

Race and the Institution Task Force
Meeting Summary
10/11/06

I. Welcome and Opening Comments

- Timeline for initial deliverables originally set for December 13th, should be a combination of progress report and a position document. Provost has requested that a final report be completed by April 1st.
- Upper administration is interested in the Task Force producing quantitative and measurable results.

- General Discussion
 - Questions about the flexibility of due dates for deliverables raised by several committee members – New dates proposed included December 20th, 1st and January 1st
 - General consensus was that waiting until exams and grading completion would allow for higher quality deliverables
 - Concern was raised about communication with the student body. Consensus was reached that the process followed by the Task Force needed to be transparent – suggestions for increasing transparency included: regular summaries of meetings/progress provided in the CT, on the Provosts website, emails across the campus; being very clear about who is serving on each committee; information accessible through the diversity link on the VT homepage.
 - Decided that the PR representative for the Provost's office might provide guidance on how to maximize transparency
 - Concern was expressed that the student body may not fully understand the charge of the Task Force (i.e. "We are not responsible for all diversity initiatives on campus")
 - Should task force meetings be open to all as requested? Decided that Task Force meetings should be closed but that each committee should consider creating events (town hall meetings or focus groups) to open discussion to all.
 - Short discussion followed on the objectives of the Task Force. Is the Task Force dealing with issues of diversity, race, or both? Generally it was expressed that the Task Force should be dealing with both, but that race was the primary consideration. Discussion about involuntary minorities versus immigrant minority populations. Suggested that the Task Force should strike a balance with the language used when discussing types of minorities, but that any initiatives/recommendations formulated by the Task Force would benefit all minorities. It was requested that Ed Mcpherson and Terry Kershaw will drafting a charge for the task force to be circulated, edited, and approved by the Task Force at large.
 - Research on all the diversity initiatives enacted by the university over the past ten years is being compiled by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. This information was offered for the use of the Task Force.

** It was noted that those conferencing over the telephone could not hear speakers through out the room**

II. Discussion of Task Force Survey Data

- Raw data and graphed analysis of the top five issues identified by Task Force members were examined and discussed.
- Discussion followed about how data were examined, point values used, etc.
- Questions raised about how many task force members responded. [20 members out of 24]

III. Finalizing Task Force Subcommittees

- 1) Faculty/Staff 2) Undergraduate 3) Graduate 4) Administrative Infrastructure 5) Academic Programs and Initiatives 6) Community/Alumni Involvement
- It was suggested that group 4 should also examine where systemic failures in race initiatives have occurred, “where is there invisible resistance”?
- Perhaps the date could be moved to January 3rd, for best possible response by committee.
- Committee members signed up for subcommittees they are interested in:

Faculty & Staff – Ishwar Puri, Christina Brogdon, Rosa Mayorga, Russell Jones, Tonya Smith-Jackson, Mary Connerley

Undergraduate – Deborah Johnson, Priscilla Martinez, Zenobia Hikes, Kevin Denny, Ray Plaza

Graduate – Manuel Perez, Tonya Smith-Jackson, Marcia Boucouvalas, Lachelle Waller

Administrative Infrastructure – Ray Plaza, Scott Johnson, Kevin McDonald, Valerie Hardcastle, Ed McPherson

Academic Programs – Sheila Carter-Tod, Terry Kershaw

Community/Alumni Engagement - Barbara Pendergrass, Vince Houston, Ed McPherson, Christina Brogdon

- The Task Force will not meet on October 19th. The next meeting will be November 8th, at that time the charge and vision of each subcommittee will be due.
- Request was made that a milestone roadmap be generated to guide the committees.

- IV. Discussion of faculty, staff, and community conversations/ town hall meetings
- Faculty/Staff subcommittee should try and put together a town hall meeting before the end of the semester
 - Possibly the Task Force should also host a community meeting
 - A Task Force member is working on supplying members with the audio from the student Town Hall meeting.
 - Are these forums a valid means of collecting information? Suggested that the Task Force should also develop focus groups. Concern expressed about forums being the only means of collecting input from various constituencies. And some concern expressed about the discussions at open forums being directed by pre-determined questions.
 - Also discussed producing a larger scale method of collection of information (survey?) to produce a more comprehensive view of campus climate.
- V. The next Task Force meeting is November 8th 8-10a.m. PBR, Burruss Hall.