

October 2, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Diversity:

Warren M. Thompson, Chair
G. Slaughter Fitz-Hugh, Jr.
James W. Head
Glynn D. Key
Lewis F. Payne
Georgia M. Willis
John O. Wynne
Gordon F. Rainey, Jr., Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

William G. Crutchfield, Jr.	Mark J. Kington
Susan Y. Dorsey	Don R. Pippin
Thomas F. Farrell, II	Terence P. Ross
W. Heywood Fralin	Thomas A. Saunders, III
E. Darracott Vaughan, Jr., M.D.	

FROM: Alexander G. Gilliam, Jr.

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee
on Diversity on October 2, 2004

The Special Committee on Diversity of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 2, 2004, in the East Oval Room of the Rotunda; Warren M. Thompson, Chair, presided. G. Slaughter Fitz-Hugh, Jr., James W. Head, Ms. Glynn D. Key, Lewis F. Payne, Ms. Georgia M. Willis, John O. Wynne, and Gordon F. Rainey, Jr., Rector, were present.

Also present were Thomas F. Farrell, II, Ms. Susan Y. Dorsey, W. Heywood Fralin, Mark J. Kington, Don R. Pippin, and E. Darracott Vaughan, Jr., M.D.

Present as well were John T. Casteen, III, Leonard W. Sandridge, Alexander G. Gilliam, Jr., Paul J. Forch, Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, Gene D. Block, Arthur Garson, Jr., M.D., R. Ariel Gomez, M.D., R. Edward Howell, Robert E. Reynolds, M.D., Ms. Yoke San Reynolds, Ms. Colette Sheehy, Ms. Angela M. Davis, Michael J. Smith, Brian Balogh, and Ms. Jeanne Flippo Bailes.

The Chair opened the meeting and invited the President to comment on "Embracing Diversity in Pursuit of Excellence," the report of the President's Commission on Diversity and Equity. The report was released in September and had been distributed previously to Members of the Board.

The President thanked Ms. Davis and Mr. Smith, the Co-Chairs of the Commission, as well as others who participated in the Commission and assisted it in its work. He characterized the Commission's report as "smart and pragmatic," and said it required action by every part of the University community.

He then reviewed the proposed budget for implementing some of the recommendations in the report, including the position of Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity. He used this review of the budget as a way of commenting on the recommendations made by the Commission.

Work is in progress on the beginning of the implementation of some of the Commission's recommendations. Others will require more planning and study. Some will involve work and coordination with entities beyond the University.

The President concluded by saying that the report is a "remarkably sound and judicious estimate of what needs to be done."

The Chair thanked Ms. Davis and Mr. Smith for their hard work and for what he termed an excellent report. He then invited Members of the Special Committee to comment.

Mr. Wynne suggested that there be more staff "up front," perhaps another analyst or two, and that there be a research/IT person on board full time. He also thought

more attention should be paid to diversity among graduate students. He remarked that the idea of exposing students to diversity is "sensational," and that as far as he knows, no other institution does this. He cautioned, though, that such efforts must be pedagogically sound. Students must be prepared for the real world, which is diverse, and he wondered if this point had been covered properly in the Commission's report.

The President commented on several of Mr. Wynne's points. On diversity among graduate students, he said that it is relatively easy to accomplish in the professional schools and there have been successful efforts in, for example, the School of Medicine. It is difficult in Graduate Arts and Sciences, however, because the organization there is by department and not by the school as a whole. He then deferred to Mr. Smith and Ms. Davis who in turn deferred to Mr. Brian Balogh, Professor of History and a member of the Commission.

Mr. Balogh noted that questions of recruiting a more diverse graduate student body really come down to problems of recruitment in general, not just minority students. The University must be able to be more competitive in recruiting good graduate students.

Mr. Fitz-Hugh commended the Co-Chairs on the work of the Commission. He then asked if thought had been given to creating a "Diversity Council" at the University, a group with representatives of the various concerned groups. Ms. Davis replied that the Commission suggests some sort of advisory group to the Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity.

Mr. Farrell also commended the Commission for its report and said he thought the idea of preparatory summer camps was worth pursuing. He said he understood the comments that such undertakings are expensive and that there doesn't seem to be state money for them, but he thought the University should be able to find the resources. He also stressed the importance of procurement from minority firms.

The President replied that camps are expensive and that maybe an approach would be to provide scholarships

based on high school counselors' recommendations. Also, perhaps these camps should concentrate on teaching method and procedure - in other words, how to cope - rather than academic preparation. He noted, too, that a variation on the old summer prep camps had been reinstated last summer or the summer before.

Mr. Smith commented on several of the points raised and how the Commission had tried to address them. It is important, above all, to have a Diversity Officer in place to direct all of this.

The Chair said time is important and he asked about the time frame for the Diversity Officer - when will he be hired? The President replied that the search process probably would take four or five months. He then went through the budget document on the report, pointing out when each portion can be funded. Other parts of the Commission's report can be done quickly if the proposed "charter" legislation is approved by the General Assembly at the forthcoming Session. If the legislation fails, then these things will take time.

Ms. Dorsey thanked the Commission for its report. She said, though, that a focus on business issues generally is missing and that she hoped there would be attention paid to this in the University's diversity efforts. The Diversity Officer can do much to push these things.

Ms. Key commented that if these diversity efforts are successful, they can only enhance the quality of the University. It is a wonderful opportunity.

Mr. Wynne said it is important that there be some early and visible successes in these efforts. He urged the administration to choose several of the points raised by the Commission and concentrate on making them successful.

Mr. Payne echoed Mr. Wynne's comments, particularly on the importance of preparing students for a diverse world beyond the University. He suggested that there might be some way to quantify successes after students leave the University.

The Chair summarized the discussions, which he termed extremely valuable. He thanked Members for their comments and said there had been some good suggestions for broadening the scope of the report.

The Rector thanked the Commission for their work, which he called extremely important and valuable. He commented that what really matters now is what we do with it. The report suggests cultural changes of a magnitude which will take time, frustrating though that might be. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that the University is committed to make these changes.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

AGG:lah

These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors website.

<http://www.virginia.edu/bov/specialcommminutes.html>