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 CEO 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