

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Minutes for September 17, 1998, Meeting

Present: E. Braaten, R. Conners, C. Easterwood, W. Elvey, R. Giddings, E. Holford, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, E. Lewis, D. Lisker, T. McAvoy, N. Parker, V. Reilly, J. Schmidt, L. Woodard. Guests: Benjamin Dixon, Jessica Ranero.

Call to order: Chair Lisker called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

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

Review of 1997-98 activities: Chair Lisker noted that the committee was quite productive last year in response to two major diversity issues on campus. One was the decision to create the office of Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, and some members participated in the search for the eventual incumbent. Additionally, the committee helped the Campus Climate Workgroup in their surveying faculty, staff, and students about their perceptions of Virginia Tech.

Chair Lisker said the two subcommittees established last year (which continue in their same form) were quite active. The Policy Subcommittee spoke with 12 department heads concerning the faculty search process and their adherence to EOAA guidelines. The subcommittee should be ready to report the results and possibly make suggestions this November. Programming and Outreach provided guest speakers and presentations for Black History Month and Women's Month; a tour of Newman Library's Special Services Lab, which assists people with disabilities; a student panel that represented a variety of identities; and a visit from President Torgersen to discuss the new VP search.

Plans for 1998-99 committee: Chair Lisker asked members to submit in writing issues related to diversity and campus climate that they and their constituents would like the committee to address this year. She said the committee's agenda would evolve in response to external events and internal initiatives.

Overview of EOAA Office: Director Elyzabeth Holford began by reminding members that the office doesn't officially handle diversity projects; it only did so in the past when no other office directed such initiatives at other than the student population. She then said the office's work falls into several categories. First, it is an investigatory body: it adjudicates charges of discrimination and harassment that may violate university policies and/or federal laws. She stressed that the office's emphasis on legally defensible procedure will benefit a university member whether he/she is a complainant or respondent. Second, the office responds to audits or investigations by federal agencies. Third, it has the responsibility of compiling the university's Affirmative Action Plan. Fourth, the office publishes the Diversity Newsletter twice annually. Fifth, it oversees faculty searches according to federal requirements, and attempts to ensure as diverse an applicant pool as possible. Finally, the office undertakes educational efforts, such as university-wide sexual harassment training and smaller pieces on ageism, racism, and disabilities.

Holford introduced Virginia Reilly, who is the Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator. Reilly said she is charged with making sure Tech is physically and programmatically accessible for all types of disabilities. She also speaks with departments, educating them on the ADA and disability issues. The university recently hired a coordinator of interpreting and sensory loss services and two full time interpreters. Other staff include an assistive technology coordinator, a Special Services Lab manager who trains students and employees in the use of assistive equipment, and two notetakers who work with deaf students or students with severe disabilities. Reilly said she is excited at this expansion of services, which is necessary

since the number of students with disabilities has increased from 150 to 640 in five years. Holford added that Tech is gaining renown for its efforts to meet, and exceed, the requirements of the ADA.

Update on Campus Climate Survey Project: Holford chairs the Campus Climate Workgroup (CCW) with the charge that the eight members conduct a climate analysis, a program analysis, a policy analysis, and create a database of diversity status indicators. Started in January 1998 under Provost Meszaros, this is Tech's first attempt to benchmark campus climate issues. Regarding the climate analysis, last spring the group completed a survey of all faculty and staff and had a high return rate of 50%. They are now drafting a status report on this. This semester they will survey a sample size of undergraduate and graduate students on campus climate. The program analysis will involve a Website questionnaire for department heads; the group will ask them to forward information about their programs directed at underrepresented groups in order to test the programs' efficacy. The policy analysis will review not just university policies, but any policies that relate to or affect the environment for women and minorities. The database of diversity performance or status indicators will be a look at who the university is right now, not necessarily in terms of what it does for the Affirmative Action Plan, but beyond that. It will provide a standard of measurement from which to work. The bulk of this fourfold project should be completed by semester's end.

Hispanic Heritage Month: Guest Jessica Ranero informed the committee of this nationally recognized month, running from September 15 - October 15, which will be celebrated at Tech for the first time. Sixteen various events are planned, with the keynote speaker being motivational teacher Jaime Escalante. Local high schools and the community are encouraged to participate. Ranero handed out flyers and urged members to publicize the month within their constituencies.

Other business: Holford reported that last summer she and personnel director Linda Woodard funded a project to review the search process for administrative/professional faculty positions. They are doing this because the pool of African-American applicants has traditionally been quite low. They are conducting a nationwide comparison of Tech to other institutions. Thus far, they have found that our pools are as diverse as any other university's, but they hope to develop a model for enhanced recruitment.

Chair Lisker introduced Dr. Dixon, VP for Multicultural Affairs. He remarked that the activities and issues under equal opportunity and affirmative action closely relate to those of multiculturalism and diversity, and he'll work closely with the EOAA Office and this committee. Parameters were set for his office in its development phase, but he stressed that if the perception of the office that exists today doesn't change a year from now, he won't feel as if he's doing his job. He insisted that, as the activities of his office become defined, this be made clear to all the university. Dr. Dixon outlined his intentions, saying he hopes to legitimize and raise the profile of existing and future diversity activities by utilizing many assets already in existence. The results of the Campus Climate Survey Project will provide him with an inventory from which he can conduct an assessment of the university and its climate. That assessment will facilitate the development of a strategic plan whose objectives will be integrated into the university's academic agenda. Furthermore, he is interested in benchmarking Tech against other institutions to discover where we stand and where we should be. Dr. Torgersen will soon issue a public announcement of endorsement for the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Periodically thereafter, Dr. Dixon will follow it up with additional communications in order to begin a public dialog on the function of his office, but, more importantly, on the meaning of diversity and multiculturalism and how they can improve the learning experience for everyone on campus.

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

meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

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

Present: E. Ackermann, E. Holford, P. Hyer, D. Lisker, T. McAvoy, R. Rios, J. Schmidt, S. Trulove, M. Whitlock. Guest: Charlotte Waggoner.

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.

Adoption of the minutes: Minutes of the September 17, 1998 meeting were adopted.

EOAA Office Quarterly Report: Holford explained that the office outlines and analyzes its activities in quarterly and annual reports written for President Torgersen and forwarded to executive administrators. EOAA Committee members receive a copy but, for reasons of confidentiality, without as much detail about the complaints as contained in the President's version. Even at that, the administrators are not told the names of the parties involved, again because of confidentiality.

Specific attention is made to compliance cases, ADA efforts, and faculty search processes. Concerning faculty searches, Holford commented on the high number of exemptions from full searches, but the majority are temporary/restricted positions of short duration; it would be too burdensome and expensive to require this of positions lasting one year or less. Of permanent-duration exemptions, she said she's especially attentive to those asking by reason of reorganization, suspecting that some are actually sought to place or promote a specific person without having to undergo a search.

Holford fielded questions. She agreed with Hyer's suggestion that future reports list the number of sexual harassment training sessions conducted by the office. Lisker asked if new faculty receive this training. Holford said not presently; their orientation isn't set up for it, and there is no systematic method of delivering the information. However, she's willing to make a presentation before new faculty, at their request. McAvoy asked if the training was the same for faculty and staff; it is. Holford stressed the importance of sexual harassment training, in part because of the university's potential liability.

Subcommittee reports: Trulove reported that the Programming and Outreach Subcommittee decided upon three possible guest speakers for the committee's consideration; she also asked the committee for any further suggestions. The three possibilities are a representative from the Office of Family Support, which functions as a resource for women; having Dean of Students Pendergrass discuss the office's activities and new initiatives; and asking a student and a faculty/staff member to speak on gay issues. Hyer proposed for the dean of students meeting that Pendergrass show her office's new orientation video and talk about how it was received, particularly its introduction of climate issues. She also said that by January, some results of the faculty climate surveys should be ready for discussion and would make a suitable program for at least one meeting. Staff survey results may follow as a program in March. Hyer said Benjamin Dixon (VP for Multicultural Affairs) may want to offer a status report at the February meeting. Another suggestion was having Delores Scott speak on the focus group interviews that are part of the overall climate study. Trulove said future committee meeting places might include the Black Cultural Center and the Women's Center.

Hyer said the Policy Subcommittee is still working on its analysis of tenure-track faculty hires.

Other business: Holford asked the committee for ideas on how to motivate

more EOAA Committee members to attend the monthly meetings. Suggestions included sending an e-mail reminder two days before which would mention the scheduled guest speaker. Another was to encourage those who can't attend to send a substitute.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Minutes for November 19, 1998, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, E. Braaten, T. Calasanti, S. Camden, C. Easterwood, W. Elvey, M. Flynn, R. Giddings, R. Grayson, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, E. Lewis, D. Lisker, T. McAvoy, L. Moore, N. Parker, V. Reilly, J. Schmidt, S. Trulove, M. Whitlock. Substitutes: W. Davis for R. Connors, D. Reaves for M. Ellerbrock. Guests: Charlotte Waggoner and Myra Gordon.

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

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

Adoption of the minutes: Minutes of the October 15, 1998 meeting were adopted.

Study on faculty searches: Hyer reviewed the Policy Subcommittee's examination of the 1997 calendar-year search committees and how well they conformed to EOAA Office procedures. Members were mailed a copy of this draft report before the meeting; Hyer recapped much of its information and expounded on some points, which follow herein.

The report comprises three parts: an overview of the study's methodology; the quantitative results from reviewing the files that were then entered into a database (the report's appendix), and the qualitative component gathered from interviewing search committee chairs; and finally, the subcommittee's recommendations for improving the faculty search process.

From a chart not included in the report, Hyer quoted that 14 of the 61 search committees had no women or minority representatives; 21 had at least one woman, but no minorities; 11 had at least one minority, but no women; 15 had at least one of each. This raised concern about the extent of searches being conducted not only without the representation of women and minorities, but without their help in terms of providing contacts and referrals. Hyer said, obviously, the search committees aren't well balanced.

Regarding the interview component, the subcommittee members interviewed selected search committee chairs not in their own colleges. While department heads were relatively involved in the searches (some even chairing the committees), all the heads were involved in making the offer themselves or were involved in determining what the offer might be. None of the 11 search committees utilized listservs of minorities or women in their discipline. Calasanti said although most search committees feel that advertising in general-interest minority publications or on listservs are not effective strategies, when they do so, she gets the impression that the department is really trying to recruit a diverse pool of candidates. Hyer said she concluded from the interviews that the usual search procedures are not proactive. When asked if professional recruiters are ever used, Hyer responded that they have been a resource for some administrative searches, but not for faculty searches; she suspects there would be resistance from Tech's incumbent faculty. Elvey suggested that the university at least offer departments the option of enlisting professional recruiters; some may be receptive to the idea and able to afford search firms.

Hyer spoke of the myth of minority recruitment, i.e., minority candidates are highly recruited, receiving multiple offers, and the high salaries they are offered mean that many institutions can't afford them. According to a report published by AAC&U, few minority candidates have this experience. Rather, they usually respond to the few colleges that make personal phone contacts and extend invitations to apply. There is a serious question as to how proactive search committees really are. Where low numbers of

minority candidates are available, did the department personally contact all of those graduates, or was the effort discounted because of presumed difficulty?

Hyer discussed the subcommittee's four recommendations and encouraged the EOAA Committee to contribute their own; she also sought the committee's opinions on the draft and its ideas on how to proceed.

Among the points raised: Hyer said that some search committees overemphasize credentials such as whether the candidate graduated from a prestigious university, which tends to leave women and minorities out of consideration. Having them serve on search committees may foster a discussion of this inhibitor. Hyer speculated that the EOAA Office or Provost's Office could be more helpful in linking search committees with listservs, vita banks, programs that support minority students through the doctoral program, and lists of fellowship recipients who may know women and minorities who would be interested in applying. She also spoke of recruiting in the longer term, to attract in a more generic way candidates who are in the pipeline, instead of in the narrow context of a specific search. Tech doesn't manage its own vita bank because it requires extraordinary effort to maintain one; perhaps we could access another institution's vita bank. Camden recommended interacting with corporations that have strong affirmative action programs and adopting their successful tactics. Gordon said there's a problem in the way search committees deliberate in that they try to recreate themselves; if women or minorities serve, they have a positive impact on the decision-making process. Also, the candidate with the most credentials isn't necessarily the best appointment; search committees should consider selecting a minority candidate who meets the minimum stated qualifications and will contribute by adding the value of diversity. Third, if departments don't have women or minorities to serve on their search committees, they should be willing to enlist people from other departments. Finally, Gordon suggested that Tech hire someone whose sole responsibility is to sit in on and oversee search committees.

Hyer concluded by asking members to e-mail her (hyerp@vt.edu) with their comments on this first-draft report. Lisker asked that a continuation of this discussion be placed on the December agenda.

Guest speaker Dr. Myra Gordon: Gordon is the associate dean for diversity and instruction in the College of Arts and Sciences. She said she switched her career emphasis from student affairs to academic affairs because she believes the classroom is the best forum for advocating diversity. Besides helping the college diversify its faculty, she will work to infuse the curricula with multicultural content and a global perspective. Gordon also hopes to coordinate and unify the diversity programs that exist within the college's departments.

University's new diversity website: Members went to the Media Center at Newman Library to view the website (<http://www.diversity.vt.edu>). Hyer said the Provost's Office developed this as a central page to replace the several, uncoordinated diversity sites set up by various departments. Currently the page has two headings: Administrative Leadership and Diversity Resources, both with several links. Hyer encourages members to review the site, which is a work-in-progress, and forward any suggestions to her.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Minutes for December 17, 1998, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, S. Asselin, T. Calasanti, S. Camden, R. Conners, C. Easterwood, M. Flynn, R. Grayson, E. Holford, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, E. Lewis, D. Lisker, T. McAvoy, L. Moore, D. Reaves, J. Reilly, R. Rios, J. Schmidt, S. Trulove, M. Whitlock. Guests: Charlotte Waggoner and Benjamin Dixon.

Call to order: Chair Lisker called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.

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

Adoption of the minutes: Minutes of the November 19, 1998 meeting were adopted after some revision.

Continued discussion of faculty searches: Hyer asked for the committee's opinions on the four recommendations contained in the report, "Outcomes of Searches for Tenure-track Faculty During 1997 at Virginia Tech." She thought they should be more strongly worded to serve as a starting point for university community discussion. Recommendation #1 is already policy; the issue is how do we ensure that departments strengthen search committee representation. Recommendation #2 asks if there is a more effective way of knowing the gender and racial balance of the applicant pools. #3 calls for more proactive methods of attracting women and minority candidates. And #4 considers how to make a diverse faculty more of a priority for search committees.

As for #1, Trulove suggested having retired faculty/staff or graduate students serve on these committees. Lisker agreed they may know of networks and resources unknown to faculty, although there is some concern about their unequal power. Concerning representation on the search committees, Holford said the EOAA Office always speaks with department heads if no women or minorities are listed. But collaterally, you run the risk of overburdening the few women and minorities you have by continually asking them to serve. Departments attempt to comply with the policy, but without reasonable numbers of representatives in the campus community to draw upon, they are hindered.

Holford said one approach to increasing the priority of diversity is to think of searches differently, with more emphasis on strategic planning. Sometimes departments foresee a vacancy years in advance, either because they know a faculty member will retire, or they discern trends in their academic fields and realize that in the future faculty must be hired in upcoming areas of research. They should plan ahead: consciously seek out women and minority Ph.D. students and establish mentoring relationships with them, instilling an interest in Tech. She added that while departments are developing these relationships, they should be honest about Blacksburg's relative lack of ethnicity; if new faculty know what to expect, they are less likely to experience culture shock and we will most likely retain them.

When asked if departments are rewarded if they have greater diversity, Hyer said no, but in the realm of incentives, the Provost's Office has the Exceptional Opportunity Program wherein they fund the salaries for senior level women and minority faculty for two years. Conners responded that perhaps there should be a reward and/or penalty system; for example, hold department heads accountable in their job evaluations for diversifying their workforce. Hyer said, alternately, deans have various options at their disposal for emphasizing diversity to department heads. Dixon spoke on the notion of incentive money for hiring diverse faculty. He said it should optimally cause a transformation in the mainstream system so that eventually you no longer need the quid pro quo. He then addressed the interplay of this form of incentive, Holford's idea of strategic

succession planning, and departmental budgeting.

Calasanti said Recommendation #4 should be emphasized more. Looking at the appendix, she noticed that several women are applying for positions, but aren't being hired. She's concerned with how the search committees operate and whether they prioritize diversity in the process.

Flynn suggested that search committees be required to keep good documentation trails related to all their decisions, including reasons for selection and non-selection alike.

Dixon thought we could offer periodic open informational/consultation sessions for potential search committees members in which the issues would be discussed prior to their launching a significant search.

Moore said he doesn't like the common method of advertising vacancies at Tech each department individually advertising. He proposed that, on a quarterly basis, Tech take out a block ad in the major minority publications listing all faculty positions available across campus. It would make Tech a visible entity, and more so if the ad stressed a strong commitment to the principle of diversity.

Dixon said we should ask all colleges for projections for potential openings and make a priority of those with the toughest recruiting problems and the opposite—those with the greatest potential for filling the slots; and in the broadside ads of multiple positions in multiple disciplines, give the university's projections. This might compel candidates to get ahead of the wave and consider Tech before the projected need-dates.

Finally, Hyer asked the committee for guidance on how to disseminate the report; she'd like to utilize it in settings where it would have the greatest impact. Members proposed including it or similarly relevant information as part of the packet sent to search committees when positions are opened. Trulove said to send it to college diversity committees for further dissemination. Lisker suggested presenting it to the dean's council, and Conners suggested department heads.

Update on Dean of Students Office: Associate Dean J. Thomas Brown handed out a descriptive brochure and noted some recent changes in the office. They moved from Brodie Hall, which was not conducive to their operations, to 152 Henderson Hall. Staff updates include Barbara Pendergrass assuming the position of dean of students, and Brown being promoted to associate dean; Kim Philpott was hired on an interim basis as assistant dean for multicultural affairs. Susan Angle continues to provide leadership to students with disabilities, with Jane Warner as coordinator. In July the office will open a position below Brown responsible for coordinating student orientation and family programs. Three interpreters for deaf/hard of hearing students are housed in the office also.

Concerning programming, the office remains as coordinator of university responses to student emergencies. They have had to scale back their family programming; because of logistical problems, Parents' Weekend has been changed to Parents' Day. Once each semester they publish the Hokie Parent Newsletter. Multicultural programs are held in the Black Cultural Center and Multicultural Center in Squires. Orientation is very successful, drawing much higher attendance rates than same-sized institutions. Project SAFE (Sexual Assault and Facts Education) now operates within the office and with a new focus. Starting January, the Corps of Cadets will participate in a sexual harassment and sexual assault program. In recent years services for students with disabilities has seen a large increase in the number of requests for accommodations. A big change is that the university judicial system is no longer handled by the Dean of Students Office, although it remains within Student Affairs; there was a conflict of interest in their serving in the role of advocate for a student charged in the system, and then presiding in the judicial process.

Other business: The second annual Diversity Summit will be held January 18, noon to 3:00 p.m., in Owens Banquet Room [see December 4, 1997 minutes].

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Lisker adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Minutes for January 21, 1999, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, S. Asselin, E. Braaten, T. Calasanti, R. Conners, R. Crittenden, M. Flynn, R. Giddings, E. Holford, M. Holmes, P. Hyer, E. Lewis, T. McAvoy, N. Parker, D. Reaves, R. Rios, T. Vaught, L. Woodard.
Guest: C. Waggoner. Substitute: W. Sasser for W. Elvey.

Call to order: Holford served as chair in Lisker's absence. The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

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

Adoption of the minutes: Minutes of the December 17, 1998 meeting were adopted.

Discussion of EOAA Office's annual report: Holford said most of the complaints involved gender disputes, most of which claim sexual harassment. Members are encouraged to contact her if they have any questions. She urged them to share the report with their department heads and constituents.

Discussion of report "Women and Minorities at Virginia Tech": Members received a copy of this report, which is one project of a campus climate workgroup [see January 15, 1998 minutes]. It studies the past 5-year trends among faculty, staff, and students and is meant to provide insight into race and gender issues. The report is nonjudgmental and doesn't make any recommendations; it is strictly demographic.

Hyer displayed overheads with information on the student body and faculty; this material was distributed to members as handouts, titled "Selected Findings" [and was subsequently mailed to members not present]. Some of the handout data is not contained in the report, or explains the data in a different way, and serves to complement it. After this discussion, she planned a review of the classified staff information contained in the "Women and Minorities at Virginia Tech" report. Incidentally, the minority figures in the report and handout concern only permanent residents or U.S. citizens, not the international population.

Among Hyer's comments: The drop in black undergraduate enrollment is a troubling trend. (Because black recruitment and retention is so problematic at Tech, black enrollment is of particular focus in the report.) However, looking at minority graduate enrollment, there is a higher proportion of black students in graduate school than in the undergraduate population. The proportion is inverse for Asian-American students, one explanation being they go elsewhere to pursue medical degrees (pp. 2-3). Overall graduate enrollment is declining nationwide, possibly because the economy is so strong. The methodology for selecting Tech's 24 benchmark institutions is an equation that weighs factors such as disciplinary mix, the amount of research conducted, number of degrees awarded, etc., but not geographic location or attractiveness to African-Americans. For a better comparison with Tech, Hyer removed some of the more dissimilar schools to compose the graph on page 5. Looking at Tech's black enrollment of 4.5% invites analysis of how well we are doing compared with the other institutions in relationship to state minority populations (pp. 4 & 6). More black students graduate in their fifth or sixth year than the traditional four-year rate; still, there's a substantial gap between black and white graduation rates (p. 6).

Concerning faculty: Over a five-year period, the number of faculty of color remained very small (p. 8). As for women faculty, there was a slow but steady increase between 1993 and 1997. Page 14 shows that North Carolina State closely resembles Tech in faculty by gender, both having established a college of arts and sciences about thirty years ago. The bar graph on page 15 reflects tenure/tenure-track women faculty.

Classified staff: Page 31 of the report shows the lack of diversity in this workforce. Among job categories, the crafts (skilled labor) sector is almost exclusively white, while there's an overrepresentation of African-Americans in service/maintenance. Flynn commented on the "revolving door" syndrome, particularly among blacks in this sector, so there is little net gain. Page 34 portrays gender segregation within classified staff.

Discussion points: It was noted that entry qualifications (for example, high school grade point averages) for black students participating in the VTASP program were higher than those for whites, but whites participating in the program were retained and graduated at a much higher rate. Also, the SAT is not as good a predictor for academic success for students of color as it is for white students, or for women versus men. There is a disparity in the quality of education black students receive before entering Tech, but also, they experience something undetermined here that makes them less likely to succeed; we do have some experiential data and anecdotal information that may help explain why. We don't have any concrete information as to how many black students who leave here drop out permanently or transfer to another institution, or whether they do so more or less than whites. It remains to be known why institutions that are more selective than Tech (UVA, JMU) and yet share characteristics with Tech, such as being full time and residential, have better graduation rates. The university's rural setting is one factor for the sparse percentage of black students, but that having been so for some time, why has the percentage dropped in five years? Possibly because Tech has adopted tougher entrance qualifications.

Hyer asked the committee what it recommended should be done with the report. She said she'd like the report to generate widespread dialogue across the university with the understanding that these are actual statistics; the common impression is that the trend is going upward instead of down. It has been shared with the deans and about 30 department heads; the faculty senate is probably next, and some commissions; partial information will soon appear on the Diversity Website [see November 19, 1998 minutes]. Getting it to multicultural fellows and college diversity committees was suggested. The key is getting it to the faculty as a whole for broader discussion. Hyer encouraged members to let her know of any other venues for presenting the report's data.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Holford adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Minutes for February 18, 1999, Meeting

Present: E. Ackermann, T. Brown, T. Calasanti, S. Camden, R. Conners, R. Crittenden, R. Giddings, E. Holford, P. Hyer, J. Kidd, E. Lewis, T. McAvoy, L. Moore, N. Parker, V. Reilly, W. Sasser (for W. Elvey), S. Trulove, T. Vaught, M. Whitlock

Call to order: Holford served as chair in Lisker's absence. The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m.

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

Adoption of the minutes: Minutes of the January 21, 1999, meeting were adopted.

Affirmative Action Incentive Grants: Hyer announced the annual call for proposals, which have a due date of April 2 this year. The grants reward innovative affirmative action projects with up to \$2,500 from a total pool of \$20,000; half this money comes from the EOAA Office and the other half from the Provost's Office. On and off-campus faculty, staff, university departments, and recognized campus organizations are eligible to apply. She said if anyone wants to see the kinds of grants that were previously funded, they may contact her via e-mail (hyerp@vt.edu). Typically, about 20 proposals are submitted, and out of that, around ten are selected. Hyer then asked members to voluntarily serve on the five-person selection committee she chairs (members who themselves are applying are ineligible). Ackermann, Calasanti, McAvoy agreed to assist. Application forms and further information can be obtained from kpoe@vt.edu or by calling 231-7518.

Dean of Students Office's "VT Pop-Up Video": Brown introduced the 12-minute video that is shown at student summer orientation. The new video was inspired by the television program "Pop-Up Video" and addresses sexual assault, sexual orientation, racism, alcohol abuse, disabilities, and religious diversity. Several student focus groups participated in its development. They felt that personal testimonials from Tech students would be the most effective format. After showing it to new students, trained orientation leaders conduct an hour and-a-half discussion and hand out a resource guide. In evaluations students stated the segment on alcohol was the least impressive, while the sexual assault segment had the greatest impact. The Dean of Students Office plans to contact students who saw the video last summer and ask if it influenced any of their decisions during their first semester. Students have positively evaluated the video, and it has received nationwide attention.

Other business: Conners said he and Dean Stephenson spoke with women faculty in the College of Engineering. Among the concerns the women raised were service responsibilities within their departments, particularly when junior faculty are overwhelmed with requests to serve on committees wanting a diverse population. Secondly, they wanted university leave policy to allow them the opportunity to take a year or two off for family responsibilities. Thirdly, they were interested in improving the college's mentoring program, causing Conners to become interested in learning how other college or department mentoring programs operate, and to ask whether the university has attempted to address the subject. Finally, the women expressed uneasiness with the apparent disparity in student evaluations between male and female faculty.

As for overloading junior faculty, Hyer responded that it's ultimately left to the department heads' discretion on how to handle this. This is a prime topic of discussion across the university. Some departments protect junior faculty from nearly all service assignments and caution them against being overly involved in student advising. However, some African American faculty want to be involved in projects, particularly programs serving

African American students. They are committed to this kind of involvement with students and would not be satisfied if denied that opportunity. At the same time, they want their efforts to be valued and recognized. Calasanti added that ideally service should be made a criterion of the evaluation process, as is teaching and research.

Hyer stated that Tech has a fairly generous family leave policy for faculty that goes beyond what is required by federal law, and there are various options for tenure-track faculty wanting to temporarily stop the clock. This information is included in the Faculty Handbook under "leave without pay" and "family leave." Conners suggested that Tech's family leave policy should be used as an attraction in recruiting women faculty.

Hyer said there is much discussion about mentoring junior faculty, but actual programs haphazardly exist among departments. Points to consider include college-wide programs as opposed to more autonomous departmental models; the effectiveness of the set-aside method and whether it causes junior faculty to feel marginalized; the complexity of matching mentors to proteges; designated pairing versus voluntarily established support groups; and the duty of department heads and deans to maintain close communication with women and minority faculty. Hyer agreed that addressing the matter would be pertinent.

Regarding student evaluations, Hyer said in the past the Organization of Women Faculty examined the issue, but she couldn't recall if the initial results didn't demonstrate a particular problem or if the demographic data wasn't sufficient for analysis. She offered Conner access to what material she has.

In other business, Hyer shared that a draft of the faculty climate report will be ready for review around spring break. The student report will be prepared in summer; the classified staff report will follow.

Also, she said that 21 people from Tech will make a diversity benchmarking visit to the University of Maryland, College Park on March 1-2. They will discuss the peer institution's diversity policies and practices.

Holford said Reilly, Tech's Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator, is developing training materials for managers and supervisors (not for faculty and student interaction); the committee will be asked to review and provide input.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Minutes for March 18, 1999, Meeting

Present: S. Camden, R. Conners, R. Crittenden, W. Elvey, M. Flynn, E. Holford, J. Kidd, Stephen Poulson (for T. Calasanti), D. Reaves, V. Reilly, S. Trulove.

Call to order: Holford served as chair in Lisker's absence. The meeting was called to order at 4:16 p.m.

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

Adoption of the minutes: Because of a lack of a quorum, adoption of the minutes of the February 18, 1999, meeting was moved to the next meeting.

Benchmark visit to University of Maryland, College Park: Richard Conners shared his observations on this trip. It was arranged by VP for Multicultural Affairs Ben Dixon. Approximately 21 people went, including members of the Advisory Council on Diversity and Multicultural Affairs and high-ranking university administrators. The idea for the visit arose out of Pat Hyer's report, "Women and Minorities at Virginia Tech," in which UMCP emerged as an institution similar to Virginia Tech, but apparently more successful at attracting African American students. Currently about 30% of the students are of color.

Conners said UMCP's president led the commitment 15 years ago to diversify the faculty, staff, and student body and instituted a number of useful programs and practices. Concerning admission policies, some minorities have trouble with standardized tests. Rather than rely exclusively on these scores, UMCP uses them as only one criterion in judging a potential student's abilities and adds a number of nonacademic variables to the process. The process is then evaluated through ongoing research and review. Conners said they have very proactive recruitment programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This is accomplished through a lot of personal interaction with students and parents via telephone and by going into the community. Also, they diversify the ranks of their undergraduate admissions officers to better represent the population they are trying to recruit.

Each college or administrative unit has its own equity officer who is responsible for overseeing faculty and staff searches and addressing any problems that may arise. When searches occur, the officers ensure that the positions are advertised over a base that is broad enough to attract women and minorities. If the short list of candidates isn't representative of women and minorities, they have the power to suspend the search and force the committee to reinstate it the next year using different methods to improve the mix.

Conners said UMCP believes strongly in accountability. Deans and department heads are held responsible for diversifying their faculty, staff, and students, and with upper administration must mutually negotiate an annual strategy to accomplish this. Their job evaluations rest in part on their ability to realize their goals. While UMCP has no instances of anyone being fired for an inability to meet these objectives, it is considered important enough that salaries could be affected.

UMCP revealed that 15-20 years ago, it was not a particularly high quality institution. However, since it diversified, the campus' standing has improved, belying the notion that heterogeneity would be detrimental. The idea of "settling for less than [by rigid standards] the best."

Conners noted that UMCP recognizes its students will face an increasingly diverse population in their postcollege environment, and to prepare them for this they develop programs that foster dialog between interracial

groups. As a result they interact in a positive manner outside of their own comfort zones.

Reilly asked for examples of nonacademic criteria used in student admissions. Connors cited leadership activities and the requirement that prospective students write an essay on what they hope to achieve in college. He said he is willing to share articles and materials he has on this topic if anyone is interested.

When asked how the visit was structured, Connors responded that the Tech delegation attended presentations from UMCP administration and later split off for individual consultations. Afterward, they were asked to write summaries of their conversations, which will later be incorporated.

Other business: Connors asked if Tech has any policies regarding harassment by e-mail. Holford said the acceptable use policy is applicable. How it is specifically handled depends on if the harasser is an undergraduate or graduate student, the exact nature of the behavior and its frequency, etc. Criminal law may apply if other conduct accompanies it. Basically, all policies covering speech also cover electronic transmissions.

Holford said the faculty section of the campus climate survey will soon be in report form, and she encourages members to read it and share it with colleagues.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Minutes for April 15, 1999, Meeting

Present: T. Calasanti, S. Camden, R. Crittenden, C. Easterwood, M. Flynn, R. Giddings, R. Grayson, E. Holford, J. Kidd, L. Moore, D. Reaves, V. Reilly, Wyatt Sasser (for W. Elvey), S. Trulove, T. Vaught, M. Whitlock.

Call to order: Holford served as chair in Lisker's absence. The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

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

Adoption of the minutes: Minutes of the February 18, 1999 and March 18, 1999 meetings were adopted.

EOAA Office quarterly report: Holford said this report contained nothing out of the ordinary. Giddings asked if more complaints originate from staff than faculty. Holford replied that they are pretty much an equal mix. The fewest complaints come from students, as they usually seek recourse through the judicial system.

Remarks on next year's EOAA Committee: Holford said the committee will experience a transition next year because of the formation of the Office of Multicultural Affairs' own committee, the Advisory Council on Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. Rather than overlap the council's issues, duplicate its efforts, and drain the resources of members who serve on both groups, the EOAA Committee will meet initially next September and then on an as-needed basis. The committee won't be disbanded, but it will redefine its focus. Holford said at this time she couldn't be more specific about either its future duties or structure.

President's Forum on Campus Climate for Diversity: Holford encouraged members and their constituents to attend this April 29 event sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. It is described as a technology-based interactive discussion, meaning every participant is issued a key pad so that he or she may respond anonymously to various questions. This unique format will allow those with divergent opinions to freely express themselves.

Other business: In discussing the upcoming May 1 presidential search forum, it was agreed that a committee member should attend and read a prepared statement emphasizing those qualities the committee wants to see in the next incumbent. Trulove agreed to compose a statement from suggestions received from attendees. Here is the statement she presented on May 1:

The University Committee on Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action asks that you seek the following qualities in the next Virginia Tech president:

We would like a visionary leader who will continue to address diversity issues and enhance programs already launched.

Because it is an institution's climate that allows diversity to thrive, we need an individual who will provide the leadership to make the climate at Virginia Tech welcoming and inclusive.

Virginia Tech is one of the nation's top research and doctoral degree-granting universities. Thus, the commitment to diversity must be reflected not only in our undergraduate population and directed not only to programs to recruit, retain, and expand the experiences of undergraduates, but also in programs for our graduate student population, faculty, and staff.

We will be a stronger and better institution to the extent that we diversify.

EOAA Committee members and university administrators have visited institutions that have succeeded in this regard and have seen and heard testimony to the qualitative improvement that is a result of diversity.

We need a leader who has been active and successful in implementing and enhancing diversity -- not only within the institutional structure, but also in the community -- and beyond. Diversity must be valued beyond the university for we have always been a multicultural state. And we need to be preparing leaders who are comfortable members of a multicultural world.

Delivered on behalf of the
Virginia Tech Committee on Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action

Susan Trulove
Multicultural Fellow
and Virginia Tech staff member since 1980

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Poe
EOAA Committee Secretary

This was the last meeting of the 1998-99 academic year