

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, March 28, 2005

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Pat Hyer, Susanna Rinehart, Ben Dixon, Jean Brickey, Susan Willis-Walton, Michael Goode, David Travis, Ross Edmonds, Monika Gibson, Susan Anderson, Maxine Lyons, Ruth Grene, Craig Brians, Jon Wooge, Leon Geyer, Marilyn Kershaw, Laura Hickerson, Cynthia Bonner, Kim Beisecker

Absent: Shamiso Rowley (for Hayward Farrar), Darleen Baker, Jeff Mann, Hassan Aref, Sam Cook, Edwin Larroy Rodriguez, Patcharee Phongsvirajati, Brandon Smith, LaChelle Waller, Valerie Hardcastle, Devi Gnyawali, Linda Woodard, Mary Madis

Guests: Mary Grace Campos, Fain Rutherford, Bob Youngs, Matt Gart, John Muffo, Laura Clark, Ellen Plummer

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

II. Chair Report

Ray reminded members that the Campus Climate Check-Up is scheduled for today, March 28 at 6:00 p.m. and will feature updates from various people across campus. Last Thursday was the open forum for orientation. There were 18-20 people there who reviewed the video and discussed how to best engage new students around diversity issues. One recommendation made was to extend the activities to the fall during Hokie Hi week prior to the start of classes. Ray will be out of town for the next University Council meeting on April 4. Marilyn Kershaw volunteered to attend in his place. There is still a need for a few more volunteers to serve on the committee to review the at-large applications.

Finally, Ray introduced Dr. Bob Youngs from the Rotary Club who wished to address the issue of the Peace Garden Sculpture. He provided some background information and stressed that the Rotary's intention was to promote international peace and understanding. They are now considering putting the sculpture in a park in Christiansburg. There was considerable conversation around the issue of public art. The university will be combining the Visual Arts and the Art in Public Places Committees. A recommendation was made to request the opportunity to have some commission members be a part of this new committee. Maxine Lyons, Susanna Rinehart, Susan Willis-Walton, and Ruth Grene indicated interest in working on this topic. Kim Beisecker recognized the incredible contributions of Bob and Esther Youngs to the Peace Garden and explained the concerns international students had with regard to the sculpture. John Muffo also explained the international nature of the Rotary Club and his disappointment that they had not been contacted to present their side of the story prior to the commission voting to request the administration not allow the sculpture to be placed in the Peace Garden.

III. Old Business – Policy 1025 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention

David Travis shared that they received feedback from a number of different individuals and made some changes to the document shared last week. The changes were reviewed and included adding language for classified staff performing instructional and academic advising duties; including a representative from the Graduate School or Student Affairs for an appeal if the appellant respondent is a student; and notifying the major advisor and department head if the respondent is a student as well as suggesting that an accused student may wish to consult a faculty mentor in

responding to the complaint. There were still some concerns about graduate students being held to a higher standard without the privileges associated. Ben Dixon suggested that those concerns are part of a larger problem regarding the rights and responsibilities of graduate students and need to be dealt with separately from this policy. The motion was made and seconded to vote on this policy acknowledging that it will be reviewed by the Commission on Faculty Affairs on April 8 and should appear on the agenda for the April 18 meeting of University Council. The policy was approved with one abstention.

IV. Announcements

March 31st at 6:30 p.m. is Take Back the Night. The International Street Fair is Saturday, April 9 from 11:00 – 5:00 with additional events all week long. This week is Gay Awareness Week. Holocaust Awareness Week is April 11-15. There will be three candidates for the Director of Equal Opportunity on campus for interviews. The first candidate, Rebecca Woodrick, will present on Thursday, April 7 at 9:00 a.m. The second candidate, Janet Saunders, will present on Tuesday, April 12 at 9:00 a.m. The third candidate, Kevin McDonald, will present on Tuesday, April 26 at 9:00 a.m. All presentations will be in Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center. Ben Dixon shared that the Office of Multicultural Affairs is advertising two position, Director of Education and Training and Coordinator of Alumni and Community Relations. The Office for Equal Opportunity is advertising for a Web Designer.

VII. Next Meeting

The next commission meeting is April 11. There will be a preliminary report on the exit survey data at the meeting on April 25. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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