

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, December 5, 2005

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Ross Edmonds, Sue Ellen Crocker, Sam Camden, Ann Kilkelly, Edd Sewell, Craig Brians, Jean Brickey, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Carlos Evia, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), LaChelle Waller, Marilyn Kershaw, Pat Hyer, Aaren Salido, Kevin McDonald, Ben Dixon, Linda Woodard

Absent: Tapsavi Bhargava (for Aisia Haque), Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Valerie Hardcastle, Susan Willis-Walton, Michael Goode, Kim Beisecker, Sumeet Bagai, Maxine Lyons, Tina Harvey, Richard Benson, Ruth Grene

Guests: Laura Gillman, Jane Ann Williams, Debbi Morgan

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

The spring meeting dates have been set but locations are still to be determined for most of those dates. If members have ideas of speakers and topics to be highlighted in the spring, please let Ray know. A summary of evaluations from the Campus Climate Check-up was passed around.

III. Event Update - Diversity Summit and MLK Planning

The commemorative poster was distributed to members. The activity poster and events will be posted later this week. Tickets for Jesse Jackson will be available starting Wednesday, December 7, from the Ticket Office in Squires. Franklin McCain, one of the Greensboro Four will be speaking at the Community Breakfast on Monday morning, January 16. Please share all the events with constituent groups. The committee is still hoping to have Senator Obama as the closing speaker.

LaChelle shared the four activities that are planned for the Diversity Summit which is scheduled for Friday, January 20 from 2:30-5:00 p.m. in Owens Banquet Hall with backup space in the Multipurpose Room at the Graduate Life Center. The theme is "Diversity Unmasked - Setting the Stage for Change," and the planning group has developed four activities for participants to engage in. The activity worksheets are still being developed along with the facilitator guides. It was recommended that there be a meeting of the facilitators prior to the event to go over the activities since they are a little more complex and it would be good to review them in person and answer questions of the group at that time. Once the registration link is active, members should send it to their constituent groups.

IV. Task Force Updates

A. Campus Climate – Ross shared copies of the SafeWatch website and that there is a meeting tomorrow with the leadership team. The site has a VT look and feel to it. Given the timeframe, they will likely wait until January to do the press release on SafeWatch and Safe Zones. There was concern raised about the logo and also that the form was too complex. Ross added that the FAQ and resources will be added. A question was raised about who decides if a complaint is worthy enough to move forward. Complaints will be directed to appropriate offices as they are received. The site will be checked daily by someone in the Student Life Office. This form is a way to report incidents anonymously. It was suggested that there is a need to test the form. Another question raised was what would happen if people misused the form. Anna shared that the frustration at Women's Center has been the underutilization of the Stop Abuse site, which was the model used in developing the

SafeWatch site. There have been no problems with people misusing the form. Ben reminded members that the idea behind this was to have a central place to keep track of information and then disperse to appropriate office. It was recommended that this be clearly stated on the site. Carlos offered students in his class as possible ones to test the site. It was determined that the site could still be launched in January with testing during spring semester through Carlos' class.

B. Policy Integration – The Principles of Community brochure is progressing and members are continuing to meet and discuss other items related to policy integration.

C. College Diversity Committee – This task force wants to encourage/mandate that diversity committees report their diversity plans for the year to the commission on an annual basis. They will send out a memo to the committees requesting a draft of plan for the year by February 15 and by March 15 give some metrics on how they will evaluate/assess what they have done. Members want this information for the 2nd annual Diversity Leadership Mini Retreat which will occur in April. They are also working on an activity for diversity chairs to do in the fall. The other goal is to get colleges who don't have committees and administrative units to establish diversity committees.

D. Lee Hall - Next Spring there will be meetings to begin implementing some of the recommendations from the Lee Hall report.

V. Discussion

Students from LASO were invited to this meeting to share their issues and concerns with the commission. Unfortunately, none were able to attend. It is hoped to reschedule this for the spring.

Ray started the discussion on how to better market the different events happening on campus. Members shared the means by which they receive information which ranged from personal contact to fliers to email messages. It was suggested that there is a need for repetition but efficiency. Ross suggested a multicultural events calendar. Direct email contact was the preference versus distributed through the DDDH list. The VT website was also mentioned as a place where some people get information. Members mentioned that often people have multiple things to attend and they need to make choices. Craig shared that people do things almost always because of personal contact. Edd reminded members that sometimes small is good and not every event needs to be attended by more than 40-60 people.

VI. Announcements

December 14 is the deadline for faculty grants for diversity research. The 3rd annual Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity is scheduled for February 2-3. There will be a special session for business and industry on the morning of February 2. The deadline for proposals has been extended to December 15. This year will also feature the M.U.G.A.B.E.E. brothers who are spoken word artists and jazz musicians. They will be here for the week on January 30 and be available for special workshops. Organizations who are interested in participating in a program with them should contact Jane Ann. Elise Witt, a singer-songwriter, will also participate. It is hoped that she will work with the Hush Harbor Choir among other groups. There will be a public performance on Thursday, February 2 in Old Dominion Ballroom at 8:00 p.m. Lucinda Roy will be the closing speaker at the lunch on Friday, February 3. Traditional holiday Latino cuisine will be available from 12:00-1:00 p.m. in the Multicultural Center tomorrow, provided by members of the Hispanic Caucus. Third annual Advance Conference will be January 9.

Meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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