

**MINUTES**  
**EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**October 29, 2001**

Members present: Denise Mewborn (Chair), Bill Barstow, Miguel Cabrera, Ann Crowther, Vicky Davion, James Hargrove, Elizabeth Craft, Peggy Kreshel, Sylvia Pannell, Rick Tarleton, Brent Allison. No visitors.

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Denise Mewborn called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

The Minutes of the last full EAC meeting--August 24, 2001-- were approved as written.

The only item of new business was a request (dated 9/21/01) from Vice Presidents Tom Dyer (Instruction) and Dick Mullendore (Student Affairs) that the Educational Affairs Committee review the campus memo that goes out over their signatures twice a year reminding faculty that some students will miss classes for religious holidays. Accompanying the request was correspondence to the vice presidents from two faculty members who expressed strong objection to portions of the memo. The VPs asked the Educational Affairs Committee to review the concerns raised by the faculty members and provide guidance as to what, if anything, should be done in response. Dr. Mewborn had gathered some background information and had talked with students, faculty, and religious leaders, and she provided committee members with copies of emails and other information she collected.

The committee discussed the religious holidays memo and the concerns expressed in the faculty letters. Members thought that it was important for the administration to affirm its commitment to diversity by sending the memo. However, committee members agreed that the memo should be revised to clearly convey that absences for religious observances should be regarded as excused absences. Discussion followed about specific wording for the amended memo. Dr. Mewborn offered to draft an amended version of the religious holidays memo to reflect the committee's decisions and to draft a letter to the vice presidents explaining the committee's recommendations. These letters will be circulated to members of the committee via email for comments and approval. [Both letters were approved by the committee and are attached.]

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm. The Educational Affairs Committee will meet again on Wednesday, February 6, 2002, at 2:00 pm in 105 Old College.