

**COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY**  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015**  
**10:30 am – 12:00 pm**  
**GRADUATE LIFE CENTER ROOM B**

**Meeting Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Tom Brown, David Clubb, Mary Beth Dunkenberger, Raifu Durodoye, Melissa Elliott, Lance Franklin, Bradley Klein, Marwa Abdel Latif, Gilda Machin-Scarpaci, Erika Meitner, Karisa Moore, Sandra Muse, Jennifer Nardine, Anita Puckett, Sapna Singh, Mikhelle Taylor, Laura Tollin, John Gray Williams, Paul Winistorfer

**ABSENT:** Noha Elsherbiny, Amer Fayad, Jamie Hollimion, Arianna Jensen-Wachspress, Sara Leftwich (with notice), Patty Perillo (with notice), Takuma Sato, Amy Tanner, Andrew Tevington, David Travis (with notice), Pamela Vickers, Daron Williams

**GUESTS:** Marcie Bishop, Jennifer Brierly, Jordan Laney

**WELCOME**

Chair Jennifer Nardine welcomed members.

**APPALACHIAN REPORT PRESENTATION (ANITA PUCKETT)**

Jordan Laney, PhD student in ASPECT and Diversity Scholar shared with CEOD members challenges for Undergraduate Students from Rural Appalachia at Virginia Tech (findings by Dr. Emily Satterwhite), and graduate student findings which is a part of Jordan's work as a diversity scholar.

To better understand the climate here, Jordan worked with Dr.'s Emily Satterwhite, Anita Puckett, and Jeff Mann, researching the recent studies and surveys on the topic. Using the qualtrics program provided by Virginia Tech, she conducted a survey which was sent to a list created by the graduate school, then sent out through the graduate school's emails for three weeks. Nine respondents completed the survey.

Jordan shared some of the responses with members. She said that across the board, respondents noted that they saw no effort on the part of Virginia Tech to acknowledge specific Appalachian cultural needs beyond the Appalachian Studies program which targets undergraduates. Jordan looks forward to working towards educational initiatives where Appalachian cultures can be celebrated and shared.

Questions and concerns were discussed among members.

## **TIME WISE EVENTS**

Jennifer Nardine reminded members about the Tim Wise events on campus November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

Reports Group (Raifu Durodoye)

1. The group will convene before the next full meeting to gather feedback from the subgroups on reports related to diversity. A final report will be shared with CEOD.
2. Mary Beth Dunkenberger requested reports that have “reportedly” been done by the provost’s office and human resources regarding pay equity. She received a response from HR that we need to ask specific questions rather than a “report.” She is waiting on the salary equity report to be released by the Provost office.

Holiday Working Group (John Gray Williams, Mikhelle Taylor)

1. The group had not convened since the last meeting.

Membership Group (Marwa Abdel Latif)

1. Marwa will send out a survey to caucus groups with questions regarding “what constitutes a caucus”. The survey results will be shared with CEOD at the next full meeting.
2. The group is still working on defining a caucus which is definitely an issue. The issue has not been compared with other institutions.
3. Discussion continued on how the Black Caucus came to have a seat on the CEOD and University Council.

## **EXTERNAL REPORTS**

- a. CAPFA – Sandra Muse said they had not convened since last meeting.
- b. CSPA – deferred
- c. CFA – vacant seat
- d. CSA – vacant seat
- e. Faculty Senate – Bradley Klein discussed the implementation of core courses for the education program.  
Brad discussed the Beyond Boundaries plan regarding the future of Virginia Tech as we approach the year 2047. He said that diversity is very important to this plan. The working group will discuss issues.
- f. Staff Senate - deferred

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Laura Tollin encouraged members to read the article in the local newspaper regarding a debate over the Roanoke Amtrak platform centers on accessibility, whether passengers will board from a low platform or a raised one is a complicated issue. The passenger train will come to Roanoke in 2017.

Laura will ask permission from ADA to create and send out a new survey regarding disability issues on campus. Mary Beth suggested she start with the Deans at Virginia Tech by asking them to distribute her survey. Laura will be working on this soon.

The Veterans in Society 2015 Conference will be November 12-14 in Roanoke Virginia.

Erika Meitner announced that Tim O'Brien author of a number of award-winning books to include (The Things They Carried) will be coming to Blacksburg and reading on Saturday night, November 14<sup>th</sup>, on campus in McBryde 100 at 7:00 p.m. She asked members to share widely.

Discussion continued about employee benefits for adoptive parents. Erika Meitner provided information on parental leave and adoption at Virginia Tech. While we have excellent policies in place at VT if a woman gives birth to a child (6-8weeks paid leave, plus a semester of modified duties at the discretion of the department head with a semester's notice), the same leave policies are not extended to adoptive families.

Erika provided some other schools with policies that are more adoption friendly. She provided some of the needs adoptive parents at Virginia Tech have articulated to Human Resources. They have corresponded with Cathy Kropff (VT Wellness) and Yohna Chambers (HR), who are working on the issue of paid leave for adoptive parents with the Provost's office. Paid Leave is the action item that CEOD could take up.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next CEOD Executive meeting will be Monday November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. in the GLC Room D.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Bishop  
Recording Secretary, Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

