

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, April 2, 2007

Minutes

Present: Ross Edmonds, Deborah Morgan, Carlos Evia, Sam Camden, Sheila Carter-Tod, Mike Taczak, Ray Plaza, Ruth Grene, Elizabeth Sotelino, Brad Klein, Ann Kilkelly, Pat Hyer, Sue Ellen Crocker, Elizabeth Gilboy (for Jack Davis), Antionette Strotter, Maggie Sloane (for Kevin McDonald), Elisa Sotelino

Absent: Craig Brians, Elizabeth Waterman, Saurabh Attarde, Zebib Bahta, Kim Beisecker, Patricia Smith, Aaren Salido, Rick Shingles, Linda Woodard, Maxine Lyons, Guy Sims

Guests: Jane Ann Williams, Sarah Wang, Pat Burton, Amy Adams, Paul Heilker, Jennie Reilly, Rheanne Eldridge

**I. Call to Order**

The agenda was adopted.

**II. Chair Report**

Carlos reminded members that the last candidate for the vice president for multicultural affairs will be interviewing this week. If members are interested in having dinner with the candidate Wednesday evening, please let Carlos know. It was suggested that a brief discussion of the four candidates occur at the April 16 meeting.

**III. Update on the Revised Religious Holidays Website**

Rheanne Eldridge shared that the goal is to revamp the current website to meet the needs of students, faculty and staff. The students have created a survey and will mail it to each of the religious organization (there are 57). They have requested that organizations send holidays they want recognized and background on them. So far they have gotten a few responses. They are also investigating what other universities have available. Once the site is complete, it will be shared widely. Their goal is to be finished by May 1. Brad recommended there be a link for feedback on the site.

**IV. Paul Heilker Presentation**

Paul Heilker presented information on autism. One in 150 people is recognized as having autism by the Center for Disease Control. He is working to raise awareness to the issues of autistic people. There are often concerns because they do not socialize like others. Yet socialization and language skills are important so he raised the question of how to create a climate where they can be accepted. Some have opted to call people with autism neurodiverse. Neurodiversity is being invoked as a political term. They do not see themselves listed in the Principles of Community because they do not consider themselves as people with disabilities. He has visited with the English Diversity Community and Services for Students with Disabilities. He has plans to meet with individuals in the ADA office. Jennie Reilly shared that right now there are five students diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. The Employee Resource Center has a number of books and a video on autism available for people to check out. Pat Burton suggested numbers at Virginia Tech are higher than one in 150. Next week is disability awareness week.

**V. Report on research on policies supporting the Principles of Community**

Ray shared a handout developed by representatives from Equal Opportunity, Human Resources, the Provost's Office, and others. This was shared at the BOV meeting last week. The question raised was now that this document is available, how do we make the community aware? This will be an ongoing conversation. Jennie asked that Policy 4075 be added. There is a need to target specific populations in

very direct ways. Debbi suggested linking this document to Safewatch. Given the conversations about education and training, there could be an on-line training module focused on policy support and accountability for the VT Principles of Community.

**VI. Report on the Diversity Requirement Resolution**

Mike Taczak distributed copies of a resolution on a diversity requirement that was passed unanimously on March 13 by the SGA House and Senate. It is now going to second reading at CSA. They are also conducting a survey to identify courses and professors which have successfully incorporated a central focus on diversity and multicultural perspectives. This information will be used in the ongoing review and revision of the Curriculum for Liberal Education.

**VII. CEOD Representative to the Employee Advisory Committee**

Maxine Lyons has volunteered to be the CEOD representative to the Employee Advisory Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. to allow for taskforce meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission