

TO: All UConn Health Faculty, Staff, and Union Representatives

FROM: Elizabeth A. Conklin, Associate Vice President  
Office of Institutional Equity

DATE: August 28, 2017

SUBJECT: Affirmative Action Plan Update and Distribution of Policy Statements

UConn Health's 2016 Affirmative Action Plan for Employment (*Plan*) was approved by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on January 11, 2017. The *Plan* reports UConn Health's good faith efforts relative to diversifying the workforce, attaining goals, and achieving equal employment opportunity.

All employees are invited to review and comment on the 2016 *Plan* until September 31, 2017. A full copy of the *Plan* is available for review in the following locations:

- [The Office of Institutional Equity \(OIE\)](#)  
16 Munson Road, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Farmington, CT 06030
- [The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities \(CHRO\)](#)  
450 Columbus Boulevard  
Hartford, CT 06103

An electronic (PDF) version also is available on [OIE's website](#).

All comments or questions are welcome and may be sent to:

[Elizabeth A. Conklin](#), Associate Vice President  
Office of Institutional Equity  
16 Munson Road,  
Farmington, CT 06030-5310  
860-679-3563

## **Policy Statements**

The following policies have been included in the *Plan*, distributed to all employees through UConn Health's Office of Institutional Equity's (OIE) [webpage](#) and posted on bulletin boards throughout UConn Health.

- [Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination, and Equal Opportunity Policy](#)
- [Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [HIV/AIDS Non-Discrimination](#)
- [Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence](#)
- [UConn Discrimination Complaint Procedures](#)

### **Policy Posting Obligation:**

As in previous years, OIE will satisfy the statutory requirement of policy distribution to employees via this notification and mail distribution as necessary. Additionally, policies will be posted in visible locations throughout UConn Health. Vice Provosts, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, and other supervisory employees are asked to ensure that the policies above are posted in their respective units in locations highly visible to employees, students, and the general public.

### **Office of Institutional Equity Merger**

On July 1, 2016, the Office of Diversity and Equity at UConn Health and the Office of Diversity and Equity in Storrs merged under one name, The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). Elizabeth Conklin serves as the Associate Vice President and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer of OIE for both UConn Storrs/Regionals and UConn Health. This merger allows OIE at both locations to more efficiently oversee University policies and procedures regarding: investigations of discrimination and harassment complaints; implementation of measures intended to mitigate the effects of demonstrated discriminatory conduct; ensuring compliance with state and federal equal employment, affirmative action, and civil rights laws and related University policies through training; and Americans with Disabilities Act and Title IX compliance efforts.

### **Program Goals**

The following program goals were established in the 2016 UConn Health State Affirmative Action Plan:

- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) will enhance the search orientation trainings offered to search committees, chairs and administrators. The training will focus on affirmative action and equal employment, strategic recruiting, and the search process including applicant evaluation, interviewing, and applicant selection. The comprehensive training will include modules focused on the development of job descriptions and qualifications, inherent bias, and best practices and resources for eliminating bias in the search process.
- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) will create additional reporting tools including a statistical report of the current staff workforce and applicant data to enable managers to examine workforce statistics and hiring trends.
- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) will develop a training module focused on the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The training will be offered to a wide range of employees, managers, and supervisors as well as members of the UConn Health community to ensure clear understanding of rights and responsibilities under state and federal disability laws.
- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) will review existing on-line Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity best practice and guidance materials to identify subject areas lacking resources. OIE will update the website with resources on all aspects of the search process, including recruitment, evaluation, interviewing, and hiring.

- In an attempt to obtain a more accurate demographic profile of the current UConn Health population, a re-survey of the workforce will be conducted during this Plan year. The Department of Human Resources, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) will design a process that will allow all employees an opportunity to voluntarily provide race, gender, and ethnicity information. The more accurate demographic data will allow for more accurate calculation of availability and setting of Affirmative Action goals that are reflective of the truly underrepresented race/gender groups.

### **Recruitment, Compliance, and Diversification:**

As a federal contractor and state agency, UConn Health's recruiting and hiring activities are audited regularly by government enforcement units. Directors, Department Heads, Hiring Managers, and Search Committee Chairs are accountable for ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations and record-keeping requirements concerning recruitment and applicant evaluation activities. Both state and federal regulatory agencies mandate policies and processes that promote equal employment opportunity and endorse aggressive recruitment programs.

Proactive and aggressive recruitment programs not only fulfill UConn Health's compliance obligations but also work to support the goal of increasing the diversity of the workforce. To encourage proactive and strategic recruitment efforts, it is necessary for department faculty and staff to engage in professional networking, join professional and discipline specific associations, and participate in pipeline-building initiatives with an aggressive focus on the diversity of graduate students.

To assist search committees and hiring departments, OIE is available for consultation about the search process, compliance obligations, best practices in building diverse pools of qualified applicants, and objective evaluation techniques

### **Discrimination Complaint Investigations:**

OIE's Staff investigators are responsible for objectively investigating complaints of discrimination and discriminatory harassment to determine if employee conduct violates UConn Health's [non-discrimination policies](#). These policies are construed to provide the same or similar protections as those contained pursuant to state and federal law and regulation. Where investigations reveal the presence of discriminatory or harassing behavior, OIE is responsible for making recommendations that are designed to mitigate the effects of discriminatory conduct. OIE thoroughly investigates discrimination complaints, makes determinations regarding violations of UConn Health policy, and follows statutory requirements regarding recommendations for remedial action when there is evidence of policy violations.

OIE also assists with developing and implementing UConn Health's non-discrimination and affirmative action policies, procedures, and programs. OIE offers information, consultation, and training to the University community on these areas of focus.

Additional information about reporting discrimination and [OIE's complaint procedures](#), as well as OIE's [Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment Complaint form](#), can be found online. If you have a specific question or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact a member of OIE at (860) 679-3563 or by email at [equity@uconn.edu](mailto:equity@uconn.edu), [website: www.equity.uconn.edu](http://www.equity.uconn.edu).

**Diversity Awareness Training:**

OIE provides ongoing Diversity Awareness training to all UConn Health employees pursuant to General Statutes §46a-54. OIE conducts [sessions](#) every two weeks. Additionally, OIE provides customized trainings to individual departments or groups of employees or students seeking further guidance or training around discrimination and/or harassment issues. For further information, please visit [OIE's website](#).