MINUTES

COMMISSION ON STUDENT AFFAIRS

March 13, 2003
Brush Mtn B
Squires Student Center
3:30-5:30 p.m.


ABSENT: Edward Barry, Vickie Clayton, Karen DePauw, Pankaj Gupta, Grant Hill, Theresa Kanter, Meredith Katz, Megan Elwood Madden, Jerry Niles, Kerry Redican, Christian Rieser, Linda Sikhammountry, Roberta Snelling

I. Call to Order

Mr. Brian Montgomery, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

There were two requested changes to the agenda: 1) move the discussion of the Board of Visitors from announcements to item A under New Business, and 2) add Nicki Cantrell for a Budget Board Resolution as item C under New Business. There was a move to adopt the amended agenda. The motion was seconded and approved.

III. Minutes from February 27th Meeting

The minutes of the February 27 CSA meeting have been sent to the commission for electronic approval.

IV. Old Business:

V. New Business:

A. Board of Visitors

Mr. Montgomery, undergraduate student representative to the Board of Visitors, briefed the commission on the March 10 Board meeting. The Board discussed the university restructuring plan and enacted the new tuition and fee rates. The Board voted to name the future Building Construction building “Bishop-Favrao Hall.” The Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity was approved, as well as the resolution concerning the university’s smoking policy. The Board passed a non-discrimination resolution that pertains to admissions and hiring decisions. They also passed a speaker policy, contingent upon the Attorney General’s office ruling on the constitutionality of the policy. The non-discrimination resolution and the speaker policy have been poorly received by the university, the state, and the country. They were introduced at
the Board meeting, and the university community had no opportunity for comment prior to their approval. The governor has issued a strong statement against the non-discrimination resolution and urged the Board to revisit this decision later in the year, and to solicit input from the university.

Ms. Nicki Cantrell announced a town hall meeting to discuss these issues. The meeting was scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on March 20 in Colonial Hall of Squires. (The meeting was postponed, and will be advertised when it is rescheduled.) Mr. Miles Hoge, attending for the Student Government Association, discussed possible legal action the SGA may take against the Board. The lawsuit would be based on the removal of "sexual orientation" from the university’s nondiscrimination statement. The SGA expects to move forward on this matter within a week. Mr. Hoge is available for questions or comments at (804) 833-3116. The commission will be kept up-to-date by the CSA listserv.

Mr. Montgomery asked if the commission had specific actions they would like to take on these matters. It was suggested that these matters be kept in the public eye until they are resolved, i.e. writing letters to the editors of newspapers. It was also suggested that individuals and student organizations write letters to the Governor, thanking him for his stance on these issues. These letters should be sent to Ms. Ellen Qualls, the Governor’s Press Secretary.

B. CSA Elections, April 10th

Mr. Montgomery announced that elections for 2003-2004 CSA Chair and Vice Chair will be held at the April 10 meeting. The commission will also elect representatives for the Committee on Academic Support and the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity at the April 10 meeting. New student leaders or appointees for next year should be present for the elections if possible, and should be encouraged to serve in these roles.

C. Budget Board Resolution

Ms. Nicki Cantrell announced that Virginia Tech will now require more security at large events (300 or more) and may also require professional event staff at student events. This change will go into effect immediately, and student organizations will be notified that they will be required to cover the expense of extra security and event staff. Ms. Cantrell requested that Ms. Kim Mitchell, Chair of the Student Budget Board, be given authority through the end of Spring Semester to approve all requests for additional funds to cover these security costs from contingency funds. Following a brief discussion, there was a motion to approve the request. The motion was seconded and approved.

VI. Announcements

Dr. Ed Spencer announced that Tim Russert would be speaking that evening at 7:30 p.m. in Burruss Auditorium.

Ms. Vashonta Roach announced that Realizing the Dream would be taking place in Haymarket Theatre in Squires on March 14 and invited everyone to attend. She also announced that slam poet Tehut Nine would be at Deet's Place at 8:00 p.m. on March 18.
Ms. Kim Beisecker announced the “Big Brother Technology” forum taking place at 8:00 a.m. on March 27 in Donaldson Brown. You may register by contacting Mary Ellen Jones at choices@vt.edu.

Ms. Susan Anderson announced a meeting that evening to discuss the Patriot Act and civil liberties. The meeting was at 5:30 p.m. in 223 McBryde.

Mr. Thanh Doan announced that LGBT A would be hosting Deb Price, a national columnist, on the topic of queer issues in the media on March 18 in the Black Cultural Center of Squires. Judy Sheppard, Matthew Sheppard’s mother, will be speaking on April 1 in Colonial Hall, Squires.

Ms. Kim Mitchell announced that the Big Event will be taking place on March 29.

Ms. Nicki Cantrell announced that the University Student Leadership Awards ceremony would take place on at 7:00 p.m. on March 27 in Haymarket Theatre, Squires. The keynote speaker is Sec. Elaine Marshall from North Carolina.

Mr. Vivek Mehta announced that March 14 would be Laura Beth Eaton’s last day on campus.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Sanzenbach
Recorder