

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Diversity Committee
Meeting Minutes – Sept. 5, 2006

In attendance: Kristy Arnold, Susan Asselin, Dick Burian, Megan Carney, Jean Elliott, Valerie Hardcastle, Robert Leonard, Marjorie Norton, Ann Potts, Rick Shingles

Bob Leonard called the meeting to order. Our goal, he said, “ is to move past programming to effect cultural change.”

The Provost’s Task Force on Race and the Institution includes Valerie Hardcastle. The Provost expects a report with action steps at the end of this calendar year. Other CLAHS members include Marcie Boucouvalas (Human Development), Sheila Carter-Tod (English), Scott Johnson (Human Development), Rosa Mayorga (Philosophy)

It was suggested that the various groups that meet on diversity matters assemble to identify common ground. There is a need for shared strategy. Two groups were mentioned here: Undoing Racism Group – funded to bring in outside facilitators; and the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond (Laura Gillman)

ACTION ITEM: With regard to committee membership, it was suggested that we email student organizations and inform them about our committee and invite their participation.

With regard to the College Search and Select process, a committee needs to be formed to define a set of talking points on matters of diversity and multicultural learning communities at VT to be used as a guide in on-campus interviews. (Betty Fine to spearhead?)

The Task Force on Diversity Research was discussed (3-page information document circulated prior to meeting) The Campus Climate Research Project will present a request for research projects for next year on questions of race. This puts the College in sponsorship position. This could go forth as a national call for proposals. In defining what resources/research are available, it was suggested that a round table could be held to help inform. We are looking for allies for project.

Megan Carney announced that fellow graduate student Shannon Turner will join her to help produce [classified]- an intervention project that interweaves student experiences on multicultural issues. Possible audiences were discussed (residence life contacts suggested) and how to build this as a useful tool. It was noted that many students here convey that they don’t feel abused but neglected.

In process of restructuring as an official College Committee, a committee (Bob Leonard, Dick Burian and Marjorie Norton) was formed to articulate structure, purpose and charge.

It was suggested that Dave Winston be contacted in College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to see how their new committee was structured. Bob is also looking for collaboration with College of Science.

Other Committee assignments:

Ann Potts with Marian Mollin and Toni Calasanti will revisit criteria for Diversity Award and take it to Valerie.

Bob will talk to Ann Kilkelly about “Joining Communities” training initiative.

A copy of “Difficult Dialogues” was distributed electronically after the meeting to see if the initiative is worth continued pursuit.

Valerie – follow up on Safe Watch contact cards for CLAHS faculty/staff.

Possible considerations for future Faculty Activities Report include adding a line to reflect mentoring. A handbook for mentoring/mentees was also suggested.

A conversation about the Connect to the CLAHS Community event for entering freshmen revealed a negative reaction to “having them sign” onto the Principles of Community. It seemed forced.

To be in sync with class times, future meetings will start a half hour later and run from 3:30 –5:00.