

## **Values Commitment Steering Team (VCST) Report for 2014-2015**

The work of the VCST was less intense than in the previous two years because numerous initiatives from prior work are now underway and results of these efforts are pending. The steering team will continue its work in the fall of 2015 with staff members Colleen Price, Savannah-Jane Griffin and Felisha McCaster. Four faculty members are stepping down after having completed 3-year terms on the steering team: Josh Rust, Leila Roach, Michael Branton and Robert Sitler. Now that we have staggered terms in place, all VCST members in the future will serve 2-year terms. While the steering team includes a member from the College of Law and genuine progress has been made in fostering truly university values, we should consider enhancing the connections between its various campuses regarding its values commitments.

This report only refers to a few highlights of the VCST work. Our minutes, recommendations, status reports and more can be found at: <http://www.stetson.edu/other/values/>. Suggestions for further work or areas that need attention should be directed to [values@stetson.edu](mailto:values@stetson.edu).

One of the most interesting and time-consuming agenda items during this past year was our examination of the issues surrounding the DeLand campus' university holiday on Good Friday. The task force examining this item included Chaplain Michael Fronk and Assistant Director for Interfaith Initiatives, Lindsey Graves, as well as the members of the steering team. This group recommended shifting the Good Friday holiday to the following Monday. After comments from the university community, the VCST also recommended dropping the Good Friday holiday as an effort to show respect for other religious traditions but, instead of having the holiday on the following Monday, suggested a flexible university holiday that would allow employees to select their own day off in order to demonstrate institutional respect for the "inner life" of all Stetson community members. The President's Cabinet was presented with this recommendation and suggested that any action await the arrival of a new AVP for Human Resources to assist in the review of the feasibility of the recommendation.

In the realm of inclusive excellence & diversity and in the realm of environmental responsibility, broadly representative working groups have been established that will direct and monitor the university's progress in these areas on an on-going basis.

At the urging of the VCST the university has also made progress this year in the areas of tobacco investments in our endowment and concussion prevention in intercollegiate athletics. This fall, the university announced that it would end direct ownership of tobacco stocks, even though it will continue to hold tobacco company stocks through the mutual funds in which it invests. In the realm of concussion management, the university has been actively using the most stringent concussion management procedures anywhere in the NCAA and was the major proponent of such practices to the Pioneer League membership. Those practices have now been accepted by the League as standard operating procedure.

Sincerely,

Robert Sitler, Leader, Values Commitment Steering Team