Virginia Tech Conductor

A Guide for our Journey toward Excellence, Equity and Effectiveness

In this issue

Communication focus of Diversity Summit

The seventh annual Diversity Summit was held on Monday, January 19, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in Owens Banquet Hall. The summit was dedicated to the memory of Michael Two Horses, a faculty member and a member of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, who passed away unexpectedly in December (see page 4).

Over 120 faculty, staff, and students participated in the summit which was structured

Dr. LuAnn Gaskill presents her table's discussion on the standard assigned.

to include two separate discussion groups. For the first discussion, participants were seated by constituent groups and focused their discussion on the following questions:

1. What are some effective or preferred ways to communicate your group's needs and concerns to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity and university officials?

2. Should the university conduct another climate survey? What questions or topics would your group like to see included?

For the second half, participants were assigned to tables and members of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity served as facilitators for a discussion based on the following questions related to the Standards for Inclusive Policies, Program, and Practices that were developed at the previous Diversity Summit:

1. Will the standard be meaningful and clear to a) internal community, b) external community, and c) new entrants to Virginia Tech? If the answer is no, what are the major problems with the statement?

2. What are one or two "best practice" examples of the application and/or illustration of the standard? (Both, existing or proposed policies, programs, or practices may be considered.)

The standards upon which the discussion

Historical Marker:
May 17, 1954 - Brown vs. Board of Education

Source: In Pursuit of Freedom & Equality: Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, http://brownvboard.org. Used with permission.

The Brown v. Board 50th Anniversary Coalition was established to commemorate the convergence in 2004 of several turning points in Kansas history, including the 150th anniversary of Territorial Kansas and the City of Topeka and the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The United States Constitution guarantees liberty and equal opportunity to the people of the United States. Historically, however, these fundamental rights were not always been provided as pledged. Our system of education is one such example.

From the earliest times in U.S. history, the educational system mandated separate schools for children based solely on race. In many instances, the schools for African American children were substandard facilities with out-of-date textbooks and insufficient supplies. Court cases against segregated schools have been documented as far back as 1849.

In 1861 a civil war was fought dividing the country and determining who should receive full rights and privileges under the U.S. Constitution. This conflict centered around the status of people of African descent who had been brought to these shores as slave labor. Those who would end the practice of slavery prevailed. Still, after the end of the Civil War in 1865, the inclusion of African Americans as full citizens required amending the U.S. Constitution.

As a result, the Civil War was followed by three crucial amendments to the constitution. The enactment of the 13th amendment ratified in 1865, abolished slavery; the 14th amendment ratified in 1868, conferred citizenship on the formerly enslaved people of African descent and bestowed equal protection under the law. The last in this series was the 15th amendment, ratified in 1870, that affirmed that the right of U.S. citizens to vote cannot be denied or abridged on account of race.

In spite of the mandates outlined in the newly amended U.S. Constitution, freedom and equal rights were not readily bestowed upon African Americans. Throughout this history, education was withheld from people of African descent. In some states it was against the law for this segment of the population to learn to read and write. Tremendous disappointment and disillusionment stirred African American people to continue to challenge this system of segregation.

In the first documented school case, *Roberts vs. City of Boston*, 1849, the courts denied Benjamin Roberts and other African American parents the right to enroll their children in certain Boston public schools. However, in 1855 the Massachusetts legislature banned racial segregation. Then in 1896, in the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, the United States Supreme Court declared it law that "separate" but "equal" facilities be provided for African Americans. This landmark case from Louisiana necessitated separate dining facilities, rest rooms, transportation, accommodations and more, including public education.

Equal rights remained virtually unattainable. Across the country, numerous cases were taken to court between 1849 and 1949. In the state of Kansas alone, there were 11 school integration cases filed between 1881 and 1949. In response to these unsuccessful attempts to

How are we doing on diversity?

By Richard Conners

Of all the gauges this university can use to judge its progress on diversity, the one that I feel is the most telling is the makeup of the undergraduate student body and how this makeup is continuing to evolve as new students gain admission to our undergraduate programs. Fortunately, each year Virginia Tech's Office of Institutional Research and Planning Analysis gathers the data needed to assess our progress. In what follows, I will present these undergraduate student data and briefly highlight some of what I believe it means.

To begin, I need to make some observations. First, prior to Fall 2001 students selecting "Unknown" ethnicity were coded as being

Figure 1
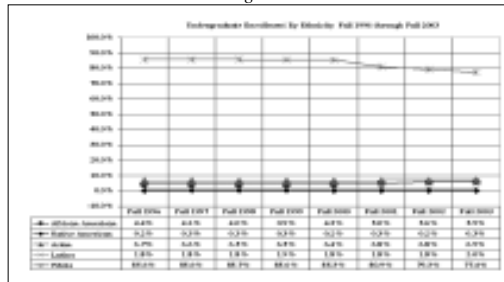
"White." Now these students are recorded as being "Unknown." Next, the number of students declaring themselves to be "Native American" is so small as to be statistically insignificant. However, since I am part Cherokee I hate to dismiss this group too lightly, so I will only say that their numbers appear to be rather constant over time. Finally, I will not include "International Students" in my discussion, though these students are important to Tech.

Let's begin by taking a historical look at the Virginia Tech undergraduate student body. These data are presented in Figure 1. This figure gives for each academic year the percentage of the undergraduate student body each ethnic group comprises. Ideally, the percentages given should reflect the percentage of the Virginia population

each ethnic group represents since everyone in Virginia is subject to taxation and we are a tax supported institution. Clearly we are not in a perfect world.

Figure 2
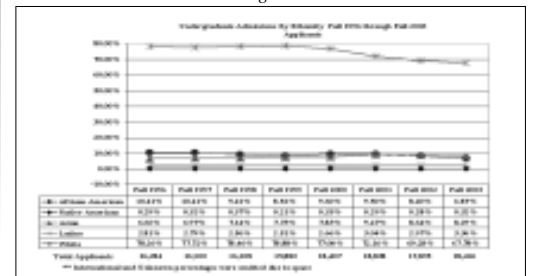
However, there is some good news here. Since Fall 1999 the number of African Americans in our undergraduate student body has gone up from 847 (3.9%) to 1250 (5.9%), an increase in number of almost 50 percent. We will see how Virginia Tech has accomplished this increase below. While this is not the increase many of us want, it is at least going in the right direction. Unfortunately, the number of Latino and Asian students appears to be staying relatively constant.

Next, let's see how our student body has evolved and how it will be evolving in the future. To do this we must look at the application, acceptance, and enrollment data for Virginia Tech. The application data are shown in Figure 2. For each academic year the data shows the percentage of total applications each ethnic group represents.

The somewhat encouraging signs are that the eight-year trend lines for both the Asian and Latino students is somewhat positive, though for the Latino students only slightly so. Unfortunately, the eight-year trend line for African American students is basically flat and over the last three years the number of applications has dropped from 1790 to 1265, a 30 percent drop. That seems significant!

What is interesting in these data is the increase in the number of students

Brown vs. Board...

Continued from page 1

ensure equal opportunities for all children, African American community leaders and organizations across the country stepped up efforts to change the educational system.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1908, took a key role in the move toward equal educational opportunity. Members were involved at every level, providing legal counsel, and funding.

From the mid 1930s to the present, the NAACP provided strategy and legal expertise, using the courts as a proving ground to obtain full constitutional rights for African Americans. In the 1940s and 1950s, local NAACP leaders spearheaded plans to end the doctrine of "Separate but Equal." Public schools became the means to that end. Their local efforts would ultimately change the course of history.

The NAACP legal team devised a formula for success. As they built their cases, the first requirement was that they involve multiple plaintiffs. Along the final road to the U.S. Supreme Court, five excellent cases were developed from the states of Delaware, Kansas, Virginia, South Carolina and Washington, D.C. None of these cases succeeded in the District Courts and all were appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. At this juncture, they were combined and became known jointly as Oliver L. Brown et.al. vs. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS), et.al.

The high courts decided to combine the cases because each sought the same relief from segregated schools for African Americans. In the end, the circumstances of the plaintiffs left no question that ending segregation as a historic practice would be the only viable outcome.

Charles Hamilton Houston argued most of the early NAACP cases. He had been the Dean of Howard Law School,

Shown here are Morton High School students, Virginia, in the 1950s.

a prestigious university for African Americans. He was teacher and mentor for many civil rights lawyers of that time including Thurgood Marshall. Houston died in 1950, leaving Thurgood Marshall as lead strategist and counsel for the school integration cases. Marshall took these cases all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. On May 17, 1954, 105 years after the Roberts case, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision that segregation violated the 14th Amendment and was unconstitutional. Thurgood Marshall later became the first African American to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The *Brown* decision initiated educational reform throughout the United States and was a catalyst in launching the modern Civil Rights Movement. Bringing about change in the years since *Brown* continues to be difficult. But the *Brown v. Board of Education* victory brought Americans one step closer to true freedom and equal rights. The combined cases were:

1. Delaware - *Belton vs. Gebhart* (Bulah vs. Gebhart)

First petitioned in 1951, these cases involved two black schools: Howard High School in Wilmington and a one-room elementary school in Hockessin. Many African American students rode the bus nearly an hour to attend Howard High School. The school was overcrowded, located in the industrial area of town, and sorely lacking in educational areas. Children attending the elementary school in Hockessin wanted equal transportation to their one-room school. Relief for the initial requests for improvement was denied. The two cases were combined, both seeking integration because "the Negro schools were inferior with respect to teacher training, pupil-teacher ratio, curricular and extracurricular activities, physical plant, and time and distance involved in travel." Their unsuccessful challenge in U.S. District Court was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

2. Kansas - *Brown vs. Board of Education*

In the fall of 1950 members of the Topeka, Kansas, Chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) agreed to again challenge the "separate but equal" doctrine governing public education. Chapter president, McKinley Burnett, conceived the case strategy. He was assisted by attorneys Charles Scott, John Scott, Charles Bledsoe, Elisha Scott and NAACP chapter secretary Lucinda Todd. For a period of two years prior to legal action Burnett had attempted to persuade Topeka school officials to integrate their schools. This lawsuit was a final attempt.

Their plan involved enlisting the support of fellow NAACP members and personal friends as plaintiffs in what would be a class action suit filed against the Board of Education of Topeka Public Schools. A group of thirteen parents agreed to participate on behalf of their children (20 children). Each plaintiff was to watch the paper for enrollment dates and take their child to the school that was nearest to their home. Once they attempted enrollment and were denied, they were to report back to the NAACP. This would provide the attorneys with the documentation needed to file a lawsuit against the Topeka School Board.

3. District of Columbia - *Bolling vs. Sharp*

The petition in this case was on behalf of 11 African-American junior high youths who were refused admission to all-white schools. Their school was grossly unequal in terms of physical condition, located in a rundown part of the city, and lacking adequate educational materials. Led by local activist Gardner Bishop, a suit was filed on behalf of these students in 1951. Unsuccessful in the lower courts, their case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

4. South Carolina - *Briggs vs. Elliott*

Twenty African-Americans parents from Clarendon County first filed a suit in 1951 on behalf of their children. With the help of the NAACP, they sought to secure better schools, equal to those provided for white children. The U.S. District Court found the black schools were clearly inferior compared to white schools. Buildings were no more than wooden shacks, transportation and educational provisions did not meet basic needs, and teachers' salaries were less than those received in white schools. Further, the lower court "ordered the defendants to immediately equalize the facilities… [but the children were] denied admission to the white schools during the equalization program." Their case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

5. Virginia - *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*

One hundred and seventeen African-American high school students chose to strike rather than attend all black Morton High, which was in need of physical repair. The students initially wanted a new building with indoor plumbing to replace the old school. Strike leader, Barbara Johns, enlisted the assistance of NAACP attorneys. A suit was filed in 1951 on behalf of the students. The U.S. District Court ordered equal facilities be provided for the black students but "denied the plaintiffs admission to the white schools during the equalization program." Attorneys for the NAACP filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court.

University subscribes to diversity online resource

Virginia Tech is now a corporate subscriber to DiversityInc.com, a web site launched in 1998. They publish original content on the web every business day. As of January 2004, they had 269,577 registered users.

Content is the core of their business. DiversityInc's editorial mission is to provide education and clarity on the business benefits of diversity. Their original content is written by their team of nine full-time, experienced journalists, located in the home office in New Brunswick, N.J. and their bureaus in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. It is exclusive to DiversityInc.com and includes regular features on diversity management, best practices, emerging markets, recruitment and retention, leadership, legal issues and more.

Subscribing is free and easy and is made available to ALL Virginia Tech faculty members, staff, and students through our corporate subscription. To start receiving your free subscription:

1. Go to http://www.diversityinc.com/signup.
2. Using the pull-down menu, select "Virginia Tech" as the corporate plan.
3. Fill out the form, making sure to use your vt.edu e-mail address, and click "Submit Membership Application" once.

Upon submitting the form, a confirmation of your chosen username and automatically generated password will be e-mailed to you. You will then be able to access all of DiversityInc.com's content and will receive the bi-monthly print magazine as a part of your subscription.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs is happy to provide this service as one of the strategies for "…promoting excellence, equity, and effectiveness within an environment that values diversity."

Additional information on this resource can be found at http://www.diversityinc.com/public/3341.cfm

The February/March issue of DiversityInc, the magazine, features a look at Diversity in the age of Political Correctness: Free Speech or Censorship? Were Rush Limbaugh and Trent Lott victims of the PC police? Or did the marketplace dictate that they paid for their ill-chosen words?
On the Cover: Ted Teng, President and Chief Operating Officer of Wyndham International.

About 'The Conductor'

The Conductor is produced twice during the fall and twice during the spring semesters by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to the editorial board at *multicultural@vt.edu*.

Back issues are online at *http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/vtpubs/spectrum/*

Editorial Board

Richard Conners, 231-6896, *rconners@vt.edu*
Benjamin Dixon, 231-1820, *bdixon@vt.edu*
Mahmood A. Khan, 703-538-8398, *mahmood@vt.edu*
Susan Trulove, 231-5646, *strulove@vt.edu*

Production

Roxanna Link, Coordinator of Communications, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 231-2610, *roxanna@vt.edu*
Salem Times Register

The deadline for the next issue is March 29.

Diversity...

with "Unknown" ethnicity. Over the last three years, the numbers have gone from 813 (4.3%) to 1884 (10.2%). It has been argued by people that I respect that the majority of students who would select "Unknown" ethnicity are either students with multiple ethnic backgrounds or students from a minority ethnic group. If this were true, it would give us some hope, but, since we cannot be sure, I think we must live with the numbers we have, and they are not that good.

Let us move on to the undergraduate acceptance data. These data are given in Figure 3. For each academic year an entry indicates the percentage that ethnic group makes up of all the students that are accepted. In examining this table, it is important to note that if all students received the same quality of education before applying to Virginia Tech, and if Virginia Tech's admissions policy is fair, then the percentage of students admitted from each ethnic group should correspond strongly to the percentage that ethnic group makes up to all the students that applied.

There is some good news in these data. The eight-year trend lines for the African American and the Latino groups are all positive, with the Latinos staying flat to slightly rising. Again the only discontent involves a matter of degree. Please note that even though the number of applications from African American students has declined the number accepted into our program has
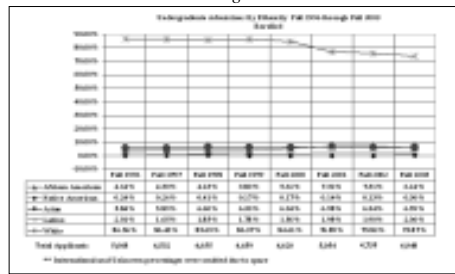
Figure 3
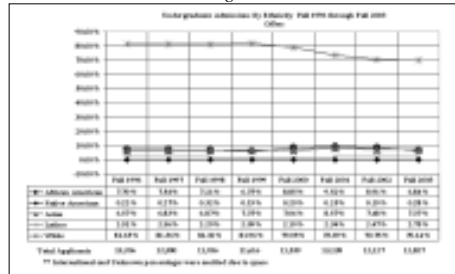
actually increased. This is how Tech has managed to actually increase the number of African Americans in our student body.

However, these data are also somewhat disturbing because the "White" ethnic group is the only one whose acceptance percentages are greater than their application percentages. African Americans, Asians, and Latinos all have lower acceptance percentages than their application percentages. Admittedly this difference can be small but it has been consistent over the last eight years and I think this consistency is troubling.

Now let's consider the enrollment data. These data are given in Figure 4. The good news is that the eight-year trend lines are all positive with the largest rate of increase being Asian students. Unfortunately, the slopes for both the African American and Latino students are rather small—smaller than one might like.

Figure 4

This leads us finally to the most important data, the yield data. These data are given in Figure 4. For each academic year, each entry is equal to the number of students from an ethnic group that actually came to Virginia Tech to matriculate divided by the number of students from that ethnic group that was accepted for admittance by Virginia Tech. Entries in this table are sentiment indicators. If students from all ethnic groups felt that Virginia Tech offered them the same opportunities, then all the entries on this table should, theoretically, be equal. Clearly they are not.

As an aside, when I asked David Ford, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, what he thought about diversifying our undergraduate student body, he said, "From my perspective, the real problem we have is in closing the deal; that is, getting the students who are accepted to actually enroll at Virginia Tech. We continue to be pleased with the quality of our applicant pool. These students have offers of admission from several very fine universities. Our challenge is to get these very talented people to come to Virginia Tech."

I believe that this table shows that Dr. Ford and his people have been successful. The yield for African American students over the last three years has been steadily increasing from basically 30 percent to 35 percent and there has been an increase for Asian students as well. Admittedly, the number has jumped around a bit for Latinos, but progress has been made. Furthermore, the data suggest that increasing these efforts should help diversity efforts in the future.

Other reasonably good news is shown in Figure 6 which

Figure 5
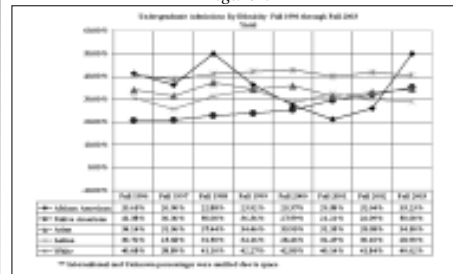
gives the percentage of the undergraduate student body that ethnic minorities comprise. Note that this percentage hit a low in Fall 1999 when the percentage was 12.8 to the high that was hit in Fall 2003 when this percentage was 16.4. Obviously these percentages are not as high as anyone would want but, at least, the trend line is heading in the right direction. Note that these percentages do not reflect members of either International or Unknown ethnicities.

However, the bottom line is this, we have a long way to go! And Virginia Tech cannot diversify its undergraduate student body without getting increased numbers of applications from African Americans, Asians, and Latinos. Finally, while the trend lines for such increases are positive for Asians and Latinos, the same cannot be said for African Americans.

However, the bottom line is this, Virginia Tech cannot diversify its undergraduate student body without getting increased numbers of applications from African Americans, Asians, and Latinos. And, while the trend lines for such

Figure 6
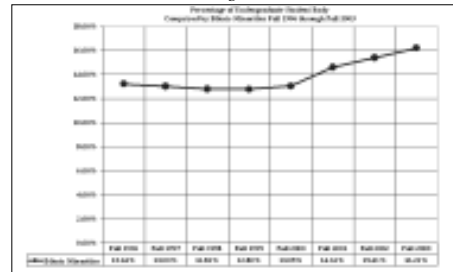
increases are positive for Asians and Latinos, the same cannot be said for African Americans.

Given this situation, I think the administration must pro-actively try to address this problem. Even in the current legal climate, narrowly tailored programs could be devised to address this problem if the appropriate studies are conducted to support the need for these programs.

Well, that's what I think. What do you think? Contact me at rconners@vt.edu. I am retired now so it might take a bit longer for me to respond than you would like, but I will get back to you. If you would like the raw data in electronic form, I can send that to you as well.

'The Supreme Court has established that diversity has an educational bendfit, do you agree or disagree? Why?'

Absolutely! Higher education prepares professionals. Exposure to diversity is vital, whether students choose to go on to graduate school or enter the work force after graduation. Students come to college from a variety of backgrounds, some with limited exposure to people and traditions that are different from themselves. Ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, and sexual orientation are examples of issues that all people face in some capacity on a daily basis. Students must know how to interact with people who are different from themselves, as well as confront concerns that arise within groups they are members of. Students should know what types of power they hold as a result of their privilege so they may be better able to work with and for various people to improve society. The greatest learning tool is experience, and students who have an increased awareness of diversity issues through personal experience will be better suited for jobs in all disciplines. There are several opportunities for students to get involved in diversity at institutions like Virginia Tech. It is my hope that more students will take advantage of events that take place during Black History Month and Women's Month. These educational experiences have lifelong payoffs that will continue to influence students long after they leave Virginia Tech.

Kristen Benson
Marriage and Family Therapy Program

I totally agree. There is much more to learn from those different than ourselves than from those that are the same. Diverse voices broaden our life experience. Our future work will be in a diverse environment. Why be in an educational environment that doesn't offer diversity?

Richard Goff
Associate Professor
Engineering Fundamentals

Yes. Diversity has been a keystone of the development and advancement of American culture and society. Diversity is as "American" as baseball and apple pie. How can you think of the statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, plantations and cotton and not think of multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-diverse communities all wanting a better life for their children and children's children. As we grow as a society, we only become more, not less diverse. Unfortunately, diversity is advertised as a "new" concept. Diversity is not new, it is the foundation that makes our country: The United States of America!

Tolerance for diversity appears to be diminishing. A key component of any diversity education program must stress the contributions of diverse people in everyday events. Education is one of the best mechanisms for overcoming obstacles and moving toward successful professions and careers. When we incorporate diverse people and champion them to greater heights, they cannot but become better role models for those who look like them, thus increasing the potential for a more educated and successful nation that is and will always be a shining example to all of the world what heights are reachable when all of our citizens are valued and respected.

Joshua A. Joseph, Jr.
Civil and Environmental Engineering

Summit ...

focused were: the Legal Standard, Inclusion Standard, Climate Standard, Competency Standard, Accountability Standard, and Student Success Standard. Summaries of the table discussions will be posted on the Office of Multicultural Affairs website once they are compiled (http://www.multicultural.vt.edu).

During the interim, the standards will be submitted to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD) for

Table disscussion during Diversity Summit 2004

review and endorsement. The commission, once it endorses the standards, will determine whether they should be submitted to University council for consideration. In turn, the council can decide whether the standards should be submitted to the president and board of visitors as a proposed university policy.

Another option is for the CEOD, along with the other commissions and University Council, is to endorse the standards document as a "position statement" developed by the university community as a guide to the collective behavior and common expectations needed to build and sustain a diverse and inclusive community of learners, teachers, and workers.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) will develop a dissemination plan to insure that all units and groups are not only aware of the standards, but are also encouraged to apply them where appropriate. College Diversity Committees, particularly, will be encouraged to create opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to use the standards in their daily operations and routine activities. OMA will provide consultation services to individuals and groups desiring further information and examples of "best practices" related to the application of the standards.

CEOD forms six committees

Below please find the charges for the six committees that were created to address some of the issues identified by the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD) members during their orientation meetings last fall. These committees will meet throughout the semester and focus on their respective charges. If you have suggestions or ideas or are interested in working with one of these committees, please contact Alicia Cohen at acohen@vt.edu or 231-1820.

Each committee operates under the authority of the CEOD, which establishes the general charge for the committee (provided below). Committees periodically report the results of their discussions, findings, and recommendations back to the commission. Every committee has the responsibility for understanding, to the extent possible, all aspects of the diversity, equity, or multicultural issue or topic related to its assigned area of focus. Thus, committees may engage in various processes to collect information that can inform their discussions, including involvement of non-commission members of the university community who may serve in a resource capacity.

1. **<u>Student recruitment and retention</u>** – Recommend strategies for attracting a more diverse student population to a) apply to Virginia Tech, and b) accept offers of admission. Also, recommend programmatic and other activities that can a) improve Virginia Tech overall graduation rate, b) reduce the disparities between racial/ethnic groups and the majority, as found in comparisons of yield, "persistence toward completion" and graduation data, and/or c) address serious under representation of women and/or ethnic minorities in various disciplines and majors.

2. **<u>Faculty recruitment and retention</u>** – Recommend strategies for increasing the diversity of the applicant pools for teaching, research, and administrative faculty searches and those appointed to faculty positions. Also, identify effective strategies for retaining under represented faculty, especially women and ethnic minorities, and for facilitating the timely progression of junior faculty toward tenure.

3. **<u>Staff recruitment and retention</u>** – Recommend strategies to increase the diversity of the applicant pools for staff positions and the eventual appointment of more women and ethnic minorities especially to upper level staff positions. Review available data on retention and promotion rates to determine where problems may be occurring and what strategies might be effective in addressing those problems.

4. **<u>Climate</u>** – Develop and/or recommend strategies for university-wide improvements in climate. Design an ongoing process for assessing classroom and community climate, with the CEOD serving as the principal monitoring agency. Develop and/or recommend a strategy for establishing baseline data on the perceptions of both subsets of the university community and the student, faculty, and staff populations as a whole. Establish procedures for the dissemination of assessment results to university units involved in advising, programming, instruction, etc.

5. **<u>Curriculum</u>** – Review student enrollment in course offerings with significant diversity-related content. Review assessment data that might inform the committee's understanding of students' multicultural competence at the time of entrance and at graduation. Investigate options for increasing student understanding of diversity issues and establish a statement of the desired level of achievement for undergraduates. Develop and/or recommend strategies for stimulating faculty research into applications of diversity, multicultural, or equity principles.

6. **<u>Best Practices</u>** – Conduct research to identify "best practices" that could/should be implemented at Virginia Tech. These programs, processes, or abilities, at minimum, should address critical needs in the areas of recruitment and retention, campus climate and curriculum. Other "best practices," especially those that support diversity initiatives in critical or priority areas, may be considered.

Michael Two Horses, 1953-2003, remembered

by Martha Ture
Michael's colleague at UCBerkeley

Michael Two Horses, Sicangu Lakota/Wahpekute Dakota, passed away in December at his home in Blacksburg. He was 50 years old. His death was unexpected and peaceful.

A memorial service for Mr. Two Horses was held on January 19, 2004 in the War Memorial Chapel at Virginia Tech.

The university's January 19th Diversity Summit was dedicated to Mr. Two Horses, according to Ben Dixon, Virginia Tech's Vice President for Multicultural Affairs. The Diversity Summit is a major university gathering intended to promote a climate of diversity on campus. A scholarship in Mr. Two Horses' name for American Indian Studies has been initiated. Contributions to the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc., Office of University Development, 201 Pack Building (0336), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, 24061, Attn: Michael Two Horses Scholarship Fund; or to the social activism causes of the contributor's choice, in the spirit of thinking globally and acting locally, the philosophy which Mr. Two Horses practiced.

Mr. Two Horses was Visiting Instructor in the American Indian Studies Program and the Humanities Program, within the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Virginia Tech. He was also a member of the Virginia Tech Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. He was a doctoral student in the University of Arizona American Indian Studies Programs. His emphasis was on societies and cultures, law and public policy, and American Indian history.

Mr. Two Horses was born in San Diego to Alberta Mariana Bertino and David Two Horses Jordan, and adopted at six months of age by Edward and Sadie Lou Tieri. He served in Viet Nam with the Navy's Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group, stationed first at Tay Ninh, then at Long Tranh, and was Petty Officer 2nd.

He is survived by his father, Edward Tieri of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, his brother, Albert Tieri of Palm Springs, California, and a large community of friends and colleagues.

Mr. Two Horses will be remembered for his exhaustively brilliant research and writing and his passionately honest dedication to human rights, particularly with respect to American Indian treaty rights, spiritual rights, and cultural rights. During an escalation of the ongoing Makah whaling controversy, he formed CERTAIN, the Coalition to End Race-based Targeting of American Indian Nations, in 2000. He went repeatedly to Neah Bay while anti-whaling forces were threatening school children, harassing the Makah people, and threatening the lives of the whalers. With CERTAIN, Mr. Two Horses engaged the opponents of the Makah's treaty rights in dialogue, countering their arguments in the media, taking photographs and witnessing to protect the Makah from further physical attack, and acting in conjunction with the Washington Human Rights Commission and the US Coast Guard to protect the lives and rights of the Makah people.

Mr. Two Horses was equally engaged in expanding the scholastic dialogue. He persistently pointed out elements of racism in the dominant cultural perspective on American Indians, in the face of pedagogical tendencies to trivialize these concerns. He declined to acquiesce to that marginalization in the discourse.

He investigated the growing rift between mainstream environmentalists and tribal nations across the US and Canada, and the way that much environmental writing fails to consider the role of indigenous peoples in shaping the so-called "wilderness." "They did not want to acknowledge," he wrote, "in much the same way as colonial writers did, that the human hand has always shaped this continent, and that in creating false constructs of 'pristine wilderness' and of cities as 'fallen' areas, such writing tends to avoid completely the contested lands where members of marginalized races or classes live, and fails to deal with the concept of 'national sacrifice areas' in human terms, inasmuch as the Indians, Hispanics, Blacks, Asians, and poor Whites living in those areas are sacrificed as well. These are zones where uranium mines and coal mines and their pollution of groundwater, or toxic waste dumps are located, without exception, in proximity to marginalized peoples."

He was relentless in his opposition toward "plastic shamans," people white or native who hawk Indian spirituality. "They abstract bits of our culture," he said, "and then they sell them as the genuine article, something along the lines of taking parts of the Catholic liturgy and extracting the 'cool parts' and then performing those parts for money. This is the deepest essence of what they do, and it is comprised of both 'snake oil sales' and of a deep disrespect for Native cultures."