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Minutes, 3/5/2008

The Commission for Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender People at the University of Tennessee,
Knoxville

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Minutes
Commission for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People
March 5, 2008

Time: 12:00 PM

Place: Hodges Library, Room 605

Present: Melissa Bartsch, Donna Braquet, Alan Chesney, Rusty Drummer, Leslie Fisher, Tiffany Hedges, George Hoemann, Joel Kramer, Erik Leander, Mary Lucal, Suzanne Molnar, Becky Morgan, David Patterson, Marva Rudolph, Renee Smith, Ed White, Lynn Woolsey

Call to Order: George Hoemann welcomed everyone and the meeting began at 12:05 PM.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

A) Approval of Minutes from February 6th, 2008

Minutes approved at 12:06 PM.

B) Awards Balloting

The award ballots were filled out and given to Renee Smith. The recipients are to be announced at the Chancellor's Honors Banquet.

C) Report from the Chair

There was no response from either President Petersen or his chief of staff regarding Dr. Hoemann's letter concerning UT System hiring policies. The consensus view is that the letter should be forwarded to Vice President Theotis Robinson. Lynn Woolsey suggested that additional members of the committee add their names to the letter. Dr. Hoemann said anyone who would like their name added should e-mail him.

The acronym 'LGBT' will be used in the safe zone program. The establishment of the program will also involve the hiring of a regular staffperson.

Dr. Hoemann will not be in Knoxville during the first week of May. This will require the last meeting of the semester to be rescheduled.

Elections for the commission's chair and vice-chair will be held in late April.

E) Awards Committee

Ballots for the three awards established by the commission have been distributed.

F) Communications Committee

Dr. Jennifer Hendricks will be giving a discussion on March 11th. On March 12th, the LGBT Film Series will continue with a showing of the documentary "Farm Family."

The committee continues to plan “Voices of Diversity,” an archive of LGBT persons at UTK sharing their personal experiences through various media.

G) Equity Committee

The final report for the peer review of domestic partner benefits was completed. Alan Chesney encouraged the committee to be careful that the data collected about UTK is accurate. It is possible that domestic partners are covered as “dependents” under EAP. It was noted that clarity concerning the availability of benefits should be factored into any determination as to whether UTK offers a specific benefit. The report will be presented at an upcoming meeting of the various advisory commissions. It may also be put on the agenda for the faculty senate as an informational item.

The Equity Committee is also putting together a list of Fortune 500 companies with strong ties to east Tennessee. As with the peer review, this report will focus on the availability of domestic partner benefits.

H) Membership Committee

Melissa Bartsch noted that the committee is currently seeking new membership with an approximate goal of about 30 voting members. Dr. Hoemann stated that he would like to see a more diverse membership in the coming academic year.

I) Guest: Phyllis Moore, Alumni Affairs

The Office of Alumni Affairs is working on the establishment of an LGBT reunion. Initially, however, they intend to focus on making the campus climate more welcoming to LGBT alumni. One aspect of this effort will be a redesigned web site. Members of the commission were asked to help ensure that photos and terminology used on the web site are adequate. All affinity programs, particularly those concerning organizations and clubs, will be receiving more resources in the coming years. There is a problem regarding the lack of available information on LGBT alumni, though attempts will be made to encourage alumni to contribute to a database that will be used to promote more effective communication.

J) Other Business

There is an ongoing concern that while great strides have been made concerning employees, the university’s policy statements need to be further amended to ensure the equal inclusion of students.

Adjournment: 1:00 PM