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5-4-2009

Minutes, 5/4/2009

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
May 4, 2009

Time: 12:02 PM
Place: Hodges Library, Room 605

Present: Melissa Bartsch, Toby Boulet, Donna Braquet, Connie Briscoe, Maxine Davis, James DeVita, Ben Doty, Rusty Drummer, Lars Dzikus, Tiffany Hedges, Robert Hinde, Joel Kramer, Erik Leander, Julie Lynch, Suzanne Molnar, Becky Morgan, Jenny Moshak, Gina Owens, Anton Reece, Renee Smith, Meshia Thomas, Ed White

Call to Order: 12:02 PM

Old Business: None.

New Business:

A) Welcome
Minutes approved at 12:02 PM.

B) Awards Committee Report
The awards for this academic year have been given out. The committee will now focus on formulating a set of rules regarding nominations. Issues that need to be addressed include self-nominations and additional documentation.

C) Communications Committee Report
The committee is currently in the process of arranging for Professor John D'Emilio of the University of Chicago to give a presentation on Bayard Rustin. The committee will request Ready for the World funding.

The Voices of Diversity web site has maxed out its storage space. The committee will seek to move the audio files to a different platform operated by the library.

D) Equity Committee Report
This semester, the committee has conducted research regarding domestic partner benefits provided by companies that maintain contracts with UTK. The research process has been difficult as many businesses are entirely unresponsive. The committee will continue to work on this project.

E) Membership Committee Report
An e-mail will be distributed shortly to determine who intends to continue serving on the commission during the 2009-2010 academic year.

F) Resource Center Committee Report
The resource center is apparently ready though the committee still lacks the keys necessary to access it. The committee hopes to have an actual report in hand by the end of June.

The committee has not yet considered how the opening will be publicized. Tiffany Hedges pointed out that, while the commission could place an ad in the Daily Beacon, it might save funds by arranging for an *article* about the center to be published in the Beacon.

G) Chair's Report
Dr. Hoemann met with Linda Hendricks, Vice President of Human Resources, to discuss what the university can do in terms of benefits for LGBT faculty and staff. Apparently, the main roadblock is neither the system nor the Board of Trustees. The laws of the state of Tennessee, including the opinions of the state's attorney general, preclude the possibility of the University of Tennessee doing anything regarding the partners of LGBT people. The commission will continue to seek ways around this. However, it is likely that a separate group will be required to lobby the governor and the legislature to amend the existing laws. For next year's membership, the commission will seek to recruit a member of the law school faculty to provide advice on legal issues.

Currently, the system is seeking to fill three positions in the upper administration. The search committees for the provost search and vice chancellor of communications search have been very inclusive and concerned with issues of diversity. The search committee for the vice chancellor of finance and administration has not been as helpful.

The Commission for LGBT People has met to discuss the possibility of further collaboration with the Commission for Blacks and Commission for Women.

Dr. Hoemann will be working on the second edition of the State of the Campus report during the summer.

H) Review: Meeting with Chancellor Cheek
Several members of the commission were disappointed that Chancellor Cheek failed to prepare for the meeting. Evidently, he also had not given much thought to issues regarding diversity, and consequently, many of his responses seemed evasive.

Adjournment: 1:00 PM