

University of Missouri-St. Louis
Equal Opportunity Advisory Council

Progress Report
September 13, 2005

The Equal Opportunity Advisory Council was established by Chancellor Thomas George in March 2005 and the first meeting convened April 4, 2005. Members of this advisory body were selected to represent a diversity of campus units and individual perspectives and included the chairs of the Diversity Task Force and the Task Force on Women. (Please see complete list attached.) Miranda Duncan, M.A., J.D. was asked to chair the EO Advisory Council.

The Equal Opportunity Advisory Council serves as an advisory body to the Office of Equal Opportunity and the Chancellor. The Council will focus on campus concerns that relate to ensuring that all members of the campus community are afforded equal opportunity in education, employment, programs and services.

The Office of Equal Opportunity is charged with making sure the University is following equal opportunity laws, policies and regulations. Over and above legal compliance, the Office promotes the *spirit of compliance* by promoting diversity because equal opportunity is both beneficial and ethically desirable.

Specifically, the Office

- Designs and implements the campus Affirmative Action Plan (AAP). The AAP is an organizational assessment of the University's (a) workforce – faculty and staff; (b) employment practices and procedures; and (c) campus policies and procedures. It is intended to be an objective instrument which will help identify problem areas and to put into place strategic action plans to address problem areas.
- Handles issues pertaining to compliance with all equal opportunity laws and regulations, such as:
 - Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - Discrimination of all protected classes
 - Sexual harassment
- Sponsors or co-sponsors multi-cultural and diversity programs (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Women's History month, Trail Blazers, etc.).
- Provides training.
- Maintains relationships with agencies and professional organizations promoting equal opportunity.

- Handles internal discrimination complaints from faculty, staff, students and others. The EO Office prepares the University's response to charges of discrimination received from federal and state agencies (Equal Opportunity Commission, Missouri Commission on Human Rights, Office of Civil Rights, etc.).
- Is responsible for all faculty searches and hiring procedures.

The Advisory Council will have input from the campus community about these functions and programs, just as the Office will have access to the Advisory Council as a sounding board for compliance issues, campus environment, proposed new programs and promoting the spirit of equal opportunity. It will be important that the campus community understand that the Office of Equal Opportunity is there for all compliance issues, not solely issues involving racial discrimination.

The Advisory Council has already recognized the importance of its task and first reviewed information pertaining to:

- "Equal Opportunity 101" (Equal Opportunity Laws related to employment and education)
- Current University EO Procedures
- University Environment
- Recognition that globalization and greater international linkages require embracing diversity as not just "right" but beneficial from the standpoint of better environment, learning and services.

During subsequent monthly meetings, advisory council members identified additional topics to address:

- Dissemination of equal opportunity information to departments and units
- Climate assessment
- Issues that typically surface under equal opportunity
- Support the Office of Equal Opportunity can offer units about following EO procedures
- Baseline information (How diverse a campus is UM-St. Louis?)
- Reasons faculty/staff in protected classes leave UM-St. Louis
- Marketing plans that include outreach to students of color and different cultural groups in the community
- Need for a new survey about perceptions and attitudes concerning race
- Affirmative Action Plan
- Campus access for persons with disabilities
- Revisions to sexual harassment policy

Action to date includes:

- Review of 1995 surveys conducted on campus about racial perceptions among students
- Review of community report, *Racial Equality in the St. Louis Region: A Community Call to Action* (Focus St. Louis 2000)

- Presentation by Deborah Burris, “Workforce Profile” (November 1, 2004)
- Assessment and audit report by Dr. Deborah Dee, Commissioner on the Disabled, on campus accessibility (Assessment completed and report sent July 12, 2005.)
- Legal review of UM-St. Louis sexual harassment policy and recommendations for revisions on implementation procedures (in progress)

<p>Review of 1995 study “Perceptions of UM-St. Louis Students about Student Race Groups on Campus”</p>
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In 1994, Public Policy Research Center conducted a telephone survey of 217 students (52.1% African American and 46.5% Caucasian) designed to investigate concerns, perceptions and experiences of racial differences and racism on the UM-St. Louis Campus. Some of the findings discussed included the following:

- Both student groups (African American and Caucasian) responded that Caucasian students were more involved in student activities.
- More students (78.3%) responded they strongly agreed with the statement “African American students are academically strong” than responded they strongly agreed with the statement that “Caucasian students are academically strong (72%).” However, 81.3% strongly agreed with the statement Asian students were academically strong.
- Caucasian students were felt to be more socially active. Each student group saw the other as more socially active than they thought their own group to be.
- Both student groups rated opportunities for employment after graduation lower for African American students.
- African American students were thought (by both student groups) to have less access to faculty.
- African American students were thought to have a disadvantage in accessing financial support.
- African American students were perceived as not having even representation in campus activities.
- When questions about the degree of discomfort a student might feel when with students of another race, more students (69%) reported being very comfortable with African American students while 50.2% of the students reported being very comfortable with Caucasian students. Each student group reported being more comfortable with the same race, though there was only a slight difference among African Americans when it came to being with other African Americans or with Caucasians. There was a much greater difference in Caucasian students reporting they were more comfortable being with other Caucasians than with African American students.
- Most respondents reported they never feel fear when they are relating to any other student groups.
- When asked a follow-up question about having close friends of another race, 44.2% of the students in both groups reported that they do not visit their close friends at their homes.

- More than half of all respondents (61.8%) replied there is racism on campus with African Americans more likely to respond affirmatively to the question (77.9% of the African American students vs. 42.6% of the Caucasian students said there was racism on the UMSL campus). Examples of blatant racism were reported verbatim in the study.

Members of the Equal Opportunity Advisory Council expressed an interest in knowing how much attitudes, perceptions and experiences had changed over the past 10 years. A similar study today may cost approximately \$4,000 and the Advisory Council is exploring the feasibility of such an update.

Review of UM-St. Louis 2004 Workforce Profile

Significant highlights in the campus workforce report include:

- Of 171 executive/managerial positions, 51.5% are filled by females while 13% are held by Blacks and Hispanics.
- Of the 1113 faculty positions, 53.4% are filled by females and 11% are held by Blacks and Hispanics.
- For tenured faculty, 29.1% are females; 7.1% are Black; and 8.2% are Asian
- Of the service/maintenance positions, 44.3% are held by women and 43.1% filled by Blacks and Hispanics.

Because the University is a federal contractor, we are required to develop and implement affirmative action policies and procedures. Affirmative action is nothing more than the development of strategies and procedures which will insure equal opportunity for individuals that have historically been denied access. The institution is required to do an assessment of its workforce, its policies and procedures specifically as they relate to women, minorities, persons with disabilities and veterans. The goal is to make sure that equal opportunity is reflected in every aspect of the institution’s culture – employment, education, services and business. This has a significant impact on organizational culture. Affirmative action is actually the first or basic step in building a diverse community.

It will be the Equal Opportunity Advisory Council’s function to develop more understanding on campus about the need for aggressive recruitment strategies that expand the pool of job applicants and to help determine what factors, if any, discourage maintaining campus diversity.

Review of Campus Accessibility

The Advisory Council heard concerns about campus accessibility and promptly recommended that the Office of Equal Opportunity request an assessment. The assessment was conducted on July 11, 2005 by Dr. Deborah Dee, Commissioner on the Disabled. Her report documented the overall accessibility of the campus to be very good and she identified seven specific issues to review and address:

- Parking
- Accessible restrooms in Seton Hall
- Lack of access to Nursing School during construction
- Needed signage to identify accessibility features.
- Consistency in accessible seating at tables, carrels and desks
- Accessible pay phones
- Placement of towel dispensers, shelves and coat hooks in restrooms

Some issues brought to light during Advisory Council discussions have already been addressed. The Advisory Council intends to review and prioritize the remaining issues over the next few meetings. Additionally, Dr. Dee will be invited back on campus to present her findings to campus administrators, managers and student leaders.

<p>Review of Procedures for Implementing the University of Missouri Collected Rules on Sexual Harassment</p>
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At the July meeting, Judith Walker de Felix asked that the Advisory Council review the implementation procedures for campus sexual harassment policy. According to University Counsel, it is not in compliance with the University's Collected Rules. Requirements of confidentiality suggests that there be one officer (rather than multiple people) designated for handling complaints related to sexual harassment. Currently a sub-committee from the Advisory Council is working on clarifying language for the newly proposed procedures.

Equal Opportunity Advisory Council
Members
2005

Scott William Bopp, Student
Mary A. Brown, Instructional Technology
Therese S. Cristiani, Education
Marilyn E. Ditto, Disability Access Services
Miranda C. Duncan, University of Missouri Extension (Chair, EO Advisory Council)
Barbara Harbach, Music (Chair, Task Force on Women)
Alexander D. Harris, Optometry
Michael M. Harris, Business Administration
Peter Heithaus (Sylvia Poe, alternate), Human Resources
Malaika B. Horne, Leadership Institute (Chair, Diversity Task Force)
Orinthia T. Montague (Robert B. Budach, alternate), Student Life
Paul S. Speck Sr., Business Administration
Lana Stein, Political Science
Judith Walker de Felix, Academic Affairs
Jeanne M. Zarucchi, Foreign Languages & Literature and Art & Art History