

June 9, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Diversity:

Warren M. Thompson, Chair
G. Slaughter Fitz-Hugh, Jr.
Glynn D. Key
Catherine S. Neale
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 June 9, 2005

The Special Committee on Diversity of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 5:15 p.m., Thursday, June 9, 2005, in the East Oval Room of the Rotunda; Warren M. Thompson, Chair, presided. G. Slaughter Fitz-Hugh, Jr., Ms. Glynn D. Key, Ms. Catherine S. Neale, 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, A. Macdonald Caputo, Alan A. Diamonstein, Ms. Susan Y. Dorsey, W. Heywood Fralin, and Don R. Pippin.

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., Robert E. Reynolds, M.D., Ms. Yoke San L. Reynolds, Ms. Colette Sheehy, Robert D. Sweeney, Ms. Amy D. Cronin, and Ms. Jeanne Flippo Bailes.

The Chair opened the meeting and commended the President on his leadership in recent efforts promoting diversity. These efforts, he said, put the President publicly at the forefront.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SEARCH FOR A CHIEF OFFICER FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

The Chair asked Ms. Reynolds, Vice President for Finance and Chair of the search committee, to report on the search for a Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity.

Ms. Reynolds told the Committee something of the search process. Her committee has 12 members, who in the end, identified 39 qualified candidates. Of these 9 were interviewed in the first round. Visits to the University by candidates have begun.

Ms. Reynolds said she hopes for a decision on the finalist by the end of July.

DIVERSITY PROCUREMENT

The Chair asked Ms. Sheehy, Vice President for Management and Budget, to report on diversity procurement.

Ms. Sheehy reported on recent developments. A principal effort has been to make better known the University's interest in doing business with minority firms. She reported on a statewide gathering in Richmond, the Virginia Business Opportunity Fair, at which Mr. Sandridge spoke, as well as a workshop held at the Piedmont Community College for minority firms on how to do business with government agencies. Ms. Dorsey and Ms. Key attended the Richmond meeting. The University's annual fair for vendors was held at the beginning of the month and a number of minority firms were represented.

Ms. Key said she thought the Richmond fair had been a great success. Mr. Sandridge's remarks were very well received, there was a good "feel" about it, and she said Ms. Sheehy did an excellent job in coordinating the University's presence.

Mr. Fitz-Hugh put Ms. Sheehy in touch with the Bank of America office in Charlotte that is in charge of the Bank's efforts to do business with minority firms. She has met also with colleagues at Virginia Commonwealth University, which has an excellent record in doing business with minority firms.

The University is doing more business with minority firms; the number rose in the last quarter and it continues to rise.

Ms. Dorsey and the Chair commented that the University is doing a good job in turning around its historically poor performance in this regard.

REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES

The Chair asked Ms. Cronin, the President's Chief of Staff, to report on "best practices," the most successful efforts at encouraging diversity and equity. Ms. Cronin spoke from the point of view of the work of the President's Commission on Equity and Diversity, which studied the practices of other institutions of higher education as well as those of business organizations.

Ms. Cronin first deferred to the President who reviewed with the Committee a "tracking grid," which is to say a status report on the implementation of recommendations made by the President's Commission on Diversity Equity.

Ms. Cronin entitled her report "Benchmarking Diversity." In part of it, she compared the University with three public institutions: the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Maryland and the University of Michigan; and with three private schools: Duke University, Northwestern University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

On institutional services offered, only the University of Michigan, among public schools ranked higher in number of categories. Ms. Cronin also had figures on kinds of racial incidents, as reported in the student newspapers of the compared institutions.

She then listed factors that could improve the student racial climate at the University; among them the idea that these initiatives should be student-run but have the full support of the administration. Efforts should target all students and there must be a long term commitment to diversity.

As for attracting a diverse undergraduate student body, Ms. Cronin said the University is behind the peer institutions with whom we have parity. The market for these students is moving from the national to the international, and offers of financial support provide the competitive edge.

For graduate students, the University lags further behind: poor financial packages was the principal reason given by graduate students who chose not to accept offers from the University. The University is 20% lower than its 13 peers as classified by the State Council, and ranks in the bottom quartile of the AAU's survey of graduate teaching assistant stipends. Competition for graduate students of color is particularly high and the University needs money to be successful in this competition.

Ms. Cronin said the President's Commission examined business "best practices," and found that the diversity office reported to the senior level, preferably the most senior officer. The most successful programs immerse the entire organization in diversity and equity and implement the "best practices" together, not one at a time. Senior level employees must model the desired behavior, education is of paramount importance, and the successful firms are bellwethers in understanding and practicing multiculturalism.

There was a general and productive discussion of these issues. The Chair observed that students interacting is what makes diversity, and the Rector noted that the goal should not be just racial diversity, but also economic diversity.

The Chair commented that progress in minority procurement is measurable and that it would be helpful to set out other diversity goals in ways that progress in attaining them could be measured.

As the discussion concluded, the Rector commended the Chair on his leadership. None of us are satisfied with the present state of things, he said, and we must keep working to attain our goals - but we are headed in the right direction.

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On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 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>