

COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY
MONDAY, DECEMBER 3RD, 2012
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
GRADUATE LIFE CENTER ROOM B

Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Aaron Bond, Dannette Gomez-Beane, Tom Brown, Nicole DaDamio, Sam Cook, Catherine Cotrupi, Ross Edmonds, Amer Fayad, Amy Hogan, Jermaine Holmes, William Lewis, Mark Managuio, Lesley Moyo, Sue Ott Rowlands, Laura Rugless, Emily Satterwhite, Guy Sims, Yannis Stivachtis, Jody Thompson, Mary Ellen Verdu, Leighton Vila

ABSENT: Chris Atkins, Hal Irvin (with notice) Marwa Abdel Latif, Corinne Noirot, Jacqueline Nottingham, Bill Ortega (with notice), Wornie Reed, Susan Rosebrough (with notice), Sherri Simmons, Cris Thompson, Alasia Washington (with notice)

GUESTS: Samantha Boyd, Perry Martin, Mark McNamee, Karisa Moore

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair Yannis Stivachtis. Motion to adopt the agenda was approved.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 26TH MEETING

Motion to accept minutes for November 26th meeting was approved.

III. DISCUSSION FROM PROVOST MARK MCNAMEE

Provost Mark McNamee thanked the members of the commission for their work in the university governance structure. He noted ongoing efforts at the university to solidify institutional commitments to diversity as well as historical events that have hindered advancement in areas of diversity. The commission was encouraged to continue to support efforts to raise the profile of the Virginia Tech Principles of Community among all members of the university community. Dr. McNamee also noted current efforts to reaffirm the university's Diversity Strategic Plan to work in concert with the institutional long range plan – A Plan for a New Horizon. This plan will monitor indicators that are hard measures of progress toward outcomes related to diversity.

Provost McNamee invited questions from the membership. In response to a question from Leighton Vila regarding administrative efforts towards improving campus climate, Dr. McNamee noted that the current campus climate survey is being used within administrative areas to review employee perceptions of climate and to influence unit activities related to climate. Amer Fayad asked if there are ways that the survey could be modified to better capture the perspective of international employees. Dr. McNamee suggested offering feedback to Human Resources on possible additions to the survey.

Dannette Gomez Beane asked about the value placed on diversity in FARs. Provost McNamee responded that diversity activity is impactful and is particularly valuable when diversity efforts are connected to faculty research.

Ross Edmonds asked about protocols for informing the commission when there are incidents that impact campus climate. Provost McNamee responded that while CEOD should not be a programming-focused entity, it can work with university offices in consulting on responses.

Chairperson Yannis Stivachtis thanked Provost McNamee for visiting with the commission and noted that he will return to address the commission later in the spring semester.

IV. REPORT FROM WORKING GROUPS

Yannis noted that working groups should expect to have a document at the end of the spring semester to present to the general membership of CEOD highlighting their findings in their areas of focus and preparing recommendations that can be shared with relevant university offices and programs.

The subgroup on CEOD effectiveness reported that they were working on reviewing the charge of CEOD and reviewing CEOD's actions to determine alignment with the charge. The group is also looking at ways to promote the Principles of Community and how the principles are related to specific policies and how the Principles are visible to the student population. Protocols on how CEOD responds to campus incidents are also being discussed.

The subgroup on Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services, as related to ADA, Cultural, and Religious Issues reported that they had been discussing religious holiday inclusion on holiday calendars. They have also been discussing a proposal for all new Virginia Tech buildings to include single occupancy restrooms as this would be beneficial to many campus stakeholders.

The Working Group on University Climate (Faculty & Staff), Hiring, Retention, and Conflict Resolution and Mediation Policies reported that they have discussed possible suggestions for additions to the campus climate survey, the feasibility of whether an external contractor would be useful in assessing campus climate, and determining what resources are available to assist in hiring and retention efforts.

The working group on student climate is reviewing student surveys that may provide insights in to campus climate perceptions among students.

The working group on the Diversity Strategic Plan is waiting for the report from various focus groups currently revising the Diversity Strategic Plan. After reviewing the revisions, the group will look at CEOD's role in examining the execution and measures found within the diversity strategic plan.

V. FOLLOW UP ON RESPONSE LETTERS FROM CEOD

Discussion continued on a response to actions related to a student Homecoming campaign. Ross passed out drafts of letters from CEOD to the university community. After some discussion on the content of the letters, it was suggested that a letter be sent to the Collegiate Times at the start of the next semester calling for a commitment to the Principles of Community and encouraging the Virginia Tech community to move forward towards a more inclusive environment that is sensitive to diverse populations. Motion not to do a second public letter directed at university offices was made by Sue Ott Rowlands and seconded by Aaron Bond. Letters would be sent directly to offices involved after edits.

Tom Brown offered follow up details on a recent incident connected to an alcohol awareness campaign. Aspects of the campaign led by students promoted insensitive stereotypes and the students' behaviors were addressed by administrators within the Division of Student Affairs. Tom reported that the incident had been contained and that the students were responsive and understanding of the need to address their behavior.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:45am. The next meeting will be on December 17th in GLC Room B.

Respectfully Submitted,

Perry Martin
Acting Recording Secretary, Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity