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