

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
Monday, April 30, 2007

Minutes

Present: Ross Edmonds, Carlos Evia, Sam Camden, Ray Plaza, Ruth Grene, Elizabeth Sotelino, Brad Klein, Ann Kilkelly, Sue Ellen Crocker, Maggie Sloane (for Kevin McDonald), Rick Shingles, Jack Davis, Guy Sims (for Zenobia Hikes), Maxine Lyons, Mike Taczack

Absent: Craig Brians, Elizabeth Waterman, Saurabh Attarde, Zebib Bahta, Kim Beisecker, Patricia Smith, Aaren Salido, Linda Woodard, Sheila Carter-Tod, Pat Hyer, Valerie Hardcastle, Antionette Strotter, Deborah Morgan

Guests: Anita Puckett, Jennie Reilly, Jane Ann Williams

**I. Call to Order**

The agenda was adopted with the addition of a presentation by Anita Puckett.

**II. Presentation on Appalachian Studies**

Anita Puckett shared information about Appalachian Studies. There is a minor in Appalachian Studies with movement towards the creation of a major and some graduate level courses. There is a need to create more visibility for this program. Students from Appalachia have issues and some will not speak up in class because of harassment (discrimination by accent). There are also race and GLBT issues. Diversity issues in the region are major and ongoing. A list of courses for the minor was distributed.

**III. Chair Report**

Carlos posed the question about how the commission can/should respond to the events that happened on April 16. Many offered the continued use of the Principles of Community as a resource. Hokies United was mentioned as an example of a group providing leadership with a focus on the community and bringing the community together. Jane Ann shared that OMA, the Service-Learning Center and Cranwell International Center have collaborated to offer a series of brown bag lunches. Today is the last one at noon at Cranwell. They have provided a good opportunity for information gathering and relationship building. She has also written a grant proposal on diversity through the arts as a way to build and sustain community.

It was also mentioned that the commission can get information out on psychological disabilities as well as provide information to members on university protocol, resources, and policies. This could also be shared with the entire university since it seems that some faculty and others are aware of the policies and protocol while others are unaware. Jennie Reilly shared that psychological disabilities are the fastest growing group. There is concern that the university will overreact which could potentially harm the people in need of help.

**IV. Reports from Taskforces**

- a) Campus Climate – No changes have been made yet but they will be and the final report will be sent to commission members and Dr. McNamee once complete.
- b) Policies – The draft document focusing on ideas for how staff can meet the diversity component as part of their annual evaluation was sent to all members. It will need to be implemented to the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs.

- c) Diversity Strategic Plan – The taskforce continues to collect input from the community. The website is still open for feedback. There will be a workshop at the end of May or beginning of June with major stakeholders. The plan is to share with the revised plan with the commission at the first or second meeting in the fall.
- d) Education/Academic Programs – Ann distributed a summary report. The goal is to make academic programs more visible through a revised and expanded diversity website. The taskforce would like to continue presentations from various departments. In the final report of the Taskforce on Race and the Institution, there is the recommendation to develop a faculty development institute for diversity and multicultural issues to promote cultural competence.

#### **V. Nomination of Vice-Chair for CEOD**

The vice-chair is responsible for providing leadership for the diversity summit and assistance for the selection of at-large members. Ideally, the person selected would be vice-chair for 2007-08 and then chair in 2008-09. Members are encouraged to think about it during the summer with the selection scheduled at the first meeting in the fall.

#### **VI. Taskforce for Improving International Graduate Students' Experiences**

Carlos has met with Karen DePauw and talked with others about the need for this taskforce. It will look at issues of discrimination related to communication skills and will begin working in the fall under Carlos' leadership.

#### **VI. Awards and Recognition**

Carlos presented outgoing members with certificates of appreciation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission