

University Committee on LGBT Issues  
February 20, 2004

Present: **XX** for C. Andrews, J. Altman, M. Brown, R. Buehler, C. Burnside,  
D. Fillmore, M. Miller, M. Moon, B. Munjas, S. Watstein (recorder)  
Absent: D. Benson, J. Bradford, M. Brown, and W. Fahey  
Excused Absences:

Agenda items included discussion of SMSA, EEO/AA sensitivity training, Equity and Diversity, Faculty Senate domestic partner initiatives, VCU Libraries circulation privileges' expansion, School of Social Work domestic partner resolution, School of the Arts domestic partner benefits inquiries, committee membership, Web page, and leadership.

### **SMSA**

Burnside and Watstein have been asked to serve as faculty advisors to VCU's Sexual Minority Student Alliance

<http://www.studentorg.vcu.edu/smsa/>

They reported on their attendance at a recent SMSA meeting. SMSA meets on Wednesdays from 10:00 on. SMSA activities are a mix of social, educational and political events. Planning is underway for the April 21 Day of Silence, the March for Women's Lives on April 25 in Washington, etc. Members raised questions about the Day of Silence; interest was also expressed in inviting a representative from SMSA to attend our meetings. Note: this falls within the larger issue of membership, and was discussed further on in the meeting.

### **EEO/AA Sensitivity Training Materials**

Burnside and Watstein reported that they had met with V. Williams, EEO/AA, at V. Williams' invitation to discuss proposed sensitivity training on LGBT. Training is designed in support of the University's commitment to non-discrimination; Williams envisions an approach and model similar to the mandated sexual harassment training her office offers to the University. Burnside and Watstein have received copies of draft training materials, and proposed setting aside the March meeting for a review and discussion of handouts developed to date. Questions were raised as to the goal of the training, the relationship of the training to Safe Zone training, and to the training Human Resources anticipates rolling out to the University (based on the work Fields, Fillmore and Watstein did for Human Resources staff in Fall, 2003). Information on sexual harassment prevention can be found at [http://www.vcu.edu/eeoaa/sexual\\_harass.html](http://www.vcu.edu/eeoaa/sexual_harass.html). Note that online sexual harassment training is currently available; whether the LGBT training would evolve to this format is unknown.

### **Diversity and Equity Committee**

We are now an official sub-committee of the Equity and Diversity Committee, and Burnside and Watstein shared details from their first meeting with this group on February 13, 2004. N. Langston, School of Nursing, chairs the group. (Note: a Partner Benefits resolution will be discussed by the Committee at its March 11 meeting; the Recruitment sub-committee chaired by B. Koerin, SSW, will be bringing this forward.)

### **Faculty Senate Domestic Partnership Initiatives**

Martha Moon provided background and an update as to Faculty Senate Committee domestic partner initiatives launched from the AA/EEO Committee co-chaired by E.

Cramer and K. Murphy-Judy, noting that there are a wide range of perspectives and issues, and emphasizing that there is movement.

### **School of Social Work Domestic Partner Benefits Resolution**

Randi Buerlin shared with the group that SSW's resolution has gone forward, and is now with the Provost. This resolution stemmed in part from E. Cramer's report on the high cost of being in a same-sex partnership (sent by Cramer to Dr. McDavis and others following a conversation with the Provost at our fall welcome reception.)

### **VCU Libraries on Domestic Partner Benefits**

Watstein noted that the Libraries intend to address the issue of domestic partner benefits when it reviews its circulation privileges this spring. It is expected that borrowing privileges will be extended to domestic partners. For more about borrowing privileges, visit <http://www.library.vcu.edu/circpriv/>.

### **School of the Arts Domestic Partner Benefits Inquiries**

Burnside reported that SoTA Dean Toscan asked him to gather feedback on the extent of faculty support for domestic partner benefits; Burnside has asked the chairs of the fifteen departments in SoTA to take the issue back to their departments, with a deadline the end of February for feedback. As of the meeting, five had forwarded it back with endorsement. Other departments have yet to respond.

### **Siegel Center**

Marianne Miller reported that she and her husband applied for membership the previous Saturday and were not asked for a copy of their marriage license. Burnside has tried to reach J. Bradford on the matter. S. Bolling, J. Bradford, and C. Burnside are supposed to get back together on this.

### **Membership**

Several pertinent issues here - - if we are a formal sub committee of Diversity and Equity appointment letters are needed to validate this status. Burnside and Watstein will follow up with N. Langston. M. Moon suggested that as our status is now more legitimate, we might want to consider more of a public call for membership. It was decided that membership will be the focus of the April meeting. Students will be asked to join us; sentiment favored representatives from the Academic Campus and the Medical Center, from the undergraduate and graduate ranks. Support was expressed for inviting the SMSA president. Burnside and Watstein will check whether Diversity and Equity has a policy on student membership. M. McCreary will join the group at its March meeting. Questions were raised about a new student organization at VCU called Queer Action. Jeremy Kidd is the President of this group, but members did not know much more about it.

### **Web**

Although the proper location for our Web site has not yet been finalized, we are closer to a URL! Logical spots include off the Office of the Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity's page, <http://www.vcu.edu/provost/diversity.html>, and off the Diversity and Equity page. The group expressed interest in how many clicks away from the home page both locations are.

### **Leadership**

Anticipated changes in leadership were briefly discussed; Burnside noted that co-chairship has been balanced gender-wise in the past. The value of rotating at least one of the current co-chairs was noted.

**Housekeeping and Happenings**

The next meeting was set for Friday, March 19, 2004 at 12 noon in the James Branch Cabell Library.

**What Makes our Teaching “Anti-Oppressive”** Wednesday, April 7 (SSW and CTE), Founders Room, Siegel Center

**Day of Silence:** April 21, with a breaking the silence event scheduled for 7 p.m. in Capital Ballroom C. Numerous campus groups are involved in this.