

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, February 11, 2008

Minutes

**Present:** Ann Kilkelly, Rick Shingles, Sam Camden, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Sharon Proffitt (for Sue Ellen Crocker), Ross Edmonds, Kelly Oaks, Jean Brickey, Ray Plaza, Sheila Carter-Tod, Kim Beisecker, Judy Ridinger, Brad Klein, Ruth Grene, Dennis Welch, Carlos Evia, Toni Stroter, Virgilio Centeno (for Elisa Sotelino), Daphne Rainey

**Absent:** Mikhelle Taylor, Stevan Jackson, Jack Davis, Patricia Smith, Kevin McDonald, Deborah Morgan, Pat Hyer

**Guests:** Claude Steele, Jennie Reilly, Maggie Sloane, Jane Ann Williams

**I. Call to Order**

Ruth shared that agenda items included an implementation team update, an update on the incident from the fall involving some VT students and Blacksburg Police, and a conversation on how to increase the visibility of the commission.

**II. Inclusive Excellence Update**

Ray shared that there are a lot of questions about inclusive excellence including what is it and how is it defined. There is also concern that the university is mandating this concept. The goal is for people to buy into the concept and have them use it as a framework. Given feedback in some meetings, though, it is clear there needs to be more education around inclusive excellence. Members were asked to think about the next steps that should be taken to educate the community and to share those with Ray. It is important to have buy-in and support from the colleges and administrative units.

**III. Update from the incident in the fall**

Guy provided an update from the incident at an apartment complex in the fall where the police came because music was being played too loud. After all was said and done mace was used to subdue one of the individuals. One individual has already had a court date, but the other individual is still awaiting a court date, so there has been no resolution. The student who had a hearing had to pay a fine and still must go through the student judicial system. A meeting with the police will be scheduled. While there was concern that students did not initially approach administrators when this incident occurred, some administrators have been working hard to develop stronger relationships with students.

**IV. Fifth Year for CEOD**

Kevin has been made aware of the lack of awareness of the commission. A question was raised as to how to get the name and work of the commission more visible. A list of projects and accomplishments of the commission could be posted on the website. There are currently two websites, so they need to be merged into one. This is the only commission that has its own website. One strategy could be to inform the administration of each college what the commission has accomplished. The CEOD chair will be invited to meetings with the diversity committee chairs to share information. Jennie shared the importance of having some training for all individuals who are diversity chairs and on diversity committees. Rick added that the chairs could be invited to present to the commission the work they are doing in their respective colleges. A summary of the accomplishments of the commission could be included in the annual report from

the vice president for multicultural affairs and equity. Adding a frequently asked questions section to the website would help with the clarification of the duties of the commission.

#### **V. Taskforce Update**

At the next two meetings representatives from the implementation team will report on their activities. If members have ideas of what commission should focus on, please let Ruth know. There has been difficulty in getting student representation in part due to the time of the meetings and students' class schedules.

#### **VII. Announcements**

Toni reminded members of the VT School of Education Student Association Third Annual Research Conference on February 26. Dr. Ansley Abraham will deliver the keynote address at the conference at 9:00 a.m. Additionally, on February 27, Dr. Abraham will be providing two workshops – one is in the morning for graduate students of color and the other is in the afternoon for faculty on mentoring and advising students of color. The conference is free but individuals must register. The commission voted in favor to be a sponsor for both conferences. Brad raised some concern over the newly released diversity statement from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences because it lists the various aspects of diversity but does not include religious background. A few members have volunteered to check on this statement.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, February 25, 2008

Minutes

**Present:** Ann Kilkelly, Rick Shingles, Sam Camden, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Sue Ellen Crocker, Ross Edmonds, Maggie Sloane (for Kelly Oaks), Jean Brickey, Ray Plaza, Sheila Carter-Tod, Kim Beisecker, Judy Ridinger, Pat Hyer, Brad Klein, Ruth Grene, Carlos Evia, Virgilio Centeno (for Elisa Sotelino), Daphne Rainey, Maxine Lyons, Patricia Smith, Jack Davis, Deborah Morgan

**Absent:** Mikhelle Taylor, Stevan Jackson, Kevin McDonald

**Guests:** Claude Steele, Jane Ann Williams, Jennie Reilly

**I. Call to Order**

Daphne called the meeting to order.

**II. Caucus Reports**

Sheila reported that the Black Caucus has been discussing Black Constituency Conference since the caucus will be responsible for providing the leadership for the conference if it continues next year. There have also been student concerns from the Black Graduate Student Organization regarding the lack of support they receive. There has been discussion about finding ongoing sponsorship for Ebony Affair rather than having to focus so much energy each year on securing funds for that event. Finally, the caucus has been talking about ways to assist the implementation team.

Ray reported that May 8 is the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Hispanic achievement ceremony. The Latino Alumni Gathering is March 28-29 in partnership with Latin-American Theatre Conference. The caucus is in state of transition and is looking for new leadership. They are also concerned about potential issues of retention of Hispanic/Latino faculty. The plan is to engage faculty in a formal survey to see what their thoughts are. They also want to improve the visibility of the caucus. The Hispanic students are concerned about promotion of Hispanic Latino Heritage Month and want to raise the profile of the celebration.

Ross shared that the LGBT Caucus in conjunction with the Women's Center and as part of Women's Month is sponsoring another showing of "For the Bible Tells Me So" on March 22 at the Lyric. It is free. The Safe Zone Program 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration luncheon is on March 21. The caucus is receiving some requests from outside the university community dealing with sexual orientation issues in workplace. There will be a second community gathering in May.

**III. Taskforce on the Needs of International Students Report**

The taskforce wants to create a deliverable – a list of available resources for students but especially for international graduate students who may have language and culture issues. They are meeting with Dr. DePauw this week to see if there are any resources to assist with these efforts. They are also looking for ways to promote resources to students.

**IV. Implementation Team Report**

Pat shared some of the activities that are underway. Susanna Rinehart developed small interactive theatre piece on search processes that was used during the Advancing Diversity Conference in January. Additionally, AdvanceVT and the Office for Equal Opportunity have funded an undergraduate student to create database on potential faculty members. These are examples of some of the things going on that are small and not very visible. The Recruitment Enhancement Grant draft was shared with members. A

question was raised whether you have to do these special receptions for all candidates? The answer was no. This supports opportunities for candidates to interact with caucuses and other appropriate individuals when they are on campus interviewing.

Pat went on to review three other proposals that were developed. Kelly did a lot of the background investigation necessary for the creation of these. The VT Visiting Scholars Program is a pre-search strategy which focuses on developing relationship with candidates even before a position may exist. This is being used with AdvanceVT. Jennie recommended adding the ADA statement to these documents. The goal is to find strategies that spend money in ways that are constructive. Guidelines are wide open for all. Kim added that Visiting Scholars is a J-1 program and is concerned that international faculty might get confused. She suggested perhaps including language indicating this is not a J-1 Department of State Program. This is a doable program that can be started immediately. The diversity cluster hire is more expensive. It could occur as a match basis with colleges with some university level committee that would review proposals. This then makes recruitment a bigger deal; it becomes a university-wide recruitment not just departmental recruitment. Jennie suggested the encouragement of departments to build in some funds should there be some need for accommodations. The Future Faculty Initiative was the last proposal reviewed and was done during summer 2006 by Tonya Smith-Jackson through AdvanceVT. NC State is doing this now on a small scale of only five to six participants. The idea is to announce through listservs and invite these individuals to two-day, all expense paid visit to VT. Each invited scholar would have a host department which expressed interest in their visit and credentials. All of these proposals are about building relationships. Pat will have legal counsel review these proposals. These programs are about affirmative recruitment. A question was raised about whether these proposals have been prioritized. As indicated earlier, the visiting scholars is doable. Diversity cluster hires are permanent appointments so it is more problematic. We need to be creative about how to implement these and seek additional sources of funds. These proposals will be shared with the implementation committee this week and will then be more widely distributed.

#### **V. New Taskforces Update**

There was some discussion about the creation of a new taskforce to assist with these efforts. Pat indicated that what would be most helpful is if someone wants to go with her to meet with the Development Office with regards to finding funding. There is also a potential to look at the retention of faculty and staff.

#### **VI. Announcements**

Thursday is the Black Constituency Conference: Success Runs in Our Race.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, March 17, 2008

Minutes

**Present:** Sam Camden, Sue Ellen Crocker, Ross Edmonds, Jean Brickey, Maxine Lyons, Ray Plaza, Ruth Grene, Hal Irvin, Sharon Proffitt (for Deborah Morgan), Elizabeth Gilboy (for Jack Davis), Virgilio Centeno (for Elisa Sotelino), Kevin McDonald, Dennis Welch, Mikhelle Taylor, Ann Kilkelly, Rick Shingles, Sheila Carter-Tod, Pat Hyer, Maggie Sloane (for Kelly Oaks), Daphney Rainey, Toni Stroter

**Absent:** Stevan Jackson, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Kim Beisecker, Brad Klein, Carlos Evia, Patricia Smith

**Guests:** Judy Ridinger, Christina Brogdon, Maggie Sloane, Claude Steele, Tashika Smith

**I. Call to Order**

Ruth called the meeting to order. Implementation team reports have been postponed to next CEOD meeting. The feedback on the initiatives shared at the last meeting was helpful.

**II. Announcements**

Ray distributed posters for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Latin American Theatre Conference Today which is scheduled for March 26-29. Ruth shared that she is a member of the Virginia Interfaith Council and they are planning a forum on April 27 with the theme of welcoming the stranger – looking at both issues that arise from influx of immigrants but also issues that international students and families may face. The forum will occur from 2-5 p.m. in the Graduate Life Center with Father Gary Kreeder serving as the keynote speaker followed by four workshops. The group is anxious to include the university community and members were asked for feedback on ways to help facilitate the university involvement. A number of individuals were recommended including Michele James-Deramo, Carlos Evia, Tonya Smith-Jackson, Barbara Allen Smith, and the Cranwell International Center. There was also some conversation regarding employees who may have language issues and the need to provide English language classes for these people in the workplace. Sam indicated that one of the reasons we do not employ more immigrants is due to the housing costs in this area.

Ross passed out the schedule of events for Gay Awareness Week and reminded members that “For the Bible Tells Me So” will be shown again on Saturday, March 22 at the Lyric Theatre with open discussion afterwards.

Daphne provided some information on Natalie Hart who is the director of NCAA initiatives and diversity management in the Athletic Department. This position was created as a result of the NCAA audit. She is working on implementing the recommendations from the audit and keeping up with minority issues – on the student and staff side. She has a taskforce working with her but would also like to have some interaction with the commission. It was suggested that she be invited to present at a commission meeting to share the work she is engaged in and determine how the commission might provide assistance.

Judy passed out the diversity commitment dimension guidelines that were created through the work of a commission taskforce and others on campus. It will be sent to all staff and supervisors and will also be posted on the Human Resources website.

The meeting was adjourned for taskforce work at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, April 7, 2008

Minutes

**Present:** Sam Camden, Ross Edmonds, Jean Brickey, Ray Plaza, Hal Irvin, Elizabeth Gilboy (for Jack Davis), Mikhelle Taylor, Rick Shingles, Kelly Oaks, Daphney Rainey, Toni Stroter, Carlos Evia, Brad Klein, Kevin McDonald, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Virgilio Centeno (for Elisa Sotelino), Shirley Cline (for Maxine Lyons and Sue Ellen Crockett)

**Absent:** Stevan Jackson, Kim Beisecker, Patricia Smith, Maxine Lyons, Pat Hyer, Deborah Morgan, Dennis Welch, Ann Kilkelly, Ruth Grene, Sheila Carter-Tod

**Guests:** Judy Ridinger, Maggie Sloane, Julie Walters Steele, Jennie Reilly

**I. Call to Order**

Daphne called the meeting to order. She was able to follow up with Natalie Hart, Director of NCAA Initiatives & Diversity Management in the Athletic Department and she will be attending the commission meeting on May 5 to talk about her role and how she might interact with the CEOD.

**II. At-Large Openings**

Ray shared information on the at-large positions available. There is one vacant at-large seat on CEOD for the upcoming 2008-09 academic year. This is open to all faculty/staff and students. In this position, faculty/staff serve for three years, students serve for one year. There is one vacant at-large Faculty/Staff seat on University Council. This is a one year appointment. There is one vacant at-large Student seat on University Council. This is a one year appointment. To apply, individuals should go to: [www.ceod.org.vt.edu](http://www.ceod.org.vt.edu). The Priority deadline is Monday, April 28th.

**III. Update from Implementation Team Taskforce**

Guy Sims reported for the undergraduate group from the implementation team. They focused on access, student success, and climate. They are looking at existing programs and how to better market what we do have and enhance some of these programs. They have also identified a couple of new programs and are trying to develop what funds would be needed to support those. There was considerable discussion about how to better market programs both internally and externally. The university struggles with getting the word out regarding events pm campus. It was suggested that the CEOD could do some assessment of diversity programs next year. That would be an appropriate project for a taskforce.

A long discussion followed regarding training opportunities for faculty dealing with diversity, especially as it relates to classroom issues. It was suggested that a CEUT study group could be formed to look at this issue. Questions arose as to how to attract people who do not self select. There needs to be some incentive for faculty to attend. When there are classroom issues where students may feel they have been discriminated, some will go to Maggie Sloane in the Office for Equal Opportunity. Kevin informed members that a team (five faculty members and one graduate student) from VT is going to the Great Expectations Institute sponsored by AA&CU. They will be working on how to better integrate diversity in the curriculum. Daphney suggested the commission revisit some of these items and determine how to follow up on some of the issues raised at the next meeting. Some might be handled through taskforces.

#### **IV. Announcements**

Julie shared that GobblerFest is a new program this fall targeting first year students. There will be a street fair on Friday before the first home football game. Local businesses, university departments, student organizations, and service organizations will all be invited to participate. The idea is to celebrate and build community. This will lead into some late night programs in Squires Student Center that night. They are changing Squires building hours to stay open until 2:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. There will be a concert and pep rally at the end of the festival. Additionally, there will be a Principles of Community Wayne Robinson Faculty/Staff Walk/Run on campus. This coming weekend is Gateway. There are a number of events occurring for Asian Pacific American Islander Heritage Month.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission



Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, April 21, 2008

Minutes

**Present:** Dennis Welch, Pat Hyer, Jean Brickey, Ross Edmonds, Elizabeth Gilboy (for Jack Davis), Maxine Lyons, Ruth Grene, Brad Klein, Kelly Oaks, Sue Ellen Crocker, Ray Plaza, Rick Shingles, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Shelia Carter-Tod, Kevin McDonald, Mikhelle Taylor, Hal Irvin, Ann Kilkelly

**Absent:** Carlos Evia, Sam Camden, Toni Stroter, Virgilio Centeno (for Elisa Sotelino), Stevan Jackson, Kim Beisecker, Patricia Smith, Deborah Morgan, Daphne Rainey, Toni Stroter

**Guests:** Claude Steele, Jill Sible, Jennie Reilly

**I. Call to Order**

Ruth called the meeting to order and asked Kevin to provide an update on a recent HBCU initiative. On May 19-20 the five HBCUs in the Commonwealth and one from outside the state, Oakwood University, will visit Virginia Tech to meet with department heads and others to explore the potential for joint programs, faculty development, grant development, etc. So far the response has been positive. This visit will coincide with VT joining the Virginia-Nebraska Alliance.

**II. Special Presentation**

Jill Sible, associate professor of biology, shared a presentation on teaching for inclusion and diversity.

The meeting was adjourned for taskforce work at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, May 5, 2008

Minutes

**Present:** Ray Plaza, Sue Ellen Crocker, Daphne Rainey, Ann Kilkelly, Sheila Carter-Tod, Kevin McDonald, Ross Edmonds, Carlos Evia, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Pat Hyer, Kelly Oaks, Ruth Grene, Sam Camden, Jean Brickey, Toni Stroter, Judy Ridinger (for Hal Irvin?), Rick Shingles, Virgilio Centeno (for Elisa Sotelino), Jack Davis

**Absent:** Stevan Jackson, Kim Beisecker, Patricia Smith, Deborah Morgan, Dennis Welch, Maxine Lyons, Brad Klein, Mikhelle Taylor

**Guests:** Natalie Hart, Pam Linkous, Susanna Rinehart, Maggie Sloane, Jennie Reilly, Julie Walters Steele

**I. Call to Order**

Ruth called the meeting to order.

**II. Special Presentations**

- A. Susanna Rinehart presented information on issues of diversity and inclusion in classroom and curriculum. She passed out a handout with brief descriptions of progress in inclusive excellence in the classroom and curriculum. There was some conversation about some of the challenges around curricular reform, faculty development and classroom climate.
- B. Sheila Carter-Tod gave a brief summary of recommendations from the academic programs subcommittee of the implementation team. There is a recommendation for incentive based course transformation and strengthening of existing dedicated programs but also the development of a Hispanic/Latino academic program. Part of the proposal includes a position in CEUT to support faculty with course transformation. This would be similar to writing across the curriculum in that courses that exist can be modified to have issues of race/racial privilege, etc. included. Members have looked at some models and Temple University has had a requirement for awhile, so Sheila plans to see how theirs works. The goal is to get some money behind this proposal and have workshop in 2009-10 with pilot courses (live with designation) in the spring 2010 followed by assessment of the pilots and submission of course requests in 2010-11. A question was raised about the Graduate School. Dean DePauw has a plan for this since it would be handled differently for graduate programs. There is also a graduate subcommittee of the implementation team.
- C. Ann Kilkelly provided some introductory comments from the task force on education and resources. They have focused on developing a website to help with the lack of visibility, availability and accessibility of dedicated academic programs. Ross shared the website that has been developed. It is a database driven website called Diversity Courses and it is focused toward students. The task force developed topics for courses and started putting in courses for each topic. They tried to keep it simple – area, number of course, title, if cross-linked, and also when taught/offered. The links take individuals directly to the timetable. They will test it this summer with five departments who have offered to work with the system. The Office of Multicultural Affairs will host this and Roxanna is working closely with Ross. It was suggested that there be offered a certificate in diversity studies that could encompass multiple specialties. Also a concentration in diversity that could be satisfied in a number of ways. The site will be linked of university diversity website, so it will be easy to find. Additional next steps were provided in a handout.
- D. Natalie Hart from the Athletic Department shared the Minority Opportunity Plan that was created as a result of the NCAA certification process which also led to the creation of her position. Virginia Tech is the only university that has a position like this. There is a committee that

Athletic Department formed. They need to have someone outside of athletics looking at diversity initiatives and CEOD could serve in that capacity. Every other year the CEOD will look at the diversity initiatives and then on opposite years a consultant will come to review the initiatives. A liaison will be identified to work with both the athletic department and CEOD to keep information flowing and provide periodic updates. Some things that the department has implemented as a result of the certification process are sending out the Principles of Community with ticket information and other publications, posting the Principles in numerous places, adding a diversity section in team reports, and offering training annually for personnel. Right now the focus is more on the employee side of things as opposed to the student athletes.

- E. Jennie Reilly presented update on the disability community. University ADA services is housed in Human Resources. They focus on individual accommodations for employees with disabilities and work closely with Physical Plant to ensure that the campus is accessible for students, employees and visitors. They also provide assistance for offices/individuals that may have a difficult situation dealing with an employee with a disability. This could include training, utilizing appropriate language, and helping others understand accommodations. The number of cases has increased steadily each year. The fastest growing group is those with psychological disabilities. They are looking for a central funding source for accommodations and also at ways for automate some of what they do.

### **III. At-large Applications**

There are two at-large seats open on the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity with three applicants, so all three of them will be forwarded to the President's Office for selection.

There are also three applicants for the University Council at-large seats. An electronic ballot will be sent to members for voting.

- IV. **Announcements** – The Hispanic-Latino Achievement Ceremony is Thursday, May 8 at 3:30 pm. in the Recital Salon, Squires. Donning of the Kente is that evening at 6:30 p.m. in the Graduate Life Center Multipurpose Room.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission