

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
Orientation Session Two
Monday, September 22, 2003

Minutes

Present: Pat Hyer, Ben Dixon, Valerie Hardcastle, Bill Greenberg, Susanna Rinehart, Mike Two Horses, Hayward Farrar, Helen Crawford, Edd Sewell, Jean Elliott, Linda Woodard, Gavin Luter, Lanny Cross, Brandon Bull, Meredith Katz, Lois Berg, Darleen Baker, Laura Hickerson, Peggy Quesenberry, Devi Gnyawali, Susan Willis-Walton, Amer Fayad, Renia Edwards for Kimberly Philpott, Trey Church, Jean Brickey, Kim Beisecker, Betty Fine

Absent: Ellen Plummer, Hassan Aref, Ray Plaza, Mary Madis, William Dougherty

Guests: Diane Bell, Mark McNamee, Ken Smith

1. Briefings on demographic profiles of faculty, staff, and students

Pat Hyer began the meeting with a presentation of key indicators of faculty and students. The data for faculty and students is located at <http://www.irpa.vt.edu/> under VT Statistics. Most of the data presented did not include Fall 2003 since that data is not yet complete, but there were some Fall 2003 projections. The presentation provided detailed information on Tenure and Tenure Track Faculty by gender and race/ethnicity and comparisons with SCHEV Peer Institutions and Top 30 as well as data on Fall 2003 entering freshmen, retention rates by ethnicity of all students, graduation rates, and graduate enrollment figures. Handouts were provided with all the detailed slides and corresponding charts.

Linda Woodard briefly introduced some data on the staff. Staff employment is determined by the state and is the same as it is for all other state employees (except faculty). The state has determined the classification scheme for employees and it is extremely difficult to derive much meaning from the data because of the broad groupings of staff. A more detailed analysis specific to Virginia Tech should be available near the end of Fall semester. Linda also passed out some information she generated from the U.S. Census data.

2. Current Legal Environment for Diversity Activities

Mark McNamee provided some background information on how the university responded to requests by both the Attorney General's Office and the Board of Visitors related to race-conscious programs. A comprehensive review of programs was completed in the spring and summer. This included collecting data, reviewing the information, and making recommendations regarding the activities reviewed. The majority appeared to be acceptable with a few requiring either modifications or being discontinued until alternatives could be implemented. There were five activities that required additional legal guidance and review. Mark then reviewed those five programs along with recommendations for each. He then went on to share how the university will move forward and who is responsible for compliance, monitoring progress, and identifying best practices. The commission is listed as the body responsible for identifying best practices for

improving diversity. Members then provided Mark with feedback on the presentation as it will be a significant part of the Forum for the university community on November 10, 2003. The forum has been scheduled at the request of Ben Davenport, a member of the Board of Visitors who led the subcommittee on Narrow Tailoring. The purpose of the forum is to educate the campus community on what we've done, where we are today, and get feedback on how we can move forward. Commission members did provide specific recommendations including the addition of international events and programs to the slide outlining major diversity-related events.

3. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the September 8 meeting as presented. The motion carried.

4. Election of the Chair

The three nominees for Commission Chair were Edd Sewell, Jean Elliott, and William Dougherty. Each provided a brief statement after which voting by ballot was taken. Edd Sewell was elected Chair of the Commission.

5. Priority Setting

a. Review of October Meetings Agenda

There was a general consensus that the commission really needs to get something specific done. While all the issues generated at the last meeting are important, some require significant time to have any impact. With that in mind, a number of individuals recommended that the commission pick a few in which there can be a real impact. A number of questions were raised including how the commission interacts with college diversity committees, what issues need to be dealt with by the full commission, and what subcommittees are needed and how will they operate. It was decided that the two October meetings will be spent shaping the agenda for the commission. The two issues that members want a report back on are the Patriot Act – what are the implications and what influence can the CEOD have on it and the Office of Civil Rights visit to campus. Individuals from that office were scheduled to meet with university administrators last week but were forced to cancel that visit due to the hurricane.

b. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 13, from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon in the Executive Conference Room at Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center.