

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, September 26, 2005

Present: Ray Plaza, Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), Craig Brians, LaChelle Waller, Michael Goode, Jean Brickey, Ross Edmonds, Susan Willis-Walton, Edd Sewell, Benjamin Dixon, Richard Benson, Linda Woodard, Ann Kilkelly, Kim Beisecker, Tapsavi Bhargava (for Aisia Haque), Aaren Salido, Carlos Evia, Rick Shingles (for Ruth Grene and Susan Anderson), Sheila Carter-Tod (for Marilyn Kershaw), Sam Camden, Kevin McDonald, Maxine Lyons, Valerie Hardcastle, Ellen Plummer

Absent: Sue Ellen Crocker, Tina Harvey, Sumeet Bagai, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Pat Hyer

Guests: Chad Disharoon, Susanna Rinehart, Laura Gillman, Akilah Chopfield

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

II. Chair Report/Discussion

A. Review of Commission and Roles – Ray reviewed the history of commission; the roster; and the roles of the chair, vice chair and commission members. A chair manual is being developed and will be shared at the next meeting. The current plan is to have the vice-chair assume the role of chair in their second year. There are ten individuals eligible. Some members voiced concern over having the vice chair assume the role of chair, especially with the way the membership changes. Further discussion and a vote on this will occur at the next meeting.

Commission members are expected to serve on at least one task force and it is also critical for them to serve as facilitators at the Diversity Summit since it falls under the purview of the Commission. Ben Dixon commented that there should be specific language regarding the role of members who represent communities. There needs to be open communication both from the member to his/her respective community and from the community back to the commission.

B. Historical Review

Ray provided a synopsis of the Commission accomplishments during its first two years.

C. Updates on Major Commission Initiatives

Regarding the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, copies of the postcard and bookmark were distributed throughout the summer. Roxanna Link was instrumental in designing these items. The signed document is available on-line. In addition to articles in the VT Conductor and the Prism, a bulletin board was developed for residence hall staff, a “how to guide” was finalized, and a number of undergraduate and graduate students were trained and assisted in presentations to various administrators/offices across campus. Michael Goode shared how receptive the deans and other administrators were during these presentations. LaChelle discussed how graduate students became involved in the summer at a level greater than they had been. Ellen Plummer added that during incoming new student orientation, the principles were passed out to each student. They were also displayed and read aloud each night. The orientation leaders also folded the principles into their discussions and role plays. Additionally, they were distributed at transfer student orientation. There are standard, framed versions still available. Roxanna Link (rdlink@vt.edu) is the contact person for those copies. Ann Kilkelly asked about conversations that occurred between January and the signing in April. Ray responded that concerns from the Alumni Association about the language in the principles led to some suggested changes. The majority of other groups, however, wanted that language put back in, so the document that was signed included the original language.

The principles have been translated into 13 different languages. Those versions will be distributed as appropriate. It has been proposed to develop a VT Principles of Community Ambassador Group. This group will be made up of students, faculty, and staff. These individuals would assist with continual presentations across campus. Other ideas include a poster, t-shirts, marketing items, an anniversary celebration, placement in classrooms, and incorporation of the principles in the Burruss Lobby area. Ray and Ben met with a representative from the Athletic Department to figure out how to fold that department into these efforts. Some ideas include public service announcements and displaying the principles in athletic programs. Michael suggested a large banner hanging at the stadium would be desirable. The How To Guide was distributed and reviewed. Ray asked that members review the guide and send any edits to him. Laura Gillman recommended a task force might work on some of the suggestions in the guide to develop more concrete strategies. Ben shared that a call should go out to the university community to find out how individuals have incorporated the principles in their work. Kim indicated the presentation used at summer orientation is available for individual use. It is accessible from the diversity webpage.

Some of the items from the Lee Hall recommendations have been accomplished. The history of the residence halls has been developed. Each student has received a history of his/her own hall and a document with the history of all the halls will be accessible on the website. Some other items require some financial support. Ray plans to meet with someone from the President's Office to determine the status and priority for other recommendations.

The Diversity Summit is tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 20. Ellen shared that there is a Provost Retreat that day which would prohibit a number of administrators from attending. A task force will be responsible for this event and will look at other possible dates.

IV. Agenda Items for Year Three

Ray shared what was presented at University Council as potential agenda items. These included: follow-up on the Lee Hall Recommendations, VT Principles of Community, campus climate as it relates to the LGBT community (Michael Sutphin from the LGBTA will be presenting concerns and issues at the next meeting) and individuals with disabilities, exit survey data, pipeline initiatives, revisions to the diversity strategic plan, and college diversity committees. These are based on constituent reports from last spring as well as conversations with ex officio members and other administrators. Ellen asked if commission members might have a role in the education and training efforts being coordinated by the Offices of Equal Opportunity and Multicultural Affairs. After an inventory is completed, the new Director of Training and Education will be able to share ways in which the commission can get involved. There will be an on-line training program for sexual harassment and preventing employee discrimination. Valerie suggested the commission might also want to have a conversation about education and training in regards to whether or not training is optional or mandatory and who should be involved and when.

2006 marks the first year that VT doesn't have classes on MLK day. Ray suggested the Commission take the lead in organizing activities in celebration of this holiday. He proposed that the CEOD calls a meeting with selected organizations and offices. Ben asked if any units were contemplating or planning activities. Laura recommended that Afrikana Studies be included in any conversations. The question was raised whether or not students would be back for activities since classes don't start until Tuesday. LaChelle shared that most graduate students would be here, but Michael wasn't sure about the undergraduates. The Black Caucus has also been talking about bringing in the community at large and not just focusing on the university community. A formal vote was taken. A statement will go out in the next few days with the hopes of scheduling a meeting in the next week and one half. Michael suggested maybe planning a week-long celebration that could include the diversity summit.

V. Task Forces

In order for the Commission to be effective, task forces need to be utilized. However, the task forces will need to do some work outside of commission meetings. Members only need to be on one task force. Proposed task forces include: campus climate issues, college diversity committees, diversity summit, diversity in the faculty dossier used for promotion and tenure, exit survey results, LGBT climate, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. An additional group might work on the VT Principles of Community. Edd suggested that separating the LGBT climate from campus climate is a mistake. The LGBT issues are part of the greater campus climate issues. Kim shared that many groups are feeling unheard. Rick added that the charge be expanded. The task forces will be responsible for creating their own charges. The provost has some groups already working on some of these issues, so the task force needs to work with existing groups. Linda recommended another task force might look at how to integrate a number of policies including the anti-harassment policy and campus violence prevention policy. This group could give some thought to how we take advantage of these policies in terms of communication. Cynthia asked if there needed to be a task force to deal with the Lee Hall recommendations. Given the number of task forces already, it was suggested to hold off on the Lee Hall recommendations as a task force until later. Richard Benson strongly urged that the MLK Celebration and Diversity Summit be one and that there truly be a strong tie to the community. This could include inviting guidance counselors and others to campus to start to change the perceptions many outsiders have about Virginia Tech. There was consensus to combine those, so Lee Hall was added as another task force.

Linda recommended that there are aspects of the exit survey data that relate to other task forces like campus climate. These results need to be shared with the appropriate task forces so they can use that data in the work they are doing. The task force group might be a referral group to pass the information on to the appropriate task force. Ben suggested that Ray send a revised list to members and request any feedback on the charges. For many task forces, a lot of information and data exists, so the task forces could begin working immediately. The meeting on October 17 is designated as at time for task forces to meet.

The next meeting is October 3 at 10:00 a.m., in the Duckpond Room at Skelton Conference Center. The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen
Assistant to the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs

**Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, October 3, 2005**

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), Craig Brians, LaChelle Waller, Michael Goode, Jean Brickey, Ross Edmonds, Susan Willis-Walton, Edd Sewell, Richard Benson, Linda Woodard, Ann Kilkelly, Aaren Salido, Carlos Evia, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Marilyn Kershaw, Sam Camden, Kevin McDonald, Maxine Lyons, Valerie Hardcastle, Sue Ellen Crocker, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Ellen Cianelli (for Ellen Plummer), Kim Beisecker

Absent: Tina Harvey, Sumeet Bagai, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Pat Hyer, Tapsavi Bhargava (for Aisia Haque)

Guests: Susanna Rinehart, Laura Gillman, Akilah Chopfield, Chad Disharoon

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

II. Chair Report

This Friday is the deadline to apply to be considered as a member of the 4th class of Multicultural Fellows. The first planning meeting for the MLK Day Celebration is scheduled for Wednesday, October 5 at 3:00 p.m. in the President's Board Room. Ray will facilitate the first meeting and expects that the CEOD task force will take over for subsequent meetings. Two copies of the President's response to the Lee Hall recommendations were passed around for members to review.

III. Vice Chair Process

Ray passed out a sheet outlining four options regarding the vice-chair process. These included: vice-chair elected and automatically assume role of chair for the 2006-07 year, vice-chair elected for the academic year and only open to faculty and staff, vice-chair elected for academic year and open to any members, and no vice-chair is elected. The role of the vice-chair was reviewed again. Ruth Grene shared that the first option is a good one since it provides training for an individual before assuming the role of chair. It was also suggested that rather than the vice-chair automatically assuming the role of chair that there be an election each spring. Students shared that since they cannot serve as chair, then the value of serving as vice-chair is diminished. It was determined that in order for a student to serve as a chair, the commission would have to make a resolution to change the by-laws. Ray would need to investigate to see what the process would require. Ellen Cianelli suggested perhaps there could be co-vice-chairs with one being a student and the other a faculty or staff member. Craig asked if the election of chairs could be done at this meeting. There was some concern over giving individuals time to consider whether or not they are able to serve in that role. Edd moved that the commission elect co-vice-chairs, one student and one faculty/staff pending further review for this year with the process done electronically before the end of the month. The motion passed.

IV. Presentation from Officers from LGBTA

Michael Sutphin and Curtis Dahn shared that LGBTA members have experienced many issues/instances of harassment. They went to a number of university offices over the course of last year and did not receive any information on how to deal with the fact that their fliers were consistently being taken down during a certain period of time in specific locations. Additionally, their office door has been vandalized on more than one occasion. However, it is not the specific incidents that bother them the most but the overall campus climate. Michael gave a speech at the Celebration of Diversity basically saying the administration did not appear to care about the campus climate relative to the LGBT community. The provost called an emergency meeting to discuss these issues. There was a follow-up meeting which created two groups.

The smaller administrative group came up with the SAFE WATCH program with some proposals and a centralized way to report harassment on-line and anonymously. There was also a telephone line individuals could call to report harassment. The larger student group is meeting regularly to continue to work on these issues. They are concerned about the responses or lack of responses from the Residence Life Department. There were repeated incidents in the Residence Hall. The RA did talk with some of the students involved, but there were no Judicial Referrals made. They feel there is a need for greater training for resident advisors, not just related to sexual orientation, but also related to other underrepresented groups.

The second department that the students feel is not supportive is the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. A member asked about the status of recreating a Dean of Students Office. Cynthia confirmed that such a proposal does exist and might be able to provide some of the infrastructure that seems to be lacking. The LGBTA recommendations include to: fully support SAFE WATCH, create tailored responses to specific incidents, house the program somewhere so there is continuity, and finally review policies as related to the two offices. Ross, on behalf of the LGBT caucus, shared that this is not just a student issue. The caucus has been concerned for some time. This commission needs to look at this very closely. Ray shared that there is a task force in the commission focusing on campus climate to include LGBT issues.

V. Task Force Membership and Charges

A handout was distributed with the task force membership and any additional items submitted by members. The meeting on October 17 will be a time for the task forces to meet. Kim suggested that during the course of the regular meetings, there need to be continual updates so that task forces can be informed on what each is doing. Task force updates will be added as a standing item on the agenda.

VI. Campus Climate

The sense is that only the students affected or active are the ones who are aware of the issues. Edd added that there is no faculty climate since there is no place for them to meet. There are questions about how the restructuring has affected campus climate. There is a perception that our awareness is increased, but Ann noted some concern regarding what she saw as a decrease in representation on a P & T committee at the university. There needs to be a better way of reporting issues related to campus climate.

VII. Announcements

On October 20 from 11:30-1:30 there is a Multicultural Staff luncheon in conjunction with Staff Senate with new multicultural staff as a welcome to the university. It is sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Human Resources, and the Staff Senate. Invitation are forthcoming. Kris shared that Enrique Escorza, Consul General for Mexico, is interested in having a conversation about the following topics: the Mexican presence in the Commonwealth and possibilities for collaborative research between the Mexican government and Virginia Tech regarding the Mexican presence in the Commonwealth. Any faculty or staff interested in joining this conversation is welcome to attend a meeting this Monday, October 10 from 10-12.

Meeting adjourned 12:00 noon

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, October 31, 2005

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Michael Goode, Sue Ellen Crocker, Jean Brickey, Debbie Morgan (for Linda Woodard), Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Edd Sewell, Carlos Evia, Ross Edmonds, Ruth Grene, Sam Camden, Ben Dixon, Kevin McDonald, Craig Brians, Zenobia Hikes, Tina Harvey, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Pat Hyer, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Susan Willis-Walton, Tapsavi Bhargava (for Aisia Haque), Kim Beisecker

Absent: Maxine Lyons, Richard Benson, LaChelle Waller, Aaren Salido, Marilyn Kershaw, Valerie Hardcastle, Sumeet Bagai, Ann Kilkelly

Guests: Jennie Reilly, Laura Gillman, Akilah Chopfield, Chad Disharoon, Jonathan McCloud

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as amended to include diversity strategies for 05-06 added after task force update.

II. Chair Report

Ray announced the establishment of a blackboard site for CEOD. When members miss meetings they can go there for meeting handouts and documents. The hope is to establish an ongoing discussion thread and also to provide a way to get quick feedback on items when needed. Please check it once a week. Its usefulness is dependent upon how frequently members access the site.

Copies of the Lee Hall Recommendations were passed out with the President's responses to those recommendations. Please share these with constituent groups. Marilyn and Ray will work on reviewing the items and prioritizing them.

A flier for the Third Annual Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity was distributed. The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2005. Please share with colleagues and emphasize the broad nature of diversity, this is not just about race and ethnicity. Ben encouraged individuals not only to submit proposals but also to attend.

There was a lunch this past Wednesday with Dr. Steger, select administrators, and some students. The main issue that seemed pertinent to students was the lack of communication about what is happening at the university. There is also an issue about approachability of administrators. SGA is planning to create site to have both information on what is happening on campus as well as which offices and administrators to go to for various issues. Zenobia suggested it might be better to have the university administration take responsibility for the management of the site instead of SGA. Pat asked if University Council could be the place to ask questions about issues since there are so many students there. Zenobia is meeting with Sumeet later on today and can discuss this with him personally.

III. Event Update - Diversity Summit and MLK Planning

Michael provided some background information on last year's diversity summit. One thing they would like to do this year is focus on ACTION. They want people to leave with actual things they can do and ways to involve departments. It will be in Owens Banquet Hall and the Multipurpose Room in the Graduate Life Center is also reserved if needed on Friday, January 20, from 2:00-5:00 P.M. There have been conversations on how to get students and staff involved who typically haven't been. Some thought has been given to the possibility of having a raffle to entice students to attend. The hope is to have facilitator guides ready by the December 5 CEOD meeting. Ruth Grene talked about the challenge of getting some people from certain colleges to participate. Publicity should begin next week with a survey. There will also be MLK activities prior to the Diversity Summit which will help in publicity for the summit.

There was some conversation about diversity as it appears in evaluations. Some departments do not take it seriously (both faculty and staff). Pat shared that the diversity block of information was instituted by the P&T committee two years ago to see what items people list. There is a CEOD task force that will focus on this. No one is being held accountable right now but there also hasn't been information given on what is appropriate and how to report on it. There is a need to educate people and it needs to be tied to the university strategic plan. Laura suggested that college diversity committees might be able to address this issue within the colleges. Ray suggested that sample staff and faculty forms be brought to the November 14 meeting for continued discussion.

The planning group for the MLK celebration has met three times and is planning weeklong celebration. The goal is to be creative and inclusive. Some of the potential events include service activities, a kick-off/featured speaker, lunchtime speakers, brown bag/teach-ins, the Diversity Summit, and a culminating speaker. A question was raised about how this fits with Black History Month. The committee has been in touch with the Black History Month steering committee. They are also looking at corporate sponsorship and are aware that this will set the stage for future celebrations, so there is a need to not be extravagant if that cannot be sustained in future years. It was commented that one headliner for the week would be good. There was some concern regarding having speeches, poems, etc. read outside during the week. General consensus was to move those into building with lobby areas and atriums to reach more people. The committee hopes to have an initial wave of publicity right after Thanksgiving.

IV. Task Force Updates

The College Diversity Committees did not meet since a number of members were unable to attend. There was some email correspondence across the group. The Faculty Diversity Task Force is meeting Wednesday at 11:00 in 325 Burruss. The Exit Survey group met but they are not at any point to share anything. Susan Willis-Walton brought some materials for the task force to look at and determine what they want. Members will actually review several surveys and data sources, so it was suggested to rename as the Data and Research Support Task Force. The Policy Task Force met and looked at policies and talked about ways to publicize them. They are continuing their discussion in a meeting later today.

There was lively discussion at the Campus Climate meeting. Ross shared information on the new SafeWatch Project and brought examples of the website he is working on. There has been concern that it not just is about policing but also includes education and is a one-stop place to go.

Discussion also focused on sanctioning including what and how sanctions should occur. Laura stressed the need to be able to direct students to resources, including courses for credit that deal with some of these issues. Conversations about the Diversity Certificate Program and increasing awareness of it also occurred. The website will be up and running soon. Ross is waiting on a domain name. It will likely be linked from the university diversity website. It was stressed that SafeWatch is for all communities on the campus. Ray will put on blackboard the SafeWatch information. There will be a marketing campaign emerging around SafeWatch. Pat suggested that the group look at the marketing around Stop Abuse since it was marketing heavily. Rick discussed the need for socialization/education for faculty. The group discussed whether or not something like FDI could be done for faculty in the area of diversity education. Ross informed members that the Campus Climate Check-up is November 14 from 5:45-7:30 p.m. in Commonwealth Ballroom. If you plan to attend, send a note to stulife@vt.edu. Kim raised the issue that there are some campus climate issues that aren't discreet, so students might not consider it an "incident" since it occurs all semester long. This led to some comments about class evaluation forms. Edd will check on status of the review of course evaluations.

V. Diversity Strategies for '05-'06

Pat shared some background information on the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOV. Last year they chose faculty issues, diversity, and graduate education as their three areas of focus. It was recommended they continue to focus on these topics but add undergraduate education. A handout of diversity strategies that will be the focus for this year was distributed. Members were asked to review the list and send any additional items to Pat. These should be things we are actually doing and will be presented at the November board meeting. Members asked for more information on SCALE-UP and the Tinner Hill Project. Ben shared details on those projects and the national memorial for Martin Luther King, Jr. He reminded members of the university's involvement in the international design competition and stressed the need for a campaign on our campus to help raise funds for the memorial. Edd raised the question of Wake Forest and recent excavations in Kentland farms. Jennie shared the status of projects and new initiatives related to the Virginia Assistive Technology Grant. Kevin informed members that there has been a pilot with College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of the on-line training programs. They will be rolled out for entire university and provide opportunity for smaller business in the community to also participate shortly. These can serve as opportunities for faculty and staff to "participate" in diversity.

VI. Announcements

CISO has Dance of Nations tonight at 6:00 p.m. in Commonwealth Ballroom. Grants are available for faculty to do work on diversity related topics and range from \$3-5,000. Proposals will go out this week and are due back in early December. This is the third year of this program. It is not restricted to teaching faculty and provides a way to fund projects that can be pilot for major grants.

No vice chair was elected since no one stepped forward. Meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, November 14, 2005

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Michael Goode, Jean Brickey, Linda Woodard, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Edd Sewell, Carlos Evia, Ross Edmonds, Sam Camden, Ben Dixon, Craig Brians, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Pat Hyer, Susan Willis-Walton, Marilyn Kershaw, LaChelle Waller, Aaren Salido, Ann Kilkelly, Valerie Hardcastle, Maxine Lyons, Zenobia Hikes, Kim Beisecker

Absent: Richard Benson, Sumeet Bagai, Sue Ellen Crocker, Kevin McDonald, Ruth Grene, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Tapsavi Bhargava (for Aisia Haque), Tina Harvey

Guests: Akilah Chopfield, Laura Gillman, Jennie Reilly

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

This past Saturday was the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet. Ray passed around a program from that event. Tonight at 5:45 p.m. is the 2nd Campus Climate Check-up in the Commonwealth Ballroom. Ray encouraged members to check out the blackboard site. Everyone should have access to post items or add to discussion threads. December 1st is the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat on the bus. The Office of Multicultural Affairs is working with the NAACP Student Chapter and others on some special programming for that day. Rick suggested bringing Margie Jumper to campus since she is a Roanoker who refused to give up her seat but did not get the same publicity as Rosa Parks.

III. Event Update - Diversity Summit and MLK Planning

Reverend Jessie Jackson will be the featured speaker on Monday, January 16, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in Burruss Auditorium. The Athletic Department is allowing the distribution of materials at the basketball games and special presentations at halftime. They met with the superintendent of schools and received permission to do a poster contest for elementary and middle school students and an essay contest for middle school and high school students. The Nigerian Minister of Education has a son at school here, so she will be here to help with the planning of the program for the international component of Dr. King's message on Wednesday of that week. They are working with University Relations to get the information on the university website. The commemorative poster is being designed and it is hoped that it will be ready after Thanksgiving.

Diversity Summit information will be distributed shortly either on Blackboard or through email. The plan is still to review specifics for that program at the December 5 meeting of the Commission.

IV. Task Force Updates

Pat reported for the Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process task force. They met and reviewed what people had identified in that area last year as part of the P&T process and are looking at what outreach has done as a model. A brief statement with examples would be helpful in this area. They will need some time to discuss this with groups like CFA, Faculty Senate, and the University-Level P&T Committee and hope to provide more information in the spring.

Policy Integration met and they are looking at the How To Guide to determine how to integrate both the Principles of Community and other policies into everyday life.

V. Discussion – Diversity in Employee Evaluation Process

There was considerable discussion about diversity as part of the evaluation process for classified staff. A copy of the P112 form was distributed. Linda provided some background information on the development of the three universal dimensions which include: teamwork, diversity commitment, and maintaining a safe and secure work environment. It would be helpful to create examples and provide more information on what kinds of activities could be included in the diversity dimension. This document can be revised since it is a university document and not a state document. Linda welcomed and encouraged any feedback and recommendations for changes. Valerie shared the difficulty of evaluating employees who do not really have the opportunity to demonstrate the diversity dimension. Additionally, there is a problem in that only staff are evaluated on the diversity component when there is not the same expectation of faculty. Many supervisors do not understand the diversity component.

Ben suggested another bullet that could be added under the component is seeks opportunities to develop and expand diversity awareness, skills, and knowledge.

There was strong consensus for the need to educate supervisors on the diversity dimension. Sam questioned if a simplified form could be distributed for the evaluation of wage employees. It was also suggested that more information should be given to staff on how to document their activities related to the diversity dimension. It was decided to get some general thoughts and examples that could then be worked on in a small work group.

Zenobia stressed the need to educate the campus community on the definition of diversity. Some ideas included the existing training programs as well as a series of campus conversations or forums. An additional issue raised by Kim is the fact that many employees are not given the opportunity or permission to attend various training programs and opportunities. Pat asked if it was possible to have Jane Ann attend these meetings to hear the conversations. The first thing we can do differently is have more opportunities for people to engage in. Additionally, Ben suggested the need to train a cadre of facilitators to assist in the education and training. As the framework for education and training is built, the hope is to have a menu of different opportunities and modes so that people can get involved in different ways. Edd shared that there are ways to educate and train without having structured programs. His example was the need for a university-wide calendar of holidays to increase the awareness of them. Jennie offered the value of taking program to people rather than expecting people to come to them.

Linda asked that members who are interested in continuing the conversation and working in a small group on this task contact either her or Carlos. They will report back sometime in spring. Ann reminded members that communities understand their own issues and concerns and we should keep that in mind as we have these conversations.

VI. Announcements

The Diversity Committee Task Force will meet in corner at the end of the meeting to determine a meeting time. UVa has appointed a full time coordinator to deal with GLBT issues. Next meeting is December 5.

Meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen
Secretary to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, December 5, 2005

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Ross Edmonds, Sue Ellen Crocker, Sam Camden, Ann Kilkelly, Edd Sewell, Craig Brians, Jean Brickey, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Carlos Evia, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), LaChelle Waller, Marilyn Kershaw, Pat Hyer, Aaren Salido, Kevin McDonald, Ben Dixon, Linda Woodard

Absent: Tapsavi Bhargava (for Aisia Haque), Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Valerie Hardcastle, Susan Willis-Walton, Michael Goode, Kim Beisecker, Sumeet Bagai, Maxine Lyons, Tina Harvey, Richard Benson, Ruth Grene

Guests: Laura Gillman, Jane Ann Williams, Debbi Morgan

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

The spring meeting dates have been set but locations are still to be determined for most of those dates. If members have ideas of speakers and topics to be highlighted in the spring, please let Ray know. A summary of evaluations from the Campus Climate Check-up was passed around.

III. Event Update - Diversity Summit and MLK Planning

The commemorative poster was distributed to members. The activity poster and events will be posted later this week. Tickets for Jesse Jackson will be available starting Wednesday, December 7, from the Ticket Office in Squires. Franklin McCain, one of the Greensboro Four will be speaking at the Community Breakfast on Monday morning, January 16. Please share all the events with constituent groups. The committee is still hoping to have Senator Obama as the closing speaker.

LaChelle shared the four activities that are planned for the Diversity Summit which is scheduled for Friday, January 20 from 2:30-5:00 p.m. in Owens Banquet Hall with backup space in the Multipurpose Room at the Graduate Life Center. The theme is "Diversity Unmasked - Setting the Stage for Change," and the planning group has developed four activities for participants to engage in. The activity worksheets are still being developed along with the facilitator guides. It was recommended that there be a meeting of the facilitators prior to the event to go over the activities since they are a little more complex and it would be good to review them in person and answer questions of the group at that time. Once the registration link is active, members should send it to their constituent groups.

IV. Task Force Updates

A. Campus Climate – Ross shared copies of the SafeWatch website and that there is a meeting tomorrow with the leadership team. The site has a VT look and feel to it. Given the timeframe, they will likely wait until January to do the press release on SafeWatch and Safe Zones. There was concern raised about the logo and also that the form was too complex. Ross added that the FAQ and resources will be added. A question was raised about who decides if a complaint is worthy enough to move forward. Complaints will be directed to appropriate offices as they are received. The site will be checked daily by someone in the Student Life Office. This form is a way to report incidents anonymously. It was suggested that there is a need to test the form. Another question raised was what would happen if people misused the form. Anna shared that the frustration at Women's Center has been the underutilization of the Stop Abuse site, which was the model used in developing the

SafeWatch site. There have been no problems with people misusing the form. Ben reminded members that the idea behind this was to have a central place to keep track of information and then disperse to appropriate office. It was recommended that this be clearly stated on the site. Carlos offered students in his class as possible ones to test the site. It was determined that the site could still be launched in January with testing during spring semester through Carlos' class.

B. Policy Integration – The Principles of Community brochure is progressing and members are continuing to meet and discuss other items related to policy integration.

C. College Diversity Committee – This task force wants to encourage/mandate that diversity committees report their diversity plans for the year to the commission on an annual basis. They will send out a memo to the committees requesting a draft of plan for the year by February 15 and by March 15 give some metrics on how they will evaluate/assess what they have done. Members want this information for the 2nd annual Diversity Leadership Mini Retreat which will occur in April. They are also working on an activity for diversity chairs to do in the fall. The other goal is to get colleges who don't have committees and administrative units to establish diversity committees.

D. Lee Hall - Next Spring there will be meetings to begin implementing some of the recommendations from the Lee Hall report.

V. Discussion

Students from LASO were invited to this meeting to share their issues and concerns with the commission. Unfortunately, none were able to attend. It is hoped to reschedule this for the spring.

Ray started the discussion on how to better market the different events happening on campus. Members shared the means by which they receive information which ranged from personal contact to fliers to email messages. It was suggested that there is a need for repetition but efficiency. Ross suggested a multicultural events calendar. Direct email contact was the preference versus distributed through the DDDH list. The VT website was also mentioned as a place where some people get information. Members mentioned that often people have multiple things to attend and they need to make choices. Craig shared that people do things almost always because of personal contact. Edd reminded members that sometimes small is good and not every event needs to be attended by more than 40-60 people.

VI. Announcements

December 14 is the deadline for faculty grants for diversity research. The 3rd annual Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity is scheduled for February 2-3. There will be a special session for business and industry on the morning of February 2. The deadline for proposals has been extended to December 15. This year will also feature the M.U.G.A.B.E.E. brothers who are spoken word artists and jazz musicians. They will be here for the week on January 30 and be available for special workshops. Organizations who are interested in participating in a program with them should contact Jane Ann. Elise Witt, a singer-songwriter, will also participate. It is hoped that she will work with the Hush Harbor Choir among other groups. There will be a public performance on Thursday, February 2 in Old Dominion Ballroom at 8:00 p.m. Lucinda Roy will be the closing speaker at the lunch on Friday, February 3. Traditional holiday Latino cuisine will be available from 12:00-1:00 p.m. in the Multicultural Center tomorrow, provided by members of the Hispanic Caucus. Third annual Advance Conference will be January 9.

Meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, secretary to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, January 23, 2006

Minutes

Present: Sam Camden, LaChelle Waller, Sue Ellen Crocker, Ross Edmonds, Susan Willis-Walton, Kevin McDonald, Ann Kilkelly, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Ray Plaza, Michael Goode, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Pat Hyer, Jean Brickey, Ruth Grene, Carlos Evia, Zenobia Hikes, Ben Dixon, Maxine Lyons, Richard Benson, Valerie Harcastle, Debbi Morgan (for Linda Woodard)

Absent: Marilyn Kershaw, Sumeet Bagai, Kim Beisecker, Craig Brians, Edd Sewell, Angela Kim, Bhavik Shah

Guests: Jennie Reilly, Akilah Chopfield

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

Copy of brochure developed by Carlos' class on the Principles of Community and how students and student organizations can use them was distributed. It will be mailed later this week to all student organizations.

III. Post Event Update - Diversity Summit and MLK Planning

A. MLK Celebration

Sometime in the next few weeks the planning committee will get together to reflect on the activities and develop an open call to recruit members for planning the 2007 celebration. They will also be preparing a report for the BOV. Ray asked for feedback on the events. Many suggested that there needs to be more description on events so people better understand what is happening. It was also recommended that a new podium and other improvements to Burruss Auditorium be put forth. There was public acknowledgement of Ray and his work. Ben shared some of the responses including money for the MLK memorial that have been received by the Office for Multicultural Affairs. The breakfast was really a wonderful event with the community involvement. There was not a big turnout for the community service projects on Monday, but Tuesday through Friday the projects were in Squires and many more participated. The question was raised as to whether or not the university needs to depend on a donor each year. It was suggested to attempt to involve corporate donors. The student response was really positive, but it was difficult for students to attend activities during the day because of classes. Many were pleased to see Virginia Tech doing something proactive. Ray is working on getting a copy of Jesse Jackson's speech and transcript. UPN taped it and aired it multiple times.

B. Diversity Summit

Ray began with thanks to Valerie and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Diversity Committee for sponsoring the poster session prior to the summit. It was well received. The summit was very well attended. The feedback was that there were really too many activities – it would have been better to have one less activity. Students did an excellent job in spearheading the activities. The committee will evaluate this year's summit to aid in the planning for next year. Many participants liked the action piece. The challenge is incorporating activities for both those who have been before as well as those who attend for the first time. It was suggested to consider having role plays next year as part of the activities. Conversation then extended to whether there needs to be another summit or how we can use existing events to keep the momentum and focus. Michael suggested having some existing events be tied

more closely together like the diversity summit, face-to-face, and campus climate check-up. Ann recommended the commission practice the activity at a meeting. Ben suggested that since next year is the 10th summit and we can plan something special around that. Jennie asked that disabilities be worked in as part of diversity.

IV. Task Force Updates:

A. College Diversity Committee

This group is working to reactivate diversity committees and is creating a diversity monitoring and assessment system. This system will begin in the colleges but will migrate to administrative offices. The goal is to have diversity committees in every college and every major administrative unit with focus on a common agenda. They are looking for committees to be doing something in the areas (climate, recruitment, education and training, outreach). Part of the process will be two annual reports – one reflecting on what was done last year and was it successful according to metrics and the second being prospective – what is the plan for the coming year and how will it be measured.

B. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process

This group is looking at how P&T guidelines could be better communicated with faculty. In the area of student evaluations of teaching Terry Wildman is about to launch an effort to revise this process which will include electronic surveys.

C. Data and Research Support

There is a February 1 meeting where a summary on exit survey data on the staff end will be presented. Terry is working on cleaning up some of the data and evaluation related to students. The alumni survey is on hold while Terry works to revise the survey, etc.

D. Policy Integration

This group is meeting today and are working on conducting focus groups with staff.

E. Campus Climate

The group hasn't met recently. The Safewatch site is up and running. They will be working during the semester and will do a beta test of the site during the semester with Carlos' class so that by the end of the semester edits can be made to the site. Tom Brown's area is ready to respond. Student Affairs will be responsible for the press releases on this.

Announcements

Black History Month Events (for calendar: <http://www.mcp.vt.edu/BlackHistoryMonth%201/Black-History-Month-1.html>.) are now available on-line. Additionally, the 3rd Annual Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity is February 2-3. Part of Mid-Atlantic Conference will be an ADVANCE track. Additionally there is a performance, "Open the Window" at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 2 at the Lyric. Tickets are available from the UUSA Ticket Office. Ray asked if the commission should we do anything special for the 1st anniversary of the Principles of Community on March 14. Members should think about that and come prepared to discuss it at the meeting next week. It was suggested to devote one hour of next week's meeting to task forces. The first hour will be for task forces, so the commission will officially start its meeting at 11:00 a.m. Kevin shared that there is a design team developing a conflict resolution program if CEOD members are interested in joining the design team they should contact Kevin. March is Women's Month and individuals are encouraged to submit event proposals. The revision to the How To Guide for the Principles of Community will be on the website shortly.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, January 30, 2006

Minutes

Present: Sam Camden, LaChelle Waller, Ross Edmonds, Susan Willis-Walton, Kevin McDonald, Ann Kilkelly, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Ray Plaza, Michael Goode, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Pat Hyer, Jean Brickey, Ruth Grene, Carlos Evia, Ben Dixon, Valerie Harcastle, Linda Woodard, Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), Kim Beisecker

Absent: Marilyn Kershaw, Sumeet Bagai, Maxine Lyons, Craig Brians, Edd Sewell, Angela Kim, Bhavik Shah, Sue Ellen Crocker, Richard Benson, Ellen Plummer, Tina Harvey

Guests: Jennie Reilly, Akilah Chopfield, Laura Gillman, Debbi Morgan

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

Ray reminded members that the candidates for Director of Multicultural Programs and Services will be on campus this week and next. He encouraged members to attend the open sessions. The Black History Month calendar was also distributed. The Dead Sea Scrolls presentation last Thursday was packed with standing room only. Tonight there is a performance at Gilbert Linkous Elementary School from the artists here for the "Open the Window" program on Thursday evening at the Lyric Theatre. Ann shared more detail about the performance. Tuesday evening at 7:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Building will be a workshop with Elise Witt. Ben reminded members again about the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity.

III. Task Force Updates

A. College Diversity Committee

They are moving forward with the dissemination with the Diversity Monitoring and Assessment System for college diversity committees. In the few days following a similar request will be sent to administrative areas at the vice presidential level. Ray asked if the documents could be posted on Blackboard for commission members to view.

B. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process

They have written some draft guidelines and put together some examples. These will be shared with the university-level P&T committee. Broader distribution will occur after that meeting. The task force would like to share the document with the commission before presenting it to the university P&T committee. This will be shared at the February 13 meeting with discussion on February 27.

C. Data and Research Support

This group merged with Policy Integration since there is so much overlap. The staff leadership development program, McComas Leadership Conference, is scheduled for May 4 and they anticipate having some discussion with staff at that program.

D. Policy Integration

There are locations and dates for focus groups for faculty and staff to get feedback on how they use the policies. March 28 or 31 are the proposed dates. They hope to have 55 representatives of

faculty and staff from different levels. It will be called a Policy Improvement/Development Roundtable. The participants will break into smaller groups and task force members will facilitate the small group discussions. In advance, participants will be asked to do some work. They hope to enhance the How to Guide for the Principles of Community. The plan is to schedule the program from 11-3 with lunch provided.

E. Campus Climate

The task force would like to recommend some speakers to come to the commission including Harry Dyer, Betty Fine, and Terry Kershaw to speak about the undergraduate and graduate diversity certificate programs. Rick suggested that brochures and more information on the programs be shared prior to their visit. They also encourage members to click on the Diversity page from the university website to help improve that site. Since Michael Dame is now on campus, he can work with people in improving the website.

IV. Principles of Community

Ray asked members to consider what should be done to recognize the one-year anniversary of the Principles of Community. Valerie suggested that at the start of each class that day faculty share the Principles of Community with students. Rick asked about having the principles in all classrooms. Ray shared that Physical Plant has agreed to post them under the Honor Code in all classrooms. Linda asked about the status of the translated versions. Ray said they are working on some final details but they do have them in 13 different languages. It was suggested maybe there could be a large poster with all the translations. Additionally, certain public locations like Squires would be good places to post these translations. Sam recommended a CT ad. Laura suggested the need to work with student groups to get them to lead teach-ins since some interpretation is needed. Kris reminded members that students must pass the TOFL exam in order to come here, so the interpretations are not necessary. The president could have a statement on the VT homepage. Jennie asked how the Principles are presented at orientation. She also added the possibility of getting Greek organizations and athletics more involved. Ray added that Penny Cook is organizing a women's leadership conference in March and the Principles will be a part of that. Ross suggested having a panel discussion on the interpretations on the Principles.

Announcements

Tom Brown and Rick Sparks will be at the February 27 meeting to share the changes they have made in the orientation program. The meeting on February 13 will again devote the first hour to task forces. BGSO and NAACP are sponsoring Ebony Affair on February 17th. A flier with details has been sent to commission members. Jennie shared that Edd Sewell will be taking Craig Brian's position for the semester as he is out ill.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, February 27, 2006

Minutes

Present: Linda Woodard, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Carlos Evia, Ruth Grene, Jean Brickey, Ross Edmonds, Ray Plaza, LaChelle Waller, Susan Willis-Walton, Kevin McDonald, Edd Sewell, Rick Shingles, Pat Hyer, Ben Dixon, Valerie Hardcastle, Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), Maxine Lyons, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer)

Absent: Sue Ellen Crocker, Sumeet Bagai, Angela Kim, Maj Zaheda, Richard Benson, Tina Harvey, Kim Beisecker, Ann Kilkelly, Marilyn Kershaw, Michael Goode, Sam Camden

Guests: Laura Gillman, Tom Brown, Rick Sparks, Jennie Reilly, Jane Ann Williams, Debbi Morgan

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Presentation: Diversity Component of the Undergraduate Summer Orientation Program

Tom Brown and Rick Sparks presented the diversity component from the summer orientation program and received feedback from members. Most comments focused on the need for more picture and more diversity in the pictures, voices, and music. Additionally, some suggested adding something about the future and that this is a work in progress.

II. Chair Report

The press release for SafeWatch is in the paper today and copies were distributed. Tomorrow evening is the Hokie Respect forum including President Steger, Vice President Zenobia Hikes, Coach Beamer, and Coach Greenberg. After spring break there will be a call for members for the planning committee for MLK week next year. The DVD of Jessie Jackson will be available for reservation from the Office of Multicultural Affairs shortly. There will be posters, t-shirts, and fortune cookies as part of the commemoration of the anniversary of the VT Principles of Community. These will occur during the week after spring break. There will be an open application process for the one at-large CEOD position and the two at-large CEOD representatives to University Council later this week. Ruth Grene, Carlos Evia, Anna LoMascolo all volunteered to serve on the committee to select the three names to be forwarded to President Steger to choose for the CEOD at-large position.

III. Task Force Updates

A. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process

This subcommittee is responsible for creating some guidance for how diversity is dealt with in the faculty promotion process. Valerie voiced concern was that there was too much required as part of their recommendation and that it might restrict what people count. An additional concern was that it does not fit with other materials submitted for the dossiers. The challenge is trying to get people to provide more detail rather than just listing items. It was suggested it would be better to have this detail in the college faculty activity reports. In the guidelines it could be clear that diversity is important and that individuals should include information about their involvement in activities that support diversity. An education process needs to be created for departments. CEOD could recommend that every FAR for every college include diversity activities. While colleges should be encouraged to create their own specific examples there could also be some broader examples that might be applicable to all colleges. Pat recommended the task force get together again and create a resolution to move in that direction.

B. Policy Integration and Data and Research Support

The roundtable discussions will occur on March 28 in Squires. A draft invitation has been created and the plan is to ask CEOD members to be the vehicle for sending forth the invitation. They hope to have 50-60 faculty and staff participate from across campus. Carlos is working on the details for the discussions. Ultimately hope to enable us to enrich the guidelines for implementing the VT Principles of Community. They hope to recruit a few research faculty, too.

C. Campus Climate

Rick called the editors of White Privilege and requested some copies of the book for the members to review. Ray indicated that Branded may be used for this upcoming year, but Susanna Rinehart has indicated interest in other possibilities. He should have more information by the next meeting.

IV. Discussion

Ray began by indicating some campus climate issues that the commission might have time to work on this spring. One issue is the German Club incident. A meeting has been scheduled on March 20 for representatives from the student organizations that are part of the Asian American Student Union and Ben Dixon, Zenobia Hikes, Maggie Sloane, and Kim Beisecker to continue the conversation. Another issue that Ray has noticed is a widening gap between faculty and staff. He is speaking at the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs later this semester and hopes to get some feedback from them on the issues of concern to them. Ross added his concern that a number of the incidents that have been reported through SafeWatch focused on sexual orientation. Edd reminded us that we can't look at the campus climate separately from the Commonwealth climate. Finally, there are questions surrounding the Principles of Community and whether or not they are policy and how they can be enforced. More discussion on this will occur at future meetings.

Announcements

Anna passed out the calendars for Women's Month.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, March 13, 2006

Minutes

Present: Sam Camden, Ross Edmonds, Ray Plaza, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Jean Brickey, Ruth Grene, Carlos Evia, Ben Dixon, Linda Woodard, Kim Beisecker, Marilyn Kershaw, Edd Sewell, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Sue Ellen Crocker, Pat Hyer, Richard Benson, Pat Hyer, Michael Goode, LaChelle Waller

Absent: Sumeet Bagai, Maxine Lyons, Angela Kim, Maj Zaheda, Tina Harvey, Ruth Grene, Susan Willis-Walton, Valerie Hardcastle, Kevin McDonald, Kris Tilley-Lubbs

Guests: Jane Ann Williams, Laura Gillman, Jennie Reilly, Debbi Morgan

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

Tomorrow is the one-year anniversary of the Principles of Community. There are three commemorative posters which are available from the Office of Multicultural Affairs or the CEOD site, www.ceod.org.vt.edu. There is also a link to the resource center for the Principles from that site. There is a press release on the university's homepage about the anniversary. Additionally, t-shirts will be available for giveaways. A memo went out on Friday to all faculty and staff about the one-year anniversary and the brochure developed by Carlos' class for student organizations were also sent last week. Last spring a student organization sponsored the Victory over Violence program. At one of the events Susan Anderson was recognized for her work and there was also a promise of book donations on Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr. There are over 30 books which will be available for circulation in April. Kim Beisecker shared that they did put the translations of the Principles in the orientation packet in the home language of international students. Ray needs a substitute for University Council next Monday, March 20. Pat offered to sign in on behalf of Ray. There will not be a meeting on April 3 as originally scheduled. Task forces are encouraged to meet during that time if needed. The at-large process is now open for one position on CEOD and the two at-large CEOD positions for University Council.

III. Task Force Updates

A. College Diversity Committee

There was nothing new to report.

B. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process

They have developed a resolution which is attached. There was some conversation on some of the wording in the resolution. Linda suggested as a parallel activity we develop the same resources for AP faculty and for staff. Ann moved that the resolution be endorsed. It was seconded and the motion passed. It will now be brought to the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

C. Data and Research Support & Policy Integration

Invitations to the roundtable discussions have gone out to various individuals across campus. Ruth is coordinating the faculty side. They discussed this morning offices that need to be involved. These include: the Police department, a Safewatch representative, Judicial Affairs, OMA, EO, Cranwell, and some individuals from off-campus sites. Carlos is working on a facilitator guide and will be seeking facilitators and note takers for this event. Everyone on the commission is invited.

D. Campus Climate

They have been focusing discussion on developing a program using the FDI as a guideline for faculty diversity training. Jane Ann needs to be involved in their conversations. It was requested to have her report to the commission at the next meeting what is being planned in the area of diversity education and training.

IV. Leadership of Commission

Ray began discussion about a chair and vice chair for the 2006-07 year. It is hoped to have the election of a chair and vice chair at either the April 24 or May 8 meetings. Ben assured the members that OMA will continue to provide the administrative support to the chair and vice chair. There is some concern about groups that haven't had representation on the commission this year.

Announcements

Women's Month activities are continuing. Ann shared a program that is occurring Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of this week called "Prozac Blues." It is in the Torgersen Museum at 8:00 pm each night. Copies of the latest issue of the VT Conductor were distributed. Ray spoke with the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs last week. There was a productive conversation with a number of points raised. Ray will provide more information from that session at the next meeting. Jean shared that there is an editorial article on the Lee Hall controversy in the Roanoke Times on Sunday. There will be an update on the implementation of the Lee Hall recommendations at a later meeting. Jennie shared that on March 17 and 24 there will be a universal design workshop called, "All Tests are not Designed Equal." Saturday, April 8 is the International Street Fair to kick-off the International Week programs.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, April 17, 2006

Minutes

Present: Ross Edmonds, Susan Willis-Walton, Ruth Grene, Judy Alford (for Sue Ellen Crocker), Edd Sewell, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Maxine Lyons, Zenobia Hikes, Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Marilyn Kershaw, Pat Hyer, Michael Goode, Ray Plaza, Linda Woodard, Ann Kilkelly, Maggie Sloane (for Kevin McDonald)

Absent: Sumeet Bagai, Angela Kim, Tina Harvey, Valerie Hardcastle, Ben Dixon, Jean Brickey, Maj Zaheda, Richard Benson, Ann Kilkelly, Kim Beisecker, Carlos Evia, LaChelle Waller, Ellen Plummer, Sam Camden

Guests: Judy Ridinger, Jennie Reilly, Jane Ann Williams

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

Maggie Sloane will be here later to introduce herself to the commission. She is the new Associate Director of Compliance and Conflict Resolution. There has been a request to cancel the meeting for next week since there are a number of conflicting events on April 24. It was then suggested moving the May 8 meeting to May 1 to avoid meeting during final exam week. Pat recommended polling the commission to see which date works best for most members. At that last meeting the chair and vice chair will be voted on. Ray passed out some materials from the Campus Climate Check-Up for members to review. There was also a National Issues Forum held on April 6 with the focus on America's Role in the World. At the next meeting results from the roundtable discussions held on March 28 will be shared. The at-large applications were reviewed by a subgroup and they have identified names to be forwarded to the President for his selection. There were no applications for the at-large faculty/staff representative to University Council. Ray passed out a sign-up sheet for the VT Principles of Community t-shirts. Ray is meeting with representatives from the Physical Plant and the University Architect about the principles being placed in academic classes. Coke has agreed to work on a design for the principles to appear on the Coke machines on campus. Michael and LaChelle have been working on the follow-up from the Diversity Summit. Last week was the first planning meeting for the 2006-07 MLK celebration. If members have suggestions for keynote speakers, please send them to Ray.

Maggie Sloane introduced herself and shared some of her responsibilities. There is a design group that has put together a 40-hr training for mediators to occur in May. She is also responsible for increasing the awareness of the harassment and anti-discrimination policy and is working on ways to best educate faculty and staff.

III. Task Force Updates

A. College Diversity Committee

The EO office has some specialized training/meetings next week on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning.

B. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process

The resolution is to be voted on at University Council today. Rick shared some of the reactions at Faculty Senate which was very mixed. It is doubtful it would have passed if there had been a vote.

C. Data and Research Support & Policy Integration

Nothing new to report.

D. Campus Climate

Nothing new to report.

IV. Presentation by Human Resources – Performance Management Process for Staff

Linda introduced Judy Ridinger, the senior human resources manager. A handout on the performance management program was distributed. The Human Resources Department was given the ability to create their own set of universal dimensions, for which diversity is one. Linda asked that members look at how the Principles of Community tie into the diversity dimension. Since the diversity commitment was created before the Principles, there may be a need to do some revisions to the description of the diversity dimension. Ross suggested the problem isn't with the statements but with the supervisor's interpretation. Staff must be given opportunity to do a self assessment that can be considered by the supervisor as part of the evaluation. It is not clear how many employees take advantage of that opportunity. The self assessment is a place where employees could make clear the work that they do in the area of diversity. Roughly 500 staff members serve as supervisors of other staff and 1,000 faculty members supervise staff. There was a question about adding engagement as an indicator. Concern was whether staff would be penalized if they were not given the opportunity to be engaged in diversity activities. Some classified staff have more opportunities than others. It was recommended that someone in addition to the supervisor review the self assessment. Three ratings are associated with each dimension: below contributor, contributor, and extraordinary contributor. Another suggestion was to include more language and examples of how staff might meet the different ratings. There are training sessions offered, but not all supervisors take advantage of the opportunities. Department Heads and Directors are also critical in this process. Jane Ann shared that the office is working on developing a multifaceted and multidimensional training that can be accessed in multiple ways by those who need the training. A number of members stressed the need for training to be mandatory for supervisors. Pat suggested adding civility as part of one of the performance indicators. There is an opportunity for Human Resources to create some written materials to address some of these issues. It was recommended to update the narrative for the diversity commitment which is another place to tie in the Principles of Community. Jennie reminded members that many employees do not have access to computers and stressed the need to bring training to some. Pat asked that Jane Ann be given some time at the last meeting to share what some of her ideas are for education and training since that has been the focus of so many commission meetings. Linda shared that any changes made need to be done by July 1.

Announcements

Jennie shared copies of the invitation to the Disabilities Awareness Reception and speaker on April 19. The Collegiate Times added a photo to the advertisement that was not approved by Jennie or Susan Angle. They are working with CT staff to do a disclaimer on the ad. It was also suggested that Ray issue a statement as chair and others write letters to the editor. Tonight is the SafeZone reception at 6:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room at the Graduate Life Center.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, May 1, 2006

Minutes

Present: Ross Edmonds, Ruth Grene, Edd Sewell, Maxine Lyons, Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Pat Hyer, Ray Plaza, Debbi Morgan (for Linda Woodard), Ann Kilkelly, Kevin McDonald, Jean Brickey, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Carlos Evia, Ben Dixon, Sam Camden, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Michael Goode, LaChelle Waller

Absent: Sumeet Bagai, Angela Kim, Tina Harvey, Valerie Hardcastle, Maj Zaheda, Richard Benson, Kim Beisecker

Guests: Laura Gillman

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

The resolution from CEOD was passed at University Council last week. Last Monday and Tuesday a consultant was here to lead sessions on Strategic Diversity Retention for Faculty and Staff and Effective Diversity Councils. Copies of the materials were distributed and are available from the Office for Equal Opportunity. Ray shared copies of the letter sent to the Collegiate Times after they changed the ad that was submitted for Disabilities Awareness. Nikkie Eley, a student at Virginia Tech, has completed a 20 minute documentary on the Lee Hall controversy. OMA will help to fund the production of copies of the DVD and it will be shown at a commission meeting this fall. The Physical Plant will begin putting the Principles of Community in academic classrooms this summer. There was some conversation about continual education about the principles. Three MLK Planning Committee meetings were held to begin identifying potential speakers and other events to occur that week. The top speaker choice is Nelson Mandela. The committee hopes to have the schedule finalized in October. Rather than having Jane Ann report on education and training at this meeting, it has been recommended that she do a presentation in the fall.

II. Selection of Chair/Vice-Chair

Carlos Evia was nominated and approved as chair. Ruth Grene was nominated and approved as vice chair.

III. Task Force Updates

- A. Policy Integration – There were over 55 participants at the roundtable discussions in March. The lowest participation was from teaching and research faculty. There was a consensus regarding the lack of knowledge about the policies and the principles and an overwhelming feeling that nothing pertained to faculty members. There is a need to communicate and educate the entire university community about the policies. A summary will be sent out to all commission members once it is completed. There was considerable discussion about how the policies and principles are enforced and how the university can communicate the interrelated nature of the policies as well as increase the awareness and understanding about the policies. It was suggested that some of the possible sanctions be listed so that people have a sense of what the consequences are for violating these policies. The connection between these policies will also be referenced in the various education and training sessions.

- B. College Diversity Committee – CLAHS, CALS, and Vet Med have active committees focused on specific tasks. The task force is still in the process of tweaking the Diversity Monitoring and Assessment System and plans to launch it this fall. There has been some talk about holding a retreat in the fall for diversity committees helping them think through their plans for the year and share activities with one another.
- C. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process – no report
- D. Campus Climate – There was considerable discussion at the last Campus Climate Team meeting about the purpose and charge of the group. A number of recommendations will be sent to Zenobia Hikes. One recommendation is to have a formal connection between the Campus Climate Team and the CEOD campus climate task force.

IV. Discussion- The Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color

The Provost is creating a task force to look at this issue and welcomes comments and feedback from the commission. Ray provided a brief summary of what has occurred and asked members to focus the conversation on what the university needs to do to prevent this from happening again. Concern was raised about mentoring or the lack thereof. This is an example of what happens when there is no system-wide support/mechanism across the university. One thing the commission can recommend is something that can be provided at the university-level to support mentoring programs at the college-level. Sam shared that one point that was stressed last week was that most people leave not because of the organization but because of a supervisor. It was mentioned that if we lose people because of great opportunities, that is okay and to be expected, but if we lose them because they feel undervalued, that is problematic. It was suggested that there are no protocols to guide retention like there are for recruitment. This discussion will be continued next week at 10:00 a.m. in the Duckpond Room for those who are available. If members have comments but cannot attend next week, please send them to Alicia so they can be made available for the discussion.

Presentation

Ray presented outgoing members with certificates. Rick will be serving as the University Council At-Large faculty representative next year.

Announcements

The Staff Senate will be reviewing the staff exit survey on Thursday and make recommendations for changes and plan to distribute the survey to staff in the fall. On June 22 there is a community symposium at Hotel Roanoke from 8:00 – 11:30 a.m. looking at all the immigrant community. The Latino Achievement Ceremony is scheduled on Thursday, May 11 at 3:00 p.m. in Haymarket Theatre, Squires and at 5:00 that same day is Donning of the Kente in the Old Dominion Ballroom, Squires.

Meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission