

March 21, 2005

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:

A. Macdonald Caputo	W. Heywood Fralin
Alan A. Diamonstein	Mark J. Kington
Susan Y. Dorsey	Vincent J. Mastracco, Jr.
Thomas F. Farrell, II	Don R. Pippin
E. Darracott Vaughan, Jr., M.D.	

FROM: Alexander G. Gilliam, Jr.

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee
on Diversity on March 21, 2005

The Special Committee on Diversity of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 11:05 a.m., Monday, March 21, 2005, in the offices of Mr. Farrell at Dominion Energy, 120 Tredegar Street, Richmond; Warren M. Thompson, Chair, presided. James W. Head, Ms. Glynn D. Key, Ms. Georgia M. Willis, and Gordon F. Rainey, Jr., Rector, were present. John O. Wynne participated by telephone.

Also present were Leonard W. Sandridge, Alexander G. Gilliam, Jr., Alton A. Martin, Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, Ms.

Yoke San L. Reynolds, Milton L. Adams, and Ms. Amy D. Cronin.

The Chair opened the meeting by saying that he wanted to have a discussion of the Committee's role from this point forward. Diversity at the University clearly is an important subject, something that comes up at every meeting of the Board of Visitors. The Committee has accomplished something in that awareness of diversity across the University has been heightened and the search for the Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity is underway. Nonetheless, he said, the Committee cannot point to measurable evidence of successes. The lack of quantifiable success would be unacceptable in, for example, the corporate world. What should the Committee do here on out?

Ms. Willis suggested first that whatever course of action the Committee decides on should be a team effort. She went on to suggest that the Committee draw up an agenda and goals to be accomplished before the Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity arrives.

Ms. Key commented that the hiring of the Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity will be a wonderful opportunity for the University.

Mr. Head said he thought the Committee has accomplished a great deal. Students are aware of the issues in ways that they were not before and have been talking to him all year about the Committee and its work. He has been happy with the work of the Committee and the fact that it has been "holding the Administration to the fire." The Committee is building a culture, and that fact is very important and is what it is supposed to be doing, but it is very difficult to quantify. He suggested that polling of student satisfaction could be useful and would be a way of quantifying the Committee's successes.

Mr. Wynne said the Committee should not devise an agenda for itself that would put it ahead of the Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity before his arrival at the University. The Chief Officer should have a role in this. As for quantifying performance, he said it takes time to measure the success of the kinds of things the Committee has been trying to accomplish. Before the Chief Officer's

arrival, the Committee could with profit survey other institutions to see what they have been doing with these issues. He said there is no reason why the University in the end can't be a leader in diversity. But he said it was not wise for the Committee to try to come up with something at this meeting.

The Chair asked Ms. Reynolds, Vice President for Finance, to report on the search for the Chief Officer.

Ms. Reynolds said the group of applicants is strong. The search committee has identified twelve semi-finalists and the first round of interviews will begin next week - these will take place at a location or locations away from the University. She said the committee hopes to have the finalists visit the Grounds by the end of April. The semi-finalists represent a good range - some are academic administrators and some come from the corporate world. The President will interview the finalists and will make the final decision. She hopes to have a decision in May and to have the Chief Officer on board at the University in the summer.

Mr. Wynne emphasized his suggestion that other schools be surveyed on their diversity efforts; Mr. Sandridge, the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, said a survey has been started.

The Chair, recalling the discussion on procurement from minority business that took place at the last meeting of the Committee, asked Mr. Sandridge if anything in that regard has transpired since then. Mr. Sandridge replied that he would have a report on this at the Board meeting next week. A temporary person from outside the University has been hired to work with the administration on this question. The process of certifying minority vendors with the state's processes has been speeded up, and he said he expects "quantum jumps" in the number of minority vendors doing business with the University in the next year. He said he thought it would be possible to set goals at the next meeting of the Board.

The Chair speculated on student perceptions of how the diversity efforts to date are working. He asked how we can improve student perceptions of how we are doing.

Ms. Key suggested that Student Council's listing of some 500 student organizations, referred to during the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee earlier in the morning, might be a way both of assessing results and "getting out the message."

Mr. Farrell suggested the format of the several town meetings of students organized by the Vice President for Student Affairs and Members of the Student Affairs Committee. Perhaps a series of town meetings with Members of the Special Committee on Diversity might be helpful.

Mr. Head commented that there are demonstrable benefits of direct Board involvement with students.

Mr. Farrell said only a few Members of the Committee, not the whole Committee, should be at these meetings.

The Chair said it would be important for the Rector and the President to be at these meetings to demonstrate the highest support for diversity. He asked Ms. Lampkin to arrange such a meeting or meetings. Mr. Farrell commented that it had been useful at the gatherings arranged for the Student Affairs Committee to invite not the student leaders who generally interact with the Board, but the students who are not otherwise involved in such things.

The Chair then asked the Committee if it should be continued as a Special Committee, pointing out that special committees must be renewed annually, at the Annual Meeting of the Board in June.

The Rector said it is wrong to chastise the Committee which has worked all along with the President's Commission on Diversity and Equity and properly could not act until the Commission made its recommendations. The Committee, in fact, has played a very useful and important role.

The Chair commented that the Committee and the Board can give guidance and support to the President, who has taken a very active role. Nevertheless, there is still discontent. He asked how the Committee could better position the President in these efforts.

Mr. Wynne said the most important thing at the moment is to hire the right person as Chief Officer. That person must be someone the President has confidence in - the President can't make diversity efforts succeed by himself.

Ms. Cronin, the President's Chief of Staff, commented that diversity efforts are discussed at every meeting of the President's Cabinet, whose members are expected to make progress reports.

Mr. Wynne said it is also important to get interaction between the Board and students who are leading diversity efforts.

Ms. Willis commented that informal, "unarranged" contacts between Board Members and these students would be useful.

The Chair suggested that a five minute video from the President to incoming and prospective students would be useful, an expanded version of the video message from the President now shown at Summer Orientation.

Mr. Farrell summed up this part of the discussion by saying that the President should be informed of the Committee's interest in helping him with his efforts at creating a more diverse climate at the University.

The Rector said benchmarks on the University's efforts in relation to efforts at other institutions should be developed in collaboration with the Chief Officer after that person arrives at the University. Goals and comparisons should be specific and measurable.

Ms. Cronin said a report on surveys of other institutions could be given at the next meeting of the Committee.

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On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.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>