Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, October 16, 2006

Minutes

Present: Ross Edmonds, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Rick Shingles, Pat Hyer, Ray Plaza, Deborah Morgan, Ann Kilkelly, Carlos Evia, Mike Taczak, Brad Klein, Elisa Sotelino, Sue Ellen Crocker, Ruth Grene, Linda Woodard, Sam Camden, Antionette Stroter, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Ben Dixon, Kim Beisecker, Sheila Carter-Tod, Maggie Sloane (for Kevin McDonald), Maxine Lyons

Absent: Alexis Bozzo, Craig Brians, Tina Harvey, Saurabh Attarde, Valerie Hardcastle, Jack Davis, Aaren Salido, Patricia Smith

Guests: Greg Sagstetter, Sarah Wang, Jonathan McCloud, Jane Ann Williams

I. Call to Order
The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report
Carlos asked Ray to provide an update on the Provost’s Taskforce on Race and the Institution. There was a community conversation with students about issues concern them. The taskforce met for a second time last week and divided into six different subcommittees. The subcommittees will meet between now and early November when the taskforce meets again. They hope to have a report by January 3, 2007. Rick requested the list of the subcommittees and their members. Meeting summaries will be posted on the web so that there are open lines of communication between the taskforce and the university community.

Mike Taczak shared the results from the Diversity and Multiculturalism Survey that was conducted by SGA. The target audience was minority students. The survey was sent to multicultural organizations and various listservs. The two main initiatives the survey focused on were a student campus climate group and a diversity/multicultural requirement in the core curriculum. The student campus climate group will begin in January 2007 with support from Multicultural Programs and Services and the Dean of Students Office. The group will meet twice monthly. One meeting will be with students, faculty, and staff. The other meeting will be just for students so they can feel comfortable voicing concerns and issues. While they are still working on the list of people who will be part of the group, they are looking at representatives from the major cultural groups. The chair will be the SGA director of diversity and multicultural affairs. Ann suggested that representations from some of the academic programs like Women’s Studies and Afrikana Studies would also be helpful.

The survey also showed support for a diversity/multiculturalism core curriculum requirement. SGA would like to set up some focus groups to determine what the specific reasons are for those who oppose such a requirement. It was recommended to investigate institutions that have such a requirement. The Office of Institutional Research might be able to provide assistance for a random sample survey if they choose to do another survey/study.

Carlos then asked Ray to provide some background on the University Policy on Religious Holidays and Observations. He began by asking what the commission should recommend in response to the fact that there is a Christmas tree on the Henderson Lawn. Some Hillel students had approached Kurt Krause about having a wooden menorah. Others opposed that idea. One recommendation is to have a tree with white lights instead of the colored lights. Another recommendation was to have banners in town to acknowledge the different celebrations. It was suggested and supported by some members that no state money should
be devoted to religious holidays. Additionally, since the holidays don’t always occur at the same time, it doesn’t make sense to have everything up at the same time.

Ray then distributed Policy No. 4315, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies Resolution, and the Religious and Ethnic Holidays list from the Registrar’s Office. Many members spoke of the need to expand the list from the Registrar’s Office and to provide some descriptions for the various holidays. There was considerable conversation about what the university should do and a number of different recommendations were made. Given the significant thought and time needed for this issue, it was determined the best approach would be to create a subgroup to work specifically on this issue. Carlos offered to chair the group and asked interested members to contact him. The group will also seek information and input from various individuals across campus.

**III. Taskforces**

There was an opportunity for members to meet in taskforces.

**Announcements**

Ann Kilkelly requested time for speaker presentations at the next two meetings. Jane Ann shared the variety of diversity and multicultural education and training options offered by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The Scholarship of Diversity Conference is scheduled for March 15-16 and a handout on the conference was distributed. Ray announced the approval of the MOSAIC proposal. It will begin in the fall of 2007 in the top eight floors of Slusher Tower. There is a three-credit course associated with this theme housing program. Kim shared that the Dance of Nations is from 6-11 pm in Squires on Friday evening. Ross asked members to save the date for December 1 for a special event sponsored by the LGBT Caucus. More details will follow. Diversity Career Day is November 2 at UVa and Career Services will be providing three vans to transport students to that event.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission