Equality VCU
Tuesday, March 18, 2014, 11am – 1pm

Agenda:

I. Committee: Mission, Goals & Objectives:

1. Historical Perspective

LGBT at VCU - Stephen Litten, asst dean student affairs, fac advisor to gay alliance of students. (1979). Did not have right to meeting space or as org, sued, VCU was forced to release space and funds. In the 90’a VCU began joining together as a staff and various faculty began having small gatherings in their personal homes.

In 1999 we had our first fall reception and the start of the LGBT Subcommittee. First couple of years we had potluck events, In the beginning the LGBT faculty and staff did a presentation with the EEO, HR and the VCU PD. Sarah W. Chris B., Jan and Donna were very key in the beginning, Receptions were sponsored by several departments. H&S and the School of Nursing etc. 2004 Domestic Benefits partnerships began taking shape, Gym benefits came through, but did not last long. The AG Jerry Kilgore said that VCU couldn't do it so VCU added a “plus 1” option. Jeremy Kidd began drafting proposal for LGBTQ resource center for the campus and asking for a FT Coordinator. Instead the group was given a 20 hour a week GA that had split time with womens services also through OMSA. In 2005 “you think you can dance” competition at a Mens Basketball game, state summit with other college leaders about the power we had. In 2009 the campus climate index began, as well as, the creation of a 5 year diversity plan. In 2010 before the AG wrote the letter to the University VCU began speaking against and sending representatives to the house committees. When the AG letters went out regarding not protecting gender discrimination matter the VCU community was not privy to the information.

2007 Burnside Watstein was created in order to celebrate LGBTQ contributions. In 2012 Wanda Mitchell was hired and we just hired a full-time LGBT Coordinator through the Office for Inclusive Excellence. We do not have a LGBTQ center yet, but there is space for us to utilize. In recent years we have dealt with issues within the athletic department. (see dorothy’s write up to add)

Donna added that the committee was a freestanding group from E&D and when we asked to be self sufficient we were denied. We thought about making things mandatory but then we thought about units who weren’t able to send people because of office size and also units who wanted to send multiple folks because of interest.
2. Review Mission, Goals and Objectives

When Co-chairs met the events we host have become very important to us, but there is so much growth on campus it may be time to shift these events to other departments. The other recommendation is that every June we take time to revisit mission, vision and goals to set priorities for upcoming year. This document hasn’t been modified too much as we were waiting for the new LGBT coordinator to come on board. We have sponsored Burnside Watstein Awards, had tabling at Pride Fest and worked with OMSA for our ice cream socials on both of our campuses. We used to work towards more advocacy events and that is the kind of thing Donna felt was the most exciting. There has also been a lot on the campus climate and the co chairs have been asked to sit on several interviews and sources. We have worked hard to be a research, but what’s next? Would our current funding be better served towards speakers and other things?

Do you like the idea of transitioning events to other places?

-Lav grad is great, but can it become an institutional event?
*Possibly having it be headed by Alumni Assoc. or the graduation office. This event came about because students wanted something special. Michael Fuller and Jeremy Kidd wanted to build that LGBT Alumni chapter and now it gives them the data to move forward and get it off the ground.

-Ice cream socials are great, but can it be somewhere else where it can be a priority?
*Faith mentioned that OMSA has already taken a bigger part in ice cream socials and welcomes that as part of their annual welcome week programming.

-Creating more events about LGBT and Inclusion on the MCV campus

-Burnside Watstein can still be a main staple of VCUEQ, but live part time with OMSA also.

-Pridefest should be owned by Michael P. and his office. We send the bodies but not maintaining the table and facilitating the event. (Co chairs will talk to him about)

3. Advocacy & Advisory focus
Important to discuss who we need to serve and connect to. Lisa suggested using the campus climate to find that data.

II. Committee: structure and organization:

1. Leadership:
Current model is three co chairs. We respond to request for meetings, list serv, answer questions, monitor emails and social networking etc. Its all a 3 year volunteer commitment with always having a new person, middle and someone around for awhile. We talked about having workgroups, but how do we encourage people to join in. The question was raised about things we could delegate. The suggestion was made to have a treasurer and perhaps two notes takers. The discussion came up to balance membership with those who are not has active with biweekly meetings. Dorothy commented that the openness of the group has really attributed to the growth or organization. Lisa noted that for those who take that leadership role are accountable for maintaining their contact with the group. Lisa mentioned doing a better communication plan to let people know what we are doing. Dorothy even suggested leading meetings and delegating task amongst us.

(Brie D. volunteered to lead that charge)
Lisa suggested to do a slow roll out. Listing the things we need to create description for. Adding an historian was also suggested. Dorothy suggested having a speaker bureaus. Faculty advising committee for students working on topics academically about LGBT issues.

2. Equality VCU and the LGBTQ Coordinator
Co chairs had a meeting with Mike P to get his thought on our movement in the future. Mike wants to be very active with the organization. He wants us to function in a collaboration role and serve in an advisory role. He wants us to also focus on advocacy which is also what Dr. Mitchell wants. University Counseling also met with him about doing more trans safe zone training and workshops. Donna spoke with him after a safe zone training and he was open to hearing what both facilitators and non facilitators had to say.

3. Membership
Not just membership but accountability. Need working group accountability/membership requirement. Donna brought up the point and reminded everyone to really push participation in our groups. Bree suggested a person who would be responsible for that.
4. Admin: Budget
We chatted about having someone to take this over. See above or merge

III. Other business

Future meetings:
May - Vision mission and goals, begin review
April - It was suggested to bring Campus Climate summary to next meeting. Brie was asked to send an email out to the list serv to remind people about the campus climate. Donna will send her the log in information for the apps log in.

--------------------
REMINDER: Current Mission, Goals and Objectives:
Written Summer 2012, Minor revisions Summer 2013

Equality VCU

MISSION: Equality VCU is a collaborative, advisory and advocacy body representing the aspirations and concerns of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, questioning, intersex/DSD, and asexual peoples and their allies (LGBTQQIAA) affiliated with Virginia Commonwealth University. This group serves to advance the university’s strong commitment to fully realizing the many benefits of our diversity. Equality VCU envisions a teaching, learning and working environment where LGBTQQIAA individuals are integrated into all aspects of the intellectual life and social fabric of the university, have equal access to resources and services, and receive equitable treatment as members of the university community.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:
Equality VCU’s goals and objectives are developed within the framework of VCU’s Quest for Distinction and VCU’s Five Year Diversity Plan.

VCU’s Quest for Distinction: Theme I Initiatives:

As a collaborative body, Equality VCU will:

- work with existing resources in the VCU community to enhance the presence and roles of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, questioning, and intersex/DSD
peoples affiliated with Virginia Commonwealth University as well as their allies.

- work with existing resources in the VCU community regarding issues of homophobia, trans* phobia, heterosexism, discrimination and harassment to dispel the myths and stereotypes upon which prejudices are formed.
- meet/network regularly with other VCU groups, including student organizations, faculty senate, staff senate, university council and other relevant groups to maintain effective communications regarding issues affecting the LGBTQIAA community at VCU.
- establish relationships with other groups, organizations, departments and universities outside the VCU campus in the greater Richmond community and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia in order to advocate effectively for full inclusion of the LGBTQIAA community.

VCU’s Quest for Distinction: Theme IV Initiatives:

As an advisory body, Equality VCU will:

- review relevant policies and procedures and offer comments and feedback to decision-makers on the potential impact and consequences their decisions may have on the LGBTQIA community at VCU.
- meet regularly with and make recommendations to senior VCU leadership, including the Chief Diversity Officer, the Provost and the President, regarding policies and services impacting the community it represents.
- assist the office of diversity and equity in periodic assessments as required by the BOV approved strategic plan for diversity.
- advise periodically VCU’s faculty, staff and students concerning the climate of the teaching, learning and working environment for VCU’s LGBTQIA students and to learn more about the attitudes on campus regarding sexual orientation and gender identity and its expression.
- make recommendations to decision-makers as to ways that VCU may be able to effectively reduce the incidence of homophobia and trans* phobia and improve the quality of life for LGBTQIA individuals on the Monroe Park and MCV campuses.
- serve as a contact point for those seeking information and opinions related to the LGBTQIAA community at VCU.
- submit an annual report to senior leadership regarding Equality VCU activities and recommendations for university action.

VCU’s Quest for Distinction: Theme II Initiatives:
As an advocacy body, Equality VCU will:

- produce, promote and/or co-sponsor events that foster increased awareness of diversity and pluralism and recognize contributions of LGBTQIAA faculty, staff, students and alumni.
- continue to sustain and grow the Safe Zone program to increase education and awareness at VCU and strategically utilize university news media, Web pages and other means of mass communication to increase awareness of diversity and pluralism, focusing on LGBTQIA issues.
- identify and address curricular issues to include development of courses and course components relating to diversity and pluralism.
- encourage and recognize scholarly and creative activities by, for and about LGBTQIA individuals.
- solicit responses from senior leadership regarding recommendations and expectations.