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
Minutes for February 5, 1998, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, E. Braaten, J. Bryant, T. Calasanti, S. Camden, R. Conners, W. Dougherty, M. Flynn, R. Grayson, T. Hergert, E. Holford, P. Hyer, D. Lisker, B. Lockee, N. Parker, B. Pendergrass, V. Reilly, R. Rios, L. Shea, L. Smith, D. Travis, S. Trulove, L. Woodard.  
Guest: C. Waggoner.

Call to order: Chair Donna Lisker called the meeting to order at 3:50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of minutes: Minutes of the January 15, 1998 meeting were approved.

Subcommittee reports: Braaten reported that the Policy Subcommittee has such a sufficient workload that it will meet twice monthly. They will review faculty search procedures and how they were used in filling tenure-track positions during 1997.

Lockee said that Programming and Outreach has tentatively arranged for President Torgersen to address the committee in March regarding the new Vice President for Multicultural Affairs position. For April, a diverse student panel will discuss their insights into racial, religious, and gender issues as they pertain to the university. This meeting may be held in the Multicultural Center. The subcommittee plans their final program for the year, in May, as a field trip to the Special Services Lab, which is the assistive facility for members of the Tech community with disabilities. Should Dr. Torgersen be unable to attend next month, they will switch the March and May meetings.

Women's Month: Holly Sowell, who coordinates Women's Month, announced that the theme of this year's activities, "We are Women Striving for Diversity," is intended to attract involvement from a greater variety of people. She distributed the 1998 calendar and remarked on the featured programming. This year's edition includes a retrospective of last year's Women's Month; it also provides news and updates of important events that have occurred in the intervening 12 months. With one exception, the activities are free.

Womanspace: Susan Anderson explained that Womanspace, The Women's Undergraduate Network, was initiated with an Affirmative Action Incentive Grants award. It is not entirely for women; in the past few years, two or three male students per year have been actively involved. One of their proudest achievements is the sexual assault hang tag they developed: it lists vital phone numbers and resource agencies, and they are available from the Women's Center. At the start of the fall semester, they hang one on every dormitory door. Committee members are encouraged to place them on their office or departmental bathroom doors.

Womanspace sponsors several speakers, particularly during Women's Month. Student members attend and contribute to many conferences and rallies and are primary organizers of Tech's "Take Back the Night" march (ninth annual will be March 26, 7:30 p.m., Drill Field). They also lobby congressional and state representatives.

During the discussion that followed, Anderson noted the following: Womanspace is structurally and membership-wise doing fine. A future goal may be to use public relations to diffuse the negative feelings aroused by the term "feminism." They are making small but incremental progress. Womanspace networks closely with other women's groups, on campus and off, and while their efforts may not affect women in the surrounding community, the students gain organizational and leadership

skills.

The Women's Center: Lisker, assistant director of the center, said it opened in 1994 and is a university department funded by the Provost's Office. It oversees Women's Month, which is the largest aspect of its educational programming, but also presents smaller-scale efforts throughout the year. Additionally, the center provides services to students who have experienced sexual assault (most of which are categorized as date/acquaintance rape) or relationship violence (which is on the rise). Lisker offers them an initial consultation and refers them to, and lets them choose from among, the services that exist on campus: psychological counseling, the appropriate police department, the campus judicial system, and academic relief or intervention. The Women's Center thus acts as an initial, centralized resource that then shepherds the students through the healing process.

Braaten asked what percentage of incidents causes the center to recognize sexual assault/violence as a problem. Lisker said, because these acts are underreported, the center relies on surveys for estimates. Typically, 50-60 students a year report sexual assaults to the center; approximately two will report to the police. As for relationship violence, Lisker receives 40-50 reports per year; the center is countering it with preventive education. Four to five students use the campus judicial system as a recourse.

Grayson asked if it is assumed that the female student is the innocent party and the male guilty. Lisker responded that the center is not an investigative agency and does not evaluate the claims; rather, it exists to aid the student in a nonjudgmental manner.

When asked if the assault figures are rising, Lisker said yes, probably because of the center's increasing visibility. Also, they received a grant to hire a victim advocate, and this person's vigilance may upwardly affect the numbers. Lisker instills awareness in the student body by making several presentations about sexual violence.

Among the Women's Center's other activities: it participates in new student orientation; it has added material to the Hokie Handbook; it collaborates with the EOAA Office and the Athletic Department on Project SAFE; it assists in women's studies research projects; and it provides information and referral to agencies in the outside community. Lisker encouraged members to refer their students to the center.

Other business: Concerning the VP for Multicultural Affairs, Holford said at the last search committee meeting a job description/advertisement was finalized and sent out for publication; it will have extensive national coverage. At the next meeting they will discuss the search process and personal contacts. They should fill the position by this fall.

Chair Lisker moved the April meeting from the 2nd to the 16th (same time), in part to avoid a conflict with the closing reception of Women's Month.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen L. Poe  
EOAA Committee Secretary

Next meeting is March 5, 1998

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
Minutes for March 5, 1998, Meeting

Present: S. Camden, C. Easterwood, M. Flynn, E. Holford, D. Lisker, B. Lockee, M. Mehrotra (for T. Calasanti), N. Parker, V. Reilly, R. Rios, L. Shea. Guest: C. Waggoner.

Call to order: Chair Donna Lisker called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of minutes: Because of a lack of a quorum, Lisker proposed that the February 5, 1998 minutes be voted upon by all members electronically. This was subsequently done, and they were approved.

Subcommittee reports: Parker reported that the Policy Subcommittee is continuing its efforts to organize the questions and methodology it will use to review tenure-track searches in 1997. They will interview two search committee chairs from each of the eight colleges, specifically looking at one search that resulted in the hire of a white male and another in the hire of a minority. These will be evaluated on the ratio of qualified applicants versus the number of interviews conducted, and based on the department and successful candidate. Most of the questions concern whether due process was followed, how much the EOAA Office aided the search, or if more help was needed and in what form. The total of 16 interviews will be divided among the subcommittee members.

Lockee of Programming and Outreach said the April meeting will feature a student forum of minority and gay/lesbian representatives who will discuss their perceptions of campus climate. The meeting at which President Torgersen will address the committee on the VP for Multicultural Affairs search has been pushed to May 7.

Affirmative Action Incentive Grants selection committee: Lisker explained that the grants will reward innovative affirmative action projects with up to \$2,500 from a total pool of \$20,000. Faculty or staff, university departments, and recognized campus organizations are eligible to apply; approximately 25 projects are submitted each year. She then called for members to voluntarily serve on the five-person selection committee chaired by Hyer. Dougherty, Lockee, Rios, and Myers agreed to assist in the evaluation process. (Members who themselves are applying are ineligible to judge.)

Distribution of Faculty Affirmative Action Reports and Goals for 1998: Lisker distributed Hyer's annual report, which was summarized in an attached memo. On the positive side, compared to fall 1996, the total number of faculty has increased; the number of minority and women faculty members has also generally increased; between October 1996 and October 1997, Tech achieved the largest number of new tenure-track appointments since 1992; the number of African-American administrative and professional faculty has increased, as have the number and percentage of women on tenure-track faculty in the academic colleges. Conversely, Tech has made no progress in increasing the number of African-American students, and the percentage of women students has decreased. The information is divided into colleges and thereunder into data on race/ethnicity and gender; it includes the affirmative action goals of each college. A summary of five-year trends in student enrollment with a similar database was attached to the report. Together, they basically present a status report of the university. Anyone having questions is referred to Pat Hyer.

Other business: Holford announced that this year's keynote speaker for the President's Conference on Campus Climate is Kweisi Mfume. He will speak

March 18 on building communities. He is currently the president and CEO of the NAACP; previously, he was a five-year congressman in the House of Representatives.

Reilly informed members of an April 3 assistive technology conference in Roanoke. She received a grant that will pay for ten faculty members and some staff to attend. It will feature faculty workshops and discuss the transition from high school to college for students with disabilities. The EOAA Office is co-sponsoring the event.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:26 p.m. Members then toured the Special Services Lab.

Tour of Special Services Lab (SSL): Reilly explained that the SSL is an accessible public computing site housed in Newman Library specifically for students, employees, and guests with disabilities. It offers both general and individualized access and communication accommodations through a variety of computerized equipment; it also has a quiet study area for people with attention deficit problems. Bill Holbach is the SSL's assistive technology coordinator. He researches, orders, and installs equipment and instructs others in its use. Richard Snider of the Technical Assistance Center conducted the tour and demonstrated the computers' capabilities.

The lab's hours are posted on its door. It has open hours, but will also make appointments. Because the equipment is expensive, someone interested in using it must first arrange a training session. Call 231-4270 or e-mail [assist@vt.edu](mailto:assist@vt.edu) for more information.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe  
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
Minutes for April 16, 1998, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, M. Flynn, R. Giddings, T. Hergert, E. Holford, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, D. Lisker, M. Mehrotra (for T. Calasanti), S. Trulove, R. Rios, L. Smith, D Travis. Guest: Kim Butler.

Call to order: Chair Lisker called the meeting to order at 3:47 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of minutes: Minutes from the March 5, 1998 meeting were approved.

Update on VP for Multicultural Affairs Search Committee and Campus Climate Workgroup: Holford reported that the search is progressing rapidly now that the committee has sifted through an overwhelming number of applications. Four candidates will visit the university starting the week of April 20. They will appear at public forums; EOAA Committee members are welcome to attend.

As part of the Workgroup's fourfold plan, they are currently concentrating on assessment of the campus climate via surveys recently sent to all faculty and staff; students will receive a similar version in the fall. The response rate has been phenomenally high for Virginia Tech, with 47.7 percent for faculty, and 47.9 percent for staff. The Workgroup will start focus groups by semester's end and into summer and fall comprising faculty, staff, and students to further define the climate. Another project this summer will be a review of university, college, and departmental policies that affect women and minorities. They also hope to establish status indicators and conduct analyses of women's and minorities' programs to test their efficacy. The latter effort will use web-page questionnaires and interviews with program supervisors and department heads.

Student panel: The panel representatives included Will Simpkins for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance (LGBA); Marquette Courts and Tyee Davenport from the Black Organizations Council (BCO); and Jose Pazos for Circulo Hispanico (CH). Each spoke in turn, then the floor was opened for questions.

Simpkins is currently the program coordinator and will be president next year. He opened by saying Alliance members are one of the less visible minorities on campus, which affects their advocacy: it's difficult being an activist when you are not easily recognized. He then spoke of the positive aspects of the climate at Tech, describing the university's administration as more progressive than at some other institutions; for example, sexual orientation is included in the Virginia Tech equal opportunity clause. Also, Residential and Dining Programs, Health Services, and the Dean of Students Office have been visibly supportive of LGBA issues in their policies, hiring practices, and programming. Furthermore, the participation of Alliance students on diversity and minority affairs committees is sought after. And, overall, the students feel safe and secure at Tech, without having to worry about physical attacks.

As for negative aspects, gay, lesbian, and bisexual faculty and staff don't feel as valued as LGBA students; when organizations ask to converse with a representative, they usually specify a student. This is in part because the faculty and staff population is not large or open. Simpkins recommended that the university make a commitment to recruit and retain gay employees to provide mentors for students. Tech could assist this goal if it would provide domestic partner benefits and, if not already, equal housing opportunities. Another grievance is the LGBA feels their issues are on a second tier as opposed to the first-tier issues of race and gender; they don't get the same emphasis and support. Simpkins said they are the largest minority group on campus (though mostly hidden) but receive the lowest budget and little advisory support. Additionally, they desire tolerance

more than acceptance from the general community. They would like to see a multicultural orientation for faculty, staff, and students; a core curriculum class concerning multicultural concerns, including theirs; gay studies courses; and an explicit statement from the administration that it supports LGBA issues. Finally, they feel hindered by the lack of unity and co-sponsorship among the minority groups; each is too involved in its own agenda.

Davenport lead an exercise in which she asked members to imagine themselves perceiving the following, meant to relate the experiences of African-American students at Tech: you're conspicuous, yet no one seems to notice you; your requests for simple assistance are ignored; a lack of warmth from the campus community makes you feel like an outcast; as a distinct minority, you sense isolation and see little to remind you of your own culture; you read an article in the campus paper that insults your race; your culture's contributions are not included in courses, and if you voice concern over this, you risk facing alienation; and attempts at advocacy may result in your being deemed a troublemaker by the administration.

She said black students don't have the choice of invisibility as do gay students. Also, they are on the frontline for other minorities: they can be the guinea pigs testing activism's limits or serve as the catalyst for others to follow. They may be criticized for not seeing past their race, but consider themselves to be agents of change.

Davenport proposed solutions parallel to Simpkins: multicultural programming activities, diversity training workshops, and an inclusive curriculum. She would like the university to make a firm public commitment to diversity and follow through with policies and action.

Courts said black student leaders are exhausted in pursuing both advocacy and their studies, but she feels they have no choice but to live these dual roles. They shouldn't be judged strictly on their classroom performance, because their activism is just as vital. She said they have to work twice as hard as other students to prove they belong at Tech and to serve as exemplars of their race.

Pazos spoke as a representative of Circulo Hispanico, which is open to anyone interested in Hispanic culture. He said the group is similar to those of the other panel members in that they want to create awareness of their culture and combat the misunderstandings and stereotypes associated with it. Nonetheless, CH is quite pleased with the Virginia Tech community and its efforts to make them feel welcome. Pazos doesn't see any major problem. He likes the Multicultural Center because it allows CH to mix with other campus groups. CH is currently working to create a Hispanic Heritage Month at Tech.

Student Jessica Ranero remarked that CH is a group composed mainly of international Hispanics rather than Hispanic-Americans, whom she feels have different issues. She regrets the lack of Hispanic mentors or faculty. When asked how much activism the group engages in, she noted that Hispanics are more easily assimilated into the majority culture than some other student minorities, and they thus feel less compelled toward it. Activism is also impeded because they are such a small percentage of Tech's total population, and consensus within CH's own ranks is difficult because of the members' various Hispanic backgrounds.

Question period: Hyer asked Simpkins if some students were hesitant to actively support LGBA because they aren't ready to self-identify. He agreed, saying students often wait until their final semester before coming out, as evidenced by there being about 50 active members and yet a mailing list of nearly 200 names.

Smith asked the BOC representatives how the university could tangibly alleviate their fatigue. Davenport said the new VP position sounds

promising, but she's afraid it won't have a support structure, and too many concerns will be dumped on the person filling it. Holford reassured her that the VP will have a staff and she will personally provide much assistance.

Davenport added that the African-American mentors at Tech are overworked and more are needed, and that black students should feel more welcome to approach white faculty and administrators. She also feels the administration should make a greater affirmation of its commitment to multiculturalism. She suggested a "unity event" as a kickoff each school year wherein individual groups would promote a theme of solidarity. Finally, the panelists agreed that their organizations need more money, and they need to know how and where to garner resources.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe  
EOAA Committee Secretary