

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, October 1, 2007

Minutes

Present: Ann Kilkelly, Rick Shingles, Sam Camden, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Sue Ellen Crocker, Brad Klein, Kevin McDonald, Ross Edmonds, Kelly Oaks, Jean Brickey, Ray Plaza, Ruth Grene, Sheila Carter-Tod, Jack Davis, Kim Beisecker, Judy Ridinger (for Linda Woodard), Dennis Welch, Mikhelle Taylor, Daphne Rainey, Pat Hyer, Carlos Evia, Karun Sapkota

Absent: Paul Davis, Deborah Morgan, Patricia Smith, Elisa Sotelino, Meredith Simon, Toni Stroter, Kesal Patel

Guests: Pat Burton, Jane Ann Williams, Maggie Sloane, Dale Robinson

I. Call to Order

The agenda was adopted.

II. Presentations

- A. **Campus Climate Issue** - Guy shared an update on an occurrence early Saturday morning, September 22, when a male African American student had confrontation with police. There was a noise violation that police responded to which resulted in allegations of excessive force. One student was sprayed with mace. Two students were arrested, one was released on \$1,000 bond but the other refused to participate in a bond hearing before a magistrate and was held until he could get a bond hearing before a judge on Wednesday. Students have met with Dr. Hikes, Kevin, Tom Brown, Guy Sims, and Ray Williams. Students have organized a silent protest from Burruss to Police Station starting at 1:00 p.m. There are concerns that staff did not find out about this until awhile later. The question is whether or not they knew who to contact or if they simply chose not to contact anyone. Another concern is that students had the expectation of that kind of treatment from police. The protest has been put together in some sort of secrecy. Ruth requested that everything possible remain public. Dr. Hikes has met with Chief Crannis and there is a desire to have a meeting with the police involved and students. Large distrust exists right now between students and administrators.
- B. **Exit Survey** – Pat followed up on the exit survey information that was shared at the previous meeting. The desire is to have a regular survey administered every six months when Human Resources receives separation notices. The survey is designed to address faculty and staff, be electronic, and allow us to look at trends on an ongoing basis. The data collected will be used to assist with recruitment and retention. The survey is meant to be broad and not too lengthy so that people will actually complete it. It was suggested that involuntary terminations should be included because even though we know why the termination occurred, there may be other information that we do not know. It was also suggested Concern that looks only at race/ethnicity and gender. It was also recommended that respondents be able to choose more than one reason for unfair treatment in workplace. Finally, the question was raised about getting information from people who move within the university since there could be issues within a specific department.

C. **Education Taskforce** – Ann distributed a summary of the original intent of the education taskforce, guest speakers, and next steps. The group was interested in finding out what more about dedicated academic programs that deal with diversity. This was done by having some guest speakers. Often dedicated programs lack visibility and there is also a lack of consistency from program to program. Additionally, there is no common place where a student or faculty interested in the academic programs could find a reasonable overview of academic programs relative to the study of diversity. A lot of academic programs are in crisis due to diminishing resources. Next steps include determining what should go into the template, where the information should be housed, and who can design this site that would be more user friendly and have brief statements of mission and goals, degree options, contact information, etc.

D. **Scenarios Dealing with Harassment** - Maggie Sloane shared scenarios dealing with harassment that she uses in training to illustrate the kinds of situations that occur. Members were split into groups to discuss the different scenarios.

III. Constituent Reports

LGBT Caucus is working hard on a program in late November that includes screening the film, “For The Bible Tells Me So.” The director, Daniel Karlake, will be present to facilitate discussions with classes and organizations. More information will follow as details are confirmed.

IV. Taskforce Updates

Members signed up for the taskforces. Daphne shared that for the diversity summit, they are trying to get more faculty, especially from the sciences, to attend. Their goal is to collect statements on diversity and start publishing statements to let people know there are different views on diversity. Kim shared the need for student involvement in the summit. She also recommended the taskforce be renamed needs of international faculty, staff and students.

VIII. Announcements

On Wednesday a world renowned Spanish architect, Cesar Ruiz-Larrea will be here as part of Hispanic Latino Heritage Month. His public lecture will be at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday in Hancock 100. VT Engage is October 16. Career Services building will be named the Smith Career Center with the dedication on Saturday, October 20. The play N*gger, Wetb*ck, Ch*nk, will be performed at 7:30 p.m., Commonwealth Ballroom, Squires on Wednesday, October 3.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen
Secretary to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity