

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DIVERSITY COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**

A meeting of the Diversity Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College was held on Monday, February 7, 2005, at Noon in Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Thomas Little, Vice Chair James Leddy, Christine Hertz

REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Student Representative Lee Souter, Faculty Representative Austin Troy

ABSENT: Richard Hube, Alysia Krasnow-Butler, Alumni Representative Janet Terp, Staff Representative Mary Guillory

OTHER TRUSTEES PRESENT: None

PERSONS ALSO PARTICIPATING: John Bramley, Provost, Willi Coleman, Vice Provost for Multicultural Affairs, Kathryn Friedman, Executive Director Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, Annie Stevens, Assistant Vice President for Campus and Student Life

Chair Thomas Little called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. Chair Little acknowledged the presence of the students who were in attendance in a protest action and stated that the Committee would hear from them on their concerns during the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the minutes of the Diversity Committee meetings held on September 10 and November 11, 2004.

Campus and Student Life Presentation

Annie Stevens, Assistant Vice President for Student and Campus Life, revisited the committee presenting the highlights of the Diversity Initiative that was started by the Division of Student Affairs four years ago. Working from a "master plan" developed for enhancing efforts to diversify key areas within the Division, Student Affairs leadership reports success in many areas, including increases in staff, graduate assistants and student affairs leadership of color. Emphasizing the importance of building trust as foundational to this process, Assistant Vice President Stevens said these conversations never end and the process is continual. In answer to the question of how this work may be moved into the greater Burlington community, she said that there emphasis has been on the internal office climate and the needs and lives of students on campus. However there are other ways in which UVM has an impact in the community at large: the College of Education teacher education program (K-12); service learning programs such as the Burlington High School mentoring project; and local hiring initiatives through the UVM Human Resources office.

Update on Campus Climate Survey

Kathryn Friedman, Executive Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, spoke to the committee about the Campus Climate Survey project which grew out of the LGBTQA Office's efforts to initiate a survey on campus climate. The purpose of this is to survey all people on campus and provide analysis and recommendations to improve the campus climate for all members of the community. Although this will be a powerful tool, it is not the only means by which climate information is obtained. The President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion has engaged an outside consultant who will create the survey instrument based on 15 on-campus fact finding meetings which she had with various constituents, including the President and the Provost. The instrument will be a web-based survey and is scheduled to be posted April 4th – 15th, and a wide variety of methods to promote participation will be utilized. The data from the survey will include recommendations for addressing identified climate problem areas.

Other Business

Chair Little invited comments on the draft of the Work Plan for this committee. He indicated that the May meeting of this committee would include gender identity/expression learning and discussion. He also said there would be an effort made to bring the Committee together for an educational meeting before May. Other comments included a request for more student presentations like the McNair scholar who presented at the November meeting. An update on Enrollment Management was also requested and is included on the work plan for May.

Chair Little then passed out the recently revised anti-discrimination policy statement, with its annotation stating that incidents of discrimination on the basis of gender identity and/or expression would be treated and enforced as instances of discrimination on the basis of sex. Provost Bramley then gave a recap of the recent review, analysis and decision-making that culminated with the issuance of the revised policy statement.

Chair Little provided his perspective on the policy development and recited the history of the Committee's development of the "Why Diversity" statement adopted by the Board at its November 2004 meeting.

Chair Little then opened the floor to those who wanted to address the Committee regarding the University's anti-discrimination policy statement. Ethan Fechter-Liggett, Vice President of the student organization Free to Be - the LGBTQ alliance recognized by the SGA – addressed the committee on behalf of his group. He read a statement expressing strong concern that this Committee has not had gender identity and/or expression on its agenda and requesting that it be a part of the May meeting. He also invited members of the committee and the community to attend the third annual student organized "Translating Identity Conference" on March 5th, which is free and open to the public.

Discussion followed including input from members of the faculty and staff in support of the students' request. Committee members expressed strong interest in becoming educated and informed on the issues. Eli Clare, Staff Assistant for LGBTQA Services, gave a heartfelt

explanation of the rationale, equity and principles behind their request for the next step, namely for including “gender identity and/or expression” in the text of the anti-discrimination policy.

Provost John Bramley explained that the administration established an enforcement policy consistent with the protection of the transgendered members of the University Community, by means of the revision to the University’s non-discrimination statement. He noted that if any change in the policy itself is to be made, it must be approved by the Board, and stated that he would assist the Committee in gathering information and materials about the issue.

Others present commented on the gender identity and/or expression issue. Chair Little stated that the Committee would be taking up the issue at its next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Little, Chair