

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, April 11, 2005

Minutes

Present: Ray Plaza, Pat Hyer, Susanna Rinehart, Ben Dixon, Michael Goode, David Travis, Ross Edmonds, Monika Gibson, Susan Anderson, Maxine Lyons, Craig Brians, Edwin Larroy Rodriguez, Marilyn Kershaw, Laura Hickerson, Cynthia Bonner, Kim Beisecker, LaChelle Waller, Valerie Hardcastle, Devi Gnyawali, Linda Woodard

Absent: Shamiso Rowley (for Hayward Farrar), Darleen Baker, Jeff Mann, Hassan Aref, Sam Cook, Patcharee Phongsvirajati, Brandon Smith, Mary Madis, Jon Wooge, Leon Geyer, Jean Brickey, Ruth Grene, Susan Willis-Walton

Guests: Mary Grace Campos, Fain Rutherford, Ellen Plummer

I. Adoption of Agenda

The Virginia Tech Principles of Community were added under old business. The revised agenda was approved.

II. Chair Report

Ray thanked Marilyn Kershaw for attending University Council for him on April 4. He was at ACPA where he presented a session on the commission. The discussion about art on campus will likely not occur until summer with the individuals who indicated interest. Holocaust Awareness Week begins today and International Week continues through the week. There were over 12,000 people at the Street Fair on Saturday. The people who have volunteered to serve on the review committee for the at-large positions are Pat Hyer, Cynthia Bonner, Monika Gibson, and Michael Goode. There are 20 applicants which need to be narrowed down to four to be sent to the President. Ellen Plummer reported that the call for a women's representative went out this morning for people to apply. The international community is still working on identifying their new representative.

III. Old Business

A. Virginia Tech Principles of Community

Ben Dixon reported that there have been two occasions where the use of the principles has become obvious. In University Council there was a reference that they are not university policy. Ben has issued a memo to the President's office requesting clarification on whether or not they constitute policy even though there is no policy number designated to them. The items for the marketing campaign are still being developed. There will be framed versions that offices can order and it will also be posted on our website as a PDF file so if individuals want to just print that and frame it, they can do so. There will be postcards and bookmarks available for the various orientations and other events and programs. The resident advisors were all given pre-made bulletin boards about the principles with questions to use to guide discussions with residents.

B. Policy 1025 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention

David Travis provided an update on the policy that was passed at the last meeting. Some changes were made after meeting with the Commission on Faculty Affairs. Ray went through the document and highlighted the changes. A motion was made and seconded to proceed with the recommended changes. It was unanimously passed. The first reading at University Council should be on April 18.

IV. New Business – Constituent Reports

Reports were presented by the international community, individuals with disabilities community, Division of Student Affairs, Commission on Student Affairs, Graduate Student Assembly, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Commission on Faculty Affairs, Faculty Senate, Hispanic Caucus, Staff Senate, Provost's Office, Personnel Services, and Office for Equal Opportunity. The LGBT Caucus report will be presented on April 25. It was suggested that the EO office report annually to the commission on number of complaints, outcomes of searches, etc.

Some of the challenges and issues for the various communities include: decline in international students; need for training and understanding of the unique challenges of internationals in our community; recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students; development of display and signage for Lee Hall; establishment of task force to propose and develop initiatives to increase student multicultural competence; VT website translation efforts; mentoring for Hispanic/Latino students; increasing the visibility of disability issues; perceptions by undergraduates that they are underserved as compared to graduate students; need for greater collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students; affects of the restructuring of higher education on the students who come to Virginia Tech; how undergraduate fit into the research mission; increased communication between students and administration; improving the image/perceptions of Virginia Tech; computer access for staff; how to incorporate the Virginia Tech Principles; and training and education of faculty, staff, and students.

Linda Woodard reported that they have speaker on campus today and tomorrow on bullying in the workplace. She also shared some of the leadership programs being offered for various individuals on campus. The exit survey will hopefully be ready for reporting on at the next meeting and they are working on developing a survey for current staff employees related to campus climate issues.

VII. Next Meeting and Announcements

The next commission meeting is April 25. Kim reminded members that there are international lunches from Tuesday-Friday at Cranwell International Center. Friday is the closing event with a parade of flags and talent show. Susan Anderson shared that 500 people attended the Take Back the Night Rally. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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