

September 21, 2009

To: New Department Heads
From: Clyde Howard
Director, Office of Affirmative Action
Re: Office of Affirmative Action

Welcome to Kansas State University!!! The Office of Affirmative Action seeks to ensure that the University's employment policies and practices, and educational programs, services and activities, comply with the letter and spirit of equal opportunity, affirmative action and nondiscrimination laws, executive orders, rules and regulations. The Office reports to the Office of the President. Our website is <http://www.k-state.edu/affact/>.

Kansas State University prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, ancestry, military status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability, and is committed to affording all qualified persons an equal opportunity.

The University's success in continuing to develop and implement effective strategies for improvement in EEO and diversity lies in our joint and individual efforts to work together to achieve equal opportunity. We are here to help you to:

- Maintain work and learning environments that are free of discrimination and harassment;
- Ensure that K-State policies, processes, and procedures comply with state and federal laws, orders, and regulations;
- Provide an equal opportunity to qualified persons to receive an education, participate in programs, services and activities, and to compete for employment and advancement;
- Employ a competent, highly skilled and diverse workforce.

Responsibilities of the Office of Affirmative Action

Resolve Complaints:

- Staff evaluate reports of possible harassment or discrimination
- We assemble an administrative review team to investigate complaints that warrant a formal investigation
- The team decides whether a policy has been violated
- The team recommends sanctions, corrective actions
- A higher level administrator adopts or modifies recommendations
- Complaint is confidential

Administer the Affirmative Action Plan

- Staff write outreach and recruitment plans for minorities and women
- Staff collect and organize work force data
- Staff calculate availability and utilization of minorities and women
- Staff write plan or action to correct problem areas

Deliver AA/EEO Educational Seminars

- Staff present Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Harassment Seminars
- Staff present Respectful Relationships and Respectful Workplace Seminars

Oversee Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures

- Staff review and approve search documents
- Staff present "Best Practices" sessions to search committees

Develop and Implement AA/EEO Policies and Procedures

- Staff research and write AA/EEO policies and procedures
- Staff interpret and revise AA/EEO policies and procedures

Provide Advice, Consultation and Referral services

- Staff meet privately with individuals

- Staff confer with the individual before discussing concerns with others
- Staff refer individuals to individuals and offices that can assist in resolving the concern
- Staff follow up to determine whether the problem has been resolved

Coordinate Reasonable Accommodations

- Staff explain interactive process to individuals and department officials
- Staff help individuals identify accommodations
- Staff work with departments, Provost and Vice Presidents to purchase equipment, furniture, etc
- Staff investigate ADA complaints filed by students, applicants for employment and employees, staff and faculty.

The staff also serve on various university committees and task forces and manage a dispute resolution clearinghouse for concerns that do not require a formal investigation of a complaint. In that role, staff work with Office of Student Life, Dean of the Graduate School, Ombuds, Employee Relations, Mediation Services, and Dr. Rusty Andrews.

Approach

The Office Of Affirmative Action is committed to an open, collaborative partnership. Partnership, we believe, is shared responsibility and commitment: a clear, mutual understanding of the issues, objectives, purpose and expectations of all parties is essential. We will be approachable and actively listen to views and concerns. Compliance requires us to be persistent and insistent in ensuring that the University complies with the letter and spirit of laws, orders, and regulations.

We will try to be unbiased and consistent in our decisions and will make decisions and recommendations without undue delay.. We will objectively consider and respect different views and alternative approaches, and will actively engage in honest evaluation of alternative approaches and solutions.

Clarity and efficiency are important to us. The information we provide will be coherent, logical and practical. We will not ask departments to do something they neither have the ability or resources to do. We will ask that departments do all that is possible to comply with University policies and procedures and federal and state laws and regulations and executive orders.

University Unit Assignments

I will work with some of you. Some of you will work with Michelle White-Godinet; others will work with Pamela Foster. We provide guidance, interpret policies and procedures, meet with search committees, collaborate with you in resolving complaints, and many other things. For classified positions, we will work directly with hiring supervisors and departmental administrators, helping them to develop screening criteria, review applicant pools for top candidates, screening applications, develop interview questions, complete reference checks. The following table shows staff assignments by major organizational units.

Clyde Howard	Michelle White-Godinet*	Pamela Foster*
President	College of Arts and Sciences	VP Administration/Finance
VP Institutional Advancement	College of Agriculture	College of Human Ecology
Provost/Senior VP	Cooperative Extension Service	College of Architecture, Planning and Design
VP Research	Experiment Stations	K-State Libraries
College of Engineering and Engineering Extension		College of Business Administration
College of Veterinary Medicine		College of Education
College of Technology and Aviation		

*To minimize delays in responding to questions, any staff member may work with organizational units assigned to another staff member.

Reporting Complaints and Requesting Advice and Technical Assistance

We are here to help. The University Policy and Procedure for Discrimination and Harassment Complaints requires supervisors and administrators to report allegations of discrimination or harassment to the Office of Affirmative Action. Failure to do so is a violation of the Policy. See the Policy at <http://www.k-state.edu/affact/Policies/> for definitions of discrimination and harassment. Please contact us if a student, employee, staff or faculty member reports experiencing conduct that has any ring of discrimination or harassment or if you have any questions about discrimination or harassment.