**UPDATE, ACTIVITIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CGAC**

**Summary:**
The CGAC had its first meeting in mid-September followed by a two-day retreat to establish a common framework, and language with which to understand the complexities of diversity work; and to gain an understanding of behaviors characteristic of an inclusive culture. In addition to hosting several forums and meeting with members of the 1993 Commission and the CGC, CGAC established a structure and process for accomplishing the tasks set forth in the charge. To ensure that all action items recommended by CGC are integrated, work has been organized into six subcommittees and cross-referenced with the action items listed in the CGC implementation plan. Namely Policies, Procedures and Practices; Personal Development, Recruitment and Retention, Community Relations, Curricular, Co-curricular Programming; and Assessment. Each of these subcommittees consists of faculty students and staff.

The following brief report will provide additional details regarding the activities and accomplishments of the CGAC to date:

- Inaugural meeting of the CGAC convened on September 21st. Provost Aprille gave the charge to group. Discussions centered on establishing a structure, process, and framework for fulfilling the charge to the Committee. Other items considered measurements of success and accomplishments; dealing with obstacles; culture change vs. population change; and making Richmond a model for institutional diversity.

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**Setting the Course for Inclusive Diversity at UR**
The Vision for the University of Richmond: Transforming Bright Minds into Great Achievers

- **University Mission Statement**
  The mission of the University of Richmond is to sustain a collaborative learning and research community that supports the personal development of its members and the creation of new knowledge. A Richmond education prepares students to lead lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a global and pluralistic society.

- **UR’s Mission**
  To develop a diverse workforce and student body, and to model an inclusive campus community which supports the expression of differences in ways that promote excellence in teaching, learning, personal development, and institutional success.

- **Diversity Mission**
  (Purpose)

- **Growth Opportunities**
  (Strategies)

- **Personal / Interpersonal**
  *Critical self exam
  *Behavior / Speech
  *Change thoughts
  *Enhance relationships

- **Institutional**
  *Review Policies / Procedures and Practices to support an inclusive pluralistic environment

- **Cultural**
  *Create environments supportive of UR’s diversity
  *Climate of respect

- **Diversity / Multi-Cultural Competence**
  (Outcome)
- Facilitated a two-day retreat to: increase personal awareness; clarify personal blocks and risks involved with doing diversity work; to explore fear and distrust issues and address validation of the experiences of others; receive coaching to deal with resistance; learn behaviors to model inclusion and diversity; and to develop qualities necessary for functioning as a team and committee. The CGAC has incorporated many of the concepts learned during the retreat into their general operations, and how meetings are conducted.

- Using the CGC Report recommendations, six Subcommittees have been established and proposed memberships were submitted to the Committee on Committees and University Staff Advisory Council for approval. Each Subcommittee consists of faculty students and staff. To guide the work of these groups a charge (see below) was developed to specify the deliverables of the each subcommittee.

**COMMON GROUND ACTION COMMITTEE**  
**Charge to the Sub-Committees**

The Common Ground Action Committee (CGAC) charges its subcommittees with evaluating the feasibility of specific recommendations of the 2004 Common Ground Commission (CGC) and developing appropriate action plans for review by the CGAC. Subcommittees must give the University community the opportunity to contribute ideas and offer opinions as their work progresses in order to develop a shared vision for ways to achieve inclusive diversity at the University of Richmond.

The work of the subcommittees flows from basic tenets that encapsulate the spirit of the 1993 and 2004 Commissions:

- Inclusive diversity is a source of creative energy and educational potential without which the University of Richmond cannot achieve is highest goals.
- Organizational practices and policies that result in barriers to progress toward the goal of inclusive diversity will not be allowed to stand.
- Every individual—staff, students, faculty--should be provided with intentional opportunities for personal growth and the development of interpersonal skills that contribute to a University culture of inclusiveness.
- Inclusive diversity is viewed as a process that over time will become so embedded into every activity of the institution that it disappears as an entity unto itself.

The vision flowing from these tenets is as follows:

*The University of Richmond is an institution that welcomes individual differences, and more importantly, a community that values the understanding of these differences as key to a dynamic, interactive, and transforming environment for work and education. Furthermore, the University is a place where all of its members are challenged to reflect on personal attitudes and actions that ultimately define “institutional culture” and to adapt behavior and work habits that are productive and accepting of individual differences* (adapted from the CGC 2004 Report).

The action plans proposed to CGAC by the subcommittees should be designed for maximum institutional impact. Proposals must contribute to the following broad aims of the CGAC charge:

- Develop specific goals, strategies, and concrete plans for increasing diversity among staff, students, and faculty.
- Develop specific goals, strategies and concrete plans for facilitating the organizational and personal changes needed to foster an environment conducive to inclusive diversity.
Develop a plan and process for making diversity more intentionally inclusive, integrated, and valued so as to become permanently embedded and sustainable in the mainstream of educational programs and institutional operations.

Develop and justify a realistic estimate of budget and resources needed for implementation.

Identify assessments to monitor progress and to guide changes in strategy that may be necessary for long-term success.

**Organization of the Subcommittees**

Five subcommittees and an assessment group have been established with focal areas that address the CGC recommendations and the added charge to CGAC to increase diversity. CGAC members will chair each subcommittee, and other members were derived from nominations received from the UR community.

1. **Policies, Procedures and Practices**
   
   Review institutional documents, and recommend changes to any language or practices derived from those documents that are non-inclusive. Examples of documents include but are not limited to By-Laws, handbooks, forms, policies, benefits, application forms and procedures, hiring, position posting, catalogues, course descriptions, website, student life, communications, publications, special events types and advertising.

   *Recommendations 2.3, 4.5, 5.2, 5.8*

2. **Personal Development**
   
   In order to change the cultural norms at the University of Richmond a critical mass of people must adopt the values of multicultural proficiency. Culture cannot be institutionalized; it must begin with personal and interpersonal interactions that transform individuals who make up the larger culture. Realizing this, our desire is to educate so that those exposed to multicultural proficiency training will have the opportunity to grow as individuals and thus transform the larger community. Development opportunities should focus on embracing diversity and sustaining values of inclusion through recognition, collaboration, respect, and appreciation for all individuals regardless of social economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, exceptionality, disability, or language within a challenging learning environment.

   *Recommendations 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6*

3. **Recruitment & Retention**
   
   Increase diversity among faculty, staff, students, and administration. Work with Admissions, Human Resources, Managers, Supervisors, Deans, and Department Chairs to develop a diversity recruitment policy and supporting statements that will be included in all publications, job notices and communication. Identify diverse markets in which to recruit, as well as methods for recruiting. Review the various staff divisions throughout the University, paying particular attention to areas where staff is predominantly majority or minority to make sure policies/practices in hiring and promotion do not promote a continuation of the status quo.

   *Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8*

4. **Community Relations**
   
   Address ways to change any existing perceptions of the University as a non-inclusive community that may be a barrier to admissions, staff recruitment, and community participation in university events. Create sustained partnerships in the community with a variety of people, organizations, and institutions including partnerships with other institutions of higher education. Investigate transportation options to enable more interaction with the greater Richmond community.
5. **Curricular, Co-curricular Programming**
In collaboration with TFUGE, investigate ways to insure that students have intentional opportunities to develop multicultural proficiency, certainly through curricular offerings co-curricular programming and possibly also as a requirement. Review current co-curricular programming aimed at promoting inclusive diversity to determine whether goals are being met. As an alternative to recommending more programming, consider whether consolidation of resources and programs would lead to outcomes that are more effective.

*Recommendations 1.4, 1.5, 4.5*

6. **Assessment**—
Establish measurable goals and a plan for outcomes assessment.

*Recommendation 4.5*

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Response to the call to serve on the above subcommittees was very positive (approximately 150 nominations and requests to serve were received).

- Members of CGAC have attended department meetings, individual school faculty meetings, and student meetings to discuss the Common Ground Initiative and answer questions relating to the diversity initiative. CGAC’s first open forum was held on November 19th.

- A Draft Mission statement (on following page) for Inclusive Diversity at the University of Richmond has been developed as a means of fostering a shared purpose for the community.

- To assess climate and attitudes of in the University community (includes all members) relative to diversity, two baseline surveys are under development.
University Mission Statement:

*The mission of the University of Richmond is to sustain a collaborative learning and research community that supports the personal development of its members and the creation of new knowledge. A Richmond education prepares students to lead lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a global and pluralistic society.*

Mission Statement for Common Ground: Inclusive Diversity at the University of Richmond.

*The University of Richmond is committed to developing a diverse workforce and student body, and to modeling an inclusive campus community which supports the expression of differences in ways that promote excellence in teaching, learning, personal development, and institutional success.*

Diversity is understood to go beyond specific categories of difference related to important demographic identifiers and cultural stereotypes, as diversity also includes each individual’s uniqueness with respect to personal values, beliefs, experiences, ideas, and perspectives. Nevertheless, we recognize the need for special awareness of some categories of difference (examples such as race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, socioeconomic status) that are more likely than others to be negatively impacted by the history and embedded practices that shape current institutional culture.

Inclusive diversity means that the open discussion of different opinions is sought and valued, and that individuals are heard, understood and respected for who they are without pressure to conform. Inclusive diversity is necessary to achieve the kind of positive interactions that contribute to excellence in educational outcomes, staff development, and long-term institutional success.

The realization of this vision will require relentless ongoing effort to insure that:

- diversity is recognized and acted upon as a value-added quality in recruiting and retention of outstanding students, staff, and faculty;
- all individuals and organized groups have the opportunity to engage in critical self-examination and be willing to adjust attitudes and behavior in ways that promote inclusive diversity;
- the university addresses perceived and real barriers to inclusive diversity that may exist in current institutional programs, practices, and policies.