Present: Judy Alford, Catherine Caldwell, Sue Ellen Crocker, Carolyne Dudding, Mike Freel, Mike Harness for Gerhardt Schurig, Walter Hartman, Kellie Morris, Diane Reaver, Wyatt Sasser, Linda Woodard, Jon Wooge

Absent: Erin Cwick, Chanda Dodd, Kenneth Miller, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Fred Piercy, Becky Saylors

Guests: Kelly Oaks, Associate Director for Equity Initiatives, EOAA Office; Maggie Sloane, Associate Director Compliance & Conflict Resolution, EOAA Office

Chair Judy Alford called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. The agenda was approved as presented.


Kelly Oaks, Associate Director for Equity Initiatives explained that the Office for Equal Opportunity provides many services including addressing issues of diversity on campus, harassment of any kind, and discrimination. Because the university receives federal funding, the office is also responsible for compliance with federal funding regulations. The office identifies problem areas in hiring and assists in making underrepresented groups aware of job openings. The office also has an education component, such as anti-harassment training.

Maggie Sloane was recently hired as the Associate Director for Compliance and Conflict Resolution. She said that it was her role to work with employees to steer them in the right direction. She works with individuals to find the solution that works for them. In addition to investigating discrimination complaints, she is also working on the development of a mediation program to provide options for individuals who do not wish to file formal complaints. However, by law, some complaints such as harassment must be formally investigated. She explained that the EOAA office does not discipline or terminate employees; that must be done by management.

2. Discussion / Updates from Previous Meetings

- Alternative Transportation

Judy Alford noted that the Office of Transportation is exploring the possibility of implementing vanpooling for employees. While the program has not yet received approval from Richmond, the pilot program would consist of a van pool for many of the counties neighboring Montgomery. Employees would be allowed to lease passenger vans. At this time, there are not estimated costs for the leave. Interested employees should contact Debby Freed in the Office of Transportation.
3. Reports:

- Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser
  The committee did not meet in January.

- CEOD – Sue Ellen Crocker
  Topics of discussion included the candidates for the position of Director Multicultural Programs and Services, college diversity assessments, campus climate, principles of community, and reports from the commission subcommittees. Linda Woodard informed the group that a roundtable discussion on relevant policies, including the anti-discrimination, campus violence prevention, and Americans with Disabilities Act policies, will be coordinated by CEOD and scheduled in late March. The Office of Equal Opportunity has purchased a license for web-based anti-harassment training. This provides an additional avenue to provide training. The program is being piloted with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. An updated accessibility map for the campus is now available on line. Accessibility issues should be directed to Jennie Reilly, the ADA coordinator.

- Staff Senate – Judy Alford
  Kevin McDonald was the featured speaker.

4. Other Business

- Judy Alford and the other commission chairs recently met with President Steger and Provost McNamee to review goals. Both were pleased with the work that the commissions have done this year. As part of her presentation, Alford noted that frequently communications and announcements refer to faculty and students, but classified staff is not always mentioned. Staff employees sometime wonder if their contributions are recognized and appreciated. It was suggested that other commissions, such as Faculty Affairs and Administrative/Professional Faculty Affairs, be invited to review what issues they are working on and if there are any common areas of interest that commissions could work on jointly. It was decided to invite Ray Plaza, Chair of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, to discuss the differences between faculty and staff, identify potential issues of concern for staff, and suggest ways that these could be addressed.

- The Student Affairs representative will not be able to attend this semester because of a class conflict. After a discussion and review of possible alternate dates, it appeared that there was not other time that worked for a majority of the members. It was moved and seconded that the meeting date and time remain the same. The motion passed unanimously.

- In response to a question about research associates being represented and allowed to serve in the Faculty Senate, Linda Woodard offered to contact the senate president to clarify their status.

- Linda Woodard also briefly discussed the university’s policy on conviction checks following some questions about who was covered by the policy. Woodard noted that not all classified staff positions require a conviction check. Checks are only done for
positions that meet certain security criteria. Further, conviction of a crime does not automatically disqualify an applicant from being hired. The conviction must be job-related, and each situation is evaluated carefully.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 9. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.