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Minutes, 4/2/2008

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
April 2, 2008

Time: 12:00 PM

Place: Hodges Library, Room 605

Present: Donna Braquet, Alan Chesney, Ed Cortez, Rusty Drummer, Leslie Fisher, Tiffany Hedges, Pam Hindle, George Hoemann, Joel Kramer, Erik Leander, Mary Lucal, Suzanne Molnar, Jenny Moshak, Renee Smith, Roger Weaver

Call to Order: George Hoemann welcomed everyone and the meeting began at 12:01 PM.

Old Business: None

New Business:

A) Approval of Minutes from March 5th, 2008

Minutes approved at 12:03 PM.

B) Report from the Chair

The main web site for UTK now has a link to a “Diversity and Interculturalism” section (which includes a link to the commission’s web site).

A potential faculty member contacted Dr. Hoemann to express concern about the status of domestic partner benefits at UTK. Dr. Hoemann notes that lack of domestic partner benefits is hindering UTK’s ability to recruit and retain talented faculty. Renee Smith suggests that the commission create a mechanism to document instances in which potential faculty members turn down positions over this matter.

C) Awards Committee

The award plaques for the Chancellor’s Honors Banquet have been ordered.

D) Communications Committee

The two final commission events will occur next week. The next brown bag lunch will involve a discussion about how to address sensitive issues in the classroom. The next installment of the film series will be “Fabulous,” a documentary about recent LGBT cinema.

E) Equity Committee

The Equity Committee will soon meet to discuss moving forward on the project examining the availability of domestic partner benefits at Fortune 500 companies active in east Tennessee.

The Athletics Department had previously only funded travel for dependent children and spouses, though Jenny Moshak and other assistant coaches have successfully convinced the department to finance travel for one additional individual for each member of the staff.

Alan Chesney is working on changing the language in TRECS policy to extend access to the domestic partners of faculty.

F) Letter to the President/Chief of Staff/Vice President of Diversity

President Petersen has yet to respond to the original letter.

Dr. Hoemann noted that the goal of the letter is to point out that Dr. Petersen's assertions regarding the prevalence of inclusive policies at other universities is inaccurate.

Alan Chesney recommended talking with the Employee Relations Advisory Board about the possibility of the ERAB raising the matter of hiring policy with Dr. Petersen.

Roger Weaver suggested issuing an invitation to President Petersen to meet with members of the commission.

G) Other Business

At the next meeting, the commission will begin the process of reviewing the existing by-laws. Also, the commission will hold elections for leadership positions.

Jenny Moshak stated that, given that the commission is relatively new, making major changes in leadership would be unwise.

Dr. Hoemann noted that, given the general composition of the commission, he believes that the next chair should be a woman. The possibility of establishing a co-chair was discussed.

Adjournment: 1:00 PM