

# Virginia Tech Conductor

A GUIDE FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

## Progress toward diversity: a bumpy road

Progress toward equality has not been smooth, as national and Virginia Tech timelines of African-American history illustrate.

### In the nation:

- From *Before the Mayflower*, by *Lerone Bennett Jr. (1619-1968)*
- 1946** Supreme Court bans segregation in interstate bus travel.
- 1947** CORE sends eight Black and eight white Freedom Riders through the South to test compliance with court orders.
- 1952** University of Tennessee admits first Black student.
- 1954** Brown vs. Board of Education
- 1955** August, murder of Emmett Till. His mother leaves the casket open "to show the world what they did to my boy." Photos appear in newspapers worldwide.
- \* December, Rosa Parks refuses to move to the back of the bus; modern civil rights movement begins.
- 1957** Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized; Martin Luther King Jr. president.
- 1971** Black unemployment is twice that of whites.

### At Virginia Tech:

- From *University Archives*, <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/blackhistory/>
- 1953** Irving L. Peddrew III is the first Black student admitted. The above web site includes links to a *Roanoke Times* article and a letter he wrote about his decision not to attend the Ring Dance. When his classmates expressed concern, he wrote: "...rather than be a cause of my embarrassment to my date or my classmates, I would like to make public my decision not to attend. I hope very much that in the future letters like this won't have to be written."
- 1958** Charlie L. Yates is the first Black graduate. He served on the faculty 1979-83, returning in 1987. Link to 1958 *Virginian Pilot* article, in which he offered this advice to others: "work hard, do his best, be careful with his actions, take it slow."
- 1973** Rhonda Miller (Rogers) is first Black secretary. She is now an administrative assistant.
- 1974** Johnnie Miles joins education faculty.
- 1975** From July to December, Overton Johnson acted as dean of the College of Agricultural, becoming the first Black dean.
- \* Michele Clark: first Black placement counselor in the Division of Student Affairs.
- 1977** 60 Black freshmen.
- 1984** 206 Black freshmen.
- \* The Black History Month Steering Committee is formed by Joyce Williams-Green.
- \* Bruce Smith became the most honored player in Hokie history when he won the Outland Trophy as America's top lineman.
- \* Joyce Williams-Green is the first female and Black female assistant to the provost, then assistant provost. Other "firsts" preceded and followed.
- \* Myrtle Brown becomes associate dean of the Graduate School.
- \* Nancy Fain is director of the University Cooperative Education Program.
- \* Joseph J. Kennedy Jr., is the first Black director of Jazz Studies.
- 1985** Black Organizations Council founded
- 1986** Calvin Jamison is the assistant to the president.
- \* **The first Black Alumni Reunion is held.**
- 1989** Cheryl Adams is staff physician in Student Health Services.
- \* Muriel Flynn is employment supervisor in Personnel Services. He became Human Resources Manager in 1994.
- \* Donald J. Williams is director of VPI Facilities Inc.
- \* Ronald Giddings is assistant Dean of Students
- Excerpts from the 1960s and 1990s national and university timelines are presented on pages 2-3.

### Comments needed from Tech community

## Standards established for inclusion, diversity

By Benjamin Dixon, vice president for multicultural affairs  
Recent unprecedented actions by the State Attorney General's office and the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors have given rise to concern that the slow but steady gains toward transforming the university into a more diverse and inclusive enterprise may be quickly dissipating. At least, this is how many people within the university community are describing the impact of the undocumented and undefined assertion by some that Tech may be violating the law with its efforts to diversify the campus. On the positive side, it now appears that the university community, understanding more fully what is at risk for the institution, is ready to engage in a conversation about the short- and long-term benefits and costs of developing and implementing "diversity-conscious" policies, programs, and practices.

The frequency and intensity of these conversations have significantly increased over the past year, primarily at the initiation of faculty members, staff, and students, with some support from the provost's office. The Black Caucus at Virginia Tech held a "Minorities in Higher Education" conference last November that featured discussions on admissions, scholarship, faculty hiring, and student support. The focus was "legal and programmatic strategies for inclusion." In January, participants in the annual Diversity Summit and members of the University Council came together to review a proposed set of standards for inclusive policies, programs, and practices. In February, the human development department held a workshop as "an opportunity for constructive dialogue about national trends in recruiting and retaining an inclusive faculty at Virginia Tech."

Major stimuli for this heightened conversation about diversity programs and initiatives are a clear shift in the political

and legal climate toward more aggressive and overt attempts to dismantle what is left of affirmative action and to discredit diversity and multiculturalism, and, as an outgrowth of this shift, an assertion by some lawyers and decision makers that

### Black History Month

If Black History Month is not viable then wind does not carry the seeds and drop them on fertile ground rain does not dampen the land and encourage the seeds to root sun does not warm the earth and kiss the seedlings and tell them plain:

You're As Good As Anybody Else  
You've Got A Place Here, Too

©2001, Nikki Giovanni

Published in *Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea*  
(New York: HarperCollins/Morrow, 2002)



In the late 1960s, the Student Senate passed a resolution to remove the Confederate flag as a university symbol at football games. The University Council approved the resolution. See how it began in the box on page 2. Senate members shown here in a photo from the 1969 Bugle are R. Basile, P. Critcher, R. Britts, J. Parker, W. Ashley (chairman), S. Burk, W. Bersch, M. Harper, and T. Smith.

current diversity policies and programs may be illegal. Requests for definitions and criteria for establishing and evaluating "legal" diversity programs have gone largely unanswered.

This lack of guidance, in part, gave rise to the development of "Standards for Inclusive Policies, Programs, and Practices." Although they were developed primarily for managers and program directors, **the entire university community is being invited to comment on the standards.**

**This is your opportunity to have a say in what the standards contain,** before they are formally proposed to the new Commission for Equal Opportunity and Diversity, and the academic, support, and administrative units. Send your comments to the Office of Multicultural Affairs, 332 Burruss (0176), or to [multicultural@vt.edu](mailto:multicultural@vt.edu).

## Standards for Inclusive Policies, Programs, Practices

### Legal Standard

In accordance with federal and state laws and university policy, the policy, procedure, or practice should not restrict or exclude any individual from accessing, participating in, or contributing to any program solely on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, or religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. The program or activities should be designed both to discourage illegal discriminatory practices and to encourage inclusion.

### Inclusion Standard

Admission to or participation in the program or activity should be based on criteria that does not exclude or privilege one group over another. Targeted programs designed to serve exclusively minority populations or women may be needed. However, such programs are legally problematic and would need extensive research evidence to support such exclusion. Equally important is the need to periodically review programs and practices that appear to be "race-neutral" in language and intent, but in practice privilege whites. In short, an equitable application of this standard suggests proactive steps to determine whether inclusion is actually occurring even when supported by race (or gender) -neutral criteria.

### Climate Standard

The program or activity should support not only the mission of the university, but also its core values. Among other

See 'Standards' on page 4

# An African-American chronology of important dates, nationwide

Adapted from *Before the Mayflower*, by Lerone Bennett Jr. (1619-1968); *Black Saga*, by Charles M. Christian (1969-1994); and such sources as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the *Gale Group Inc.*, CNN (1995-). A more detailed list will be at [www.multicultural.vt.edu](http://www.multicultural.vt.edu). This article focuses on the 1960s and the 1990s, with a few events around the edges of those decades.

## The 1960s, a time of heroes

- 1960** Four students from North Carolina A&T College begin the Sit-In Movement at a Greensboro, five and-dime store on 1 February. By 10 February, the movement had spread to 15 Southern cities in five states.
- Student protest marches spread; white police forces and white civilians respond with violence. By March, more than 1,000 are arrested.
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organized at Shaw University.
- President Eisenhower signs the Civil Rights Act of 1960 on 6 May.
- 1961** 13 Freedom Riders take bus trip through the South. The bus is bombed and burned. Robert F. Kennedy sends 400 federal marshals to Montgomery to keep order. Hundreds of protesters, including King, are arrested and beaten.
- 1962** Several Black churches are burned.
- Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett denies the federally-mandated admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi. Federal marshals eventually escort Meredith to the campus.
- 1963** National Guard troops brought to Boston because of protests against integration.
- March on Washington, the largest civil rights demonstration in history, draws more than 250,000 people in August.
- Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham bombed in September, killing 4 Black girls.
- More than 225,000 students boycott Chicago schools in October to protest *de facto* segregation.
- John F. Kennedy assassinated in November.
- 1964** 24th Amendment eliminates poll tax requirements in federal elections.
- Muhammad Ali defeats Sonny Liston.
- Malcolm X resigns from the Nation of Islam and founds the Organization for Afro-American Unity.
- Civil Rights bill signed by President Johnson.
- Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman murdered by KKK in Philadelphia, Miss.
- Martin Luther King Jr. receives Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1965** King begins voter registration drive in Selma. More than 100 are arrested.
- Malcolm X assassinated.
- Selma-to-Montgomery civil rights march.
- President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Bill authorizing the end of literacy tests.
- Riots in Watts and Chicago.
- 1966** Julian Bond denied his seat in Georgia House of Representatives because of his opposition to the Vietnam War.
- King denounces the Vietnam War.
- Stokely Carmichael named chairman of SNCC.
- Memphis-to-Jackson voter registration march. James Meredith wounded by sniper. Carmichael launches the Black Power Movement during the same march.
- Race riots in Chicago, Lansing, Milwaukee, Dayton, Atlanta, and nearly 40 other cities.
- Huey Newton and Bobby Seale found the Black Panther Party in Oakland.
- 1967** Julian Bond is finally seated in the Georgia legislature.
- Representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr. is expelled from the House of Representatives. Harlem voters re-elect Powell.
- H. Rap Brown chair of SNCC.
- Race riots in Roxbury, Tampa, Cincinnati.
- Thurgood Marshall named to the Supreme Court.
- Muhammad Ali convicted for refusing induction into the army.
- Newark Rebellion, the worst outbreak of racial violence since Watts; riots spread to other cities. National Guard called out.
- 1968** Kerner Commission Report states that racism is the fundamental cause of the riots.
- King announces in March plans for Poor People's Campaign in

- Washington, scheduled for 20 April.
- King assassinated on 4 April. Riots ensued throughout the country.
- Robert F. Kennedy assassinated on 6 June.
- Poor People's Campaign, 19 June. Numerous arrests. Resurrection City closed 24 June.
- 1969** Thomas Kilgore first Black president of the American Baptist Convention.
- 1,185 Black candidates elected to political office, including the mayor of Fayette, Miss., a result of the Voting Rights Act of 1968.
- U.S. Department of Justice sues State of Georgia for its refusal to implement court-ordered school desegregation — the first federal desegregation suit against an entire state.
- Supreme Court declares delays in integration unconstitutional and rules against discrimination in housing.
- Black Panther headquarters raided by police.
- 1970** 54 percent of Black men and 58 percent of Black women completed high school, up from 36 percent and 41 percent in 1960.
- NAACP pressures U.S. Senate to reject Harold Carswell for the Supreme Court.
- One-third of school buses in Denver are bombed by segregationists.
- Rhode Island, New York, and Maine and several large cities celebrate King birthday.
- IRS revokes tax-exempt status from all-white private academies.
- Two Black students were killed and 12 were wounded by indiscriminate police firing during racial disturbances at Jackson State University, Jackson, Miss.

## The 1990s -- wins and losses

- 1990** American Council of Education reports number of Black faculty at colleges and universities virtually unchanged in last decade — up from 4.3 percent to 4.5 percent — with more than half employed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- Derrick Bell takes one-year unpaid leave from Harvard Law School to protest poor record of hiring Blacks and women.
- Only 3 percent of doctorates are awarded to Blacks.
- Florida Atlantic University offers free tuition to every Black freshman who meets admission standards.
- Selma students protest lack of Black leadership in school administration. School board agrees that half of members will be Black.
- Violence erupts in Teaneck, NJ, when Black teenager Phillip Pannell is shot in the back by a police officer.
- President Bush vetoes the Civil Rights Bill.
- 1991** Rodney King beating by police, caught on video by white citizen, outrages the nation.
- Supreme Court rules schools may remain segregated if system made "good faith" effort.
- Clarence Thomas nominated to Supreme Court
- National Civil Rights Museum opens.
- 1992** U.S. Civil Rights Commission finds incidents of discrimination widespread in military.
- A number of studies confirm unequal justice for Blacks, including encounters with the police and the courts.
- Riots follow the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King. President Bush ordered troops to L.A. 52 people are killed and 600 buildings burned.

The following is from Tamara Kennelly's interview with Marguerite Harper Scott:

"The time when I was most fearful was when we were attempting to get the University to take the Confederate flag out of the coliseum.... I didn't realize how big the flag and "Dixie" was to this institution. And I got my first insight into that at the first football game that I went to. The cheerleaders would come out on the field first with this huge rebel flag, and then the Highty Tights would come out playing "Dixie." When they played "Dixie," it was expected that people would stand, as if it were the national anthem.



Marguerite Harper

"...I said, "There's no way I'm standing for 'Dixie.' And I remember someone punching me in the back at a football game and saying something to the effect about how I should stand. I looked at that person, and I said, 'You best not put your hands on me again.'"

Harper was a member of the Student Senate. They passed a resolution, to remove the flag and Dixie as university symbols, that was ultimately passed by University Council. In the meantime, Harper said, "My roommate at the time was white, and so she got threatening phone calls about living with me."

## and at Virginia Tech

Adapted from the African American History Timeline at Virginia Tech (<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/blackhistory/timeline/>), which was produced by University Archives in collaboration with the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Virginia Tech. The timeline chronicles important individuals, groups, and events and outstanding achievements. The site provides links to oral history transcripts, letters, speeches, and newspaper articles. As with the national timeline, we focused on events around the decades of the 1960s and 1990s.

- 1961** James Whitehurst is the first Black male to attend the Ring Dance.
- 1963** Blacksburg High School integrated by Phillip Harmon Price (interview available)
- 1966** The first Black women students enter Tech: Linda Adams, Jacquelyn Butler, Linda Edmonds, Freddie Hairston, Marguerite Harper, and Chiquita Hudson. See the *Black Women at Virginia Tech History Project*.
- 1967** Trackman Jerry Gaines ('71 foreign languages) is the first Black scholarship athlete and the first Black inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame.
- 1968** There are 43 undergraduate Black students and several Black graduate students.
- April 4, 1968 Death of Martin Luther King Jr.** Student vigil held to honor Dr. King. See Linda Edmonds' thoughts on King's death.
- 1968** Human Relations Council is formed. "The Human Relations Council is an organization devoted to promoting better relations between the University administration, the campus community, and the Black minority students on campus. Through the sponsorship of social, intellectual, economic, and political interactions its goal is to promote unity among the many diversified people and organizations that encounter one another surrounding the University and community. The Council believes in the pursuit of happiness for those who were lost in a world of the unpredictable."
- \* Heidi Ford is the first Black in extension at Virginia Tech. A home demonstration agent in Nelson County since 1948, at Tech, Ford was extension leader of special programs for nine years, then equal employment opportunity officer until her retirement in 1985.
- \* Jacqueline Desylvia Dandridge ('71 biology) is the first Black homecoming princess.
- \* Approximately 75-80 Black students.
- 1969** Overton Johnson is the first Black faculty member, teaching in the College of Agriculture.
- 1969-70** Charlie Lipscomb starts on the varsity basketball team
- 1970** First Black students to receive advanced degrees are Camilla Anita Brooks and Franklin Mckie, both master's in statistics.
- \* James Whitehurst is the first Black appointed to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.
- \* John Dobbins ('74 education) is the first Black scholarship football player (See the *Roanoke Times* article, Sports Helped Ease Integration.)

Please see National timeline on page 3

Please see Virginia Tech in the 1990s on page 3

## Virginia Tech in the 1990s

- 1990 Vernell "Bimbo" Coles ('90) is the top basketball scorer in Metro Conference history.
- Virginia Tech Veterinary College creates Minority Recruitment Program.
- 1991 Black Cultural Center opens (proposed in 1984 by Black student leaders).
- Delores W. Scott is the first coordinator of the Office of Academic Enrichment Programs
- H. D. Flowers is first Black coordinator of the Black Studies Program.
- Milton Franklin is first Black campus police officer to be awarded the Silver Distinguished Service Award. He risked his life for 700 individuals at the 1990 Homecoming dance.
- Coretta Oden ('91) is the first Black woman appointed to the Corps of Cadets Regimental Command.
- 1992 Major George McNeill is first Black director of the Highy Tighties.
- Carolyn Penn is the first Black health educator in Student Health Services. She became director of health education in 1994.
- Phalisha Yvonne Newsome ('93 political science) receives a Truman Scholarship
- Ujima Dance Theatre is founded by Carol Ann Crawford (Smith), then coordinator of the Black Cultural Center.
- Engineering Minority Center opens. Bevelee Watford ('81) is named the director of the Minority Engineering Program.
- Alfred Curtis Lynch is the first Black supervisor of traffic and parking in Parking
- Nina Hollins ('92) is the first Black woman Cadet Major on Regimental Staff.
- H. D. Flowers II directs *Fences* by August Wilson, the first all-Black main stage production. It won the Kennedy Award.
- Black Business Council is founded by James Walter Price in the College of Business.
- 1993 Patrick Liverpool is first Black vice provost.
- Cornel N. Morton is the first Black executive assistant to the president.
- First jazz festival at Tech hosted by Tony Walters.
- Ronnie E. Stephenson is first African American SGA President at Virginia Tech
- 1994 Lucinda Roy is the first Black associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Clarresa Morton is assistant director for event planning; now associate director of University Unions and Student Activities.

## About The Conductor

*The Conductor* is produced twice during the fall and twice during the spring semesters by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to the editorial board at [multicultural@vt.edu](mailto:multicultural@vt.edu). Back issues are online at [www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor.html](http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor.html).

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Deadline for the next issue: March 28

- Lisa Leftwich, Angela Donnell, and Stephanie Carter are the first Black female basketball players to play in a post-season tournament and to win a conference championship.
- The National Pan-Hellenic Council was established by Delta Sigma, Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and Omega Psi Phi.
- 1995 Barbara Pendergrass is Associate Dean of Students
- Antonio Freeman is the all-time leading receiver.
- Bryan Still is named the MVP of the Sugar Bowl
- Aldora G. Green is the first Black staff member to receive the President's Award for Excellence.
- The board of visitors establishes the Gloria D. Smith Professorship in Black Studies.
- The first "Donning of the Kente" is held.
- Ronnie Stephenson is president of the Class of 1995.
- Ronald Giddings is associate director of the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence.
- 1996 James R. Martin II is the first Black graduate from Virginia Tech to receive the Outstanding Faculty Award by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.
- Russell Jones is the first Black faculty member to receive the Alumni Advising Award.
- Delores Scott receives the first Academy for Leadership Excellence Outstanding Leader Award.
- Lucinda Roy is the first recipient of the Gloria D. Smith Professorship in Black Studies.
- Plant pathology professor Herman L. Warren's scholarly achievements are recognized by inclusion in the "Tenth Anniversary Blacks in Science Calendar 1996."
- 895 Black undergraduates (4.4%), 316 graduate students (5.5%), 26 Black tenure-track faculty members (2.4%)\*
- 1997 Nikki Giovanni, professor of English, starts a Black Studies library with a personal donation of approximately 200 volumes.
- The Hush Harbor Choir is formed by Nikki Giovanni's Harlem renaissance class to honor slave choirs of the American past.
- 1998 B. Keith Fulton ('89) is awarded the College of Architecture and Urban Studies' first Outstanding Young Alumnus Award.
- Benjamin Dixon is appointed the university's first vice president for multicultural affairs.
- Barbara Pendergrass is Dean of Students.
- Denmark Vesev Voices (Hush Harbor Slave choir) organized by Nikki Giovanni.
- 115 Black full-time faculty members (4.5%), 33 are tenure-track (2.4%)\*
- 1999 Nikki Giovanni first Black University Distinguished Professor
- 169 Black alumni and guests come to campus to attend Virginia Tech's fourth Black reunion, the largest to date.
- Terry Kershaw is director of Black Studies
- 2000 Basil I Gooden is outreach coordinator.
- Marilyn Kershaw is director of graduate student recruitment.
- Cadet Lt. Vaughn Dickenson is the first African American Regimental Band Drum Major.
- 929 Black undergraduates (4.3%), 348 graduate students (5.7%), 39 Black tenure-track faculty members (5.9%)\*

\* Source: Office of the Provost and Institutional Research

## A New River Valley resident remembers when VPI was out of reach

This year, Virginia Tech celebrates the 50th anniversary of the first Black students entering the university. In addition to the alumni celebrating a golden anniversary, there are New River Valley residents who remember when they could not attend VPI.

Having graduated from high school in 1948 at age 14, Elaine Carter went to Rosary College in Chicago, graduated from Howard University in 1952, and was a graduate student at Boston College when the institute in Blacksburg admitted its first Black student.

"I didn't even think about going to Virginia Tech," says Carter. "We were taught *not to want to go there* — to be angry toward and rejecting of local white institutions. It is why I ended up in suburban Chicago. My family was willing to trade off distance from family for relief from overt racial hostilities.

Born in Roanoke, where her grandfather had been a slave, Carter's family moved when she was three to Elliston, and attended a two-room Elliston public school beginning in 1940. Her mother, Talma Serrell Dowe, started teaching the year Carter went to high school, 1944. She now works in the room at the Christiansburg Community Center where her mother taught first and second grade.

"Coming back here has been a wonderful journey," says Carter. "I began to appreciate the source of my anger about race. What I remember as 'roaming the hills' turned out to be a very small area. Our parents taught us that our survival depended upon staying inside boundaries. Virginia Tech, Radford, Hollins

were outside of those boundaries.

"To ward off abuse, we learned to second guess white peoples' moods by their reaction to us."

Carter, who started the quest to include the first Black women students in the oral history project authored by Tamara Kennelly, says that the first Black students at VPI survived because they had been taught to accommodate whites. "They came from that culture — from the racially segregated south. They took different approaches, but they knew how to survive in a racially hostile world.

"You had to work hard to make such an assessment. That builds up a lot of fear. For instance, I believed that if I put my foot on the VPI campus — a military academy — I would be killed. The students were trained killers. That was part of the school's mission. For African Americans, that compounded the tyranny of whiteness."

But Elaine Carter did become a student at Virginia Tech, after working in Boston, doing social work in a medical setting and nursing school administration, and community development in New York City. "That led me into the antipoverty program and I worked in every major slum, focusing on controlling blight and remedying ills that stem from

See *'Carter remembers'* on page 4



Elaine Carter

## National timeline

*Continued from page 2*

- Supreme Court rules that burning crosses is protected under the first amendment.
- Buffalo Soldier Monument in Kansas recognizes that one out of five soldiers in the early West were Black. Fund raising begins to recognize Black soldiers of the Revolution.
- The Federal Reserve reports that mortgage lenders discriminate against Blacks.
- 1993 Maya Angelou recites her poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," at President Clinton's inauguration.
- Justice Thurgood Marshall dies. He served on the Supreme Court for 24 years and dedicated his life to the civil rights movement.
- Two LA police officers are found guilty in federal court of violating Rodney King's civil rights.
- NAACP signs fair share agreements with Flagstar Inc. and Richardson Sports Inc. to provide more than \$1 billion in direct economic benefits to African Americans throughout the nation.
- Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize for literature.
- A report by Gary Orfield and John Yun of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard finds that racial isolation is increasing; segregated schools more common in the North than in the South (*The Growth of Segregation in American Schools: Changing Patterns of Separation and Poverty Since 1968*).
- 1994 The Florida legislature agrees to compensate the survivors of the rampage by a white mob that wiped out the Black town of Rosewood in 1923.
- 1995 Louis Farrakhan calls for a "Million Man March," calling on Black men to take charge in rebuilding their communities and show more respect for themselves and devotion to their families.
- 1996 Oklahoma Congressman J. C. Watts is the first African-American selected to respond to a State of the Union address.
- 1997 A state ban on all forms of affirmative action is passed in California.
- 1998 James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality, awarded the Medal of Freedom from President Clinton.
- The New York Stock Exchange closed for the first time in honor of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.
- 1999 The NAACP calls for a boycott of South Carolina vacation spots to force removal of the Confederate flag from its statehouse.
- Location of a national monument to Martin Luther King Jr. between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument is approved by the National Capital Planning Commission.
- 2000 More than 46,000 protesters march on the South Carolina capitol to protest the Confederate battle flag atop the statehouse.
- Florida bans race as factor in college admissions.
- Two challenges of affirmative action admission decisions at the University of Michigan and the university's law school are ruled on differently by two different federal judges, and will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Condoleezza Rice becomes foreign policy adviser for President-Elect George W. Bush.

## Can we have a diverse environment without race and gender specific recruitment strategies?



Yes. No race or gender is more qualified than any other in any axis of recruitment; therefore, if one seeks the most qualified individuals, through a gender and colorblind lens, a healthy diverse environment will develop naturally. I believe we need to create and promote an atmosphere that is comfortable to women and minorities. To me, this means funding to areas specifically designed to support these groups. A university's reputation will spread once a positive atmosphere is created.

I think we can, as long as the existing environment already includes things that would attract a diverse group. If things are not already present that would appeal to such groups, then there would need to be some type of recruitment strategy involved.

*Jomita Smith, president, Association for Student Development, and graduate hall director*

There is an old joke regarding adults debating the issue of prayer in the public schools. A young student overhearing the



debate says, "As long as there are math tests there will be prayer." In much the same way, there will always be a diverse environment at Virginia Tech because there will always be men, women, Hispanics, Asians, Caucasians, African Americans, gays, the handicapped, and so on, on our campus. However, the question misses the heart of the matter. The environment will exist but will it be a healthy one? Without programs and strategies to foster a dynamic environment, I would say the campus climate will become an increasingly unhealthy one.

*Tom Brobson, University Development*

I think that such a question is loaded with the same amount of bias that would push someone to deny access to another person based on physical or other demographic attributes. To assume that diversity is only an issue of race and

gender is to give preference to those people who are "diverse" in those areas, completely ignoring every other difference that makes individuality so rich. We can never truly have diversity until we all recognize that the minority most discriminated against is the individual.

*Dallin Young, graduate student*

The climate of this university and national trends are such that diversity-based initiatives are still needed. These initiatives help ensure balance and representation across facets of university leadership, administration, and on the faculty. While Virginia Tech has tried to develop a diverse environment, there is always more that can be done to ensure that the community is open and welcoming to all.

*Sharrika Davis, doctoral student*

*Compiled by Ray Plaza, residence director and Multicultural Fellow, rp25@vt.edu*

## Standards ...

*Continued from 1*

things, these values address the common bond between, and the diversity among, all the members of the community. Thus, the program or activity should be designed to operate in and promote a positive, welcoming educational and work environment, characterized by mutual respect, the right to express freely one's opinion, civility, cultural sensitivity, multiple perspectives, and a focus on creating and sustaining a just community.

### Competency Standard

The program or activity should foster the individual and collective pursuit of excellence, equity, and effectiveness, as a multifaceted evenhanded approach to achieving high quality results through inclusive learning, teaching, research, outreach and/or support endeavors. It is not uncommon for programs, policies, procedures, and practices to be focused only on excellence and effectiveness. By also attending to equity issues, individuals and groups increase their appreciation and understanding of differences (cultural, racial, gender, disabilities, religious, etc.), and develop their knowledge and skills in managing or negotiating relationships and other interactions within a diverse environment.

### Accountability Standard

The program or activity should be the responsibility of a specific individual or unit who would be accountable for reporting on the results of an ongoing assessment of the program's efficacy and effectiveness. Components of both internal or self-study assessments and external audits or reviews should reflect the unit's goal's with respect to equity and diversity issues. For example, this assessment could be one of the components or tools in an overall process of continuous improvement of the program. Overall, this assessment should involve a review of the impact of the human, fiscal, and material resources employed to support the effort.

### Student Success Standard

The program or activity should address the university's obligation to educate the whole person. In addition programs should promote and support student academic, professional, and social success both within the context of the university experience and beyond. Discipline based academic pursuits should be augmented wherever possible by attention to the social implications or impacts of the work itself, and/or the quality of the interpersonal interactions involved in doing the work. A non-academic or social program or activity supported by the university should be consistent with the university's values and philosophical orientations. Further, there should be an academic or research basis for such program or activity, and an expectation that it would contribute positively to the personal and professional development of the student.

## Carter remembers

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poverty." She was asked to join Mayor Lindsey's community action program, became an assistant commissioner, then went into the private sector for 20 years, also working as an assistant dean at Columbia before starting her own consulting service.

"Returning to school was the furthest thing from my mind," Carter says. "I was giving some thought to returning to the South. My family was here. I did comment to some friends that I had considered getting a Ph.D. and, in February 1992, I went to Virginia Tech for advice. By August, I was a student again. There was a snowball of events that led to my submitting my application," including the offer of a Commonwealth Fellowship to study with the Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP).

"I seized the opportunity. I knew it would be interesting. The whole issue of race did not enter my mind."

As a 58-year-old Ph.D. student, Carter lived in the dorm. "It was one of the best experiences I had at the university," Carter says. "Students helped me understand what it was to be a student again. I had forgotten the process of learning student-style. They soothed my anxieties and helped me with the library and my computer. I didn't experience the loneliness that other older students do."

The students were generally devoid of what she thought of as good manners, she says, "but they were more open and honest than my generation. I wasn't a strain on them. They were going to do what they were going to do."

Was she a divided person? A student in one world and her adult-self returning to that other world where she grew up?

"I made observations as a student. It has always been a part of my life to observe race relations. It began out of fear and became part of my fabric. I was very attentive to what was going on around me. Being divided began when I went to the Women's Center in 1994. I became less interested in academics. In 1995, I became active with Christiansburg Institute (CI) alumni. It shifted my awareness of who I was.

"At first, the memories were negative. But they also brought up the connections to my family, the community.

"One day, visiting Elliston, I realized how small that world was. My trust in my parents was absolute. When they said, 'Don't go beyond a certain tree,' I didn't. That visit and the CI oral history project began to trigger thoughts. By 1996, the probability of completing my Ph.D. was remote. The work with CI gave me more energy."

In February 2001, she agreed to become executive director of CI, while remaining a board member. She has brought in enough funding through grants to launch a major building restoration and, recently been, a quarter-time income.

"I have never had such a challenge. In other environments, I have always had the greatest of resources — role models, colleagues, dynamic environments for relaxation. When I worked for corporations, I was a part of the legitimate institutionalized world. Here, beginning with CI, there were just

a few connections that had been forged. By and large, segregation in this area has been extremely pronounced. Relationships have been 'friendly', but the world divides after you leave school and work," Carter says.

"The manner of interacting with whites has not changed for most people of my age, and even younger. There are many modes of accommodating apartheid. The way of accommodating whites, respecting white authority, emulating their ways, and expecting that whites own power is prevalent here. Those who speak out against racism are likely to be called 'trouble makers'."

She says that there are still whites believing that Blacks are inferior, and that attitude was most characteristic of her experiences in Virginia Tech classrooms. "African American students are highly devalued."

What has happened to African Americans in 50 years means a lot, she says. "People of my generation were proud to be at CI. We came from one- or two-room schools to a campus with many buildings. It opened a world. My conviction is that CI always was and can continue to be a resource to the community.

"But, after Martin Luther King Jr., students had a different experience at CI. The focus on Black history was gone. White was right and 'I want to be like them' became the point of view. Whites had better schools and the political power," says Carter. She tells of one CI alumnus who graduated in 1964 who didn't like the institute. "She passed two high schools on the bus ride to CI. The students were more conscious of discrimination.

"Today, some Black students protest when they are invited to special programs for minority students separate from white students for orientation. They don't know how to read white people and their perceptions of African American culture is hip hop. Assertiveness is shown as defiance. Some students have the notion that college is a passport to earning without civic or cultural obligation.

"Desegregation brought pensions, health insurance, indoor jobs — so I'm not blaming those who enjoy the civil rights gains. Yet, it is important to recognize the journey of those who gained those rights" Carter says.

"But there is an ongoing dilemma of being a Black person in a white world, Carter says. "It's a double life. There is unresolved racism and more energy spent on what white people are doing than how Blacks are accommodating. I have never been as aware of race as now."

Hundreds of thousands of African Americans span the last half century, Carter points out. "Each of has worked out their own way to accommodate the new order. Desegregation put options before Black people as to how they will deal with race in the post-apartheid South. Before, you had one. There is still a residual of that one."

Learn about the Christiansburg Institute at [www.christiansburginstitute.org](http://www.christiansburginstitute.org). There is a transcribed oral history with Elaine Carter by Tamara Kennelly at <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/blackwomen/carter/>.