

TO: All University Faculty, Staff, and Union Representatives

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

DATE: July 10, 2015

SUBJECT: Affirmative Action Plan Update and Distribution of Policy Statements

The University of Connecticut's 2014 Affirmative Action Plan for Employment (*Plan*) was approved by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on May 20, 2015. The *Plan* reports the University's good faith efforts relative to diversifying the workforce of the University, attaining goals, and achieving equal employment opportunity.

All employees are invited to review and comment on the 2014 *Plan* until September 30, 2015. A full copy of the *Plan* is available for review in the following locations:

- [The Office of Diversity and Equity \(ODE\)](#)
Wood Hall, 241 Glenbrook Road
Storrs, CT 06269
- [The Department of Human Resources \(DHR\)](#)
9 Walters Avenue,
Storrs, CT 06269
- [Homer Babbidge Library](#)
369 Fairfield Way
Storrs, CT 06269
- [The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities \(CHRO\)](#)
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06106

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

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

[Elizabeth A. Conklin, Associate Vice President](#)
Office of Diversity and Equity
Wood Hall, Unit Box 4175
241 Glenbrook Road
Storrs, CT 06269-4175

The following policies and procedures have been included in the *Plan* and are available to every employee:

- [Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
- [Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships](#)
- [Policy Statement: People with Disabilities](#)
- [University of Connecticut Discrimination Complaint Procedures](#)

The above documents and other relevant policies are posted throughout the University. These policies may also be viewed on [ODE's website](#) and the University's [e-policy website](#).

1. **Policy Posting Obligation:**

As in previous years, ODE 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 the campuses. 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.

2. **Recruitment, Compliance, and Diversification:**

As a federal contractor and state agency, the University's recruiting and hiring activities are audited regularly by external and 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 the University's compliance obligations but also work to support the University's goal of increasing the diversity of the workforce. To encourage proactive and strategic recruitment efforts, it is crucial for department faculty and staff to engage in professional networking, join professional and discipline specific associations, and participate in Ph.D. pipeline-building initiatives with an aggressive focus on the diversity of graduate students.

To assist search committees and hiring departments, ODE in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources and the Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity and Academic Affairs, offers University-wide and individualized [search orientation training](#). These trainings focus on affirmative action and equal employment, strategic recruiting, and the search process including developing job descriptions, applicant evaluation,

interviewing, applicant selection, the hiring process, and an interactive module on inherent bias and best practices for elimination of bias in the search processes. Additionally, the ODE [EEO & Search Compliance team](#) is available for consultation about the search process, compliance obligations, best practices in building diverse pools of qualified applicants, and objective evaluation techniques. For more information on the recruitment and the search process, [please visit our website](#).

3. **Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act (VEVRAA) Revisions:**

In March 2014, the Office of Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) imposed new requirements regarding applicant and employee self-identification, goals and benchmarks for recruitment and outreach, and data collection, analysis and reporting for veterans and individuals with disabilities. In an effort to meet the new data collection and reporting requirements, all employees will shortly be requested to complete a brief survey to update demographic information including disability and veteran status. Response to this survey is voluntary, but highly encouraged. The information provided will be kept confidential and will only be used for federal reporting purposes. The provided information will not impact an employee's current employment status

4. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Activities:**

ODE is responsible for facilitating the interactive process used to evaluate employee requests for accommodations under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and providing guidance to employees and managers regarding reasonable accommodations under the ADA. ODE acts as the University's compliance office under § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA, and accepts and investigates complaints alleging non-compliance with the ADA or § 504. To request an accommodation, or if you are a supervisor or manager who has been presented with a request for an accommodation, please contact a member of the Case Management Team at (860) 486-2943 or via e-mail at ODE@uconn.edu and/or visit our page on [Employee Accommodations](#). A guide to ODE's reasonable accommodations process can be found [here](#). Students who require an accommodation in the academic setting should contact the [Center for Students with Disabilities](#).

5. **Discrimination Complaint Management:**

The Case Management Team (CMT) of ODE is a neutral investigatory unit charged with fielding and objectively [investigating claims of discrimination and harassment](#) on the basis of legally protected characteristics. The CMT's investigations determine if employee conduct violates [non-discrimination policies](#) which have been construed to provide protections aligned with current law. The CMT addresses inquiries and complaints made in-person, by telephone, e-mail, and regular mail ranging from

employee requests for confidential consultations about options for action and relief, to managers' calls for disparate treatment analyses of intra-office conflicts. The CMT thoroughly investigates discrimination complaints, makes determinations regarding discriminatory animus and violations of University policy, and follows statutory requirements regarding recommendations for remedial action when there is evidence of policy violations.

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

Additional information about reporting discrimination and ODE's complaint procedures, as well as a complaint form, can be found on [ODE's website](#). If you have a specific question or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Case Management Team at (860) 486-2943 or via e-mail at ODE@uconn.edu.

6. **Diversity and Sexual Harassment Prevention Training:**

ODE provides ongoing Diversity Awareness and Sexual Harassment Prevention training to all permanent University employees pursuant to General Statutes §46a-54. Along with the Cultural Center Directors, ODE's [Case Management Team \(CMT\)](#) conducts numerous [sessions](#) each semester. Additionally, the CMT provides customized trainings to individual departments or groups of employees or students seeking further guidance or training around discrimination and/or harassment issues. Members of the CMT also present tailored trainings, speakers or information sessions to a variety of groups upon request or where a specific need is evident. For further information, please visit [our website](#).