COMMUNITY

VIRGINIA TECH
TASK FORCE ON RACE
AND THE INSTITUTION

APRIL 11, 2007

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Virginia Tech Task Force on Race and the Institution

Final Report

April 11, 2007

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* Additional task force materials are available online at *www.provost.vt.edu.*

VirginiaTech

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To: The Virginia Tech Community

From: Mark McNamee, University Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: April 11, 2007

Re: Final Report and Recommendations — Race and the Institution Task Force

In August 2006, I asked 25 members of the university community to serve on a Task Force on Race and the Institution. Over the past academic year, these individuals have worked to explore innovative ways in which Virginia Tech can advance its stature as a university that welcomes and advances all students, staff, and faculty members. The Task Force educated itself and others on the issues and challenges associated with race and racism within and external to the university community. While at times these conversations have been challenging, the benefit to us as a university community is substantial. The task force has engaged individuals and academic and administrative units across the university community in discussions that have resulted in raised consciousness, an increased understanding of the need for ongoing education on these issues, and specific recommendations put forth by the task force on how to improve university programs, policies, and services.

The task force issued a preliminary report in January 2007 and fulfilled its commitment to issue a final report in mid-April. The final report is responsive to comments received after the preliminary report was issued and benefits from additional research, discussion, and priority-setting within the task force.

The final recommendations of the task force are organized into six areas: academic programs, administrative infrastructure, alumni and community engagement, faculty and staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The report is available for review on the provost's website (*www.provost. vt.edu*). I am pleased to note that most of the recommendations by the independent task force align with programs and activities already underway at the university. Our progress will be enhanced by our ability to strengthen, support, and expand existing successful programs. The opportunities for better coordination among programs and for more effective communication strategies are clearly identified. The report also emphasizes the importance of effective accountability strategies.

The work of the task force is complete and members of the task force are to be commended for their significant contributions to advancing Virginia Tech in our commitment to being a university community that welcomes and supports all its members. The recommendations will form a foundation upon which the work of a new steering committee will be based. This steering committee will assist the vice president for multicultural affairs and me in identifying and implementing strategic programs, policies, and services designed to strengthen and improve Virginia Tech's commitment to a diverse learning, living, and working environment.

I am grateful to the members of the task force and the many individuals within and external to the university who assisted the task force in its work over the course of the 2006–2007 academic year. The university will benefit from their commitment and hard work.

I welcome your comments and feedback on this important work.

Mark McNamee
University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Invent the Future

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April 11, 2007

The Task Force on Race and the Institution is pleased to present its final recommendations. The task force was charged by Provost Mark McNamee in August 2006 to examine issues pertaining to race and racism and to suggest innovative strategies to make a significant step forward in achieving at Virginia Tech a richly diverse and talented faculty, staff, and student body who co-exist in a stimulating, encouraging, and supportive environment. Since its appointment, the task force has worked diligently gathering information and crafting these recommendations designed to improve Virginia Tech's policies, programs, and administrative structures to address the legacy of racial privilege. The task force would like to acknowledge that many units within the university currently engage in making significant contributions to achieving a diverse and welcoming learning and working environment. The substantial progress and successes made by Virginia Tech are to be applauded and celebrated. For Virginia Tech to be a truly great institution of higher learning, the university community must continue to be resolved to achieve much more. Therefore, the recommendations that follow are to be seen as supporting, amplifying, and enhancing the many existing successful efforts underway at Virginia Tech, while providing innovative ideas to achieve the key strategic goals of the university.

The recommendations are organized by the six task force subcommittees:

1. Academic Programs
2. Administrative Infrastructure
3. Alumni and Community Engagement
4. Faculty and Staff
5. Graduate Student
6. Undergraduate Student

Each of the subcommittees has presented recommendations that are believed to make significant progress in addressing the key issues considered by the task force. Objectives are provided for each recommendation. The proposed recommendations provide multidimensional strategies and are connected by common themes. Common themes that emerge from the recommendations include

1) improving the effectiveness of recruitment, retention, mentoring, and advising strategies for underrepresented minority faculty, staff, and students.
2) improving the campus climate for minorities and improving the cultural competence of administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
3) improving assessment and accountability procedures for advancing diversity at the university, college, and departmental levels.
4) strengthening collaboration and communication between and among all administrative, academic, and organizational units, as well as alumni and the community, for advancing race and diversity issues.
5) implementing curricular reform to strengthen and create new race and diversity issue-related academic programs.
6) providing additional resources for addressing and advancing race and diversity issues.

Although the recommendations that follow could have easily been organized and presented with respect to such common themes, the task force has chosen to provide an organizational structure with respect to the original subcommittee structure that concentrates primarily on issues related to specific constituency groups. Efficiency of implementation is a key consideration for such an organizational structure.

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Additional task force materials are available at *www.provost.vt.edu*.

The task force thanks the large number of university administrative units, organizations, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members who took the time to meet with the task force and provide valuable and insightful input and feedback as well as encouragement over the past eight months. All of these constituency groups are stakeholders in and beneficiaries of the success of the work of the task force. The task force would also like to thank the external review team for providing useful comments that resulted in strengthening the proposed strategies. Finally, the task force would like to acknowledge the support of Provost Mark McNamee for having the clear vision that, as a cornerstone of its foundation, a truly great institution must have an environment that has the widest possible interplay of races, cultures, perspectives, and points of view.

Wayne A. Scales, Professor
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Chairman, Task Force on Race and the Institution

Executive Summary

The Task Force on Race and the Institution was formed by Provost Mark McNamee in August 2006 to examine key issues of race, racism, and racial inequity at Virginia Tech. Addressing such issues ultimately provides a more talented and diverse faculty, staff, and student body and creates a fertile environment in which the entire university community can prosper and flourish. Virginia Tech has made significant and commendable progress in addressing these issues in the past; however, recent concerns prompted the institution to be even more aggressive and proactive in making measurable progress. The task force is providing recommendations that it believes will make significant advances in addressing the key issues under consideration. The recommendations call for enhancement and support of highly successful ongoing efforts and also provides new innovative strategies. Effectively addressing such complex issues requires a multidimensional strategy as described by the report. While the individual task force recommendations provide detailed objectives, outcomes, and implementation strategies directed to specific constituencies, six common themes emerge from the set of recommendations that can be described as follows.

I. Assessment and Accountability

To advance the issues of race and diversity, effective assessment procedures must be implemented and everyone in the university community must be held accountable for making progress. The proposed task force strategies involve

- expanding existing assessment efforts to include further measures of campus climate, cultural competency, effective recruitment, and diversity.
- providing resources for appropriate development and analysis of such assessments.
- continuously monitoring and evaluating diversity initiatives and efforts, holding each unit responsible and accountable for their outcomes.

II. Cultural Competency and Campus Climate

A stimulating, supportive, encouraging, and inclusive environment is critical for a diverse faculty, staff, and student body to flourish. The proposed task force strategies involve

- developing incentive-based professional development programs for administrators, faculty members of all ranks, supervisors, and university and classified staff members to address the issues of diversity, multicultural awareness, and cultural competency and its impact on the campus climate.
- continuing to monitor, develop, and sustain campus-climate initiatives to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all faculty, staff, and students.

III. Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration

Communication, coordination, and collaboration serve to create a robust infrastructure to effectively advance race and diversity issues that lead to institutional transformation. The proposed task force strategies involve

- coordinating and sustaining diversity activities and communication regarding these activities across all levels of the institution.
- affirming diversity as a vital part of the contemporary vision of Virginia Tech's historical land-grant mission in order to more effectively engage all citizens of the commonwealth.
- strengthening existing and developing innovative new strategies to engage minority alumni.

IV. Curricular Reform

Curricular reform will result in leading research and scholarship and will produce well-educated, culturally aware, and competent majority and minority students. The proposed task force strategies involve

- creating a requirement within Virginia Tech's undergraduate liberal education/core that addresses issues of race and racial privilege.
- strengthening existing dedicated programs that address racial and intersected issues and creating a Latino/Latina/Hispanic Studies Program.
- creating incentive-based opportunities for pedagogical review and course transformation that address race and diversity issues.

V. Recruitment, Retention, Mentoring, and Advising

Strategic recruitment and retention are critical to creating and sustaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. Effective advising and mentoring allow talented individuals to ultimately achieve the fullest potential for the benefit of the institution. The proposed task force strategies involve

- increasing minority access to Virginia Tech at the undergraduate level via a comprehensive pipeline approach to pre-college marketing, public information, and awareness efforts.
- developing more effective strategies and efforts to sustain viable access to Virginia Tech through the ongoing recruitment of and financial aid for underrepresented undergraduate students.
- developing a more effective framework that supports and nurtures undergraduate student success through the enhancement of advising, mentoring, financial aid, scholarships, and other retention efforts.
- expanding existing activities in the Office of Graduate Student Diversity Initiatives.
- creating partnerships between the Graduate School and each of the colleges to develop and implement strategic graduate student-recruitment efforts that are tailored to the needs of disciplines within each college.
- actively and continuously recruiting underrepresented staff and faculty members in all ranks, with an emphasis on innovative strategies.
- aggressively focusing on the practice of equity in advancement and promotion by developing, implementing, and evaluating university-wide opportunities and criteria for advancement.

VI. Resources

A commitment of ongoing resources is necessary to maintain and sustain successful efforts that address race and diversity issues. The final task force strategy involves

- securing adequate resources to maintain and sustain diversity efforts across the university. Resources should support efforts such as significant diversity initiatives, faculty and staff recruitment, scholarships, program development, research opportunities, and other initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(Additional Race and the Institution Task Force materials are available at ***www.provost.vt.edu.***)

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Recommendation 1: Create a requirement within Virginia Tech's undergraduate liberal education/core that addresses issues of race and racial privilege.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen existing dedicated programs and create a Latino/Latina/Hispanic Studies Program.

Recommendation 3: Create incentive-based opportunities for pedagogical review and course transformation.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Recommendation 1: Accountability. Virginia Tech should continuously monitor and evaluate diversity initiatives, holding each unit responsible for their outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Coordination. Virginia Tech should coordinate and sustain diversity activities and communication regarding these activities across all levels of the institution.

Recommendation 3: Resources. Virginia Tech needs to secure adequate resources to maintain and sustain diversity efforts across the university. Resources will support efforts such as significant diversity initiatives, faculty and staff recruitment, scholarships, program development, research opportunities, and other initiatives.

ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: The university should establish a high-level Diversity Advisory Council.

Recommendation 2: Virginia Tech should affirm diversity as a vital part of the contemporary vision of the university's historical land-grant mission.

Recommendation 3: The university should increase minority access via a comprehensive pipeline approach to pre-college marketing, public information, and awareness efforts.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Recommendation 1: Active and Innovative Recruitment. The university should use innovative strategies to actively and continuously recruit underrepresented staff and faculty members in all ranks.

Recommendation 2: The university should develop incentive-based professional development programs and accountability strategies for administrators, supervisors, faculty members of all ranks, and staff members. Programs and strategies will support

the effective implementation of policies and procedures related to continuous improvement, the application of performance goals and evaluations, professional standards, equity in decision-making, and cultural competence.

Recommendation 3: Equitable and effective advancement programs. The university must aggressively focus on the practice of equity in advancement and promotion by developing, implementing, and evaluating university-wide opportunities and criteria for advancement.

Recommendation 4: Create a position in the Department of Human Resources to focus on recruiting.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen supervisor training.

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Recommendation 1: Improved Infrastructure. The Graduate School should expand existing activities in the Office of Graduate Student Diversity Initiatives. Two additional full-time equivalent (FTE) administrative positions should be created to expand and support recruitment activities.

Recommendation 2: Recruitment. The Graduate School should receive additional resources from the university to partner with all colleges to develop and implement strategic recruitment efforts that are tailored to the needs of each discipline.

Recommendation 3: Assessment and Accountability. The Graduate School should expand existing assessment efforts to include measures of climate, cultural competency, and recruitment to increase diversity; fund a full-time position to develop assessment procedures; and allocate a graduate research assistantship (GRA) every year to assist in the administration of assessment and data analysis.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Recommendation 1: Access. Develop more effective strategies and efforts to sustain viable access to Virginia Tech through the ongoing recruitment of and financial aid for underrepresented students and through the expansion of pre-college outreach initiatives.

Recommendation 2: Student Success. Develop a more effective framework that supports and nurtures student success through the enhancement of advising, mentoring, financial aid, scholarships, and other retention efforts.

Recommendation 3: Campus Climate. Continue to monitor, develop, and sustain campus climate initiatives to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment inside and outside the classroom.

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FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Working within the broader goal of the Task Force on Race and the Institution, the Academic Programs Subcommittee used these questions as a guide: How is the culture of white privilege reinforced at Virginia Tech in the area of academic departments and programs? What are models and/or possibilities for creating academic programs and curricula that are less reflective of the existing power structures?

Comprehensive reform involves three areas: (1) a substantial commitment to and support of existing academic programs; (2) a commitment to the creation of new dedicated programs; and (3) opportunities for curricular and pedagogical reforms that provide opportunities to investigate the ways in which race and racial privilege are manifested in the classroom within the structure of existing programs.

Recommendation 1: Create a requirement within Virginia Tech's undergraduate liberal education/core that addresses issues of race and racial privilege.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

While devoted programs such as Africana Studies, Women's Studies, and Native American Studies, along with programs that directly address issues of race as part of their curriculum, such as political science, sociology, counseling, psychology, education, and family and childhood development, have courses that explore and investigate issues of race, a student matriculating at Virginia Tech who does not major in one of these programs could easily go through his/her academic career without questioning, exploring, or coming to any clearer understanding of the role of race in society or issues related to race and racial privilege. In order to provide students with opportunities to better understand race and racial privilege, discipline-specific courses need to be developed, taught, and required as part of students' "core" liberal education. While the subject matter may vary based on the discipline, these courses should have a substantial dedication to race and/or the influence of race and racial privilege on, around, and within that particular discipline, its methodologies, and/or approaches used within its study. These courses should have some type of syllabus approval and/or monitoring process similar to the one implemented for Writing across the Curriculum, in which courses were designated as "writing intensive."

If designed and taught effectively, such courses will educate both majority and minority students, providing them with opportunities for awareness, analysis, and action. The opportunity for professional preparation and pedagogical guidance for such courses is addressed in recommendation three.

Another outcome of this recommendation is that it directly addresses the Student Government Association's (SGA) resolution for a required course in the liberal education/core dealing specifically with race and diversity. This resolution was proposed and unanimously passed by both houses of the SGA in March 2007.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen existing dedicated programs and create a Latino/Latina/Hispanic Studies Program.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

Strengthening existing dedicated programs (i.e., Africana Studies, Women's Studies, and Native American Studies) based on their proposed charter and five-year plans and creating a new Latina/Latino/Hispanic Studies Program/Department will help to address issues of racial privilege by programmatically emphasizing alternative ways of understanding critical issues of race and racial privilege. Such programs attract interested graduate students and faculty members who will ultimately change the institutional culture and structure of academic programs at Virginia Tech.

These changes, if sustained and supported, can eventually result in the reduction and ultimate elimination of racial privilege and produce the type of climate conducive to the recruitment and retention of excellent students and faculty members.

Strong, vibrant, and well-supported dedicated programs will make Virginia Tech a leader in producing research focused on race, gender, class, and social change. As a result of these programs, Virginia Tech can become a model for other research institutions in the development of the kinds of citizens, both leaders and followers, required for the 21st century.

Recommendation 3: Create incentive-based opportunities for pedagogical review and course transformation.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

When approached comprehensively, curricular change transcends designated programs and required core courses. To specifically address issues of race and racial privilege, an investigation must occur that interrogates traditionally honored modes of thinking, examines methodologies of inquiry, and questions processes of acquiring and disseminating knowledge. This recommendation is designed to provide faculty members with opportunities to conduct research in, learn about, and explore "other" ways of knowing while reviewing, transforming, and creating new courses. Through incentive-based opportunities, courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels can be designed and/or redesigned to broaden the curriculum to become more progressive and inclusive.

Shifts in pedagogical practices make for an inclusive learning environment and provide students with a broader knowledge base that shifts the focus of what it means to educate or be educated and that decentralizes learning away from privileged or dominant ideological practices.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Sustaining a climate and environment for diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism requires an administrative infrastructure that provides systematic checks and balances for institutional policies and practices with regard to their effectiveness in promoting, affirming, and utilizing new ideas, perspectives, and strategic results. This infrastructure serves as a foundation for achieving substantive institutional transformation. The recommendations of the Administrative Infrastructure Subcommittee focus on administrative coordination, accountability, and resources.

Recommendation 1: Accountability. Virginia Tech should continuously monitor and evaluate diversity initiatives, holding each unit responsible for their outcomes.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

To develop and implement an assessment program that holds the university community accountable for achieving its goals.

1. Expectations and outcomes will be clearly articulated at all levels of the university's infrastructure and reinforced by the university's leadership.

2. University, college, and administrative diversity strategic plans will be assessed annually using a Diversity Scorecard.

3. Equity reports and data will be folded into assessment processes involving the Diversity Scorecard.

4. Virginia Tech's institutional culture will be transformed and will support a common expectation for meeting diversity goals across all units, taking into consideration those areas that are often more engaged with these efforts than others.

5. The Office of Multicultural Affairs will annually report on progress to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity and will make formal recommendations for improvement to the Office of the President.

6. University and college leadership will attend, on an annual basis, required workshops on implementing and assessing diversity efforts.

Recommendation 2: Coordination. Virginia Tech should coordinate and sustain diversity activities and communication regarding these activities across all levels of the institution.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The purpose of this recommendation is to significantly improve the coordination of and communication about diversity and diversity efforts throughout the entire infrastructure of the university. All components are currently in place to realize this objective.

1. The Office of Multicultural Affairs will serve as a clearinghouse of information regarding diversity efforts across the university.

2. The relationship between the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office for Equal Opportunity will be strengthened.

3. Non-academic units, in addition to all of the colleges, will each have a diversity committee.

4. Annual reports on diversity efforts will be submitted by all university units.

5. Each college and administrative unit will have a diversity strategic plan that aligns with college diversity plans, administrative diversity plans, and the University Diversity Strategic Plan.

6. College diversity committees will be represented on the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

Recommendation 3: Resources. Virginia Tech needs to secure adequate resources to maintain and sustain diversity efforts across the university. Resources will support efforts such as significant diversity initiatives, faculty and staff recruitment, scholarships, program development, research opportunities, and other initiatives.

Several approaches could achieve this recommendation:

Option 1: The university sets aside an appropriate percentage of its base budget and earmarks these resources for a wide variety of diversity initiatives. Colleges and administrative units would be given access to these funds for diversity efforts.

Option 2: The university provides guidance to the colleges and administrative units to re-invest a percentage of their total budget into diversity initiatives that have made an impact within the colleges and administrative units, as well as on the whole university.

Option 3: The university requires that each college and administrative unit contributes a percentage of its budget to develop a central pool of resources that would be earmarked for diversity efforts across the entire university.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The objective of these options for implementing this recommendation is to ensure a long-term and sustainable resource commitment to diversity.

1. Implement a University Diversity Fund Initiative that would serve the needs of the university community.

2. Secure a significant endowment for diversity initiatives.

3. Increase efforts to secure external funding for diversity initiatives.

4. Determine and assess the actual amount of funds expended by the university on diversity-related efforts.

ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

After years of broad-based community-building and engagement activities, annual campus-climate discussions, diversity summits, and several diversity research conferences, Virginia Tech is challenged by the need to provide resources for greater institutional transformation and fuller integration of diversity initiatives within and external to the university. These recommendations provide a model for continued efforts for inclusion of all alumni constituent groups and the university's broader communities.

Recommendation 1: The university should establish a high-level Diversity Advisory Council.

Objectives
The proposed council will be a diverse group of alumni, members of the university's off-campus communities, faculty members, and administrators to support both the University Strategic Plan and the Diversity Strategic Plan and to provide insight and perspective designed to integrate Virginia Tech's commitment to diversity and inclusion, especially as it relates to underrepresented minorities. The council will help guide the implementation of the Diversity Strategic Plan and provide support for institutional transformation across administrative units in conjunction with the Office for Multicultural Affairs by

1. working with the Office of University Development and the Office of University Relations to enhance Virginia Tech's public image, including increasing the recognition of and representation of alumni of color. This will require collaboration across the university and in the community to promote the achievements of alumni of color.

2. providing support to the Office of University Development for the capital campaign, ongoing fundraising initiatives, and donor stewardship activities.

3. expanding the Multicultural Advisory Board to guide the Office of Alumni Relations toward a broad, sustained engagement of underrepresented alumni.

4. engaging underrepresented alumni and community members by increasing opportunities for volunteer service with Virginia Tech.

5. increasing collaborative efforts with affinity groups located near the Blacksburg campus, such as Campus Ministries, Virginia Tech alumni chapters, the NAACP, the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Roanoke Hispanic Community Center.

6. extending alumni and community engagement efforts beyond African-American alumni to include other underrepresented minority groups.

7. ensuring that the objectives of the University Strategic Plan and the Diversity Strategic Plan are developed and implemented as a university priority.

Proposed Outcomes

Improved public image of Virginia Tech, especially as it relates to race, which should have a positive effect on the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty, staff, and students.

Enhanced "town-gown" relations in the communities that the university serves.

Increased giving to Virginia Tech from underrepresented alumni.

Increased financial support from corporations and foundations to fund diversity programs and initiatives such as scholarships, endowed chairs, and speakers.

Increased participation of underrepresented alumni at alumni events.

Increased diversity of advisory boards, alumni boards, naming or commemorative tributes committees, and award recipients of color.

Recommendation 2: Virginia Tech should affirm diversity as a vital part of the contemporary vision of the university's historical land-grant mission.

The subcommittee proposes an affirmation of diversity as a contemporary vision of the historical land-grant mission. This mission is rooted in the historical need to counter elitism and racism through education and the development of talent within all citizens. Minority communities across the commonwealth are marginalized by inadequate resources, particularly the financial wherewithal to address root causes of myriad social and educational issues.

Objectives

1. Partner with minority communities to address their human, social, and economic development needs as a vital part of the university's historical land-grant mission. This includes capitalizing on the strong presence of Virginia Cooperative Extension programs to leverage the commitment to education, research, public health, nutrition, agriculture, economic development, and engagement.

2. Work with constituents across the commonwealth to review and assess current engagement programs and explore ways to affirm diversity as an integral part of the university's land-grant mission.

3. Seek opportunities to connect the land-grant mission with Virginia Tech's branding initiative. Invite feedback from internal and external constituents.

4. Expand the breadth of service-learning opportunities that target areas of need within underrepresented communities.

5. Promote the scholarship of diversity as viable and important to fulfilling the university's land-grant mission.

Proposed Outcomes

Full integration of the goal of diversity as a vital part of Virginia Tech's vision of its future in the commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

Direction and purpose for the proposed Diversity Advisory Council's stewardship, resource planning, and goal attainment.

Support for the university's efforts to recruit and retain faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups.

Reinforcement of the university's brand in order to challenge historically negative perceptions of Virginia Tech and to amplify the credibility of its diversity agenda.

Recommendation 3: The university should increase minority access via a comprehensive pipeline approach to pre-college marketing, public information, and awareness efforts.

Objectives

Virginia Tech has many excellent educational assets and opportunities that minority youth can explore for personal, academic, and career development. A comprehensive pipeline approach to pre-college marketing, public information, and awareness would present age-appropriate information to a range of audiences regarding available educational opportunities and career pathways to strengthen Virginia Tech's pipeline programs.

1. Inventory existing Virginia Tech educational assets and youth-development opportunities. Identify target audiences and benefits to participants and seek to align their operation to increase awareness and linkages with admissions, the Graduate School, and career pathways. This effort should include the statewide 4-H camps, the various pre-college diversity outreach programs, and individual faculty outreach that is related to grant-funded research, along with state agency-related services and support provided by or linked to the university.

2. Create a minority pipeline steering committee to inventory, review, and assess the effectiveness of existing pre-college programs and activities.

3. Coordinate and differentiate programs with similar target audiences, geographic locations, or programmatic themes for improved public awareness.

4. Assess program effectiveness, sustainability, and broader impacts via constructive peer review and evaluation. Existing internal funding should be supplemented with additional resources and university support.

5. Engage underrepresented faculty, administrators, staff, and students in mentoring, recruiting, and pipeline programs as often as possible.

Proposed Outcomes

Increased applications for admission by underrepresented students.

Improved retention of underrepresented students.

Increased likelihood that underrepresented students will become more permanent members of the Virginia Tech community as alumni, graduate students, faculty, or staff.

Synergistic efforts and measurable results for the success of pipeline programs.

Improved public perception and campus climate.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The Faculty and Staff Subcommittee focused on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented instructional faculty, research faculty, administrative/professional faculty (A/P faculty), and classified and university staff at Virginia Tech. The recommendations center on the need to develop, implement, and evaluate mechanisms that support a strong institutional commitment to inclusion and equity. The recommendations of the subcommittee focus on institutional change rather than on individual assistance. All programs for recruitment, retention, and advancement must be synergistic with leadership-development exercises but yet distinct from them. The programs should focus on the importance of policies and procedures that improve diversity initiatives, particularly as they impact underrepresented faculty and staff members.

NOTE: "Common" refers to objectives and outcomes that apply to instructional faculty, administrative/professional (A/P) faculty, research faculty, and staff. When "faculty" is used, the reference includes all faculties (instructional, A/P, and research) unless otherwise noted.

Recommendation 1: Active and Innovative Recruitment. The university should use innovative strategies to actively and continuously recruit underrepresented staff and faculty members in all ranks.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

1. Increase the use of non-traditional recruiting methods that are more effective in generating diverse applicant pools and increasing the number of diverse hires. Such methods include the use of (for instructional faculty) distinguished professorships or endowed chairs; special hires; attractive and interdisciplinary job descriptions with an emphasis on diversity, including highlighting an active commitment to the value of diversity; and diverse, well-trained search committees.

2. Create a Minority Recruitment Team with representatives from colleges, administrative units, the Office of the Provost, Office for Equal Opportunity, and the Office of the Vice President for Research to monitor, assess, publicly disclose, and continuously improve the recruitment effort. This team should centralize and coordinate the discipline-related and college-based recruitment efforts and ensure work across colleges and departments to strengthen and institutionalize continuous recruitment efforts, such as the objectives outlined below.

3. Implement a cluster hire of approximately five positions for instructional faculty members from a variety of disciplines with expertise in the scholarship of race and ethnicity or diversity issues. Recommended subject areas include Hispanic Studies, Africana Studies, Native American Studies, Americana Studies, and Women's Studies.

4. Aggressively continue the use of target-of-opportunity hires.

5. Work with University Development and related departments to solicit corporate partnerships and funding for chairs and professorships with an explicit focus on hiring around the scholarship of race and ethnicity or supporting diversity initiatives.

6. Aggressively utilize available funding and revamp the pre-doctoral program and the ABD Fellows Program to attract new faculty.

7. Provide funding for departmental or college visits to job fairs at historically black colleges and universities; Hispanic-serving institutions; tribal colleges; community-based, civic, and professional organizations; and events to recruit underrepresented faculty and staff members.

8. Provide funding for representatives from departments, colleges, or the university to attend targeted national events for minority students with advanced degrees for the purpose of recruiting potential faculty members.

9. Increase funding and institutional support for the Dual Career Assistance Program.

Proposed Outcomes

1. Centralized efforts and greater accountability for recruitment of underrepresented faculty in all ranks, ensuring that all departments develop and execute plans to increase minority faculty applicants.

2. Increased number of underrepresented faculty.

3. Increased institutional teaching and research around race and ethnicity.

4. Increased pool of mentors for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff.

5. Increased opportunities for faculty to collaborate across the institution to support scholarship, service, and external research and program funding.

6. Increased presence of underrepresented faculty and/or faculty focused around race and ethnicity or diversity.

7. Increased opportunities for fellow designations and for the institution to consider a permanent faculty position.

8. More effective pipelines for new faculty to be identified and hired before they are hired by competing institutions.

Recommendation 2: The university should develop incentive-based professional development programs and accountability strategies for administrators, supervisors, faculty members of all ranks, and staff. Programs and strategies will support the effective implementation of policies and procedures related to continuous improvement, the application of performance goals and evaluations, professional standards, equity in decision-making, and cultural competence.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

1. Develop a Faculty Development Institute for Diversity and Multicultural Issues to promote cultural competence. Satisfactory completion of programs in this institute will result in a grant of vouchers that when appropriately accumulated would lead to time off from teaching and service, early sabbatical or research leave, or special leave opportunities. In addition, the university is encouraged to implement diversity-related competency into its proposed Leadership and Professional Development program.

2. Hold administrators such as vice presidents, directors, department heads, and deans accountable for mentoring and retention of underrepresented faculty by including this criterion in their performance appraisals. Publish retention figures prominently online or in selected university publications. Ask directors and department heads to report progress on recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented minorities.

3. Establish a concrete infrastructure for annual written performance appraisals and communication of clear criteria for advancement and promotion for administrative/professional faculty and research faculty.

4. Coordinate a regular analysis of salary equity conducted by the Office of the Provost, the Office for Equal Opportunity, and Human Resources to determine the presence of underrepresented minorities in various units and at various levels and their compensation relative to their peers.

5. Train academic administrators to consistently review during faculty evaluations the diversity-related components in the Faculty Activity Reports and to uniformly ascribe rewards for specific diversity activities. Coordinate these efforts among the Office of the Provost, the Office for Equal Opportunity, and Human Resources.

6. Implement a 180-degree assessment for supervisors so that employees can provide feedback on the quality of their supervision.

Proposed Outcomes

1. Improved articulation of performance expectations for faculty in all ranks.

2. Assessment of the effectiveness of the evaluation-training program at four levels (reactions, behaviors, results, outcomes).

3. Development of an incentive structure that will reward individuals for participating in diversity-related training and professional development programs.

4. Increased use of assessments to hold administrators and supervisors accountable for their performance.

5. Improved retention of underrepresented faculty.

Recommendation 3: Equitable and effective advancement programs. The university must aggressively focus on the practice of equity in advancement and promotion by developing, implementing, and evaluating university-wide opportunities and criteria for advancement.

Common Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

1. Develop metrics to assess existing faculty and staff professional development, training, and mentoring opportunities within departments and colleges that may support advancement and promotion. Criteria that might be used to evaluate the efficacy of development opportunities might include
    a. equitable access (reported barriers to use by underrepresented faculty/staff).
    b. equitable utilization (percent of utilization by faculty and staff as a whole; proportional representation by underrepresented faculty and staff).
    c. effectiveness (quality of opportunity).
    d. compatibility (with varying faculty and staff environments, schedules, skill needs, and requirements for promotion or advancement).
    e. alignment with the University Strategic Plan.

2. Allocate funding and merit-based growth opportunities to support faculty and staff members who commit to training and development programs to transform the institution. Include such programs as Undoing Racism, AdvanceVT, special assignments (i.e., serving on diversity committees), or similar programs developed by units within the university. Incentives should include course-buyout, support from one's supervisor to participate in efforts on a consistent basis, and use of participation to support promotion and advancement to higher-level positions within the university.

3. Develop and support diversity-focused research, professional development, and educational-leave opportunities (of no more than five months) for faculty and staff members who pursue innovative efforts that lie outside their traditional areas of expertise and that will advance the university's efforts toward transformation and inclusion.

4. Use Virginia Tech's Undoing Racism effort as a model of an innovative approach for existing faculty and staff to address issues of racism and diversity. Faculty and staff members participating in such programs should have access to incentives such as course-buyout or educational leave.

5. Develop policies that require mechanisms to clearly communicate promotion, advancement, and tenure requirements. Ensure that all department heads and supervisors are communicating requirements directly and equitably to all faculty and staff members on an annual basis and in writing.

6. Redefine service on a search committee as a position to be achieved by qualified faculty members. Establish qualifications for serving on search committees to include verification of training or completion of tutorials that address bias in hiring, affirmative action, and search-committee procedures. Departments should develop a database of qualified faculty and staff members to serve on search committees.

7. Empower college diversity committees by allocating funding, clerical support, and buyout of at least one course per year for faculty members serving on the committee. Allow a two-year rotation of service on college diversity committees. Expand the committees to include representatives for A/P and research faculty.

8. Establish equivalent departmental and college diversity committees for staff with an allocation of funds to support university efforts to increase diversity and improve the climate for staff.

Common Proposed Outcomes

1. More effective and accessible professional development, training, and mentoring programs across the university.

2. A more inclusive and innovative climate for advancement and development.

3. Increased perceptions of equity in tenure and promotion practices and performance evaluations among faculty and staff.

4. Increased accountability and incentives for department heads and supervisors for the retention and advancement of underrepresented faculty and staff within their units.

Recommendations for University and Classified Staff

Virginia Tech has two groups of salaried non-faculty employees: classified staff and university staff, who are covered by the Virginia Personnel Act and State Human Resource policies and the University Human Resource policies, respectively. Given the

unique policies and procedures that govern staff employees, the Faculty/Staff Subcommittee recognizes the need to highlight some recommendations expressly for staff employees of the university.

Recommendation 4: Create a position in the Department of Human Resources to focus on recruiting.

The recruiter's job responsibilities would consist of a major performance objective and accountability to recruit employees from underrepresented groups. The recruiter should work across colleges and administrative units to recruit candidates for staff positions and to assist with recruitment for administrative/professional faculty positions. Job responsibilities should include the following:

1. Collaborate with the Office for Equal Opportunity and university personnel to understand and communicate the university's placement goals for women and minorities.

2. Establish an elaborate, interdisciplinary network of local, regional, and national contacts and organizations that serve underrepresented minorities for referrals.

3. Perform community outreach to source candidates and support the university's outreach mission.

4. Attend and coordinate local, regional, and national job and career fairs.

5. Assist departments in writing job descriptions that emphasize the institutional commitment to diversity.

6. Create and coordinate a pool certification process for professional staff positions (pay band 4 and above).

7. Coordinate advertising plans to target women and minorities.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

1. Centralized targeted recruiting efforts for staff vacancies.

2. Coordination across departmental and administrative units.

3. Strengthened network of contacts.

4. Increased focus on attracting underrepresented minorities for staff positions.

5. Increased representation of racial minorities in professional staff positions.

6. Established measurements to assess the results of these targeted recruiting efforts.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen supervisor training

Departmental climate is a strong indicator of staff satisfaction and retention. Since the relationship between a supervisor and an employee is a main driver of departmental climate, the subcommittee recommends that supervisory training be required for

all new supervisors and that the training include cultural competency. All current supervisors could elect and could be strongly encouraged to participate in this training. The training program should be developed in collaboration with the University Leadership Development office.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes

1. Welcoming departmental climates for underrepresented staff.

2. Increased accountability for supervisors in regard to performance and cultural competency.

3. Improved departmental climate for underrepresented staff.

4. Reduced turnover of underrepresented staff.

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

The Graduate and Professional Students Subcommittee applauds the Graduate School for establishing an environment that welcomes and responds to the needs of diverse graduate and professional students. The Transformative Graduate Education Initiative provides an academic, socio-cultural, and professional environment that attracts and retains diverse students. The Office of Graduate Student Diversity Initiatives is leading the effort to increase diversity via the creation of innovative programs that go beyond traditional recruitment activities. The subcommittee grouped recommendations under three themes: a) infrastructure, b) recruitment, and c) assessment.

Recommendation 1: Improved Infrastructure. The Graduate School should expand existing activities in the Office of Graduate Student Diversity Initiatives. Two additional full-time equivalent (FTE) administrative positions should be created to expand and support recruitment activities.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The overarching objective is to strengthen administrative support for Graduate School recruitment and retention activities.

1. Create a recruitment and retention consortium comprised of minority-serving institutions, research centers, and other organizations to increase participation of underrepresented groups in graduate education at Virginia Tech and at partner academic institutions.

2. Develop a portfolio of research and education programs that enhances graduate student diversity and increases involvement of underrepresented groups.

3. Expand the existing Quality Mentoring and Advising program to include more faculty members.

4. Strengthen communities of underrepresented graduate students by creating support networks within sub-communities (e.g., African Americans in Engineering and Latinos in the Social Sciences). Consider using graduate student mentors for undergraduate students.

5. Expand bridge programs such as the Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program and McNair Scholars Program to provide more opportunities for non-traditional students.

6. Implement commonly accepted best practices to recruit and retain underrepresented students.

7. Increase the visibility of existing opportunities (e.g., Women's Center dissertation-writing group and Graduate Scholars Circle) among graduate students and faculty.

8. Disseminate information about and increase the effective use of existing opportunities that facilitate positive and effective relationships between faculty/staff and graduate students. Use the existing program in conflict resolution and mediation provided by the Office for Equal Opportunity to offer services to students and to provide training for each college's associate dean for graduate studies.

Recommendation 2: Recruitment. The Graduate School should receive additional resources from the university to partner with all colleges to develop and implement strategic recruitment efforts that are tailored to the needs of each discipline.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The main objective of this recommendation is to institutionalize the development of long-term recruitment strategies that are compatible with each disciplinary and professional community. These strategies will increase the visibility of Virginia Tech among the various professional societies that serve underrepresented groups.

1. Create a strategic recruitment diversity plan in each department and/or college that is tailored to the needs of its disciplinary and professional communities. The plan might be generated by departments and coordinated at the college level with the college's diversity committee.

2. Have the Graduate School identify, evaluate, fund, and implement the best recruitment plans.

3. Improve the recruitment of prospective students through the effective use of conference attendance. Develop a list of conferences that focus on underrepresented students and professionals. Support expenses associated with attendance at these conferences to conduct active recruitment of prospective students. Attendance will increase the visibility of Virginia Tech nationwide. Suggested conferences include SHPE, NSBE, Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity, Grace Hopper Women in Computing, National Council for Black Studies, American Indian Council of Architects and Engineers, Association of Black Psychologists, and Association of Black Physicists, among others. Provide this list to all departments as encouragement to submit a student-recruitment plan.

4. Improve cultural competence of faculty members by providing orientation and training about diversity issues and the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities.

5. Strengthen faculty and staff advising skills by providing training that improves awareness of diversity issues, as needed and based on findings from annual departmental climate evaluations.

Recommendation 3: Assessment and Accountability. The Graduate School should expand existing assessment efforts to include measures of climate, cultural competency, and recruitment to increase diversity; fund a full-time position to develop assessment procedures; and allocate a graduate research assistantship (GRA) every year to assist in the administration of assessment and data analysis.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The main objective of this recommendation is to expand assessment mechanisms to include assessment of the campus climate for graduate students and the cultural competence of faculty and staff members with whom graduate students interact. It is important to provide to relevant constituencies assessment results on the performance of departments in reaching diversity goals. The Graduate School should collect data on a department-by-department basis that provides a five-year moving window to assess progress on recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for all underrepresented groups.

Proposed Outcomes

1. Provide assessment data and information about climate and cultural competency to support continuous improvement. This provision can be accomplished as an expansion of the existing annual survey conducted by the Graduate School or as part of the Campus Climate survey.

2. Develop a valid data-collection instrument to track applications, admissions, retention, and graduation rates among all communities of interest. See the rankings by the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* as an example of the metrics to use.

3. Communicate annually how well departments and colleges are implementing their strategic diversity recruitment plans (see recommendation 2). This annual report will serve as a mechanism for accountability.

4. Require the Graduate School to continue its visible leadership in making connections between diversity research and its relationship with graduate student recruitment and retention. The Graduate School will conduct regular graduate program reviews of each department's implementation of the strategic diversity recruitment plans.

5. Strengthen the monitoring of and use results-oriented interventions to assure that all graduate students receive culturally competent, effective, and supportive advising. Annually administer to graduate students a double-blind departmental climate evaluation that includes questions about advising competency, funding opportunities, and overall cultural competency. Based on the survey results, the Graduate School should assess departmental climate and determine appropriate action.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Undergraduate students play a pivotal role in the life and mission of the university. The Undergraduate Student Subcommittee focused on three main areas that affect the undergraduate experience: access, student success, and campus climate. Members of the subcommittee engaged in discussion with key partners—the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid, Academic Support, and other areas that are responsible for the three identified areas—about supporting and improving the experience of undergraduate students and tapping into undergraduate student perspectives on these issues.

Recommendation 1: Access. Develop more effective strategies and efforts to sustain viable access to Virginia Tech through the ongoing recruitment of and financial aid for underrepresented students and through the expansion of pre-college outreach initiatives.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The main objective is to improve student access to Virginia Tech and significantly impact the increased recruitment and yield of underrepresented students. It is critical that all members of the university understand that many offices/units play important roles in providing student access and that improved communication and coordination are crucial for this effort to be successful.

Proposed Outcomes

1. Develop an office or appoint the necessary staff and resources for an initiative dedicated to student access to provide a coordinated focus on pre-college initiatives targeting K-12, especially middle school.

2. Establish a multicultural-recruitment committee to communicate efforts (i.e., recruitment, pipeline, summer programs, visitations, fairs/expos) taking place in the colleges.

3. Expand formal networks of partnerships and programs with minority-serving institutions: historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges. Explore the potential for five-year joint programs between Virginia Tech and minority-serving institutions.

4. Restructure existing recruitment plans into a formal and comprehensive recruitment and yield plan that includes the means for establishing partnerships with external groups and examining inclusive images in university publications. In addition, this plan will explore more effective yield activities and ways to engage alumni in attracting minority students to Virginia Tech.

5. Expand the role of the Undergraduate Admissions Advisory Group in coordinating recruitment and yield plans and provide additional staff within Undergraduate Admissions.

6. Develop a set of target benchmarks that align with restructuring and formalize recruitment and yield plans that outline measurable growth in the number of underrepresented students.

7. Expand strategies that target low-income high schools not sending students to Virginia Tech and provide incentive scholarships to increase student applications and yield.

8. In the area of financial aid, establish a parent outreach coordinator position to implement parent outreach and education programs. Increase financial aid grants available for underrepresented students. Require all admitted students to submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA).

9. Work with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and the Office of University Development to create scholarship opportunities for students in University Studies.

10. Establish formal analysis and tracking mechanisms for enrollments with standard consensus dates through the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Undergraduate Admissions, and Institutional Research to provide the most accurate picture of enrollment numbers.

Recommendation 2: Student Success. Develop a more effective framework that supports and nurtures student success through the enhancement of advising, mentoring, financial aid, scholarships, and other retention efforts.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The overall objective is to develop strategies that will enhance the university's commitment to ensuring student success among underrepresented students. Student success is impacted by consistent and quality academic advising, sustained and culturally sensitive mentoring, the availability and use of financial support through scholarships, and a welcoming and nurturing campus climate within and external to the classroom.

Proposed Outcomes

1. Build upon efforts by the Academy of Advising Excellence to conduct a survey on college and department advising and mentoring needs and student/advisor ratios. The survey would serve as the basis for an ongoing assessment of advising/mentoring progress.

2. Enhance the communication surrounding the role and importance of academic advising across the entire university community. Explore ways in which the Division of Student Affairs can expand collaborations and increase its role in advising students.

3. Reduce the student-to-advisor ratio at the departmental level. Set maximum levels depending on department need and advisor commitment. Hire new advisors to comply with the new ratio.

4. Develop a plan that will lead to the expansion of the University Academic Advising Center (UAAC) through increased resources and administrative support and will facilitate the creation of a university-wide advising program.

5. Establish a formal university-wide advisor-training program and handbook through the UAAC.

6. Require that all students performing below a 2.0 GPA use the services provided by the Center for Academic Excellence and Enrichment (CAEE). CAEE will require additional resources to meet the increased demand for services.

7. Support the development of an Academic Advising and Mentoring Council (already in process) to provide leadership, strengthen university-wide collaboration and communication, and align advising initiatives with those surrounding the university's liberal education curriculum and VT Pathways for Learning.

8. Appoint a task force to explore the coordination of financial support and scholarships at the college and university levels in order to provide greater access to scholarships.

9. Explore ways to bridge the "gap" between the four-year and six-year graduation rates among underrepresented students.

Recommendation 3: Campus Climate. Continue to monitor, develop, and sustain campus climate initiatives to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment inside and outside the classroom.

Objectives and Proposed Outcomes
The main objective is to improve the campus climate for all undergraduate students and to impact the entire university community. Campus climate is affected by events, interactions, and activities that take place in both academic (e.g., classrooms) and non-academic environments (e.g., residence halls, dining centers, student unions, and any space outside the university).

Proposed Outcomes

1. Develop, implement, and analyze a biennial campus climate study using the expertise provided by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Institutional Research.

2. Use a common book that reflects social justice and other diversity themes. Coordinate the implementation of the Common Book Project throughout the university.

3. Work closely with the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaccreditation effort in establishing the recommendations for the QEP for Virginia Tech.

4. Exert concerted public relations and marketing activities to communicate the diversity efforts of Virginia Tech.

5. Evaluate and explore the Safewatch program as a method for potentially monitoring the climate of classroom and other academic settings. If needed, establish a formal mechanism for assessment of and accountability for the Safewatch program.

6. Develop and communicate formal procedures for responding to campus climate concerns and reinforce the role of the Office of the Dean of Students, the Campus Climate Team, and other units engaged in promoting a positive campus climate.

7. Develop and expand peer academic and co-curricular mentoring programs for students.

8. Establish incentives for colleges to develop programs similar to the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences' effort to educate students about the Virginia Tech Principles of Community.

9. Encourage colleges and units to conduct periodic focus groups with first-year through senior-year students to gauge campus climate concerns at various levels.

10. Add art, displays, and public symbols that reflect the campus climate throughout the university community.

11. Establish a system of workshops on campus climate that has clearly defined objectives and incentives for staff and faculty members and students.

* Additional task force materials are available online at *www.provost.vt.edu.*