

Affirmative Action Policy Statement

The Board of Governors for Higher Education is the statewide planning agency for Connecticut's colleges and universities. Responsible primarily for policy making for public institutions, the Board promotes cooperation between the public and independent sectors in order to sustain a strong and coordinated system of higher education.

The Department of Higher Education is the administrative arm and staff of the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

As the statewide policy making authority for public higher education in Connecticut, the Board of Governors is committed to leading, by example, in the areas of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Additionally, the Board has been charged by state statutes (specifically Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10a-10 and 10a-11) to promote representative racial and ethnic diversity among the students, faculty, administrators and staff at public institutions of higher education. Board policies also advance compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act by the state's colleges and universities. Equal employment opportunity and affirmative action are essential to the achieving higher education's twin goals of academic excellence and equity.

The Board of Governors recognizes that affirmative action is positive action undertaken with diligence and conviction to:

1. overcome any remaining effects of past practices, policies or barriers to equal employment opportunity, and
2. achieve the full and fair participation of all protected class members groups found to be underutilized in the workplace, or adversely impacted by policies or practices.

The Board deems equal employment opportunity to be the employment of individuals without consideration of race, color, sex, religious creed, marital status, national origin, ancestry, mental

retardation, past or present history of mental disability, learning disability, physical disability, age, or sexual orientation. The Department of Higher Education will not request or require genetic information from job applicants or employees, or otherwise discriminate against any person in employment conditions on the basis of genetic information. Additionally, the Department will not unlawfully discriminate against persons with a prior criminal conviction. Equal opportunity is the purpose and goal of affirmative action.

It is the policy of the Board of Governors to administer all of its personnel policies in manners that insure that there is no discrimination based upon race, color, sex, religious creed, marital status, national origin, ancestry, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disability, learning disability, physical disability, age, genetic information or sexual orientation. The Board's personnel policies involve employment applications, job qualifications, job specifications, recruitment practices, job structuring, orientation, training, counseling, grievance procedures, evaluation procedures, layoffs and terminations. To ensure the full and fair participation of protected group members in the employment process the Affirmative Action Office shall be consulted and shall monitor the complete process and has sign off responsibilities in all aspects of the staff recruitment and selection process.

The Board of Governors recognizes the hiring difficulties experienced by the physically disabled and by many older persons. If necessary, the Board shall establish program goals within the affirmative action plan for actions eliminating hiring barriers and actively recruit members from these groups, to overcome any remaining effects of past discrimination against these groups and to achieve full and fair participation of such persons in the workforce.

The Department of Higher Education shall explore alternative approaches wherever personnel practices have a negative impact on protected classes and establish procedures for the extra effort deemed necessary to assure that the recruitment and hiring of protected group members reflect their availability in the job market.

To this end, the Department of Higher Education shall continuously review its personnel policies and procedures to ensure that barriers that unnecessarily exclude protected classes, and practices

which have a discriminatory impact, are identified and eliminated. Recognizing that there are residual effects of past discrimination, the Board of Governors pledges not only to provide services in a fair and impartial manner but also to establish, through this policy, affirmative action and equal opportunity as immediate and necessary Board objectives. The Board is committed to maintaining a work environment free from the influence of prejudicial behavior and sexual harassment and a workplace in which all terms, conditions, privileges and benefits are administered in an equitable manner.

Commissioner Valerie F. Lewis, the chief executive officer for the Department of Higher Education, is committed to successfully implementing the Affirmative Action Plan within the timetables set forth. The Commissioner assures that all employees, especially managers and professionals, understand the policies and their responsibilities for implementing such and take positive steps to ensure compliance with the plan, policy and procedures.

Arthur Poole, Director for the Office of Educational Opportunity is the appointed Affirmative Action Officer for the Department of Higher Education. The Plan is available to all members of the workforce through the Office of Educational Opportunity and the Department's library which are located at the Department of Higher Education, 61 Woodland Street, Hartford, Connecticut, 06105. Mr. Poole can be reached via the telephone at (203) 947-1833 and e-mail – APoole@ctdhe.edu.