

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Monday, November 8, 2010

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Graduate Life Center, Room B

Present: Karen Jones, Hal Irvin, Jim Snyder, Kim Beisecker, Bruce Hayden, Amy Reed for Kelly Belanger, Brad Klein, Cris Thompson, Jean Brickey, Meghan Kuhn (vice chair), Connie Wilkinson, Nathan Lavinka, Sam Riley, Mark Cartwright, Ross Edmonds (chair), Diego Troya, Anna LoMascolo, Lee Lovelace, Craig Brians, Anita Puckett for Emily Satterwhite, Guy Sims, Chaney Mosley, Adam Abbruzzese for Lubna Chowdhury, Keisha Riley, Justin Graves

Absent with Notification: William Lewis, Ellen Plummer, Jon Jaudon, Terrence Austin

Absent without Notification: Alan Grant, Virgilio Centeno, Christine Snider, Aditya Johri, Jody Thompson, Frank Hernandez

Guests: Maggie Sloan

Next meeting is scheduled:

Monday, November 29, 2010 in Room B of the Graduate Life Center from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Last CEOD meeting of the semester.

Meeting called to order at 10:05AM.

Motion to pass minutes from previous meeting seconded and so passed.

Ross mentioned that the only item on the University Council agenda was removing degrees, and next UC meeting has been cancelled.

Diversity Progress Summit Implementation Subcommittee formation and charge

Will have four update meetings in the spring with key constituencies; broader “summit” meeting to be held on Wednesday, April 27, 2011 in Commonwealth Ballroom, Squires. Subcommittee to guide planning of these meetings and program are Guy Sims, Kim Beisecker, Meghan Kuhn and Mark Cartwright.

Policy 1025 Rewrite

A subcommittee will convene to rewrite Section 4. Maggie gave overview of requested changes by Staff Senate and Commission on Staff Affairs. The concern is that staff are subsumed under “and others” in the current reading of the policy. A commitment was made to rewrite the policy and the goal is to acknowledge staff without charging them with a set of responsibilities that are not expected of them – a liability issue. The subcommittee leading the rewrite is comprised of Diego Troya, Jean Brickey, Connie Wilkinson, Maggie Sloane, and Guy Sims. Will also welcome other resource people or those who want to be involved/not present at today’s meeting.

Subcommittee for Strategic Priorities

To meet with Will Lewis and devise CEOD priorities in support of monitoring the university's Diversity Strategic Plan. Suggested participants in this discussion include Ross Edmonds, Guy Sims, Meghan Kuhn, Ellen Plummer, Craig Brians, and Kim Beisecker.

Update on Holiday Letter

A lengthy conversation ensued over the issue of the university's annual holiday letter. Below are some bulleted highlights from the conversation:

- Perhaps the letter should be issued by the CEOD rather than by university administrators
- Eliminate 2nd paragraph? May be too off-putting
- Letter should encompass entire year and not target winter holiday season; perhaps disseminate letter 3X/year
- Use Principles of Community as a backdrop to the letter
- What is a welcoming environment? We perpetuate confusion by having no policy; What do we really mean by welcoming?
- Concerns that cultural and religious holidays are being intertwined
- University policies govern individual choices
- We're telling new employees we want them to bring their "whole self" to the environment and that we are inclusive; this begins to conflict with that message
- First amendment concerns w/ getting too prescriptive
- Protect individual rights but the university cannot promote a specific religion; university resources being used in celebrating religious holidays also an issue

There is really no benchmarking to be done around this issue. A subcommittee formed to review the letter and make recommendations, including: Guy Sims, Ross Edmonds, and Hal Irvin. It was requested that nothing be endorsed this year by the Commission.

Guest Speaker

Speaker Dr. Seong Ki Mun, w/ team from the VT Executive Leadership Development Institute, presented on "The Academic Bullying Culture: A Case Study on the Bullying of Graduate Students by Faculty". His presentation is available on Scholar. Some highlights:

- Data accessed through Grad School ombudsperson
- Conclusions: Current VT policies and procedures only tangentially address bullying; this absence not serving accusers or accused.
- Recommendations: study impact at VT; need for awareness programs, policies, procedures
- Need for tools to assist those who intervene

For more details of the talk, visit the CEOD Scholar site.

Meeting adjourned at 11:34AM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Anna LoMascolo