

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Monday, May 1, 2006

Minutes

Present: Ross Edmonds, Ruth Grene, Edd Sewell, Maxine Lyons, Cynthia Bonner (for Zenobia Hikes), Rick Shingles (for Susan Anderson), Pat Hyer, Ray Plaza, Debbi Morgan (for Linda Woodard), Ann Kilkelly, Kevin McDonald, Jean Brickey, Anna LoMascolo (for Ellen Plummer), Carlos Evia, Ben Dixon, Sam Camden, Kris Tilley-Lubbs, Michael Goode, LaChelle Waller

Absent: Sumeet Bagai, Angela Kim, Tina Harvey, Valerie Hardcastle, Maj Zaheda, Richard Benson, Kim Beisecker

Guests: Laura Gillman

I. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

II. Chair Report

The resolution from CEOD was passed at University Council last week. Last Monday and Tuesday a consultant was here to lead sessions on Strategic Diversity Retention for Faculty and Staff and Effective Diversity Councils. Copies of the materials were distributed and are available from the Office for Equal Opportunity. Ray shared copies of the letter sent to the Collegiate Times after they changed the ad that was submitted for Disabilities Awareness. Nikkie Eley, a student at Virginia Tech, has completed a 20 minute documentary on the Lee Hall controversy. OMA will help to fund the production of copies of the DVD and it will be shown at a commission meeting this fall. The Physical Plant will begin putting the Principles of Community in academic classrooms this summer. There was some conversation about continual education about the principles. Three MLK Planning Committee meetings were held to begin identifying potential speakers and other events to occur that week. The top speaker choice is Nelson Mandela. The committee hopes to have the schedule finalized in October. Rather than having Jane Ann report on education and training at this meeting, it has been recommended that she do a presentation in the fall.

II. Selection of Chair/Vice-Chair

Carlos Evia was nominated and approved as chair. Ruth Grene was nominated and approved as vice chair.

III. Task Force Updates

- A. Policy Integration – There were over 55 participants at the roundtable discussions in March. The lowest participation was from teaching and research faculty. There was a consensus regarding the lack of knowledge about the policies and the principles and an overwhelming feeling that nothing pertained to faculty members. There is a need to communicate and educate the entire university community about the policies. A summary will be sent out to all commission members once it is completed. There was considerable discussion about how the policies and principles are enforced and how the university can communicate the interrelated nature of the policies as well as increase the awareness and understanding about the policies. It was suggested that some of the possible sanctions be listed so that people have a sense of what the consequences are for violating these policies. The connection between these policies will also be referenced in the various education and training sessions.

- B. College Diversity Committee – CLAHS, CALS, and Vet Med have active committees focused on specific tasks. The task force is still in the process of tweaking the Diversity Monitoring and Assessment System and plans to launch it this fall. There has been some talk about holding a retreat in the fall for diversity committees helping them think through their plans for the year and share activities with one another.
- C. Diversity in the Faculty Promotion Process – no report
- D. Campus Climate – There was considerable discussion at the last Campus Climate Team meeting about the purpose and charge of the group. A number of recommendations will be sent to Zenobia Hikes. One recommendation is to have a formal connection between the Campus Climate Team and the CEOD campus climate task force.

IV. Discussion- The Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color

The Provost is creating a task force to look at this issue and welcomes comments and feedback from the commission. Ray provided a brief summary of what has occurred and asked members to focus the conversation on what the university needs to do to prevent this from happening again. Concern was raised about mentoring or the lack thereof. This is an example of what happens when there is no system-wide support/mechanism across the university. One thing the commission can recommend is something that can be provided at the university-level to support mentoring programs at the college-level. Sam shared that one point that was stressed last week was that most people leave not because of the organization but because of a supervisor. It was mentioned that if we lose people because of great opportunities, that is okay and to be expected, but if we lose them because they feel undervalued, that is problematic. It was suggested that there are no protocols to guide retention like there are for recruitment. This discussion will be continued next week at 10:00 a.m. in the Duckpond Room for those who are available. If members have comments but cannot attend next week, please send them to Alicia so they can be made available for the discussion.

Presentation

Ray presented outgoing members with certificates. Rick will be serving as the University Council At-Large faculty representative next year.

Announcements

The Staff Senate will be reviewing the staff exit survey on Thursday and make recommendations for changes and plan to distribute the survey to staff in the fall. On June 22 there is a community symposium at Hotel Roanoke from 8:00 – 11:30 a.m. looking at all the immigrant community. The Latino Achievement Ceremony is scheduled on Thursday, May 11 at 3:00 p.m. in Haymarket Theatre, Squires and at 5:00 that same day is Donning of the Kente in the Old Dominion Ballroom, Squires.

Meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia P. Cohen, Secretary to the Commission