

**Chancellor's African American Community Advisory Council  
And  
African American Coordinating Committee  
Monday, November 14, 2007, 3:30 p.m.  
African American Cultural Center – Room 126  
Meeting Minutes**

**CAACAC Members present:** Marcus Belvin, Dwayne Green, Angel Lewis, Carolyn Smiley Love, Jim Stewart, Brad Thompson, Adama Washington, J.J. Wilkins, Greg Williams, and Sandra Williams.

**University Members:** Christina Cox, Niccoya Dobson, Larry Nielsen, Jim Oblinger, and José Picart.

**AACC Members Present:** Frankye Artis, Tremaine Brittian, Myron Burney, Allen Cannedy, Angie Daniel, Thomas Easley, Shonaka Ellison, Marcia Gumpertz, Orlando Hankins, Wandra Hill, Brett Locklear, Tony Mitchell, Marva Motley, Keith Powell, Jo-Ann Robinson, Jamila Simpson, Deidre Yancey, Keith Powell and Fred Hord.

**Agenda Items:**

- **Call to Order**

Chairperson Jim Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Stewart introduced Chancellor Oblinger.

- **Welcome and Campus Update**

Chancellor Oblinger welcomed everyone and gave a brief update of current happenings on the NC State campus. 1) NC State's Centennial Campus was nominated as the top research park in the world. Banners will be displayed on campus for one year to proudly proclaim the distinction. 2) Chancellor Oblinger praised NC State's Wolfpack for their recent football victory over UNC-Carolina. 3) The construction of the Randall B. Terry, Jr. Companion Animal Veterinary Medical Center will take place during the next 24 months and will involve a series of activities in two separate stages. The new referral hospital is made possible by a \$20 million pledge from the R.B. Terry, Jr. Charitable Foundation - the largest private gift ever given to North Carolina State University. The N.C. General Assembly appropriated \$38 million for the facility in the recent budget session, and additional private funds will pay for the remainder of the \$72 million project. Construction is expected to be complete by 2009. When completed, this state-of-the-art medical center will serve as a national model. 4) Chancellor Oblinger informed the group of the most recent responses and actions surrounding the "noose" incident that occurred on November 8, 2007 on NC State's campus. Chancellor Oblinger provided a chronological report of a collection of messages that were released and actions that had been taken in response to the noose incident. Chancellor Oblinger made it clear that the incident is being taken very seriously, it is being thoroughly investigated and anyone found guilty of this act is subject to the university's disciplinary process and may also face criminal charges. Greg Williams applauded NC State for the progress it has made to be a more inclusive environment. Mr. Williams shared his concern

that an unfortunate act by one individual could potentially cause a fracture in the campus community. Mr. Williams expressed his view that Chancellor Oblinger and NC State had responded appropriately to the incident. Marcus Belvin felt Chancellor Oblinger's responses were not strong enough. Mr. Belvin felt that the perpetrator might feel that he or she could repeatedly get away with such behavior. Mr. Belvin felt the incident was very symbolic and explained that historically the noose was used to symbolize death in the black community. He stated that the university should be careful not to get into a band-aid situation and one way is to better prepare students for diversity. Mr. Brad Thompson's initial reaction was that someone understood this was an important act and it commanded attention. He further stated that the action was symbolic of a means of intimidation and the noose particularly symbolized a method of death. Mr. Thompson felt that the use of the word "prank" in the Chancellor's initial message was unfortunate and that it undermined how serious and how offensive the noose was to the black community. Mr. Thompson stated the responses could also have been more compassionate in its regard for the pain this incident caused some people in the black community.

Jamila Simpson spoke about her experience as a NC State student stating that Chancellor Oblinger cares but students may not have felt the emotional support they were seeking in the message. Ms. Simpson stated that students look to Chancellor Oblinger to take care of it, referring to the noose incident, because they see you as the "Father of the University" and a "Father" protects his family from threatening and harmful circumstances. Niccoya Dobson spoke as Chair of the African American Student Advisory Council reiterating their message that Chancellor Oblinger's response was not strong enough. One of the things AASAC students felt needed to be communicated was that the "noose" doesn't just effect African Americans, but that it effects the entire University community. The AASAC students also strongly believed that the incident should have been treated as a hate crime. She shared that AASAC would like to see hate crimes more clearly defined in the student conduct policies. In addition, AASAC students believe that more specific consequences for hate crimes should be clearly stated in student and university policies. Dr. Fred Hord questioned whether NC State has defined what a hate crime is and if there is any written policies that states what the responses is to these actions. Monica Price felt Chancellor Oblinger had been courageous in his response, but still feels that racism and discrimination is still prevalent at the university. She also mentioned that some times it may take a long time to solve a case or it may not even get solved, but students should understand that it is not because of the lack of effort on the part of the university. Dr. Picart informed the group that a team of trained individuals had formed a Crisis Response Team to assist when incidences such as this occur. Dr. Carol Love recommended defining hate crime and also looking at other universities to help create a clear definition.

### **Brief Overview of the African American Coordinating Committee**

Dr. Picart gave a brief description of the African American Coordinating Committee (AACC) explaining that they are a very strong group of professionals that promote inclusiveness and a welcoming environment at NC State. The group membership ranges from Directors, to Assistant or Associate Deans and some administrative department heads within the colleges and various campus units. The AACC meets monthly to connect and share ideas. They work proactively to respond and deal with issues that relate to diversity on the campus. In addition, from time to time the coordinating committee members receive briefing or training concerning diversity efforts across higher education.

Mr. Brad Thompson questioned if the diversity goals and achievements of the colleges are measured. Dr. Picart explained that UPA keeps track of demographic data by college. In addition, during the compact planning process, the Dean of each college is asked to articulate its diversity accomplishments and plans for the future. Annual reviews of each college examine data such as graduation rates and retention rates. Each college is also required to complete and submit an affirmative action plan, which is reviewed at the end of each year. Dr. Picart collaborates with the colleges to implement diversity programs and training. Finally, Provost Nielsen stated NC State has invested substantially in promoting diversity.

### **AA Coordinator's Presentations**

Referring to the noose incident, Dr. Fred Hord, Director of the African American Cultural Center (AACC) and Executive Director of the Association for Black Culture Centers (ABCC), opened his presentation by stating that it is difficult to apply meaning to something like the noose incident, unless you place it in a historical context. He stated the mission of the African American Cultural Center as it relates to student involvement and shared his concern that the recent legislation stating that state funds can't be used for student travel could have a significant impact on student development at NC State. Dr. Hord announced that the African American Cultural Center Art Gallery is currently hosting the Human Rights exhibit, "Speak Truth to Power." He further stated he would like to present more student work in the art gallery. Dr. Hord announced that the Association for Black Culture Centers Conference in Columbia, Missouri was very successful with about seventy schools attending the conference. He was proud to announce that association memberships had also increased. In addition, he would like to see NC State student participating on the association's board of advisors. The American Heritage Society and the SPACE program provide great developmental and leadership experiences for students on campus and for pre-college students. Dr. Powell described his efforts in conducting a summer transition program to prepare the students for high school, stating that the program helps students develop good study habits and time management.

Thomas Easley, Director of Community Diversity in the College of Natural Resources (CNR) explained that the Community for Diversity is designed to make Natural Resources a profession that is welcoming to all populations. To achieve this strategy, CNR works to align student interests and academic programs with the needs of industry and communities by developing university-industry partnerships, inter-institutional collaborations, and community programs. Mr. Easley listed three key responsibilities: 1) facilitate diversity recruitment efforts, 2) assisting departments in developing a more inclusive environment in CNR, and 3) developing scholarly initiatives for diversity. Mr. Easley shared a list of annual activities in the CNR that focus primarily on promoting and improving a diverse and inclusive environment. Mr. Easley talked about *Environmentors*, a program that mentors high schools students, engages students in research, provides opportunities to present their research at the symposia and national conference in Washington, D.C. and also provides opportunities to win scholarships. Mr. Easley shared that Provost Nielsen had contributed significantly in pushing the program forward.

Mr. Brad Thompson asked if any programs had been in existence in the last three years that made significant impacts. Mr. Easley named Opening Doors and NCBI (National Coalition for Building Institute). He explained the programs are offered to senior level administration, faculty, staff, and students. The programs focus primarily on individual reflection, racial awareness and how to effectively promote diversity in the work place.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.