

To: The Virginia Tech Community

From: Mark McNamee, University Provost

Date: January 26, 2007

Re: Progress Report – Race and the Institution Task Force

Since their appointment in August 2006, the members of the Task Force on Race and the Institution have clearly demonstrated their commitment to strengthening the university's goals of achieving inclusive and diverse learning and working environments. The Task Force has worked diligently to educate itself by collecting and analyzing information and engaging students, staff, and faculty members in discussions on how to address issues and challenges directly related to race and racism. To maximize input from the university community, the Task Force decided to produce a comprehensive progress report in January 2007, and they have fulfilled their ambitious goal under the able leadership of Professor Wayne Scales. The Progress Report authored by the Task Force is an interim expression of information collected by Task Force subcommittees and their preliminary recommendations.

To implement the charge to the Task Force, members self-organized into six subcommittees: Undergraduate Students, Graduate Students, Faculty and Staff, Academic Programs, Administrative Infrastructure and Diversity Initiatives, and Community and Alumni Engagement. Each subcommittee outlined a vision to guide its work and engaged campus and off-campus resources to inform and shape preliminary recommendations. The Progress Report is a point of departure for discussion and input from the wider university community. The Task Force will continue to gather information, seek assistance in analyzing options, and develop a list of specific recommendations. The Task Force will produce a final report in mid-April 2007 in order to ensure ample time for additional feedback and implementation assessment prior to the end of the academic year.

I am grateful to the members of the Task Force and the many individuals within and external to the university who continue to assist the Task Force in this very important project. Virginia Tech's continued efforts to aggressively seek ways to strengthen inclusive policies, programs, and practices for all prospective and current members of the university community will benefit from the in-depth and focused attention brought by the Task Force to the issues of race. The university seeks to establish a successful record of progress on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of students, staff, and faculty members. The work of the Task Force will assist Virginia Tech in accomplishing this goal and fulfilling the promise of the Principles of Community. Virginia Tech can be a national leader in doing the research and implementing the policies and practices that will best serve the academy.

Invent the Future

The Progress Report of the Task Force on Race and the Institution is available on the Provost's website <http://www.provost.vt.edu/> under the Task Force on Race and the Institution link. I invite you to help the Task Force build upon its initial work by providing comments that can help shape and strengthen its final recommendations. Comments can be submitted at <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1169827303551>. In addition, you may contact me (mmcnamee@vt.edu) or Professor Wayne Scales, Task Force Chair (wscases@vt.edu).

Best wishes for a successful spring semester.

Race and the Institution Task Force
Progress Report
and
Preliminary Recommendations

January, 2007

Race and the Institution Task Force

Announcement of Task Force by Provost McNamee

August 24, 2006

Virginia Tech is committed to diversity among faculty, staff, and students and is committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive, supportive environment for all members of the university community. The “Principles of Community” provide a compelling guide for our actions. In support of broad institutional goals, the university has developed and implemented a wide array of programs, policies, and practices designed to promote and support diversity and multicultural opportunities for all faculty, staff, and students. Despite our efforts, we still struggle in addressing issues directly related to race and racism, especially around issues affecting our underrepresented African American and Latino communities. We have not yet established a consistent track record of success that sustains confidence among our underrepresented faculty, staff, and students of color. The protest last semester surrounding the non-reappointment of an African-American faculty member underscores the fragile nature of our situation. In order to focus attention on race issues without diminishing our broader commitment to diversity, I propose a two-part plan of action. First, a special “Taskforce on Race and the Institution” will be created to examine issues of race and racism at Virginia Tech. The goal of the taskforce is to identify key issues and to propose specific actions that will enhance our opportunities to make lasting progress. Second, the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, in partnership with the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office of Equal Opportunity, will update our Diversity Strategic Plan, which was issued in 2000. As part of the updated plan, the university community will be provided with a comprehensive summary and analysis of all the current programs, activities, and funding associated with diversity and multicultural efforts for faculty, students, and staff. The updated plan will be linked to the University Strategic Plan and will provide specific ways to measure progress. Both efforts will be substantially completed by the end of the fall semester 2006.

The Taskforce on Race and the Institution consists of faculty, staff, and students with a demonstrated understanding of issues of race and racism and a commitment to institutional progress. The taskforce will use current research related to race in higher education to identify key issues that need to be addressed; review the current situation at Virginia Tech; review position papers and plans developed over the past 2-3 years by various members of the Virginia Tech community; identify the most important issues at Virginia Tech that limit our progress in recruitment and retention, and in creating an inclusive, supportive climate; propose both short-term and long-term action items and strategies that will promote institutional progress based on an analysis of best practices; and identify additional research or follow-up studies that are needed to extend or sustain the work of the taskforce. I am personally committed to the success of the taskforce and will provide appropriate staff and financial support. I want to be part of the solution and I will be available throughout the process to participate in the deliberations to the extent desired by the group.

Race and the Institution Task Force

Task Force Members

- Barbara Board, Director, Northeast District, Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Marcie Boucouvalas, Professor, Human Development
- Christina Brogdon, Human Resources Analyst, Human Resources
- Sheila Carter-Tod, Assistant Professor, English
- Mary Connerley, Associate Professor, Management
- Kevin Denny, Senior majoring in Computer Science
- Susan Gooden, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs, Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Valerie Hardcastle, Associate Dean for Outreach and External Affairs, Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
- Zenobia Hikes, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Vince Houston, Police Lieutenant, Virginia Tech Police
- Deborah Cumaraswamy Johnson, Postdoctoral Associate, Science Education Partnership, Biochemistry
- Scott Johnson, Associate Professor, Human Development
- Russell Jones, Professor, Psychology
- Terry Kershaw, Chair, Africana Studies program
- Barbara Pendergrass, former Dean of Students
- Priscilla Martinez, Aerospace Engineering major
- Rosa Mayorga, Assistant Professor, Philosophy
- Kevin McDonald, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity
- Ed McPherson, Director, VT Stars, Learning Technology
- Manuel Pérez-Quiñones, Associate Professor, Computer Science
- Ray Plaza, Projects Specialist for Diversity Initiatives, Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Ishwar Puri, Department Head, Engineering Science and Mechanics
- Wayne Scales, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Tonya Smith-Jackson, Associate Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering
- LaChelle Waller, Graduate Student, Genetics, Bioinformatics, and Computational Biology

Race and the Institution Task Force

Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations

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Race and the Institution Task Force

1. Context and Introduction

In August of 2006 Mark McNamee, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, appointed and charged the Task Force on Race and the Institution to critically examine issues of race and racism at Virginia Tech. Chaired by Professor Wayne Scales, the Task Force is to develop recommendations to guide Virginia Tech in being proactive and strategic in advancing race and diversity issues. Task Force recommendations will result in the implementation of more effective assessment and accountability procedures on matters pertaining to diversity across the university.

Progress has been made since the admission of Virginia Tech's first African American male students in the 1950s. Unfortunately, concerns remain about campus climate and the university's sustained commitment to hire, retain, and advance African American, Latino/a, Native American and other underrepresented minority students, faculty, staff, and senior administrators. If left unaddressed, these issues will continue to compromise Virginia Tech's status as a premiere institution. Over the years, the university has been confronted with events that have highlighted the need for Virginia Tech to seriously address race-related concerns. These events have included reports of racial discrimination and harassment by faculty, staff, and students; personnel decisions regarding African American faculty and staff; policy actions taken by the Board of Visitors; and a perceived lack of significant progress to improve the climate for underrepresented minorities on campus. The decision to deny reappointment to an African American faculty member in the spring of 2006 served as a catalyst for the formation of the Task Force. Students strongly voiced their concerns about the perceived lack of progress on the part of the university to address racial issues and to increase the diversity of the university community. Of particular concern to the students was the existence of relatively few African-American faculty members in all ranks as well as the experiences of students with an uninviting climate for African Americans on campus.

After consulting with the Virginia Tech community, Provost McNamee assembled a diverse group of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to develop strategies to improve campus climate and to recommend programs, policies, and other efforts that advance equity and inclusiveness across all sectors of the university. The charge to the Task Force on Race and the Institution can be summarized as:

- Examine issues of race and racism particularly as they relate to African-American, Latino/as and Hispanics, and Native American populations,
- Identify key issues,
- Propose specific actions that will enhance the opportunities for lasting change,
- Issue a final report in April, 2007.

As its initial task, the Task Force polled its members and reached consensus on the issues that it would address. Issues were grouped into six categories that served as the basis for the formation of subcommittees. The preliminary findings of each of the subcommittees comprise this report.

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The six subcommittee categories are:

- Undergraduate Student Issues,
- Graduate Student Issues,
- Faculty/Staff Issues,
- Administrative Infrastructure,
- Academic Programs, and
- Community and Alumni Engagement.

To guide the initial thinking of the Task Force, the group decided on a succinct question to unify its recommendations for action:

How does Virginia Tech through its traditional culture, hierarchical structure, and restricted access to power, reinforce an organizational culture of racial privilege?

This question articulates the vision of the Task Force. Each subcommittee has developed vision and charge statements that align the scope of its work with this question.

This preliminary Task Force report is divided into six reports that include the vision/charge of each of the subcommittees, preliminary short-term strategies, a discussion of further research and assessment required, and initial recommendations. The final report of the Task Force will contain further analysis, timelines for implementation of strategies, and estimates of the resources required to implement these strategies. Considerable research is expected to be conducted by the Task Force during the spring of 2007. In addition, data collected from discussions with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and members of the surrounding communities will be incorporated into the final document. A plan for assessing progress made by the university in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force will also be provided in the final report.

What follows is the preliminary report from the Task Force on Race and the Institution submitted to Provost McNamee in January, 2007. This report provides preliminary ideas and strategies. The Virginia Tech campuses and their surrounding communities are the primary stakeholders and most important beneficiaries of this effort. The Task Force welcomes feedback on the strategies and recommendations presented in this report. Please feel free to submit comments on the entire report or sections of the report to the Task Force through <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1169827303551>. In addition, anyone may email the Task Force using the address racetaskforce@vt.edu. The Task Force believes that its work will guide Virginia Tech to becoming the inclusive and welcoming environment required for its continued growth as a premier institution of higher education.

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Race and the Institution Task Force

2. Undergraduate Student Subcommittee Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations

Co-chairs:

Deborah Johnson, Postdoctoral Associate, Biochemistry
Ray Plaza, Projects Specialist for Diversity Initiatives, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Members:

Kevin Denny, Undergraduate Senior, Computer Science
Zenobia Hikes, Vice President for Student Affairs

2.1 Vision

The scope of the work of the Undergraduate Student subcommittee includes:

- *Examine recruitment strategies; identify the scope of pipeline initiatives and the development of strategies for better linkages with academic programs,*
- *Explore issues concerning financial aid,*
- *Examine advising and mentoring support networks and*
- *Examine components that influence the campus climate infrastructure.*

Vision Statement

Given that diversity is a vital aspect of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community, the Undergraduate Subcommittee of the Task Force on Race and the Institution is committed to understanding how race affects the undergraduate experience at the university and will examine how issues of undergraduate recruitment, admissions, financial aid, retention, mentoring/advising, and campus climate impact the success of underrepresented student groups at Virginia Tech.

The subcommittee believes that a push to increase the numbers of minority students is alone not adequate to achieve the objective of creating a more racially diverse student body. Rather, it is important to transform the culture of the university by continuing to find and implement inclusion efforts that contribute to learning, discovery, and community engagement.

The rigorous pursuit of this vision is vital to ensuring that the university continues its commitment, reaffirmed in the University Strategic Plan Update, to increasing access and inclusion of underrepresented groups. These efforts will strengthen the national regard of the university by allowing for continued and greater attraction of top scholars and students.

2.2 Introduction

As the issues of race and the institution are examined by the Task Force, it is important to consider the impact of racism on the various communities that comprise Virginia Tech. In this particular instance, the subcommittee is looking at the undergraduate student population.

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Undergraduate students play a pivotal role in the life and mission of the university. The subcommittee has focused on four areas affecting the undergraduate experience: recruitment and retention, advising/mentoring, financial aid, and campus climate. Within the concept of campus climate, the subcommittee recognizes the importance of the type of courses that are available to students and the importance of faculty and staff role models. Regardless of the background of the student, all students are impacted in some way by these four areas. The subcommittee seeks to explore how issues of race impact each of these areas with a specific focus on the experiences of underrepresented students. Unfortunately, many students face obstacles in one or more of each of these areas that is associated with their access to and success at the university and become frustrated.

For the purposes of this subcommittee, underrepresented students are from historically underrepresented populations, that include African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American students.

2.2.1 Virginia Tech Today – the Numbers

Virginia Tech is the second largest institution in the Commonwealth and enrolls approximately 28,500 students at all its campuses. The number of undergraduate students enrolled is about 22,000. The undergraduate population self-reports as 72% Caucasian, 4.5% African-American, 2.3% Hispanic/Latino, and .25% Native American.

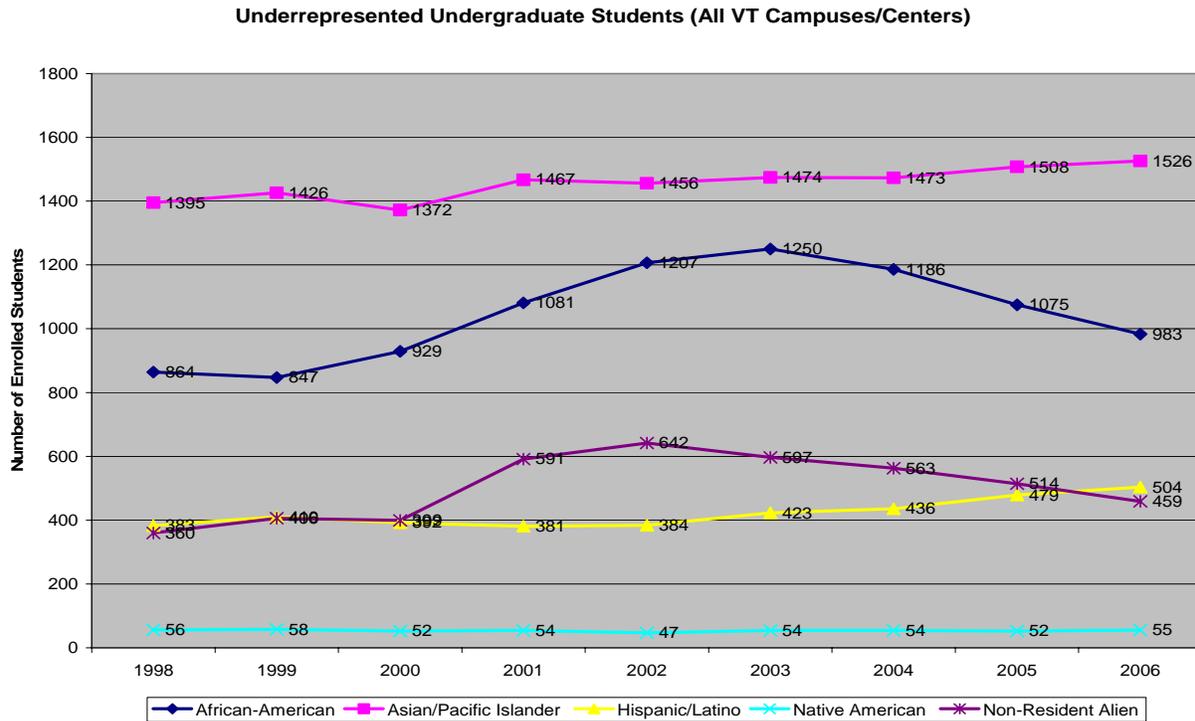
Figure 2.1 illustrates 1998 to 2006 trends for the following student populations: African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Native American and Non-Resident Alien (i.e. international students).

An examination of the trends reveals the following:

- the number of African-American students as declined continuously since 2003,
- the number of Asian/Pacific Islander students has remained relatively stable,
- the number of Hispanic/Latino students has increased incrementally since 2001,
- the number of Native American students has remained relatively stable,
- the number of Non-resident alien students has decreased since 2003.

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Figure 2.1



It is important to consider the persistence and graduation rates of students. In addition to enrolling a diverse student body, it is important to have students successfully complete their degree and graduate. Data from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness show that 80% of underrepresented students at Virginia Tech continue on to a second year, 75% to a third, and on average, most Virginia Tech students regardless of race will graduate within 6 years of their initial enrollment. These numbers are virtually identical for all students at Virginia Tech regardless of ethnic background.

2.3 Initial Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

Members of the subcommittee engaged in discussions with university officials from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, University Scholarships and Financial Aid, Academic Support Services, and other departments responsible for areas related to the recruitment and success of students. In addition, the subcommittee engaged undergraduate students in discussing their perspective on a number of issues. While this information is preliminary, the subcommittee believes that it will provide a basis for the development of strategies that target change and address concerns expressed by undergraduate students. Below are preliminary near term strategies in the four areas of recruitment, financial aid, advising/mentoring, and campus climate.

2.3.1 Recruitment

How do potential students learn about or find out about Virginia Tech? Some of the ways that prospective students learn about the university include receiving a mailing, seeing a TV advertisement, following VT athletics, getting information from a family friend, hearing a news reports or learning about the school from a parent.

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Learning about the university is just a small part of the effort. A significant effort is to get them to apply and consider coming to Virginia Tech. It is the responsibility of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to recruit undergraduate students to the university, and to “sell” Virginia Tech and all that it offers. The approach and manner of this recruitment has a significant impact on the recruitment of underrepresented students.

Two components related to the recruitment of students to Virginia Tech are covered in this section of the subcommittee’s report: admissions practices and pipeline efforts that are implemented collaboratively by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in conjunction with the office of Academic Support Services.

The subcommittee met with colleagues from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and discussed the nature and practices of student recruitment. Of particular interest to the subcommittee and its focus on underrepresented students, was role that the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decisions (*Grutter v. Bollinger*) had in upholding the use of race as one of many factors that can be used in the undergraduate admissions process.

Admissions

Admissions staff noted that all higher education institutions are battling each other in the recruitment of underrepresented students. In particular, the recruitment of African American students is very competitive. In the states surrounding the Commonwealth, and in North Carolina in particular, colleges and universities use privately endowed scholarships to discount tuition. This practice has a tremendous impact on the ability of the institution to recruit underrepresented students. Consequently, Virginia residents who are admitted to out-of-state institutions that offer these scholarships are charged in-state tuition at out-of-state institutions. The University of Virginia, which has a long standing record of recruiting students of color experienced a marked decrease (approximately 80%) in the enrollment of African American students in its 2006 first year class. Staff members from the admissions office at Virginia Tech speculate that many of these Virginia students chose to attend UNC at Chapel Hill.

Colleagues from the admissions office indicated that all denials of underrepresented applicants are audited to ensure fairness. In addition, in studies that follow up on admitted underrepresented students who chose not enroll, students cite financial concerns as the main reason for not enrolling at Virginia Tech.

Admissions office staff members continue to be mindful of the political climate surrounding college admissions nationally. Virginia Tech has been under the scrutiny of various anti-affirmative action “watch dog” groups over the past three years because of allegations of race-based practices. As a result of this scrutiny, the Provost and Office of Undergraduate Admissions developed the Undergraduate Admissions Advisory Group. The subcommittee will explore the efforts of this group in helping to define how Virginia Tech has ensured that its usage of race as been “narrowly tailored”.

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Recruitment programs coordinated by the Office for Undergraduate Admissions include a program called Fall Visitation that is held in conjunction with the Fall Open House. Fall Visitation is designed for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors interested in coming to Virginia Tech. Gateway and the Spring Open House are undergraduate admissions programs designed for all students that have been accepted to Virginia Tech.

Pipeline Programs

At Virginia Tech, Academic Support Services coordinates various pipeline or pre-college initiatives. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Academic Support Services have collaborated since 2004 on pipeline initiatives to increase the number of underrepresented students that enroll at Virginia Tech.

A pipeline, or pre-college program, is an outreach effort that targets students in K-12 and encourages them to graduate from high school and enter college. These programs provide opportunities for pre-college students to explore the opportunities available to them through college by introducing them to career opportunities, offering opportunities to refine their academic skills, and gain information about college that might not be available to them. This effort creates a “pipeline” for these students from K-12 to higher education. The federal definition of the term pipeline is further broadened to convey the importance of viewing student progress as a continuum leading from high school into postsecondary education and through to the completion of a college degree.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive plan to recruit underrepresented students that incorporates the university’s goal to diversify the student body.
- Establish a multicultural recruitment committee to communicate with efforts (i.e. recruitment, pipeline, summer programs, visitations, fairs/expos) taking place in the colleges.
- Provide diversity training for admissions personnel to enhance multicultural competencies and improve abilities to reach out to and connect with prospective families of color.
- Contract with an outside admissions consultant to recommend new strategies within Virginia’s legal parameters that successfully address the historic perceptions of Virginia Tech held by underrepresented groups
- Provide a standard script for admissions callers to use when determining why targeted students did not enroll. It is further recommended that students of the same race contact potential students who did not enroll. Prospects may be more inclined to share reservations with other students with similar backgrounds.
- Develop a more detailed and expanded survey to ascertain additional reasons that students chose not to enroll.
- Continue development of the Yates Project, including first-year students to provide a fresh perspective.
- Develop partnerships with additional local, state, and national external groups, such as churches, the Jackie Robinson Scholarship Program, Inroads, members of the Virginia Black and Hispanic Caucuses and community organizations.

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- Continue improvement of technology and supporting software to track applicants/offers/acceptances by race.
- Further exploration of the visitation programs with currently enrolled underrepresented students to impact the yield.
- Re-examine and broaden the images used in recruitment brochures, university videos, and other promotional pieces, as negative symbols can adversely impact prospective parents' and students' opinions.
- Explore new recruitment markets using data from the College Board and other sources to increase the numbers of non-residents.
- Identify new markets for recruitment of students that match the population growth within Virginia.
- Partner with Black Cultural Center Advisory Board and other alumni of color to host receptions and contact prospective students in their areas.
- Communicate with Virginia Tech faculty and staff of color, via listservs, regarding upcoming events and opportunities to connect with prospective families.
- Cultivate elementary and middle school students through "grow your own" programs in collaboration with the academic departments. A college awareness component can be tied to these initiatives.
- Investigate a "3/2" dual degree program with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Tribal Colleges, whereby students may earn both a degree at their home institution and an engineering degree (for example) at Virginia Tech.
- Utilize the networks that Virginia Tech has in every county in Virginia through extension and respective satellite campuses.
- Ensure linkages of pipeline initiatives with academic efforts of the colleges and assess the true impact of these efforts.

2.3.2 Financial Aid

Financial aid plays a vital role in providing affordable access to higher education for students and their families. In today's college market, the availability of funds is one of the main factors determining whether a student decides to attend school. National trends show that underrepresented students and their families are less likely to take advantage of financial aid options that are available to them.

At Virginia Tech, the Office for Scholarships and Financial Aid works closely with the colleges and the Virginia Tech Foundation to coordinate financial aid and scholarship awards. Below, the subcommittee has noted successes, areas of concern, and a list of recommendations related to financial aid. Virginia Tech has done an excellent job of being good stewards of federal and state resources that are available. However, it is clear to the subcommittee that improved efforts are needed to educate underrepresented students, their families, and their communities about the importance and availability of financial aid.

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Successes

- Presidential Campus Enrichment Grant (PCEG) is now entering its sixth year. PCEG is a renewable grant given to students who have expressed a desire to learn more about diversity.
- Funds for the Future (developed in 2005) is a way to hold tuition increases and is based on family income. Helpful for students from low-income backgrounds.
- Flash mail (monthly electronic newsletter) as a means to better educate students about financial aid.
- Early admission grants for those that accept early decision offers (\$1,000). These grants are given to students on the basis of their responses to the admissions diversity essay question.

Areas of concern

- Misconceptions/misperceptions of eligibility for financial aid. Some underrepresented students don't apply for financial aid because they think that they are not eligible.
- Confusion over *Funds for the Future*, and how it keeps costs in check.
- Philosophy surrounding the development of financial aid packages and what is included in that package.
- Perception of over-reliance on loans (how do the numbers really break out in terms of work-study, grants, scholarships, loan packages?)
- Timeliness and availability of financial aid packages. Students have voiced a concern that this information is not available when they are making decisions, as compared to other institutions.
- Communication of scholarship opportunities and where to locate this information. Students are unaware of the processes. Often the same students are awarded multiple awards.
- Information/education for parents and families. Lack of information in Spanish for Spanish-speaking families. This is a barrier for many Hispanic/Latino/a families.
- Confusing and vague information is shared with students and parents.
- Unused scholarship money each year at the college and university level. Eligible students are missing out on these opportunities.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Require that all admitted students submit an Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) regardless of financial need. This would ensure that underrepresented do not fall through the cracks at this initial stage.
- Encourage all students to meet with a financial aid counselor during orientation to look at their financial aid situation.
- Clearly articulate what is included in a financial aid package to better prepare students for how they can compare the Virginia Tech financial package to those offered by other institutions.
- Develop targeted approaches for underrepresented students and their families about the differences in the types of aid. Better partnering with admissions and recruitment efforts to engage communities on financial aid matters.

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- Increase education about loans and debt – underrepresented students don't take advantage of loan opportunities. Need for a community awareness campaign possibly developed with extension offices throughout the Commonwealth.
- Timing of financial aid packages – if FAFSA needs to be filed by March 11th, Admission's decisions are mailed on April 1st, students need to respond to the offer by May 1st, how can students know where they stand financially if their financial aid package is not available until the end of May?
- Improve communication about the different scholarship opportunities available and the processes required to access them.
- A focused development campaign to raise additional funds for scholarship opportunities.
- Development of more attractive financial aid packages that do not rely solely on loans but include more grants and scholarships.

2.3.3 Advising and Mentoring

Advising at Virginia Tech is defined as a “collaborative process between student and advisor leading to the exchange of information that encourages the individual student to make responsible academic and career decisions”. The quality of this encouragement and advice impacts the retention of underrepresented students at the university and contributes to a positive, inclusive, and supportive campus climate for all students.

Virginia Tech's commitment to the “education of the whole person” as outlined in its 2006 – 2012 Strategic Plan Update requires a strong advising program to better serve the academic and professional needs of students. In addition, quality advising will ensure the success of the integrated curriculum that lies at the heart of the VT Pathways for Learning efforts. Strong and consistent academic advising is central to providing undergraduate students with opportunities to pursue multiple majors, integrated course sequences, and interdisciplinary research experiences.

The importance of academic advising to a successful undergraduate experience cannot be understated. One third of incoming freshmen are undecided about their majors and the most popular major for the 2006 freshman cohort is University Studies – a program that depends heavily on academic advising to ensure successful transfer and placements of students into suitable majors.

The subcommittee has collected information from the following sources: the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence (CAEE), University Studies, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS), the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs), the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the University Center for Undergraduate Education, and from the Campus Climate Check-up held November 15, 2006. In addition, the subcommittee has benefited from informal conversations with undergraduate students and faculty in both CALs and the College of Engineering.

- Virginia Tech has a definition, philosophy, and statements of expectations and responsibilities for **academic advising**.

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- Virginia Tech does not have a definition, philosophy, or statement of expectations and responsibilities for **mentoring**.
- Virginia Tech has a comprehensive web page on advising called “Undergraduate Advising at Virginia Tech” (<http://www.advising.vt.edu>) maintained by a 12-member advising website committee.
- There is no similar website for mentoring at Virginia Tech – although a detailed list of available mentoring programs on campus can be found on the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence (CAEE) homepage.
- Web-based exploration of the advising networks within each college shows enormous variation in the advising structures and methods. Accessing information on advising at some college websites is more challenging than others. Some colleges (CALs, CNR, CLAHS) provide an interactive decision-making program known as “Advising Pathfinder” to compare academic requirements for different majors.
- The variety of mentoring programs at Virginia Tech seem to predominantly consist of peer-mentoring programs such as those run by The Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity (CEED) where upper class mentors are matched with first-year college of engineering students.
- Academic advisors are automatically assigned to students upon joining the university. The burden is usually on the student to contact the advisor. Some departments have a more pro-active approach but overall, there is little evidence of advisor-initiated contact.
- No institutional training or handbook is provided for academic advisors, although efforts are underway to create one. Some departments provide their own handbooks but there is no consistency in training or professional development opportunities available for advisors. A number of faculty report wanting to have more training on academic advising or mentoring but only if it counts towards their overall performance or FARs.
- A number of faculty members with advising responsibilities were unaware of the existence of the ‘undergraduate advising at VT’ website and of the recent changes to the university’s core curriculum in light of the VT Pathways efforts.
- Many faculty members do not consider advising an important part of their job because they do not get evaluated on their advising ability (as they do with teaching, for example). There is no mechanism in place for assessing the quality of academic advising within departments / colleges.
- Undergraduate students’ most frequent complaints about their advisors tends to be the lack of availability, clarity, personal connection, knowledge of resources available, and interest in their advisees’ welfare. However, there is no departmental or institutional mechanism in place for students to express this discontent.
- Undergraduate students regularly use other undergraduate students and office administrators as ‘informal advisors’. If dissatisfied with their assigned academic advisors, some pro-active students will seek out faculty members who will give them time and advice. This has the effect of over-burdening some faculty members who pick up other faculty member’s advisees.

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- In general, students often do not realize the importance of having an advisor throughout their undergraduate career. If they do not like their assigned advisor, many tend not to be pro-active (or are sometimes intimidated) about approaching another advisor. In general, many undergraduate students do not seem to take full advantage of the advising /counseling services available to them, particularly because these services require a student to “ask for advice”. In some cultural groups, seeking advice can be viewed as a sign of weakness – no institutional data has been collected to investigate this possibility and what can be done to address this potential cultural bias.
- Students who do not access advising / counseling services available to them also represent a disproportionately high number of students on academic probation. “Project Success” has been successful in helping students on academic probation regain good academic standing at the university. This has been particularly true for the African-American student group, which constitutes a disproportionately high number of students on probation. Students on this semester-long program are advised weekly and given free CAEE College Success Planners to help them get and stay organized.
- The retention rate of minority undergraduate students is high (~ 85% for African-American students). Although reasons for attrition of the remaining 15% are mainly financial –‘personal reasons’ are the second most common reason for attrition. There is no data that explores how advising / mentoring (or the lack thereof) may have impacted a students’ decision to leave or could have prevented the student from leaving.
- The extent to which the quality of advising and mentoring programs impacts the racial climate at the university is unknown as there is no institutional data available that specifically addresses this issue. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the lack of cultural competence displayed by many faculty advisors plays a significant role on students’ discontent with the racial climate on campus.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Evaluate faculty members in their role as academic advisors. Advising needs to be valued and become an important component of faculty job performance. End-of-year evaluations (like those administered for teaching) would be one way of increasing accountability. The result of such evaluations can become part of P &T evaluations or of annual FARS. Teaching loads could also be swapped for advising roles.
- Recruit more professional academic advisors within departments or colleges. If the undergraduate learning goals outlined in the Strategic Plan Update are to be achieved, there will be an increased need for more sophisticated and student-tailored academic advising.
- Add exit survey questions focused on advising. There is currently no way of keeping track of the impact of advising / mentoring on students’ undergraduate experiences.
- Data is needed to assess and evaluate the extent to which students use the advising and mentoring services available to them.

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- Implement advising and mentoring training into both faculty and staff professional development programs. Incentives need to be found to encourage attendance in these programs.
- Improve the mechanism by which students and faculty advisors are paired. A better mechanism for matching students with advisors would benefit both parties. Students should be assigned an advisor to start with; however students should be encouraged to view advisors as an important component of their academic success and therefore encouraged to work with an advisor that suits their needs.

2.3.4 Campus Climate

Campus climate can be defined as "the formal and informal environment in which we learn, teach, work, and live in a post-secondary setting." For a college or university to reach its highest potential, it is necessary to know the environmental factors and conditions that contribute or detract from its institutional mission. Campus environments that produce feelings of alienation, hostility, social isolation, and invisibility can impair the recruitment of new students, retention of current students, academic adjustment, social adjustment, grades, satisfaction, and graduation rates. For faculty, staff, and administrators, this type of environment can work to impair the productivity and/or enthusiasm for teaching or working.

When looking at campus climate through the lens of a student's experience, campus climate can be tied to concepts of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be followed to address the factors that are components of campus climate. The subcommittee recognizes that there are other approaches beyond Maslow, such as Baxter-Magolda's focus on the conditions that promote transformative learning and self-authorship.

Many of the components of the university that have a direct impact on campus climate for undergraduate and graduate students are areas that fall under the purview of the Division of Student Affairs. These components include, but are not limited to, residence halls, dining centers, areas dedicated to supporting student activities, the Office of the Dean of Students, Multicultural Programs and Services, the Cranwell International Center, student counseling, the student health center, Career Services, and others.

Student Affairs has ties with academics affairs both areas report to the university Provost. However, the connections and collaborations between the student affairs and academic affairs can be strengthened. In what ways can the Division of Student Affairs work more closely with faculty members in enhancing the climate in the classroom? Classroom climate has an impact on all students and there is confusion of how and who takes the lead on addressing issues of climate within the classroom.

At Virginia Tech, the Office of the Dean Students provided focused support for underrepresented students through the coordination of the heritage month activities, providing resources and advising. In 2006, after reorganization within the Division of Student Affairs, services are provided to various cultural and identity student organizations by Multicultural Programs and Services (MPS). MPS provides

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coordination of the heritage months and advising of the major cultural groups. The subcommittee notes the valuable role played by the Cranwell International Center, also located within the Division of Student Affairs, in supporting international students.

The subcommittee will continue to explore the important role that the Division of Student Affairs plays in promoting and supporting an inclusive and positive campus climate for all students. In addition, the subcommittee looks forward to understanding the nature of the various components within the Division and their respective impact on the campus climate for underrepresented students.

Preliminary Recommendations

The subcommittee will continue its work on developing recommendations related to the improvement of campus climate for inclusion in the final report of the Task Force.

2.4 Upcoming Subcommittee Activities

The subcommittee plans to engage in the following activities during the spring of 2007:

- Host a series of brown bag lunch discussions with undergraduate students on each of the four areas.
- Invite additional undergraduate students to be involved in the work of the subcommittee.
- Possibly conduct a site visit to the University of Virginia and/or other institutions to examine policies, programs, and practices employed to enhance the quality of life for their underrepresented students.
- Attend selected national/regional meetings to gain further insight/perspective.
- Provide a viable plan of action for how these recommendations can be implemented and a projected timetable.
- Examine items from the preliminary progress report of the Task Force and prepare more detailed analysis for final report.

The subcommittee realizes that Virginia Tech faces a daunting task. However, the subcommittee believes strongly that the undergraduate student experience can be strengthened and improved by making substantive changes in the areas that the subcommittee has identified. It is also important to understand that many of these recommended changes will positively impact the experiences of graduate students and all members of the campus community.

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3. Graduate and Professional Student Subcommittee Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations

Co-chairs:

Manuel Pérez-Quiñones, Associate Professor, Computer Science
Tonya Smith-Jackson, Associate Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering

Members:

LaChelle Waller, Graduate Student, Genetics, Bioinformatics, and Computational Biology

3.1 Vision

The Graduate Student subcommittee of the Task Force on Race and the Institution is committed to transforming the racial culture (values) of Virginia Tech and its institutional climate (policies and practices) to achieve world class distinction as a culturally competent, competitive, and supportive learning environment for those seeking advanced degrees. The subcommittee further commits to producing recommendations that advance Virginia Tech's ability to produce advanced scholars who are culturally competent with knowledge, skills, and abilities that facilitate success in a global market.

The mission of the subcommittee is aligned with the goals stated in the University Strategic Plan Update (2006-2012) to *educate the whole student...support the curricular and co-curricular experiences of a diverse student body*. Goals of the subcommittee include advancing recommendations that urge Virginia Tech to continue to build multicultural and international competencies in graduate and professional students and to support students through improved living and learning environments.

Two additional goals outlined in the University Strategic Plan Update are fundamental to the objectives of the subcommittee. The first goal is to *enhance quality graduate and professional education*, and the second goal is to *establish a graduate education portfolio reflective of a 21st century research university*. Accomplishing the goals outlined by the subcommittee will enhance the university's national reputation by increasing Virginia Tech's success at graduating diverse citizens who are culturally competent and competitive within a global society that demands multicultural knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Subcommittee objectives include:

- Increased recruitment of graduate students from underrepresented groups (African-American, Hispanic/Latino/as, and Native Americans).
- Increased numbers of doctoral and masters' degrees awarded to students who are members of underrepresented groups.
- A more inclusive and culturally competent academy that supports learning, engagement, and discovery for all members of the university community.
- Greater effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts driven by increased accountability by department heads and faculty who advise graduate students.
- Increased cultural competence and quality of advising by faculty advisors.

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- Increases in the national reputation of Virginia Tech as demonstrated by improvements in rankings as determined by key national organizations.

3.2 Introduction

The "life-cycle" of a graduate student begins before they make a decision to apply to graduate school. It continues well after their graduation, as the university would like them to be ambassadors for Virginia Tech and to aide in the recruitment of future students and faculty members. Data gathered by the subcommittee have been organized with this understanding of the life-cycle of graduate students. In its final report, the subcommittee will identify activities currently utilized by Virginia Tech's Graduate School and will make recommendations for policies, programs, and practices that are not in place with a particular emphasis on efforts designed to improve the recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate students.

The subcommittee commends the Graduate School, under the leadership of Dr. Karen DePauw, for establishing an environment that is welcoming and responsive to the needs of diverse graduate and professional students. In particular, the Transformative Graduate Education initiative provides an academic, socio-cultural, and professional environment that attracts diverse students and serves as a mechanism for retention. The subcommittee has identified issues and problems to be addressed that continue to undermine success in certain recruitment and retention efforts.

There are themes across the problems and issues identified thus far that represent a need to increase diversity among the graduate and professional student populations at Virginia Tech. Figure 3.1 illustrates the demographics based on ethnicity for all Virginia Tech graduate and professional students. Disparities are clearly evident and there is no significant increase demonstrating continuous improvement since 1998. Figure 3.2 illustrates the demographic composition of graduate and professional students enrolled at the Blacksburg campus which shows a similar trend. Of specific interest is Figure 3.3, which consists of the non-Blacksburg sites and reveals greater diversity (as determined by proportions of the total) compared to the Blacksburg campus. Beyond geographic differences, the subcommittee suspects that additional enablers exist in the non-Blacksburg recruitment and retention experiences of graduate and professional students and plans to identify what these enablers might be using interviews and other data collection methods.

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Figure 3.1

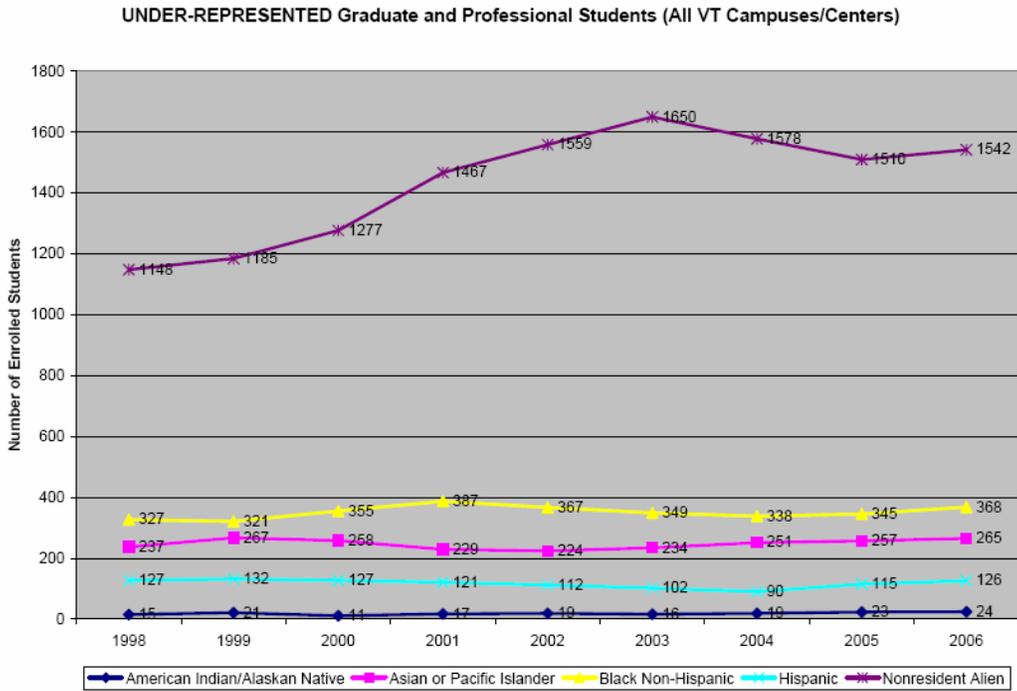
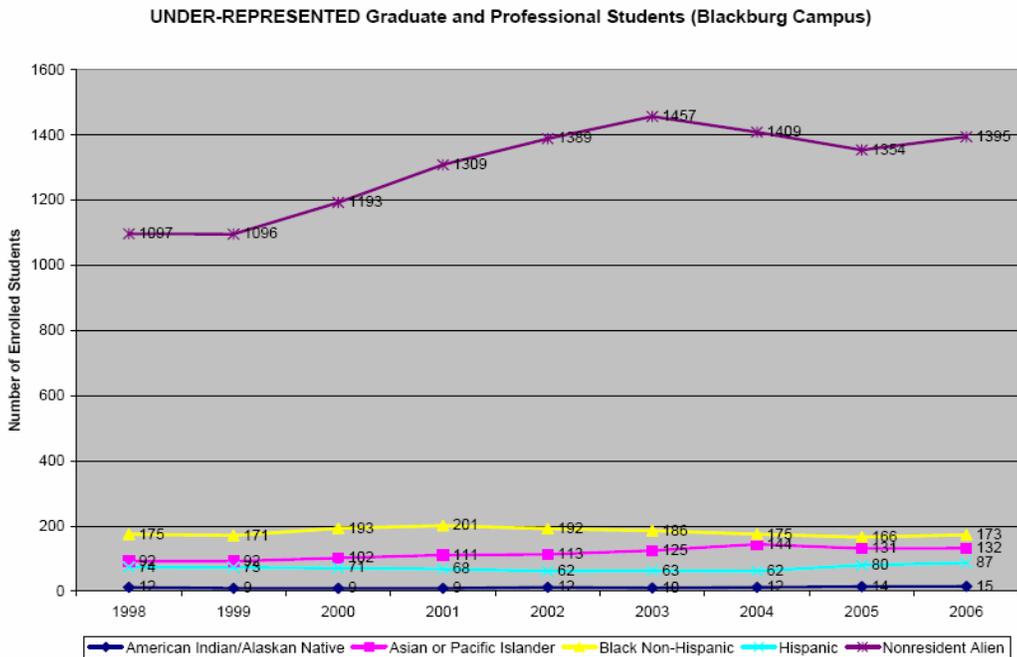
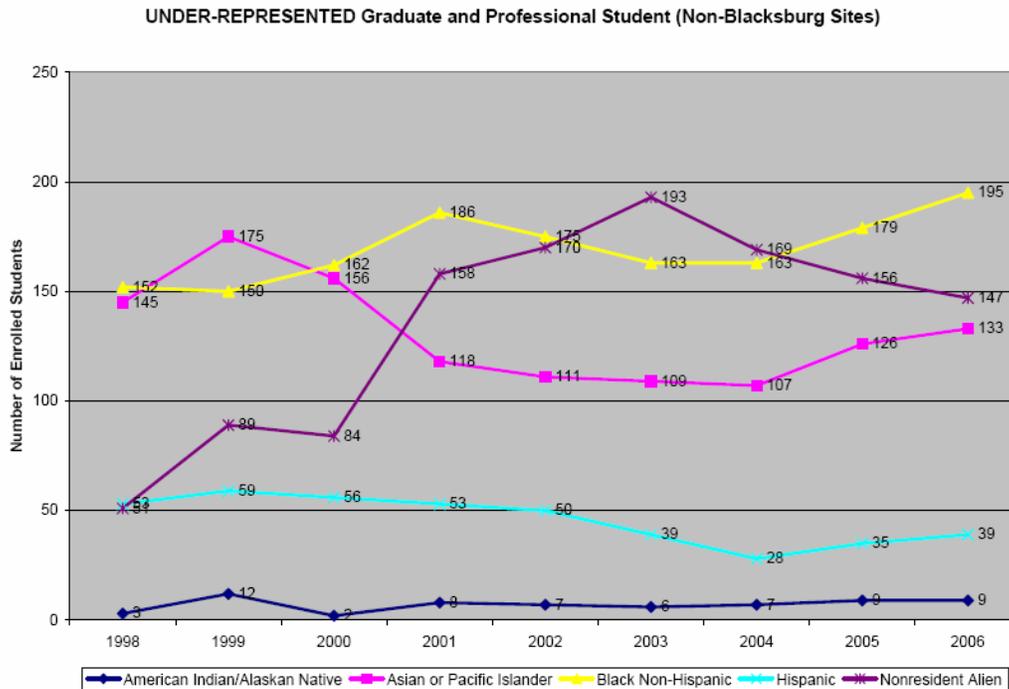


Figure 3.2



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Figure 3.3



Additional themes and problems identified by the subcommittee include the absence of underrepresented faculty and staff members which serves as a barrier to students in the desire to come to Virginia Tech and the desire to remain through the completion of a program. Of great concern to the subcommittee is the apparent lack of cultural competence of many faculty members who serve as advisors or on graduate committees. Disturbing experiences shared with members of the subcommittee ranged from reports of discrimination to experiences of depreciated morale and stamina of underrepresented students. The lack of knowledge by faculty members of different minority groups provides a major barrier to the advancement and success of graduate and professional students from underrepresented communities. Strategies used by departments to recruit and retain underrepresented students are not readily available and do not seem to exist in written form. This apparent lack of a strategic approach to recruitment and retention is evidenced by a seeming over-reliance on the Graduate School to recruit and retain underrepresented students. Relying solely on the Graduate School for targeted efforts communicates a negative message to prospective and current students. The subcommittee continues its work in this vain and has yet to fully complete a benchmarking process and compilation of best practices from universities comparable to Virginia Tech.

3.3 Initial Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

- The Graduate School, along with the deans of all colleges, should identify departments that are successfully attracting and retaining graduate and professional students from underrepresented groups. Successful formal and

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informal methods used by departments should be documented and made available to all departments.

- Incentives and accountability mechanisms should be instituted for all college and departmental graduate program directors. Metrics that reflect success of diversity efforts for graduate students at the departmental level must be made public on a regular basis.
- College level Diversity Committees need to be given support and budgetary resources to assist with the recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate and professional students. Each Diversity Committee should be chaired by a full-time Graduate Diversity Recruitment and Retention Officer (this idea has been proposed already to the Colleges of Science and Engineering). This officer will chair the Diversity Committee in their respective college. At a minimum, the members of each college Diversity Committee should receive a reduced teaching load and serve on the committee for no more than one year.
- Exit interview results should be made accessible to colleges and departments, and retention surveys should be implemented immediately. Survey instruments should include questions assessing cultural competence of advisors and the climate within departments, colleges, and the university. Exit and retention surveys should be included in the final defense packet for each graduate student, and the completion of the exit survey should be included on the checklist of required activities before final degree approval by the Graduate School. The subcommittee is aware that the surveys suggested above are currently being done or are under development by the Graduate School. The subcommittee looks forward to the results and encourages the Graduate School to make the information available to the university in a public document.
- An Ombuds program, to support and advocate for graduate and professional students, should be established. This program must have dedicated personnel and budgetary resources provided to the Graduate School and must be able to address the needs unique to underrepresented graduate and professional students. Current mechanisms are not sufficient to provide advocacy for graduate and professional students who face issues of cultural conflict or are confronted by a lack of cultural competence on the part of faculty advisors, instructors, department heads, or college administration.
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges should be examined to determine the mechanisms used to attract and retain graduate and professional students at these institutions. Mechanisms that are compatible should be customized and then implemented, or at least pilot-tested, at Virginia Tech.

Additionally, graduate and professional students provided the subcommittee with a number of recommendations that, either in the short or long term can positively influence the successful recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate and professional students at Virginia Tech. These are:

- Implement diversity training for faculty, staff, and administrators that is coupled with performance expectations, evaluations, and incentives.
- Implement a diversity scorecard process.

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- Use experts who are external to the University to assess Virginia Tech's work on diversity.
- Create an *Undoing Racism Committee* for graduate and professional students.
- Utilize the Collegiate Times to help with campus communication as it pertains to racism.
- Hold faculty members accountable for inclusive and professional advising and teaching.
- Utilize current faculty and staff who are experts in diversity-related work to provide resources for the campus community. Faculty suggested by students include: Shelli Fowler, Ann Kilkelly, Tonya Smith-Jackson, Lucinda Roy, Deborah Tatar, Ray Plaza, Manuel Pérez-Quiñones, James Turner, and Sheila Carter-Tod. Students recommend that these individuals serve as a collective and provide resources on the micro- and macro-levels. The institution has to be willing to buy out their time.
- Teach students to recognize academic hazing, racism, and other biases to assist them in being proactive rather than reactive. Help students know they have a voice and help them to be proactive in addressing actions that reflect academic hazing and racism.
- Develop a committee to serve students who have concerns and issues. Provide a place where students can go and privately talk.
- Provide training and mediation to the university community.

Additional goals, time lines, benchmarking data, and estimated resource requirements will be provided in the final Task Force report. Measurable outcomes include annual increases in proportions of underrepresented students; increases in positive ratings of campus climate by graduate and professional students; increased numbers of advanced degrees awarded to underrepresented graduate and professional students; evidence of formal recruitment and retention strategies that succeed in increasing the number of underrepresented graduate and professional students in departments; evidence of a decrease in the number of reports of incidents associated with a lack of cultural competence of faculty and staff who work with graduate and professional students.

3.4 Upcoming Subcommittee Activities

The subcommittee continues to gather data and plan activities through which to learn about the problems faced by underrepresented graduate and professional students and possible solutions. For the university to be effective in the recruitment and retention of graduate and professional students, the subcommittee recommends that assessment be periodically conducted with each of the groups listed below to ascertain the progress the institution is making. Table 3.1 outlines an inventory of current and proposed assessment practices and the related constituency.

- Prospective graduate and professional students; in particular, minorities from HBCUs, HSI, and other institutions.
- Incoming graduate and professional students; students who are considering whether or not to attend Virginia Tech.
- Current enrolled graduate and professional students.

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- Faculty members who teach in graduate programs and/or are involved in research
- Personnel responsible for graduate and professional student programs; academic administrations, department heads, directors, deans.
- A national audience

Table 3.1 Possible activities that can address the different constituencies in graduate and professional studies at Virginia Tech

| Activities | Prospective Students | Incoming Students | Current Students | Faculty Mentors | Program Administrators | National Audience |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Graduate Preview Weekend | 4 | 4 | | 4 | 4 | |
| Recruiting workshops for administrators | | | | 4 | 4 | |
| Recruiting programs: HBCU Connect, VT Prep, VT Stars, McNair program, etc. | 4 | 4 | 4 | | | |
| JBHE Rankings | 4 | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Cultural competency of members of the institution | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Existing surveys | | | 4 | | | |

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The subcommittee will continue to explore and outline useful assessment procedures for the above referenced constituencies, and will continue to collect data to further frame the problem, identify needs, barriers, enablers, and determine effective strategies for recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups. These data collection methods are presented here.

Graduate School Survey. The Graduate School currently conducts an entrance and exit survey of graduate students. The entrance survey is done in the fall semester and the exit survey is done in the spring. The Graduate School is considering expanding this survey so that it is conducted in the middle of the academic year. The Graduate School conducted an exit survey in the spring of 2006. These data have not yet been analyzed. The subcommittee will collaborate with the Graduate School and looks forward to reviewing the data and including these data in the final report of the Task Force. The Graduate School survey covers the following areas:

- academic support (selection of courses, advising, mentoring, research/practicum opportunities),
- career preparation,
- technology,
- support services, and
- general information.

The subcommittee is interested in studying differences observed between students of various ethnic backgrounds, and will work with the Graduate School to include additional questions in the survey that measure inclusiveness and cultural competence of members of the institution.

Cultural Competence Survey. The subcommittee has prepared a cultural competence survey based on a survey reported in the literature. The plan of the subcommittee is to make the survey available to as many graduate students as possible currently enrolled at Virginia Tech. The survey will allow the subcommittee to assess cultural competency of members of the institution. The subcommittee's survey will be conducted during the spring of 2007 in coordination with the Graduate School. The subcommittee is considering identifying other institutions that might be willing to offer the same survey so we can gather data to compare different institutions.

Rankings. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education has a ranking of universities using metrics or factors of racial diversity. The metrics include total enrollments, first year (incoming) class, yield (graduation), and number of minority faculty. For each one of these numbers, the journal calculates the current measure, the five year progress on that measure, the percentage of minority/majority, and the five year progress on the same percentage. The subcommittee plans to gather these data about Virginia Tech from the Office of Institutional Research and to assess the racial diversity of Virginia Tech's graduate degree programs. The subcommittee hopes the Graduate School will continue to collect these data and use them to assess their efforts to improve the racial environment for minorities.

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Review of graduate and professional student reviews and evaluations. There are several areas identified by the subcommittee that appear to contribute to disparities and inequities experienced by underrepresented groups at Virginia Tech and are also experienced by prospective students. To address these barriers, the subcommittee plans to examine departmental graduate and professional student application review processes and admission rating systems. In addition, the subcommittee will review the processes (graduate committee procedures, defenses, preliminary examination methods) associated with advancement through graduate programs in order to identify structural barriers that have disproportionately negative impacts on underrepresented graduate and professional students.

Assessment of Existing Initiatives. The subcommittee plans to review recruitment and retention initiatives currently in place. After the subcommittee's initial meeting with Dr. DePauw, the subcommittee learned of a number of initiatives. The subcommittee plans to collect additional information from additional Graduate School administrators and staff to learn more about these activities. Some of the activities of interest to the subcommittee include: Graduate Preview weekend, recruiting workshops for faculty (done a few years ago), HBCU Connect, VT Prep, VT Stars, the McNair program, and the GEDI and Citizen Scholar efforts of the Graduate School. In addition, the subcommittee will include in its assessment effort professional students (such as the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine) and graduate and professional students located at off-campus sites (i.e., Northern Virginia).

The subcommittee will coordinate with a committee in the Graduate School that is preparing a report on activities aimed at improving diversity within the Graduate School. The Graduate School committee expects to release a report in March of 2007 that addresses diversity issues relevant to graduate student retention and recruitment. The subcommittee will coordinate with that committee to support a common set of activities to improve the environment for all students.

Members of the subcommittee will meet with Graduate Program directors in various departments to identify successful existing formal or informal recruitment and retention efforts for underrepresented students.

Second Town Hall meeting. The subcommittee plans to host a second Town Hall meeting for Latino/a students. The previous two meetings attracted only African American students. The subcommittee has contacted a number of Latino/a faculty members to help us reach Latino/a graduate and professional students. The subcommittee will organize a second meeting sometime during the spring semester.

Stories and Perspectives. We will create a website to collect stories and perspectives of student experiences. These stories will be collected anonymously.

Interviews with students who have transferred or dropped out of specific programs. The subcommittee will attempt to identify and interview underrepresented graduate and

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professional students who have transferred out of or dropped out of graduate programs. The purpose of this interview will be to identify any barriers or unmet needs that specifically relate to cultural competence or support from the institution that resulted in the dropping out of the student or in the student deciding to transfer from Virginia Tech.

Visit other universities. The subcommittee is interested in visiting other universities to interview officials and graduate and professional students to gain an understanding of how they are dealing with diversity, racism, etc. The subcommittee wants to learn what programs they have in place, which have worked, which have not, etc. Some candidates for a visit include: UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke University, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, and the University of Virginia.

3.5 Summary

This report provides an update on the progress achieved, an assessment by the subcommittee of the issues and problems at Virginia Tech, and the plans of the subcommittee to continue data collection and evidence searches to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the university's efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented graduate students. There are disparities in the number of graduate and professional students who identify as members of underrepresented groups (as compared to majority group or Caucasian students). Several predominant themes emerged from the preliminary work of the subcommittee. One theme is the university's failure to prepare and hold accountable all faculty who advise, teach, and have the potential to develop a diverse and global graduate and professional student population. Another theme is the lack of strategic and specific efforts by departments and Graduate Program directors to recruit and retain underrepresented students, and an apparent lack of oversight over and correction of barriers that impede the recruitment, admissions review, and retention of underrepresented students (i.e., graduate advisory committee conduct and evaluation procedures).

The subcommittee has made a number of preliminary recommendations which will be clarified and expanded upon in the final report of the Task Force. Some preliminary recommendations include mandatory training for faculty members in best practices for advising students with diverse backgrounds; developing an *Ombuds* program for graduate and professional students to provide advocacy and culturally-competent support; imposing a system of accountability and incentives for departments and colleges who successfully recruit and retain underrepresented students; and replicating, across the university, effective strategies from successful departments and minority-serving institutions.

It is the goal of the subcommittee collect additional data, to address issues identified, and to provide solutions and strategies that are compatible with Virginia Tech's constraints and capabilities.

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4. Faculty/Staff Subcommittee Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations

Co-chairs:

Christina Brogdon, Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Coordinator, Office for Equal Opportunity

Tonya Smith-Jackson, Associate Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering

Members:

Mary Connerley, Associate Professor, Management

Rosa Mayorga, Assistant Professor, Philosophy

Ishwar Puri, Department Head, Engineering Science and Mechanics

4.1 Vision

The Faculty/Staff subcommittee of the Task Force on Race and the Institution is committed to developing new and more effective strategies to recruit and retain faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. The specific vision and mission statement is as follows:

Virginia Tech must have a high quality and diverse student body, faculty, and staff who contribute to the robust exchange of ideas, and foster a diverse and inclusive community that supports mutual respect. The subcommittee recognizes that the university has engaged in many good faith efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented groups, but these efforts have proven insufficient. The aim of the Faculty/Staff Subcommittee is to reinforce and create strategies that are routinely implemented and result in successfully recruiting, retaining, and advancing faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. The work of the subcommittee is focused on developing new strategies that can be effective and sustained across the university.

The subcommittee has aligned its mission with two areas of the University Strategic Plan Update for 2006 - 2012:

- 1. Human resource and work/life strategies support the achievement of the university's missions by attracting and retaining the best instructional, research, and administrative/professional faculty and staff, investing in their development, and supporting them by providing a high quality of work life.*
- 2. The university must foster a diverse and inclusive community that supports mutual respect. Efforts to diversity the university by increasing the number of women and underrepresented minorities hired and promoted into faculty and staff ranks must continue to be a priority.*

The subcommittee's strategies will be aligned with outcomes that are based upon quantitative metrics and qualitative indicators. By using this approach, the subcommittee will complete the following:

- Accurately and comprehensively identify system-wide barriers and practices that undermine effective recruitment and retention.

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- Identify systematic and effective recruitment, retention, and enrichment strategies for underrepresented faculty and staff.
- Develop recommendations that outline frameworks for individual, group, and organizational level accountability.
- Develop recommendations on how to eliminate institutional practices that perpetuate the accumulation of advantages for faculty and staff from well-represented demographics or contribute to the cumulative disadvantages of underrepresented faculty and staff.
- Increase awareness of the need to advance underrepresented faculty and staff into leadership positions, and make recommendations on how the university can provide better mechanisms to target, develop, and advance underrepresented faculty and staff.

The subcommittee will propose a recruitment and retention strategy that is relevant to the needs, barriers, and enablers associated with faculty and staff employed at Virginia Tech. Accomplishment of these objectives will enhance the national reputation of the university. The expected impacts of accomplishing successful recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities at Virginia Tech include the enhancement of social capital within Virginia Tech and educational outcomes that positively affect the indicators used in national rankings of institutions of higher education, including the number of degrees awarded to underrepresented students; relative proportions of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty; retention rates of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty; external research funding; individual and public attitudes and perceptions of the university's climate; and the absence of disparities in faculty and staff appraisals, promotions, and levels of career/job satisfaction;

4.2 Introduction

A major indicator of successful recruitment and retention efforts is revealed by census data. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate data on the number of faculty and staff at Virginia Tech based on ethnicity. There have been no significant increases in the numbers of underrepresented groups; however there is a slight positive trend for all categories except Native American. Based on these data, the university has failed to make significant progress in hiring faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.

In addition to census data, data collection conducted by the subcommittee has identified issues to be addressed: inconsistency in recruitment, retention and development efforts across campus; lack of diversity in senior faculty and executive leadership positions; and insufficient resources to develop and maintain strategic diversity initiatives.

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Figure 4.1 Faculty demographic data, 1998 – 2006

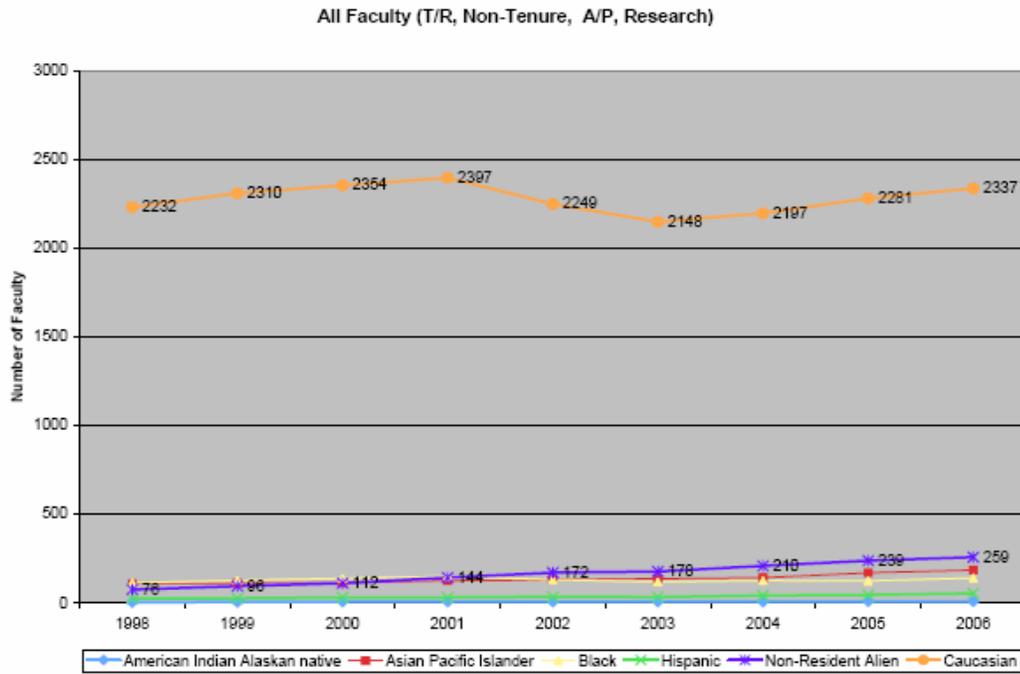
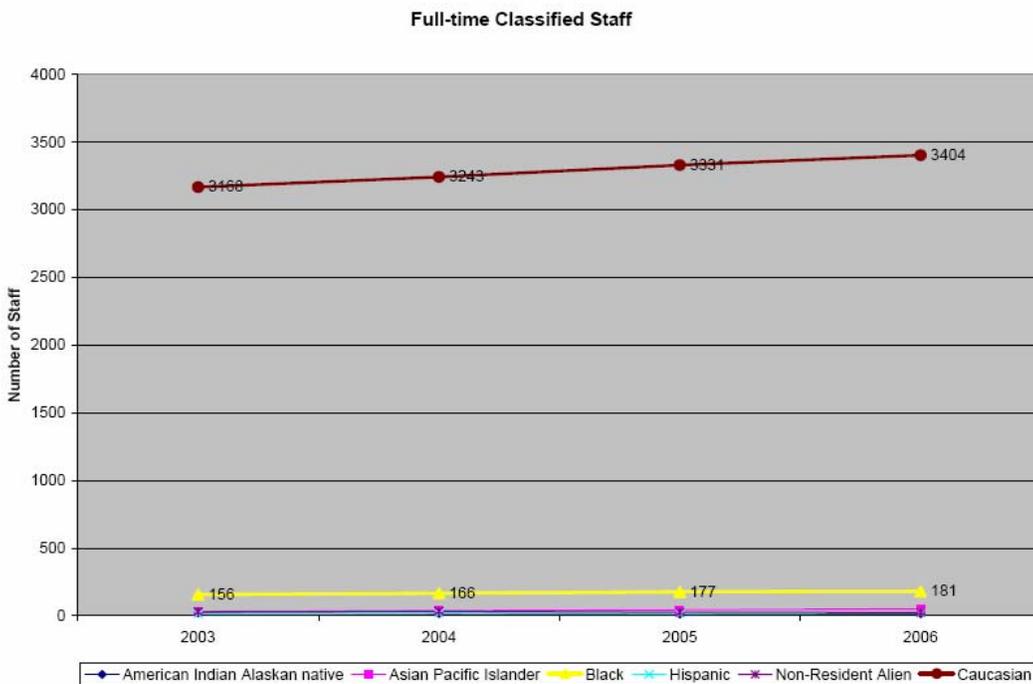


Figure 4.2 Classified staff demographic data, 2003 – 2006



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4.3 Initial Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

Strategies that can be implemented, many of which require few resources but have a high potential to yield high returns on investment include:

- Improve the current faculty and staff exit survey administration and analysis plan.
- Work with the Office of Institutional Research to survey current faculty and staff on key factors associated with successful recruitment, retention, employee development.
- Employ internal knowledge and resources when conducting surveys of climate, cultural competence, or voluntary departure surveys. Assets internal to the university include Black and Hispanic Faculty/Staff Caucuses and the Race and Social Policy Research Center.
- Review search procedures with Human Resources, Office for Equal Opportunity, Vice President for Research, and the Office of the Provost (including ADVANCE VT) to identify issues relevant to bias or procedural inequities or injustice.
- Identify an effective process to institute compulsory online training for all deans, department heads, center directors, and faculty and staff search committee members to increase awareness of and minimize the impact of bias in decision-making and evaluation.
- Identify written diversity recruitment and retention plans for review by the subcommittee. Departments polled by subcommittee members thus far do not have written diversity recruitment and retention plans and have not been required to have such written plans.
- Articulate methods that eliminate the “minority tax” on underrepresented faculty and staff at Virginia Tech by identifying creative ways to support promotion and tenure that give effective weight to certain types of service to the University.
- Review college level faculty and staff recruitment and retention plans and the extent to which plans align with the University Diversity Recruitment plan and other strategic initiatives lead by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Office for Equal Opportunity.
- Identify and analyze inequities in opportunities for training, educational, and professional development for faculty and staff.
- Identify strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of senior faculty members and staff from underrepresented groups using methods that have been successful in higher education, such as chaired professorships.
- Review impact of the current university faculty and staff salary structures based on race or ethnicity and gender.
- Develop a program of accountability for upper administration, deans, and department heads for their recruitment, retention and enrichment plans.

The subcommittee has developed a preliminary list of measurable outcomes that the subcommittee recommends:

- Develop indicators of accountability and sustainability in the university’s recruitment, retention, and enrichment policies and programs.
- Implement an annual review of recruitment, retention, and enrichment objectives for underrepresented faculty and staff, especially in senior management.

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- Implement regular training on cultural competency and bias for all university employees.
- Regularly review the culture and climate of the university and its departments.
- Maintain equity in salaries for faculty and staff.
- Maintain equity in promotion and tenure decisions for faculty members.
- Implement equitable allocation of funds for diversity recruitment efforts compared to overall recruitment efforts.
- Establish networks throughout the university to coordinate an administrative and operational infrastructure to implement and advance the recommendations of this subcommittee using an existing group, such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, or create a new system wide assessment and oversight group that includes all the appropriate bodies and offices including the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, Human Resources, VT Black and Hispanic Caucuses, Race and Social Policy Research Center, Office for Equal Opportunity, etc.

4.4 Upcoming Subcommittee Activities

As a preliminary step to identifying strategies to recruit, retain, and enrich faculty and staff from underrepresented groups, the subcommittee is studying initiatives and infrastructure currently in place at the university and will conduct assessments to further identify barriers and solutions.

Data collection. The subcommittee has met or corresponded with several administrators in charge of faculty exit and climate surveys, and staff surveys (Pat Hyer, Kelly Oaks, Susan M. Willis-Walton, Valerie Hardcastle, Linda Woodard, Judy Ridinger, and Curtis Mabry). According to the information provided about faculty, the data in reference to the departure of minority faculty members are sparse. For instance, in university's Voluntary Departures Report only four respondents (2 Blacks and 2 Hispanics) were minorities. It is the subcommittee's recommendation that additional data be collected in order to capture data on why minority faculty members depart from the university. The subcommittee also recommends that members of the Task Force be included as consultants in the creation of future survey instruments. The subcommittee will continue to collect data plans to review information gathered by the Undoing Racism effort.

Interviews and surveys of faculty and staff: It is the goal of the subcommittee to collect information from faculty and staff from across the university and from all levels to determine their perceptions of equity and to elicit input on additional issues and solutions. Additionally, the subcommittee plans to collect information from deans, department heads, center directors, and vice presidents on best practices required to recruit, retain, and enrich minority faculty and staff members at Virginia Tech, as well as to catalog current efforts, including implementation of initiatives outlined in the University Diversity Strategic Plan. The subcommittee plans to host Town-hall meetings and discussion groups with faculty and staff members.

Existing infrastructure. The subcommittee believes that there is little evidence that the concerns of individual minority faculty and staff are addressed by the university in a

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timely manner. The last exit survey implemented by the university indicates that departmental climate is a major factor in faculty and staff retention. Although the most common reasons the tenured/tenure-track respondents provided for their departure in the Voluntary Departures Report were lack of state support and professional interests, due to the small response rate by minority faculty, the ranking of these reasons cannot be interpreted as being applicable to minority faculty members were not retained during the time period of the survey.

Hiring practices. Although some minority individuals have been successful under university efforts to promote “from within”, it is not clear to the subcommittee that this practice has not benefited majority group members disproportionately. Efforts to promote from within the university should balance with recruitment efforts aimed at minority faculty and staff from outside Virginia Tech who have different perspectives and points of view, while ensuring equal opportunity and access for current faculty and staff members. Virginia Tech should both hire minority faculty and produce the best scholars in the world. The practice of hiring “from within” can divert efforts to successfully compete for minority scholars in the marketplace. This issue becomes even more critical given the small number of available minority scholars.

Existing initiatives. While there have been good faith efforts across the university, the subcommittee has not found an institutionalization of policies for deans, department heads, or other line positions that specifically address the recruitment, retention, or enrichment of underrepresented faculty and staff members. The subcommittee recommends that extensive training be required for deans, department heads, and center directors to determine the outcomes and/or criteria that are to be used for current or new recruitment and retention initiatives. In 2001, the university established universal performance dimensions for diversity, safety, and teamwork for its classified staff members. It is a good foundation piece, and the university needs to ensure all employees understand how to be successful and accountable in this area.

Visits to other universities. The subcommittee considers visits to other universities for benchmarking and consultation to be an important part of its mission. The subcommittee is identifying universities with features comparable to Virginia Tech (i.e. public/land grant universities) that have been successful in recruiting faculty and staff from all underrepresented groups.

4.5 Summary

It is evident to the subcommittee that there are disparities in the numbers of underrepresented faculty and staff, their level of satisfaction with the university's climate, and quality of life. In addition, the subcommittee notes a lack of institutionalization of practices necessary to recruit and retain faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. The university's efforts can improve by conducting audits of existing practices to identify deficiencies that contribute to inequities and to the lack of diversity. Additional improvements can be gained through relatively simple, but high-impact, programs such as recruiting senior faculty by using chaired professorships and by assuring fairness and transparency in review, tenure, and promotion systems and

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practices. The subcommittee has a number of activities to complete during the spring of 2007, including collecting information from faculty and staff and surveying deans, department heads and center directors to identify specific and effective strategies to recruit, retain, and advance underrepresented faculty and staff members.

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5. Administrative Infrastructure and Diversity Initiatives Subcommittee Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations

Co-chairs:

Ed McPherson, Director, VT Stars, Learning Technology
Ray Plaza, Projects Specialist for Diversity Initiatives, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Members:

Barbara Board, Director, Northeast District, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Valerie Hardcastle, Associate Dean for Outreach and External Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Scott Johnson, Associate Professor, Human Development
Kevin McDonald, Director, Office for Equal Opportunity

5.1 Vision

- Examined the current administrative infrastructure of the university.
- Identified areas where linkages could be further developed or enhanced.
- Identified specific areas of interest that should be enhanced or modified.
- Developed a set of strategic recommendations.

Vision Statement

Sustaining a climate and environment for diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism requires an administrative infrastructure that provides systematic checks and balances for institutional policies and practices with regard to their effectiveness in promoting, affirming, and utilizing new ideas, perspective, and strategic results. This infrastructure serves as a foundation for achieving substantive institutional transformation. It also enhances and sustains organizational accountability.

5.2 Introduction

Administrative infrastructure refers to all of Virginia Tech's programs, governance structures, policies, operational procedures, and their coordination and linkages with each other.

Historically, the effort to achieve diversity at Virginia Tech has involved creating programs, creating or revising governance structures and policies, and adapting operational procedures to address deficiencies within the university's organizational structures. Typically, the focus of these changes has been on improving the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students.

Virginia Tech's current *diversity infrastructure* is in a nascent state. Many of the programs, revised governance structures and policies, and operational procedures are relatively new, appear to have been developed ad-hoc, and are not yet fully integrated across the entire university. Hence, their effectiveness has been limited.

In some cases, the university's diversity efforts appear to efforts added to the existing responsibilities of units or assigned to minority personnel or individuals with a passion

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for diversity efforts. At best, this manner of creating programs, policies, and organizational structures creates marginalized discreet efforts that are not system-wide. The result is uneven and inconsistent goal attainment. The subcommittee believes it is time to critically assess current policies, programs, organizational structures and practices to identify gaps, misalignments, as well as strengths and successes.

Key components of Virginia Tech's organizational infrastructure include: the Board of Visitors, the President and the university's executive leadership. Specific to addressing priorities related to diversity, the university's organizational and governance infrastructure includes: the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Office for Equal Opportunity, the Commission for Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD), and Multicultural Programs and Services in the Division of Student Affairs. In addition, other units play a role in advancing diversity at the university and these include the colleges, academic departments, administrative units including admissions, financial aid, academic support services and units focused on implementing the curriculum. The subcommittee believes that it is critical to understand that these components are inter-related. Currently, it appears that they are not working together effectively together and this must change.

As an organization, the university is decentralized. The subcommittee believes that it can propose a framework that will be effective within the university's current organizational structure that allows for flexibility while advancing and sustaining an inclusive and diverse environment.

5.3 Initial Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

Virginia Tech must develop an administrative and programmatic infrastructure that advances and sustains a culture and environment that values diversity and inclusion, promotes anti-racism, and supports differing ideas and perspectives. The subcommittee proposes the following preliminary recommendations:

Major themes for preliminary recommendations:

- Better defined linkages/relationships among university units.
- Better and more effective communication among all segments of the university community.
- Increased allocation of resources.
- Increased accountability and ongoing assessment.
- Shared responsibility for diversity.

Preliminary Recommendations

Collaboration and accountability across the university

The preliminary recommendations of the subcommittee center around two main themes:

- increased collaboration between and among diversity initiatives that results in a synthesis of university-wide efforts, and
- increased accountability. Both of these themes are important to developing a universal sense of shared responsibility for diversity at Virginia Tech.

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In particular, the subcommittee believes that diversity efforts must be tied to reporting and accountability mechanisms, resource allocations, and the various reward structures throughout the university (annual performance reviews, promotion and tenure, etc.). Without accountability, diversity will remain the province of the few.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA)

The Office of Multicultural Affairs was formed in 1998 to elevate the prominence and importance of diversity efforts across the university. The current change in leadership of the OMA, due to the retirement of Dr. Ben Dixon, provides the subcommittee with an opportunity to examine the role that the office has played and to suggest how OMA might amplify its role in guiding diversity efforts throughout the university.

OMA is a vital component of the university's diversity infrastructure. An important role of OMA has been to serve as an integral collaborator at all levels of the university. OMA should continue to expand its communication and programming efforts, reinforcing and expanding connections across the university, and supporting research that examines diversity. The subcommittee believes that OMA ought to significantly increase its efforts to provide education and training across the university. OMA needs to position itself to be the conduit of diversity training, education, and support throughout the infrastructure of the university. The mission of OMA outlines its responsibility to be proactive and communicate a thorough understanding of the complex nature of the university's values, culture, and climate.

The subcommittee chose to highlight the Office of Multicultural Affairs because the subcommittee believes that OMA is central to leading the efforts to re-shape and strengthen the administrative infrastructure of the university to improve the impact of diversity initiatives across the university.

- Improve communication and partnerships with the Office for Equal Opportunity.
- Ensure strong relationships with the CEOD.
- Continue to sustain relationships and collaborations at levels of the university's infrastructure.
- Thoroughly understand and articulate diversity efforts taking place across the university.
- Increase transparency in reporting.
- Increase and improve ongoing training, education, and outreach programs.
- Increase relationships with admissions, especially with respect to examining enrollment data.
- Increase interactions with the colleges through their Diversity Committees by providing support and resources.
- Oversee an annual assessment system in cooperation with CEOD.

Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO)

- Improve communication and partnerships with the Office of Multicultural Affairs.
- Ensure strong relationships with the CEOD.
- Increase transparency in reporting.
- Increase and improve ongoing training, education and outreach programs.

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- Continue to work closely with Human Resources, the Provost's Office, and the colleges.
- Increase interactions with colleges through their Diversity Committees by providing support and resources.

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD)

- Enhance Commission visibility and relationships with throughout the university being mindful of the parameters that define its role as a university commission
- Increase its oversight role.
- Review annual assessments of university units and provide evaluative and summary reports to university community.
- Expand membership.

Board of Visitors

- Hold Virginia Tech's leadership accountable for its actions and inaction with respect to diversity efforts.
- Reflect on its own role in helping to diversify the university.

President and executive leadership

- Articulate and reinforce Virginia Tech's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and a positive campus climate.
- Respond to the annual reports submitted by the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD).
- Ensure the consistent enforcement of policies.
- Secure and allocate sufficient resources to achieve change.
- Integrate the University Strategic Plan and Diversity Strategic Plans into one document.

Colleges

- Commit to college diversity committees as essential tools to recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students.
- Create and implement college diversity plans.
- Annually assess the success of diversity and affirmative action plans in coordination with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, CEOD, and OEO.
- Develop viable articulation agreements with Virginia community colleges.
- Examine student services.
- Consider innovative and creative approaches to hiring, e.g. cluster hiring.
- Ensure that departments have diversity plans and goals with actionable objectives.
- Annually evaluate and hold departments accountable for diversity improvements.
- Actively support diversity initiatives.
- Reward department, faculty, staff, and student diversity activities.

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Academic departments

- Critically analyze departmental climate.
- Update curricula.
- Create and implement department diversity plans and goals.
- Report on diversity initiatives to college annually.
- Reward faculty, staff, and student diversity activities.

Student services and curriculum

- Create and implement a first year experience that articulates the university's values in diversity.
- Devise more effective communication plans.
- Include the Donning of the Kente and the Hispanic/Latino Achievement ceremony in commencement ceremonies

Administrative (non-academic units)

- Develop and maintain administrative diversity committees.
- Create and implement administrative diversity plans.
- Annually evaluate diversity and affirmative action plans in coordination with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, CEOD, and OEO.
- Annually evaluate units, faculty, and staff on successful diversity initiatives and improvements.
- Ensure that units have diversity plans and goals.
- Reward diversity activities.

Admissions

- Significantly expand efforts in recruiting diverse students.
- Report admissions data to Office of Multicultural Affairs, OEO, and CEOD.
- Expand current pipeline programs and develop new partnerships.

Financial aid

- Examine why Virginia Tech has been unable to compete with other institutions with regards to the timeliness of financial aid packages, etc.

Student Affairs

- Continue to reinforce partnership with OMA for the new MOSAIC program.
- Highlight the impact and role that Student Affairs has within the organizational framework of the institution.
- Develop linkages between efforts and initiatives developed throughout Student Affairs and the academic area/colleges.
- Continue to serve as a valuable link to students for the sharing and reporting of information.
- Consider ways that Multicultural Programs and Services can better relate/interact with OMA.

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University Development

- Significantly improve fundraising efforts to sustain diversity initiatives.
- Change and improve the university's development philosophy regarding multicultural issues.
- Develop diversity partnerships.
- Increase visibility of development in diversity initiatives, programs, and activities on campus.
- Communicate the importance of diversity/race efforts more effectively to donors.
- Under University Relations, create and implement a full-scale plan to enhance or improve the image of the university with respect to diversity.

Off-campus locations

- Develop better understanding of the implications of the Blacksburg infrastructure on these areas.
- Incorporate better utilization of these locations within overall diversity efforts in terms of recruitment of students, faculty and staff.

The university has most of the tools needed to implement these recommendations immediately. However, the university will need to be deliberate in developing a phased approach in order to build the desired administrative infrastructure.

While resources will be critical in some areas, other areas require a paradigm shift in communication, partnerships, and relationships. The subcommittee understands that it is necessary to ensure that recommendations for new infrastructure and for change are viable within the existing organizational structure and fit into the decentralized nature of our university. A number of the preliminary recommendations submitted by the subcommittee are currently practices under development or utilized by a subset of the infrastructure. The university should build upon these ongoing efforts.

5.4 Upcoming Subcommittee Activities

The next steps for the subcommittee are to:

- Identify best practices. Assessment must be accompanied by well-defined best practices. It will be a challenge for the subcommittee to identify best practices that can meet the needs of the university, fit Virginia Tech's organization, and provide the programmatic force to make diversity efforts a shared university responsibility.
- Discuss the preliminary recommendations with varied university leadership and key personnel in the various component areas.
- Provide a viable plan of action and a timetable for final recommendations.
- Prepare a more detailed analysis for the final report from the Task Force.

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6.0 Academic Programs Subcommittee Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations

Co-chairs:

Sheila Carter-Tod, Assistant Professor, English Department

Terry Kershaw, Chair, Africana Studies Program

6.1 Vision

Working within the broader goal of the Task Force, the subcommittee on Academic Programs used the following questions to guide its work: How is the culture of White privilege reinforced at Virginia Tech in academic departments and programs? and what are possible models for creating academic programs and curricula that are less reflective of existing power structures?

To better understand these questions, the subcommittee continues to collect to evaluate the ways in which Virginia Tech's current academic programs do and do not address issues of race within curricula and within programs. The subcommittee is also collecting information from peer institutions and schools that are leaders in the institutionalization of race across curricula and within departments, programs and majors dedicated to the study of race.

The goal of the subcommittee is to get a sense of how offerings across "general" or "core" education programs as well as offerings within dedicated programs that provide undergraduate and graduate students with academic opportunities to explore issues of race that challenge and contribute to existing research and policies. The subcommittee's area of investigation and preliminary recommendations align with goals outlined in the university and diversity strategic plans and in Virginia Tech's core values.

University Strategic Plan goals

- *Social and Individual Transformation. The dynamics of economic, social, political, technological, environmental, and cultural change are at the heart of this area of research and creative scholarship, which has application in domestic and international aspects of community life.*
- *Significantly increase the diversity of the student body and provide educational experiences that will enhance students' multicultural competence.*
- *Enhance quality graduate and professional education.*

University Diversity Plan goals

- *Implement a comprehensive program of education and training opportunities.*
- *Implement a comprehensive system of responsibility, accountability and recognition.*

University Core Values

- *Freedom of inquiry. Fundamental to the creation and transmission of knowledge is a commitment to nurture and protect freedom of inquiry. Intellectual freedom is*

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the foundation of academic excellence and is vital to sustaining environments in which sound and rigorous learning, discovery, and engagement occur.

- *Mutual respect. At the center of the educational enterprise is the commitment to the exchange of ideas and information. Respect for varied points of view and the diverse backgrounds upon which they may be based is essential to the continued growth and advancement of all members of the university community.*
- *Lifelong learning. A commitment to lifelong learning and inquiry within and outside the university community guarantees continued growth and secures for society the benefits of ever advancing knowledge.*
- *A commitment to diverse and inclusive communities. In carrying out its mission, Virginia Tech values the educational benefits of diverse ideas, peoples, and cultures. Articulated in the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, adopted by the board of visitors in 2005, diversity enlivens the exchange of ideas, broadens scholarship, and contributes to just engagement in all the world's communities.*

6.2 Introduction

The subcommittee reviewed race-based course offerings and programs dedicated to the study of race at Virginia Tech. In addition, the subcommittee has conducted a cursory survey of offerings at peer institutions. In spite of the existence of academic programs at Virginia Tech such as Africana Studies and Native American Studies, and programs that embed the study of race in their curriculum such as Political Science, Sociology, Women's Studies, Judaic Studies, Counseling, Psychology, Family and Childhood Development, and many others a student who does not major in one of these programs can go through his/her academic career without questioning, exploring, or coming to any understanding of the role of race in society or the issues related to race and racial privilege. Curricular reform is needed at Virginia Tech on two fronts: first, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to examine issues of race and racial privilege and, second, to create curricula that are less reflective of existing power structures.

6.3 Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

A comprehensive approach to curricular reform involves three basic areas:

- (1) substantial commitment and support of existing programs;
- (2) a commitment to the creation of new programs dedicated to the study of race;
- (3) opportunities for curricular and pedagogical reforms--that provide opportunities to investigate the ways in which race and racial privilege are manifested in the classroom—within the structure of existing programs.

(1) Substantial Commitment and Support of Existing Programs and (2) A Commitment to the Creation of New Dedicated Programs: The on-going support of programs (Africana Studies, Native American Studies, Judaic Studies, and Women's Studies) that study race and racial privilege, and the creation of new programs need to be considered jointly.

By strengthening existing programs and adding new departments that study alternative and critical ways of understanding race and racial privilege Virginia Tech would attract

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graduate students and faculty members who can ultimately change institutional culture and the structures of academic programs. These changes, if sustained and supported, can result in the reduction and elimination of racial privilege and produce a campus climate conducive to recruiting and retaining excellent students, staff, and faculty members. Such changes will make Virginia Tech a leader in producing research focusing on race, gender, class, and social change (see the website below for a discussion of the development of a Center for African American Studies at Princeton University and for a sense of research that is occurring regarding the study of race www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/S15/85/section=topstories).

Virginia Tech is uniquely positioned to be a leader in transformative research on race and racial privilege. Several academic units and a research center currently study social inequality and social justice. No other institution has the combination of a degree granting unit connected to a research center that aids faculty members whose research areas include race, class, and gender. Faculty members are engaged with graduate students in advancing scholarship that creates future researchers and professionals in the fields of Africana Studies, Women Studies, Native American Studies, Hispanic Studies, Sociology, History, Political Science, Policy Studies, Urban Affairs and International Studies, to name a few. Virginia Tech can be a model for other research institutions in the development of the kind of citizens (both leaders and followers) and advancing the kind of knowledge needed for the 21st century. A commitment to existing programs and the creation of possible new programs, such as Hispanic Studies, would allow Virginia Tech to be recognized for concretely addressing issues of climate and race through dedicated programs and to be a leader in the research, scholarship, and future of studies of race, class, gender, and their many intersections.

(3) *Curricular and Pedagogical Reform*: In her article “Toward a Critical Race Curriculum Special Issue on Critical Race Theory in Education: Recent Developments in the Field” (2002), Tara J. Yosso, a professor in the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara describes the many components that make up a curriculum and the areas in need of reform when making a comprehensive curricular change. Yosso states:

School curriculum is not merely the information included or excluded from a textbook or in a class discussion, but it also includes the structure of the class and the processes by which students are placed in the class. Understanding that curriculum includes both formal and informal methods of presenting knowledge means that we also understand decisions are made about what knowledge is presented and who will have access to that knowledge. Thus, it is important to broaden understandings of curriculum beyond the visible materials teachers present in their classrooms to include less visible curricular structures, processes, and discourses....Curriculum includes what structures are in place so that specific classes are designated to present specific knowledge. Curriculum also encompasses the processes designed to place students in certain classes, wherein they are presented with specific knowledge.

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Furthermore, curriculum is supported by discourses that justify why some students have access to certain knowledge while others are presented with different school curriculum (95).

Comprehensive curricular reform goes beyond designated programs that address race and employs critical race theory as one of many possible frameworks for investigation across and within various disciplines. This pedagogical approach may challenge and seem foreign to faculty members outside the liberal arts and human sciences. However, opportunities can be created to help faculty better understand and implement investigations of race in their classrooms by working with college deans, department heads, and program directors. The subcommittee would suggest that this approach to curricular reform be examined for implementation by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, the Assistant Provost for Liberal Education and University Studies, the Director of the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the Dean of the Graduate School and the faculty members engaged in the graduate Preparing the Future Professoriate program.

- *Support and strengthen existing programs.* Virginia Tech presently has two programs that focus on the understanding of racial privilege: the Women Studies Program and the Center for Africana Studies and Race and Social Policy Research. The Center focuses on the intersection of race, gender and class through its methods and theory classes at both the undergrad and graduate levels. The Women Studies Program focuses on gender, and race and the analysis of each in its undergraduate and graduate offerings. Virginia Tech also has an American Indian Studies Program that is not as fully developed as The Center and Women Studies but whose mission is also to provide alternative ways of understanding that are vital to the development of America's future citizens. The subcommittee recommends that these programs receive additional resources to grow. Each program has different needs that revolve around faculty lines, autonomy, and space. Faculty lines can be dedicated hires at 100% to each program or a less desirable 50% to be shared by two of the above mentioned programs. A commitment is needed to get each program the number of faculty members that allows the program to reach the next level of development within a 3-5 year period. Each program can be developed to produce future professionals in their field, create post doc opportunities, and support sponsored research opportunities with a moderate investment of resources (see appendix A for a model of an academic unit that focuses on race).
- *Create a Hispanic Studies program.* To advance the strengths already in place in the Africana Studies and Women's Studies programs, the subcommittee recommends the creation of a Hispanic Studies program within the context of existing academic structures and the addition of necessary resources.
- *Academic and programmatic autonomy.* Autonomy is important for all programs if they are to develop at the rate expected for an academic program at Virginia Tech. Each of the programs needs the autonomy to hire, promote, shape their curricula, and offer their own degrees. To do so may require changing its

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program status to a more appropriate academic designation but this step is a key component to enhancing recruitment and retention of students and faculty.

- *Allocation of sufficient space.* Space is an important ingredient in the growth of existing programs and in the development of new ones. Adequate space allows one to designate an area as theirs. They can decorate it, they can use it to meet with others, their students and friends can have a gathering place, it can be the symbol that galvanizes.

These recommended changes in dedicated faculty lines, autonomy, and space will vary by academic unit in terms of the resources needed. However, the subcommittee believes these elements are crucial to the elimination of both real and perceived racial privilege at Virginia Tech.

- *Curricular reform at the undergraduate level.* College Diversity Committees should prompt the conversations needed to investigate how racial privilege is manifested within individual departments, degree programs, and courses and seek the assistance necessary for curricular reform. Such an investigation and subsequent reform will require the support of deans, department heads, program directors, faculty members, and students.
- *Partner with VT Pathways for Learning.* The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education should discuss ways in which VT Pathways for Learning can promote ways for students to address issues of race and racial privilege.
- *Pedagogical Reform.* Pedagogical reform should be orchestrated with departments and colleges by the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (CEUT). The university must invest further in the CEUT to provide the education, training and support necessary for faculty to re-envision approaches to instruction that go beyond those that have been privileged in the past and that provide methods for exploring a more critical and complete picture of race and racial attitudes and culture.
- *Expand GEDI.* The university should provide the resources necessary to expand the pedagogical explorations present in the Graduate Education Development Institute (GEDI) course, and should allocate funds for additional graduate faculty education and opportunities through the Diversity Fellows.

6.4 Upcoming Subcommittee Activities

The preliminary recommendations listed above are the initial attempt by the subcommittee to outline a plan for curricular reform. The subcommittee has not had an opportunity to meet with the stakeholders involved in the units that named and/or alluded to in its recommendations. With that in mind, the subcommittee has a great deal of work ahead of us for the spring semester 2007.

As the subcommittee continues to collect information, the subcommittee seeks to collaborate with, be informed by, and better understand the details involved with refining, and implementing our recommendations. The subcommittee plans to continue gather information about funding strategies at peer institutions for existing programs and

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ideas for start-up funding for new programs. Much of this information is not readily available and may take some campus visits. The plan of the subcommittee is to coordinate its efforts with some of the other subcommittees that are also planning fact-finding visits to peer institutions

The subcommittee will meet with the directors of Women's Studies, Native American Studies, Judaic Studies and key Hispanic faculty members to better understand what they see as the best ways to support and enhance their current programs. Using The Center for Africana Studies and Race and Social Policy Research charter as a guideline (see appendix A), the subcommittee will ask them to propose their own vision statement and five year plan with short and long term goals and needed funding to achieve those goals.

The subcommittee further plans to meet and collaborate with college level Diversity Committees, deans, directors and department heads, to explore ways and resources needed to enact curricular reform through course development and/or revision. In these meetings the subcommittee will discuss some of the current research and curricular program support available. The subcommittee plans to explore ways in which Virginia Tech can create an initiative to lead course development and pedagogical reform to include the study of race, critical race theory, and racial privilege as it manifests itself in the classroom.

The subcommittee plans to meet and collaborate with the Assistant Provost for Liberal Education and University Studies, and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education to review and discuss ways in which VT Pathways for Learning can be engaged in the investigation of race and racial privilege within local and broader contexts.

The subcommittee is planning similar meetings to explore pedagogical issues with the Director of the CEUT, the Dean of the Graduate School, those teaching in the GEDI program, and those who coordinate the Diversity Fellows Program.

6.5 Summary

The benefit of a comprehensive approach to academic program reform to Virginia Tech's national reputation as a research institution and promoter of non-racial privilege cannot be underestimated. There are a number of areas Tech's national standing will be enhanced.

- The research coming out of faculties in the areas of race, gender, class, culture, at both the basic and applied levels, is not being done by many research institutions. Consequently, the university has the potential to lay the foundation for the development of new theories, methods, and policy directions for race, gender, class and culture.
- Undergraduate and graduate students will become excellent citizens and leaders in a diverse 21st century world (See Attachment B "Diversity and The College Curriculum").

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- Virginia Tech would serve as a beacon for graduate students, new faculty, and established faculty (regardless of disciplinary/program home), who are interested in researching race, gender, class, culture and policy. Committed scholars would have at their disposal structures and resources (financial and intellectual) to aid them in their growth and development. Resources available would include: graduate assistantships, mentors for graduate students, post-doc opportunities. Virginia Tech would be at the forefront of producing a generation of scholars that will impact the world for years to come in the areas of race, gender, class, culture and policy.
- An institutional commitment to strengthening/developing these specific academic units will significantly help the university achieve its strategic plan.
- Racial privilege will be eliminated at Virginia Tech and the university will serve as a model for the rest of the country on how to eliminate racial privilege in higher education.

The benefits for faculty, students and staff of color include:

- A critical mass of scholars for faculty, staff, and students to have as role models and mentors
- An intellectual environment in which to wrestle with key questions the answers for which impact the lives of members of the affected groups.
- A positive social climate that is central to having a positive experience and enhances faculty, staff, and student recruitment and retention.

Works Cited

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Appendix A

CHARTER

The Center for Africana Studies and Race and Social Policy Research

I. Vision and Objectives of the Center

A. Vision

The Center for Africana Studies (AFST) and Race and Social Policy Research (RSP) (hereafter referred to as the Center) is a departmental unit comprised of an academic program (AFST) and a research organization (RSP) that conducts scholarly research and outreach activities in the area of public policy with a direct emphasis on race and ethnicity. Through the use of applied research, the Center will evaluate the development, implementation, and effects of public policy across different racial and ethnic contexts. Some of the public policy issues include welfare, employment, education and health. RSP promotes a broad and inclusive conceptualization of race and ethnicity including, African-Americans, American Indians, Asian-Americans, European Americans, Latinos, and bi-racial and multi-racial identities while AFST focuses on people of African descent.

Aside from the research objectives stated above, the Center will be instrumental in developing future professionals in the area of Africana Studies by sponsorship original research of its members and disseminating of research findings. Seminars, workshops, conferences, and a publications program will be implemented to support the needs of AFST present and future professionals.

B. Objectives

The objectives of the Center are:

- To produce strong undergraduate and graduate students in the interdisciplinary field of Africana Studies and Sociology
- To develop scholars conducting research in Sociology, Africana Studies, and race and public policy through Center Affiliates, Associates and pre and post doctoral fellows
- To conduct scholarly research in the areas of Sociology, Africana Studies, and public policy with a direct emphasis on race and ethnicity
- To generate intellectual and financial resources for the Center
- To provide post-doc research opportunities
- To offer two 9-12 hour graduate level concentrations one in Africana Studies and the other in race, ethnicity and public policy
- To offer seminars, workshops and guest lectures on topics relevant to Sociology, Africana Studies, race, ethnicity and public policy to the university-wide community

We will achieve our objectives through a number of activities being carried out by the Center:

- An endowed professorship in AFST

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- Two speaker series (1 in AFST and 1 in RSP)
- Two undergraduate/graduate student scholarships
- Two grad certificates (AFST and RSP)
- A grad specialization in Sociology's MS and PhD programs
- Two minors and a degree option in IDST (AFST)
- Applied research projects (RSP)
- Home of The International Journal of Africana Studies (the official journal of the premier national scholarly organization in Africana Studies)

C. Five-year Plan

The Center's five-year development plan along with the staffing needs is outlined below.

Preliminary Staffing

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Director | 9 months (30%) |
| Associate Director | 9 months (30%) |
| Graduate Research Assistant | 9 months (20 hours/week) |
| Administrative Support | 12 months (min. 20 hours/week) |

Major Goals Year One: 2006-2007

- Hire staff listed above
- Visit/research comparable sites (ex., Cornell University, University of Michigan, Temple University)
- Maintain graduate level concentration/certificate requirements (2 graduate seminars each semester for RSP certificate)
- Host one academic seminar each semester
- Maintain present Center Associates/Affiliates
- Update policies, brochures and web information
- Secure \$20,000 through a combination of sponsored research and development initiatives
- Hold yearly stakeholders meeting

Major Goals Year Two: 2007-2008

- Host one academic seminar each semester
- Continue to offer 100% of courses to maintain concentration/certificate requirements (2 graduate seminars each semester for RSP certificate)
- Identify any additional Center Affiliates / Associates
- Secure \$25,000 through a combination of sponsored research and development initiatives
- Host a one day "visioning retreat" with RSP Stakeholders
- Hold yearly stakeholders meeting

Major Goals Year Three: 2008-2009

- Host one academic seminar each semester
- Continue to offer 100% of courses to maintain concentration/certificate requirements (2 graduate seminars each semester for RSP certificate)
- Identify any additional Center Associates/Affiliates

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- Develop Center Fellows program
- Secure \$30,000 through a combination of funded research and development initiatives
- Hire 2 faculty in AFST
- Meet with stakeholders committee

Major Goals Year Four: 2009-2010

- Continue to offer 100% of courses to maintain concentration/certificate requirements (2 graduate seminars each semester for RSP certificate)
- Host one academic seminar each semester
- Select 1-2 Center Fellows to begin Fall 2009
- Update policies, brochures and web information
- Secure \$40,000 through a combination of funded research and development initiatives
- Meet with Stakeholders Committee

Major Goals Year Five: 2010-2011

- Continue to offer 100% of courses to maintain concentration/certificate requirements(2 graduate seminars each semester for RSP certificate)
- Host one academic seminar each semester
- Secure \$50,000 through a combination of funded research and development initiatives
- Hire 2 faculty in AFST
- Meet with Stakeholders Committee

II. Center Clientele

The Center will maintain a close relationship with the students and faculty from the Center for Public Administration and Policy, Sociology Department, the Africana Studies Program, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies (Women Studies, Religious Studies), History Department, the English Department, the Department of Political Science and the Center for Gerontology. Graduate students university-wide, but particularly those associated with the School for Public and International Affairs, Sociology, Human Development, STS, Urban Affairs and Planning and Africana Studies will be recruited to enroll in courses and/or complete a concentration in Race and Social Policy/Africana Studies.

Research clientele will include governmental, private, non-profit foundations and organizations that sponsor research related to the Center's mission.

III. Governance

A. The Center's Stakeholders Committee

The following individuals have agreed to serve on the Center's Stakeholders Committee:

- James Bohland, Professor, Urban Affairs and Planning
- Karen DePauw, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
- Michael Herndon, Director, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

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- Karen Roberto, Professor and Director, Center for Gerontology
- John Ryan, Professor and Chair of Sociology
- Representative from Provost Office (Pat Hyer/Karen Sanders)?

IV. Payoff to the University

- Reinforces the University's commitment to issues of inclusion and social justice and provides important reputational capital to the institution
- Attract nationally known senior scholars who have a history of bringing in grant money
- Enhance the cultivation of institutional linkages (i.e. Johns Hopkins, Temple University, University of Michigan, Cornell University)
- Increase capacities for sponsored research among all faculty doing relevant research
- Will train future scholar-activist researchers who can make significant contributions to community outreach initiatives
- Recruitment and retention of graduate students and faculty interested in helping the Center achieve its objectives.

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Appendix B

Diversity and The College Curriculum:

How Colleges & Universities Are Preparing Students For a Changing World (1998)

by Debra Humphreys, AAC&U,
for the Ford Foundation Campus Diversity Initiative

America's colleges and universities are educating a larger and more diverse group of students than ever before. As student bodies become more diverse, scholars are generating a plethora of new knowledge about the diversity of cultural traditions and histories in America and around the world. Some critics have misrepresented what these developments mean for today's students. Their reports ignore the renaissance in curriculum, teaching, intercultural understanding, and civic dialogue that characterizes how colleges and universities are transforming what and how they teach. College courses today offer students a deeper and more complete picture of America's culture and history. Professors are utilizing new texts and teaching techniques designed to prepare students for increasingly complex and diverse communities and workplaces.

Battles about what sorts of courses should be taught in college are not new and are no more heated today than they have been in the past. Critics calling for a return to a purportedly uncontested past curriculum of "timeless truths" present an inaccurate history. They charge that a core curriculum focused on "classic" texts and "western civilization" is threatened by current curricular innovations. As historian and author Lawrence Levine of George Mason University reminds us, however, "The canon and the curriculum . . . were constantly in the process of revision with irate defenders insisting, as they still do, that change would bring instant decline. The inclusion of "modern" writers from Shakespeare to Walt Whitman . . . came only after prolonged battles as intense and divisive as those that rage today."¹

This paper explores current developments in curriculum transformation. It presents a brief overview of what these changes seek to accomplish and what they mean for today's college students. It ends with a list of additional resources on curriculum change in higher education.

More and more colleges and universities across the nation are transforming their curricula because college leaders increasingly recognize that knowledge about the diversity of American history and culture and knowledge about international diversity are essential for today's students.

- In a survey of 65 institutions involved in a recent curriculum transformation project sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), almost 60 percent had instituted requirements that students take at least one course addressing diversity. Many more schools are moving toward instituting such requirements.²

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- Another study found that of 196 colleges and universities surveyed, 34% had a multicultural general education requirement, 33% offered course work in ethnic and women's studies, and 54% had introduced multicultural material into their departmental course offerings.³

The Facts about Changes in the College Curriculum

1. Diversity courses teach students skills they will need to succeed in the 21st century.
 - A course at the University of Michigan, "Intergroup Relations, Conflict and Community" teaches students how to address constructively conflicts that arise among and within different groups and explores the possibility for building community across racial and ethnic boundaries. This course and scores of others across the country are teaching students valuable skills they will need to function in a diverse world: listening, empathy, fairness, dialogue, intercultural communication, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving.
 - Courses that incorporate new historical knowledge are also preparing students to meet contemporary challenges. Some examples include the core course at Occidental College in California on "The History of Human Patterns of Migration, Emigration and Immigration." Students are learning about changes in immigration laws and the experiences of various immigrant groups. These students will be much better prepared to engage the challenges presented by immigration today.
2. A diversified curriculum can help bridge differences, both on campus and in society. Learning about the diversity of U.S. and global cultural traditions brings groups of students together rather than dividing them.
 - Students who have taken a new required course on "Self and Community" at Olivet College in Michigan report that they now find it easier to discuss issues of racial conflict outside the classroom. Students report that taking the course has encouraged them to reach out and socialize with students who have backgrounds different from their own.
 - Campus leaders at SUNY-Buffalo report that a required course on "American Pluralism and the Search for Equality" has also had an impact beyond the classroom. Students consistently report that the course gives them an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues. In fact, in the midst of a heated campus debate in which race figured prominently, it was students from this course who were most informed about the issues and contributed most productively to the debate.
 - Many campuses now sponsor programs that provide students with structured opportunities to work in diverse groups on pressing community problems. At California State University-Los Angeles, for instance, diverse groups of students, guided by their professors, worked with Los Angeles community members to design and conduct a needs assessment of Boyle Heights, a neighborhood adjacent to the campus with a largely Latino population. They studied student dropout issues and

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prevention programs in ethnically diverse high schools. They also surveyed and assessed the impact of the informal economy of local street vendors.

3. Diversifying and expanding the knowledge base of the college curriculum does not prevent students from studying traditional texts.
 - Contrary to some reports, faculty members are not ignoring traditional canonical texts as they expose students to new voices that have also shaped our history and culture. In fact, students are gaining a deeper understanding of classic texts through these new courses. "Inventing America," a course at Lewis and Clark College in Oregon focuses on concepts of equality and freedom, justice and authority, and conflict and consensus. Students study the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment in addition to key court cases and diverse commentators on democracy and the American experience including Alexis de Tocqueville, Thomas Jefferson, Sojourner Truth, Ralph Ellison, and Ronald Takaki.
 - Newly transformed American literature survey courses across the country still include texts by authors like Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. But by also studying the slave narratives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, students in these courses are better able to understand the racial dynamics that informed the writing of more "classic" authors.
 - Diversity courses challenge students to think in more complex ways about identity and history, and *avoid* cultural stereotyping.
 - By offering increasingly sophisticated and comparative perspectives, new college courses challenge simplistic or stereotypical notions of cultural identity. Courses like "Hispanic Cultures in the U.S." at SUNY-Albany or "Sociology and Culture of American Ethnicity" at North Seattle Community College teach about cultural identity, but also consider the multidimensional nature of cultures. These courses work against stereotyping even as they teach students about cultural differences.⁴
 - Through courses like "Comparative Race Relations: A History of Race Relations in South Africa, Brazil and the United States" at Rowan University in New Jersey, students develop a more complex understanding of what shapes their own attitudes and beliefs, where their own cultural traditions came from, and how they interrelate with other traditions.

In addition to the testimony of students and faculty from across the country about these new and transformed courses, educational researchers are also beginning to document the positive impact on student learning that these curricular changes are having.

One comprehensive national study found that faculty emphasis on diversity in courses has positive effects on openness to racial understanding and overall satisfaction with college.⁵

- Another study found that cognitive development improves among students participating in a multicultural course.⁶

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- A study conducted at the University of Michigan that investigated the impact of intergroup contact and course work dealing with racial and ethnic issues found that course work had the most significant positive impact on increased support for educational equity.⁷
- A 1996 study examining the impact of multicultural courses on white students' sense of community, cultural awareness, interest in promoting racial understanding, and satisfaction with college also reported positive results in each of these areas.⁸
- A 1991 study found that a comparative multicultural course requirement at the University of California-Berkeley led students to a greater appreciation of the complexity of artistic productions in various cultures.⁹
- Another study found that students whose professors included racial/ethnic materials in their courses reported higher levels of satisfaction with their college experience.¹⁰
- Finally, several studies reveal that women's studies courses encourage more debate among students than other kinds of courses and, in fact, improve women's attitudes toward men.¹¹

This research and trends across the country suggest that, contrary to critics' claims, diversifying the college curriculum is resulting in a more rigorous educational experience for today's college students. While some new courses are being added, many of the changes in the college curriculum are improvements to existing courses.

Faculty members today are striving to provide a more complete and complex picture of culture and history. The growing evidence suggests that these efforts are paying off for today's students. They are fostering intellectual development, expanded cultural knowledge, and interracial understanding among college students.

Notes

1. Lawrence Levine. *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996): 15.
2. Debra Humphreys. *General Education and American Commitments: A National Report on Diversity Courses and Requirements*. (Washington, D.C.: AAC&U, 1997).
3. Richard Light and Jeanette Cureton. "The Quiet Revolution: Eleven Facts About Multiculturalism and the Curriculum." *Change*. (Jan/Feb, 1992).
4. Debra Humphreys. *General Education and American Commitments: A National Report on Diversity Courses and Requirements*. (Washington, D.C.: AAC&U, 1997).
5. Astin, A. *What Matters in College?: Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
6. Adams, M., and Y. Zhou-McGovern. "The Sociomoral Development of Undergraduates in a 'Social Diversity' Course: Developmental Theory, Research, and Instructional Applications," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1994, at New Orleans, Louisiana.

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7. Lopez, G. E. "The Effect of Group Contact and Curriculum on White, Asian American, and African American Students' Attitudes." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1993.
8. Tanaka, G. K. "The Impact of Multiculturalism on White Students." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996.
9. Institute for the Study of Social Change. *The Diversity Project: Final Report*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1991.
10. Villalpando, O. "Comparing the Effects of Multiculturalism and Diversity on Minority and White Students' Satisfaction with College," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, November, 1994, at Tucson, Arizona.
11. Musil, Caryn McTighe. *The Courage to Question: Women's Studies and Student Learning*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1992; and Bargad, A., and J. S. Hyde. "Women's Studies: A Study of Feminist Identity Development in Women," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 15 1991: 181-201.

Additional Resources on Diversity and the College Curriculum Resources from the Association of American Colleges and Universities

The Drama of Diversity and Democracy: Higher Education and American Commitments

The first in a series of reports written by a National Panel of scholars convened through AAC&U's American Commitments initiative, this report explores higher education's responsibilities within a diverse democracy. Challenging conventional arguments that equate diversity with balkanized groups, the authors call on higher education to provide public leadership in helping the nation see the connections between diversity issues and the unfinished work of building a successful and inclusive democracy. The report provides a broad societal analysis of United States diversity issues and is recommended for trustees, general readers, and campus groups.

Liberal Learning and the Arts of Connection for the New Academy

The second report written by the American Commitments National Panel explores goals for liberal learning in a diverse democracy and argues that the liberal arts of the future will include ways of relating and learning across difference. Written for faculty members and curriculum committees, this report should be used in connection with American Pluralism and the College Curriculum described below. American Pluralism and the College Curriculum: Higher Education in a Diverse Democracy The third report explores curricular practices that help prepare all students for a diverse society. It makes specific recommendations for teaching diversity across the curriculum, in both general education and major programs, and describes effective diversity courses and requirements in a broad range of institutions, large and small, public and private, two- and four-year.

Diversity Works: The Emerging Picture of How Students Benefit When a campus makes and is perceived by its students to make a significant commitment to diversity, educational gains are made across the entire student body. Student participation in campus diversity initiatives contributes to measurable changes in openness to difference, increased commitment to social justice, as well as to cognitive development and academic success. These results

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are explained in this report which also provides an overview and a critical examination of diversity research literature. The authors ask "What works?" and then provide answers, while also explaining the theory and tools available for studying diversity in higher education.

Diversity in Higher Education: A Work in Progress

This book represents the insights of four diversity evaluators Caryn McTighe Musil, Mildred García, Yolanda T. Moses, and Daryl G. Smith who assessed the institutional impact of the first round of grants awarded under the Ford Foundation's Campus Diversity Initiative to nineteen residential colleges and universities. With lessons from the field, this monograph is designed to assist institutions in thinking strategically about how to make diversity more integral to the mission and practices of higher education.

Core Curriculum and Cultural Pluralism: A Guide for Campus Planners

Written by Betty Schmitz, this rich study reports on emerging models for multiculturalism in core curricula and provides a roadmap for academic leaders looking to design and pass new general education programs. It includes sample syllabi, core proposals, curriculum profiles, and a step-by-step guide through the potholes of curriculum change and faculty development.

General Education and American Commitments: A National Report on Diversity Courses and Requirements Written by Debra Humphreys, this overview of curricular changes at 65 colleges and universities involved in the first part of the American Commitments Curriculum and Faculty Development network provides concrete examples of new courses, programs and curricular models on U.S. pluralism. It also provides practical advice on the process and politics of curriculum change. To order any AAC&U publication, contact AAC&U Publications Desk, 1818 R Street, Washington, D.C. 20009; 202/387-3760; pub_desk@aacu.nw.dc.us Other Resources on Diversity and the College Curriculum

Creating an Inclusive College Curriculum: A Teaching Sourcebook from The New Jersey Project, edited by Ellen G. Friedman, Wendy K. Kolmar, Charley B. Flint, and Paula Rothenberg

Includes over 40 syllabi and teaching resources for both two-year and four-year colleges and universities. Reflective essays rethinking pedagogy and course content cover such subjects as the structures of knowledge, feminist science, psychoanalysis and feminism, and affirmative action. The volume also contains information about initiating, sustaining and renewing curriculum transformation projects. Syllabi include course content, weekly outlines, reading lists, and assignments. (Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027; 212/678-3919)

Diversity Within America's Catholic Colleges and Universities

A report of findings from the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities survey of its two hundred member institutions. Contact William Martineau at Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, 202-457-4650.

Selected Bibliography of the Cultural Pluralism Institute This bibliography edited by Johnella Butler and Andrew Bartlett, includes the major texts and readings of the joint Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education/University of Washington Cultural Pluralism Institute. Contents include sections devoted to: multiethnic literature; African-

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American, American Indian, Asian American, and Chicano/Latino materials; curriculum transformation; and institutional change (January 1995). Contact: Johnnella Butler, Box 354380, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195-4380.

World Wide Web Resources

DiversityWeb

DiversityWeb serves as an electronic hub linking nearly 300 institutions' work on diversity via the World Wide Web. Developed by AAC&U and the University of Maryland at College Park, DiversityWeb includes a World Wide Web home page connected to campus-based diversity home pages, but also contains essential information about diversity efforts nationwide. DiversityWeb helps participating institutions explain, categorize and link their diversity priorities, practices and accomplishments. Finally, it includes a Leader's Guide—a topically organized consumers' guide to strong diversity practices and resources. (<http://www.diversityweb.org>)

Managing Diversity

The Program on Intergroup Relations, Conflict & Community (IGRCC) at the University of Michigan is a multicultural and diversity education program organized under the divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. IGRCC is an innovative effort to educate students and members of the University community about intergroup relations and various forms of conflict among social groups. It links formal education course work to the living and social experiences of students outside of the classroom. The program brings together people from various social and racial/ethnic backgrounds to discuss commonalities and differences, address issues of conflict, and learn how to deal with these issues constructively. <http://www.umich.edu/~igrcc>

University of Washington Curriculum Transformation Project

The University of Washington Curriculum Transformation Project was initiated in 1991 and became an administrative unit of the Office of Undergraduate Education in January 1995. Its primary responsibilities are assisting both individual faculty and academic departments with curriculum change related to gender and cultural pluralism. The website has information about the project's current available resources and activities; several sample syllabi; a series of bibliographies; and a newsletter on curriculum transformation efforts at Washington and around the country. The site also links to other diversity related sites. <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~ctp/about.htm>

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7. Community and Alumni Engagement Subcommittee

Co-chairs:

Christina Brogdon, Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Coordinator, Office for Equal Opportunity

Ed McPherson, Director, VT Stars, Learning Technology

Members:

Susan Gooden, Associate Professor, Government & Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University

Vince Houston, Police Lieutenant, Virginia Tech Police

Barbara Pendergrass, former Dean of Students

7.1 Vision

The Community and Alumni Engagement subcommittee seeks to explore and examine avenues for increased recognition, partnerships, and interactions with African-American, Hispanic and Native American communities and university alumni.

Vision:

Virginia Tech's evolution to a world-leading land-grant institution requires that inclusive policies and practices become a natural phenomena and systematic characteristic of university life. The subcommittee believes this can be achieved if Virginia Tech develops a sustained visible presence in diverse communities as a contributing partner to each community's enhancement and benefit.

7.2 Introduction

Virginia Tech has made commendable efforts to enact meaningful policies to foster inclusion, increase tolerance, and has adopted the Virginia Tech Principles of Community. However, due to the university's segregationist past, its 2003 Board of Visitor's attempt to reverse policy statements of inclusion, and recurring acts of individual bias a general image lingers of Virginia Tech as an institution that is challenged by issues of race, ethnicity and civility. The seeming persistence of a climate of insensitivity is particularly troubling for Virginia Tech because much of its increased name recognition is due in part to a successful athletic program that includes a significant level of African-American participation. Efforts to increase minority alumni involvement and community engagement have been hampered by inconsistent priorities, personnel turnover, and constrained resources in three key areas; Alumni Affairs, University Development and Community Outreach.

7.3 Findings and Preliminary Recommendations

Alumni Engagement

- Engaging alumni in university diversity initiatives is important. In the past, individuals worked on diversity part-time or their appointment was split between key areas. Currently, new hires have been made in Alumni Affairs and University Development two key areas in advancing minority alumni engagement. The Office of Multicultural Affairs has limited involvement in community outreach and

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some interaction across the key areas. Sustained relationships with minority alumni can provide regional support for various university activities, such as admissions.

- A number of best practices are effective at peer institutions and merit closer scrutiny by the subcommittee as possible models for adaptation or modification at Virginia Tech.
- Continue to document and present aspects of campus activity, social history, and the personal stories of minority alumni. This approach was identified by the subcommittee as a useful and effective way to positively reconnect with alumni with a range of student experiences.
- The very successful fiftieth anniversary celebration of Blacks at Virginia Tech in 2003 was cited as a highly significant and unique historical event that demonstrates what can and should occur to engage Black and minority alumni. Concern was expressed to the subcommittee that the event may not have been leveraged sufficiently to replicate in 2007. A similar event should be planned to recognize inclusive moments of diversity for other minorities, despite the lack of a critical mass for Latino/a and Native American populations.
- The upcoming Black Alumni reunion in mid-March (2007) and the Fourth Annual Scholarship of Diversity Conference are events that warrant increased support for their success. In addition, each can serve as a test case to review current levels of coordination, event planning, and affinity marketing for minority alumni and community partners. An initial discussion with the leadership of the Alumni Affairs office and the principal planner for the Black Alumni reunion was very positive and encouraging. A follow-up meeting is planned by the subcommittee to continue the exploration and possibilities for broader involvement.
- The use of Town Hall forums, focus groups, and special interest chats were discussed extensively by the subcommittee as possible methods to engage alumni who may have largely negative memories of their student experiences and who as a result may currently have negative attitudes toward Virginia Tech.
- At present, the subcommittee does not recommend extensive large group gatherings to explore these potentially painful experiences; rather the subcommittee recommends sponsorship and development of targeted community and relationship building events and activities in six regional areas:
 - New River Valley and Blacksburg campus area
 - Roanoke-Lynchburg, Clifton Forge and Shenandoah area
 - Southside (Martinsville, Danville, Pittsylvania County and South Boston)
 - Greater Richmond region
 - Tidewater and Hampton Roads region
 - National Capital and Maryland region
- The subcommittee encourages the creation of an extended campaign of intentional informational, cultural, and educational messages with clearly established outcomes, and expectations to engage minority alumni in a sustained series of alumni, development and outreach events and activities based on demographic data, field of study, occupation and degree.
- The university must seek greater inclusion of Black alumni in all aspects of its institutional branding, athletic events, academic, cultural and development

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activities. The appeal to minority alumni must be embedded in every message to all alumni, and supported by a team of *'advancement professionals'* who are woven throughout key levels of Alumni Affairs, University Development and Community Engagement.

- Virginia Tech was one of 76 colleges and universities nationwide selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for its new Community Engagement Classification. A second university 'Challenge of Engagement' conference is planned for 2007. Each of these highlights the potential benefits to the university from reciprocal relationships with the local community and larger regional initiatives.

The university's effort to engage minority alumni is directly impacted by its willingness to address the essential issues that confront Black, Hispanic/Latino and Native American communities in such a way that *true partnerships are established with reciprocal and synergistic benefits* for both the university team of scholars and the participating community team of citizens. There is solid evidence of a variety of collaborative university activities and community engagement projects, with real benefits for all participants. Yet, some of the relationships reflect traditional dichotomies and one-directional transfers of knowledge. These existing efforts must be strengthened.

Community Engagement

Traditional relationships reinforce the notion of the institution as uncaring, exploitive and inaccessible for citizens with limited opportunities for interaction, and may also silently validate negative perceptions of hostility or uncertainty with regard to access. These are topics ripe for novel research and opportunities to expand innovative pipeline efforts within targeted communities for reciprocal engagement around locally identified issues.

- Two strategic university initiatives can be leveraged to support broader engagement with minority alumni and minority communities. The Institute for Society, Culture and Environment, and The Institute for Biomedical and Public Health Sciences each can involve holistic experiences for undergraduate students and use community engagement as an opportunity for social and individual transformation.
- The strategic focus on K-12 STEM activities in the Engagement domain can be leveraged to strengthen public education and local support for long-term economic viability of currently depressed communities, as part of the university's engagement.
- Reciprocal benefits may be difficult to identify, assess, and measure without a long-term mechanism and framework for sustained community engagement in multiple regions and with a variety of partnerships across each region. Creation of such a framework will likely require substantial resources or novel pass-through contractual arrangements with federal and/or state agencies. External funding from corporations or foundations may provide seed money for projects within the appropriate strategic university initiative.
- Use the redefined Discovery domain of the academic plan to address the underlying causes of inequity within minority communities via reciprocal

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relationships. The challenge will be to determine several compelling and attainable goals.

- Organizations such as the NAACP, the Urban League and the university Black and Hispanic Caucuses should be empowered as full partners to explore this challenge, along with various alumni groups and local community associations, within target areas.

7.4 Upcoming Subcommittee Activities

The consensus of the subcommittee was to focus on solutions and strategies for immediate implementation by key areas of the university charged with support of alumni and community engagement. The subcommittee anticipates using the 2007 spring term to further explore and examine avenues for increased recognition, partnerships and interactions with African-American, Hispanic and Native American communities and university alumni.

The subcommittee will seek solutions and implementation strategies within the regions defined above and in conjunction with the key areas of Alumni Affairs, University Development and Community Engagement and Outreach. The subcommittee will rely upon partnerships with these areas to recommend additional resource needs and operational parameters for shared ideas.

The subcommittee will explore methods to impact the public perception held by underrepresented groups, among those without entrée to the university and seek ways to address the concerns of community members from churches, organizations, and non-profits.

The subcommittee is planning fact-finding requests and open-ended discussions. It will seek joint meetings with several subcommittees with related concerns, such as undergraduate education and academic programs. The subcommittee will also suggest that some information be shared with the taskforce as a committee of the whole.

Virginia Tech is not alone in its effort to address the issue of greater inclusiveness in alumni and community engagement activities. There are lessons to learn from other institutions as well as a need to fully identify current efforts across the university. The subcommittee hopes to determine projects, events, activities and programs that can be leveraged to increase the potential for reciprocal relationships and benefits for everyone involved.

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8. Summary List of Preliminary Recommendations

The following is a summary of the principal preliminary recommendations from each of the subcommittees. Note that these recommendations are expanded upon in the text of the subcommittee reports and it is, therefore, crucial to read the details outlined earlier in this document to gain the full context and scope of the recommendations. Common themes in the recommendations include:

- More effective recruitment, retention, mentoring and advising strategies for underrepresented minority faculty, staff and students.
- Improved campus climate for minorities and improved cultural competence for administrators, faculty, staff and students.
- Improved assessment and accountability procedures for advancing diversity at the university, college, and departmental levels.
- Enhanced collaboration and communication between various administrative, academic, and organizational units as well as alumni and the community for advancing diversity and race issues.
- Curricular reform to strengthen diversity and race issue related academic programs.
- Additional resources for addressing and advancing diversity and race issues.

Common themes provide focus for combining preliminary recommendations into final recommendations as well as timelines for implementation and requests for creation of infrastructure and resources.

8.1 Undergraduate Student Subcommittee Preliminary Recommendations

1. Increased proactive and sustainable efforts of recruitment of underrepresented students.
2. Increased understanding, by students, of the services available that impact student retention.
3. More defined efforts with pipeline programs and assessment of effort.
4. Increased access to financial aid through education and timely award packages.
5. More clarity and consistency needed with academic advising campus-wide.
6. Need for defined mentoring programs.
7. Refinement and enhancement of campus climate infrastructure.

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8.2 Graduate Student Subcommittee Preliminary Recommendations

1. Mandatory cultural competence training for faculty, staff, and administrators.
2. Greater accountability of graduate program directors and department heads for recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate and professional students.
3. Develop an Ombuds program to provide culturally competent advocacy and support to underrepresented graduate students.
4. Review and identify structural barriers in departmental subsystems that limit the recruitment, admission, retention, and evaluation of graduate and professional students.
5. Hold faculty who advise, teach, and develop graduate and professional students accountable for their competence and professionalism.
6. Identify strategies within departments that have succeeded in recruiting and retaining underrepresented graduate and professional students.

8.3 Faculty/Staff Subcommittee Preliminary Recommendations

1. Develop a new exit survey administration and analysis plan for faculty and staff submitted by July 31, 2007.
2. Survey existing faculty, staff, and administration on key factors associated with recruitment, retention, employee development, and cultural competence. The survey method and approach should be developed by Institutional Research and paid for by funds from the Provost's office.
3. More effectively utilize internal knowledge and resources before conducting surveys of climate, cultural competence, or voluntary departure surveys. These internal assets include Black and Hispanic Faculty/Staff Caucuses and the Race and Social Policy Research Center.
4. Audit and conduct interviews of search committees and search committee members during and after search processes to identify issues relevant to bias or procedural injustice. This audit and interview process should begin in the fall of 2007.
5. Identify an effective process to institute compulsory online training to increase awareness of and minimize the impact of bias in decision-making and evaluation for all deans, department heads, center directors, and search committees.
6. Audit and review departmental diversity recruitment and retention plans. This can be conducted through online surveys and meetings. The audit and review should be

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followed by analysis of gaps and limitations (or variances), and departments should be required to submit improved plans no later than December 31, 2007.

7. Identify and analyze observable inequities (salary, opportunities for staff training and education, and professional development opportunities).

8. Increase the number of senior faculty from underrepresented groups by using methods found to be successful at other institutions such as the use of chaired professorships.

9. Assign additional resources to the Provost's office and Institutional Research.

10. Audit and review processes for determination of market value and assignment to pay bands for classified staff, with specific emphasis on the subjective justifications provided for assignment to levels or pay bands.

11. Develop an accountability plan for upper administration, deans, department heads, and vice presidents as it relates to results of evidence-based assessments and recruitment, retention and enrichment plans.

12. Develop an intrapreneurial group within the Provost's office to coordinate infra- and extra-structures to advance the recommendations of this subcommittee.

8.4 Administrative Infrastructure and Diversity Initiatives Subcommittee Preliminary Recommendations

1. Clearly define the roles for each component within the university's infrastructure
2. Increase the cooperation between and more effective communication among components
3. Streamline reporting procedures.
4. Increase accountability and ongoing assessment of diversity efforts.
5. Increase the level of shared responsibility for diversity efforts.

8.5 Academic Programs Subcommittee Preliminary Recommendations

1. Address issues of racial privilege within current academic programs and create academic curricula that are less reflective of the existing power structures, a comprehensive approach to program support and curricular reform is needed.
2. Increase pedagogical and research support for existing programs (Africana Studies, Women Studies, American Indian Studies) and new programs (i.e. Hispanic Studies).

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3. Institute curricular change and reform at the undergraduate level.
4. At the graduate level, work with and expand current pedagogical explorations present in the Graduate Education Development Institute (GEDI) course in conjunction with funding further graduate faculty education and opportunities through the Diversity Fellows.

8.6 Community and Alumni Engagement Subcommittee Preliminary Recommendations

1. Leverage strategic university initiatives to provide broader engagement with Black, Hispanic and Native American alumni and communities.
2. Immediately develop specific targeted projects within the Institute for Society, Culture and Environment, and the Institute for Biomedical and Public Health Sciences, and gradually within all strategic initiatives to provide compelling and sustainable goals to engage minority communities.
3. Design university diversity projects to involve faculty, students, staff, and alumni in holistic learning experiences with intentional benefits for minority communities and reciprocal relationships for everyone involved.
4. Embed messages of value and inclusion in every message to all alumni and throughout all levels of communication within and throughout the university minority alumni are a potentially vital asset in the university's positive institutional transformation.
5. Develop multiple strategies and comprehensive efforts across the key advancement areas of Alumni Relations, University Development and Community Engagement.
6. Increase collaboration between the Black and Hispanic Caucuses and minority alumni will improve recruiting, educational and institutional marketing within a regional, national and international framework.
7. Establish nontraditional partnerships with reciprocal and synergistic benefits that are essential to achieve meaningful goals on a broad and sustained basis. Such partnerships are essential for effective pipeline programs.