

Minutes
CLAHS Diversity Committee
Meeting, February 6, 2006

Bob Leonard called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

The minutes of the most recent previous meeting on December 5, 2005 were accepted with no changes. Discussion followed on several items.

Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at Virginia Tech/CLAHS poster session

Committee members were positive overall about the poster session, and noted that posters developed for this session could be used in other forums, such as a diversity conference. One person commented that the process to develop the poster was a good experience for her department in that it had stimulated thinking about types of research being conducted in the department. The faculty in one department developed a flow chart of departmental activities for their poster. Other comments involved the helpfulness in the future of providing more guidance on what was expected in a poster, perhaps especially for faculty who are unaccustomed to presenting their work in poster format. Representatives of some departments suggested the use of software specifically designed for making posters.

Diversity Research Conference

Comments about the conference were the following.

- The keynote speaker gave many statistics to educate people; this may have been unnecessary for the audience, and a more inspirational speech may have been better.
- A publisher discussed difficulties in fielding e-mails sent to minority authors.
- Lucinda Roy's presentation was well received.
- Some VT faculty members have said that they never received word on whether their proposals submitted for the meeting were accepted or not.

CLAHS faculty meeting, February 16, 2006, 4:00-6:00

Dick Burian discussed this upcoming meeting, which will focus on diversity issues to increase faculty awareness that diversity is an issue for the faculty, not just administrators. A joint committee from the Faculty Council and the Diversity Committee has organized the meeting. The meeting will open with a panel discussion by administrators. Then, the faculty will break into discussion groups. One topic to be discussed is retention of diverse faculty, recognizing that VT seems better at recruiting diverse faculty than retaining them; an action that may help retention is to have greater diversity in the senior faculty by making senior appointments of people of color and women. A possible outcome of the meeting is the formation of a faculty group to address retention. Dick

asked for volunteers to facilitate discussions or act as recorders in the breakout groups at the meeting on February 16.

Exit survey of faculty who have left VT

Valerie Hardcastle reported that she is organizing an exit survey of CLAHS faculty members who have left VT over the last three years. She commented that exit data from the VT Quality of Life Survey by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) are not college-specific, although the data seem to show that the reasons faculty leave are not college-specific. Valerie indicated that she could invite to one of our meetings an individual in CSR who is familiar with the exit data from the Quality of Life Survey.

A related comment was that some diverse faculty may have left the university because promised research support never materialized. Peggy Meszaros noted the importance of including promises of support in the offer letter to a prospective faculty member. A question was raised as to whether the university is bound by what the offer letter says.

On a related issue, Valerie Hardcastle mentioned that Beverlyn Samuels has been appointed the VT dual-career coordinator to help find positions in the university for spouses of individuals who have been offered faculty positions at VT.

Intervention training strategy for RAs

Megan Carney is coordinating this effort. A suggestion was to include AASU along with the other organizations involved, such as LASO.

Diversity faculty development institute

Rick Shingles raised the idea of a faculty development institute on diversity that would be organized along the lines of the FDI for computer training. Faculty would cycle through every few years and be rewarded for participating in the institute. This initiative would need financial backing. We could not rely on graduate students to organize this because of their transient status at VT. The goal of the diversity institute would be to change the VT culture to provide a more welcoming climate for all.

Summer Graduate Student Diversity Fellowship

Marjorie Norton and Rick Shingles have volunteered to handle this, but there has been confusion about the fellowship. Valerie Hardcastle said that a meeting about this will take place and that she would get the meeting time changed and let us know when it is.

Diversity Research Small Grants Program

Peggy Meszaros noted that the list of the awardees of the diversity grants was distributed at the Diversity Research Conference and that the grants have resulted in visible outcomes. She also noted that the diversity research grants began in CLAHS and are now

a university program funded through the office of the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs (Ben Dixon's office). She cited changes in this grants program as follow: The start date of the grants will be in January so the grant period will be an entire year, and awardees will be expected to subsequently submit proposals for external funding. She will have a report on the two-year evaluation of this grants program by the end of this semester.

CLAHS Diversity Award

Applications for the award were due February 3, 2006. Some confusion was noted in where/to whom to submit the applications. A subcommittee of our committee will evaluate the applications.

All-But-Dissertation (ABD) Program

Valerie Hardcastle indicated that she will write a proposal to re-institute the ABD program. She noted that few in the present administration remember this program, and many at VT think it was a failure. Although some of those who came to VT in this program have left, several are still here.

CLAHS Diversity Web Site

Comments about the Web site were positive. One such comment was that the CLAHS Diversity Web site is linked to the CLAHS Web site where diversity is prominent. To a question about how our committee wants to use the Diversity Web site, a suggestion was to use it for public relations in terms of demonstrating the importance our college places on diversity.

Principles of Community

The use of the Principles of Community to address the needs of "neglected groups" on campus had been discussed in the meeting on 12/5/05. Highlights of that discussion were reviewed.

Multicultural meeting places in lieu of the Multicultural Center

Loss of meeting space in the Multicultural Center has left some groups without meeting facilities. A suggestion was to invite Zenobia Hikes, the Vice President for Student Affairs, to talk with our committee about the need for meeting places for various groups in the university. Also noted was that we would be better able to serve the needs of students in our college if we had more information about (a profile of) the CLAHS student body. Mary Ann Lewis may be able to provide needed information. It was suggested that we invite her to one of our meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes were taken by Marjorie Norton.