MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Diversity:

Allison Cryor DiNardo, Chair
Helen E. Dragas
Kevin J. Fay
Frank E. Genovese
William H. Goodwin Jr.
Stephen P. Long, M.D.
Edward D. Miller, M.D.
Linwood H. Rose
Blake E. Blaze
George Keith Martin, Ex-Officio
George M. Cohen, Faculty Consulting Member

and

The Remaining Members of the Board and Senior Advisor:

Frank B. Atkinson
Hunter E. Craig
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.
John A. Griffin
Victoria D. Harker

Bobbie G. Kilberg
John L. Nau III
Timothy B. Robertson
Leonard W. Sandridge Jr.

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee on Diversity on November 15, 2013

The Special Committee on Diversity of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 11:00 a.m., on Friday, November 15, 2013, in the Board Room of The Rotunda; Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo, Chair, presided.

Present as well was George M. Cohen, the faculty consulting member.

Also present were Yanna Bian, Blakeley I. Calhoun, Vittoria M. Capria, Susan A. Carkeek, Karla J. Castro, Susan G. Harris, Patricia M. Lampkin, David W. Martel, Marcus L. Martin, M.D., McGregor McCance, Eric M. McDaniel, C. Joy Omenyi, Debra D. Rinker, Colette Sheehy, Teresa A. Sullivan, and J. Patrick Walsh.

Ms. DiNardo opened the meeting by asking each person present to introduce himself/herself. She then gave the floor to Dr. Martin.

Office for Diversity and Equity Support of the Student Experience

Dr. Marcus Martin, the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity described a role of the Office for Diversity and Equity (ODE), which is to enhance the student experience both academically and culturally. ODE collaborates with the Vice President for Research and with graduate student diversity programs to provide funding for 66 student groups and 140 events aiming to enhance the student self-identity and cross cultural engagement. Two such events are Fall Blast (to welcome Latino students) and Fall Fling (to welcome African American students). In an alliance which includes four Virginia research universities (of which the University of Virginia is the lead institution), four historically black universities, and Piedmont Valley Community College, ODE has received and coordinated grants totaling $8.5 million from the National Science Foundation in order to increase the number of underrepresented minorities earning baccalaureate degrees and graduate degrees. The alliance has reached its five-year goal of increasing underrepresented minority enrollment by 39%.

Dr. Martin illustrated ODE's recent collaboration with the University Guide Service and the IDEA Fund on a brochure detailing a history of slavery at the University of Virginia. The brochure illustrates the contributions made by slaves in building the University.

Diverse Student Leaders Report on Their Organization Missions

Dr. Martin introduced five students who reported on the missions of their respective organizations. Mr. McDaniel is a fourth year English major and is President of Student Council. Ms. Castro is a fourth year Foreign Affairs major and History minor and is the President of the Latino Student Alliance. Ms. Capria is a fourth year Biology major and is the President of the American Indian Student Union. Ms. Bian is a fourth year Biology and Music major and is a member of the Asian Student Union. Ms. Omenyi is a third year Computer Science and African-American Studies major and is President of the Black Student Alliance. Ms. Calhoun is a third year Sociology major and is the President of the Queer Student Union.

Mr. McDaniel spoke about the role of the Student Council at the University. The Council exists to protect and advocate for the rights and
quality of life of the students at the University. It consists of 250 people, 17 committees, of which 40 are elected by the student body. The Council also represents graduate students. The Council directs outreach to various communities across the grounds and has put initiatives in place to recognize issues in diversity. These efforts include the creation of a Diversity Initiatives committee whose role is to facilitate networking events amongst student leadership representatives across the University.

Ms. Castro discussed the role of the Latino Student Alliance at the University. The Alliance’s mission is to advance Latino student rights within Virginia, the United States, and the world. The Alliance holds community cultural events throughout the year with a focus on Hispanic Heritage Month each year between September 15 and October 15. It also convenes politically-focused events, including an event the previous night on the topic of the “roots of immigration.” Latinos represent 5% of the student population at the University. Students indicate on their application whether they are of Latino heritage, and those who affirm this are considered members automatically.

Ms. Capria discussed the role of the American Indian Student Union at the University. The Union represents the cultural interests of the Indigenous population at the University. On an upcoming Saturday, the Union will host a Native American Fair with a grant from the IDEA Fund. The goal of the Fair is to promote relationships with surrounding Virginia Indian tribes, which are all state-recognized. The Union occasionally participates in tribal powwows and organizes trips to the American Indian Museum in Washington, DC. The main goal of the Union is to bring together people of all backgrounds to explore native identity. She noted that not all natives are the same, and each group has its own languages, cultures, and dress. The Union has generated interest in a Minor in Native Studies which has since been launched through the American Studies Department in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Indian student population is approximately 1%, but the group is open to anyone who is interested. Fifteen people regularly attend meetings, but major events are attended by close to 100.

Ms. Bian discussed the role of the Asian Student Union at the University, which is to serve the Asian and Asian Pacific American (APA) student population through social, political, and cultural programming and advocacy. It was started in 1984 as a faction of the Student Council and still fills the same purposes. In 1999, it started an APA heritage month which is held each April. The Union has helped to establish an APA Studies program at the University; it is one of only a few programs like it in the country. The Union serves 16 Asian interest cultural and Greek organizations and consists of more than 20 council members who coordinate its activities.

Ms. Omenyi discussed the role of the Black Student Alliance at the University, which was founded in 1969. It serves as a nodal point for 40 organizations on-Grounds serving the African American student population. The Alliance serves as a liaison to students, alumni, and University
administration in communicating the goals of the black student community and the Charlottesville community to leadership and in continuously assessing programs and practices implemented at the University which affect this population. In the previous week, the Alliance helped in the celebration of Black Culture Week, a tradition that began in the 1970s. The week included a food migration event (featuring foods throughout cultures within the African diaspora) and a black athletes panel featuring the first four members from the first football recruiting class to include black athletes. The Alliance partners with the Office of Admissions for a "lunch buddies" activity in which prospective students and parents talk with current students about their experiences. The Alliance recently partnered with the Latino Student Alliance for College Day to encourage local high school students to consider applying to the University. Students indicate on their University application whether they are of African origin, and those who affirm this are considered members automatically.

Ms. Calhoun discussed the role of the Queer Student Union at the University. She noted that the term "queer" is not a derogatory term but is used as an umbrella term meant to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, queer, and questioning individuals. At a basic level, the Union is an opportunity for social interaction. It respects a policy of confidentiality for its members but also coordinates an annual "Proud to be Out" week of activities for the community, which is currently ongoing. Members of the Union are allowed to grow at their own pace. The Union goal is to be a resource and safe space for those that need or want it rather than to focus on hosting events and drawing in members. The Union partners with community events at the local LGBTQ center which coordinates internships and programming on a larger scale. The Union does not have an actual membership size due to its confidentiality policy, but bimonthly meetings show an attendance between 50-75 regular attendees. Major events (including the annual Drag Bingo event) include more than 200 people.

On further motion, the committee adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

SGH: jpw
These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors website. http://www.virginia.edu/bov/specialcommminutes.html