

**Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, February 14, 2005**

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Pat Hyer, Marilyn Kershaw, Shamiso Rowley (for Hayward Farrar), Susanna Rinehart, Cynthia Bonner, Laura Hickerson, Ben Dixon, Jean Brickey, Susan Willis-Walton, Michael Goode, Kim Beisecker, David Travis, Ross Edmonds (for Jon Wooge), Edwin Larroy Rodriquez, Monika Gibson, Mary Madis, Valerie Hardcastle, Linda Woodard, Susan Anderson, Devi Gnyawali, Maxine Lyons, Leon Geyer, Ruth Grene, Craig Brians, Patcharee Phongsvirajati

Absent: LaChelle Waller, Darleen Baker, Jeff Mann, Hassan Aref, Sam Cook, Brandon Smith

Guests: Mary Grace Campos, Jennie Reilly, Norrine Bailey Spencer, Karen DePauw

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented. Ray informed members that Hayward Farrar had double by-pass surgery last week and is now at home recuperating. He will be off for the remainder of the semester and Shamiso Rowley will be serving in his absence. Ruth Grene was introduced as Edd Sewell's replacement, Ross Edmonds was introduced as a substitute for Jon Wooge, and Patcharee Phongsvirajati was introduced as the new representative from the Council of International Student Organizations.

II. Chair Report

- A. Recommendations on Dealing with the Lee Hall Name/Situation** – the report and recommendations were forwarded to the President. Ray has not received any feedback.
- B. University Council Realignment** – Ray sent Sam Easterling the commission's recommendations on the realignment and these were incorporated into the report they presented to the President. Those recommendations included maintaining the seats for the Black Caucus and Black Organizations Council and having one faculty/staff and one student at-large position elected by the commission as well as maintaining the position for the Director of Equal Opportunity.
- C. VT Principles of Community** – the most recent version was distributed. The line for the signature of the President of the Alumni Association has been removed because they do not have adequate time to review the document before the board meeting in March. Their executive committee does not meet again until April. They have been encouraged to do something else in addition to endorsing the document after their April meeting. There will be a marketing plan once the document is signed. Details are still being discussed There will be a public ceremony at the BOV meeting on the afternoon of Monday, March 14. It will be a powerful resolution from the board which will recognize not only the Principles of Community but also the Diversity Matters paper, the standards of inclusive policies, programs, and practices, and both the PATH and Human Relations Council pledges.
- D. Task Force Updates** – a couple of copies of a summary of the evaluations from the Diversity Summit are being passed around. Most task forces haven't had a chance to meet given the full schedule of the commission.
- E. Other items** – Ray asked for a member to attend University Council in his place on Monday, February 21 as he will be at a conference. Kim Beisecker volunteered to attend.

III. Presentations: A Look at Undergraduate and Graduate Admission at Virginia Tech

- A. Dr. Norrine Bailey Spencer, Associate Provost and Director of Undergraduate Admissions**
Norrine began her presentation by passing out a handout with some of the initiatives taking place in the Admissions Office in the areas of policy and procedures, personnel, and programs and collaborations. One of the charges she was given when she accepted the position was to bring more

diversity through the freshman admissions process. Right now the office is reviewing 17,700 applications. When reviewing, they look at course selection, grades in courses, SAT scores, and then everything else (to include items like first generation college student, race, major, athlete, etc.). In addition, this year a second optional statement on diversity was included as part of the application. Norrine highlighted some of the items from the handout and shared some of the numbers. They will make 12,000 offers with the goal of a freshman class of 3,350 in state and 1,650 out of state students. Some of the challenges they face include the resignation of the sole African American Assistant Director and that fact that we meet about 70% of need but it is mostly in the form of loans. Norrine then answered a number of questions from commission members. There were some specific questions about University Studies and whether or not students are able to move from that program into specific majors with relative ease. No one knew whether or not that was an issue, so it will be investigated further. Norrine asked that if individuals have suggestions or recommendations to please pass them on to her.

B. Dr. Karen DePauw, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School

Karen began by sharing some of the fall 2003 data including number of master's students, doctoral students, graduate assistants, graduate teaching assistants, and graduate research assistants. She also provided some of the demographics of the graduate population. Female students have declined while male students have increased. Most of the graduate students are from Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. They would like to see an increase of students from some of the other states. There is also a move by the university to increase the enrollment of PhD students by 900 by the year 2010. There are 49 new graduate assistant positions for PhD students next year to assist with this goal. They are also trying to bring back the ABD (all but dissertation) program and there have been more combined bachelor's/master's programs. A question was raised about how competitive Virginia Tech is with the stipends for graduate students. Karen responded that the stipend is not as much of an obstacle as health insurance has been. However, we have moved from 30% to 70% funding of health insurance premiums. Her goal is to get it to 100%.

Ben Dixon thanked both Norrine and Karen and commended them on their leadership in their respective areas which is helping to turn the university in the right direction. He encouraged members to be sure to share this information with their constituencies so that everyone is more informed.

IV. Announcements

Ben reminded members of the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity which is being held March 17-18 at the Hotel Roanoke. The keynote speaker is William Harvey, Vice President and Director of the Center for the Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity. Also speaking on Thursday is Megan Boler, a former faculty member at Virginia Tech. The closing address will be made by Nikki Giovanni. Kim Beisecker announced that there will be a Tsunami Relief Concert on Thursday, February 17 in Burruss Auditorium.

V. Next Meeting

The next commission meeting is February 28. Tom Brown will be present to discuss student orientation and Linda Woodard will share information on staff orientation. David Ford will attend a meeting in March to discuss faculty orientation since he is unavailable on February 28. The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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