

University of Massachusetts Lowell

Executive Summary Affirmative Action Plan 2003 – 2006

Presented to the
Board of Trustees
Administration and Finance Committee



William T. Hogan
Chancellor

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 10
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

All members of the University of Massachusetts Lowell benefit from federal and state equal opportunity laws. Equality of opportunity is essential in maintaining a high quality human relations climate. In such a climate we are all responsible for treating one another with dignity and professionalism in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Practicing this in our daily interactions is essential. It facilitates the opportunities that allow each individual to be successful and for his or her contributions to be acknowledged. It reminds us that fair treatment is based on individual merit not on perception of similarities or differences between individuals. Evaluation of merit, free from prejudicially-based views, requires each of us to engage in an on-going challenge of our own viewpoints about others whose ethnic and racial backgrounds are different from our own or are in some way unfamiliar to us. This directly relates to our ability to draw and to retain diverse faculty, students and staff to our University community.

Toward this end, I reaffirm that the policy of the University of Massachusetts Lowell is to engage in employment and academic practices in a manner that does not discriminate. It is University policy that factors such as race, color, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, and marital or veteran status, will not be used to determine merit. In employment, this protection also extends to those who serve in the Reserve or in the National Guard components of the military. Further, it also the policy of the University of Massachusetts that these factors shall not be the basis of harassment resulting in intimidation or other behaviors that detract from positive relations between members of our community. It follows then that retaliation against anyone who raises concerns about discrimination or harassment is equally prohibited.

These provisions are not only consistent with federal and state laws; they are consistent with ethical and fair treatment. Similarly then, we will continue to move forward with identifying and eliminating unnecessary barriers that could impede progress for members of the university community. University officials are charged with the responsibility to support the EOO policies and the Affirmative Action Plan. They will be actively engaged in developing and achieving designated objectives and goals. However, policies and plans are only tools to achieve a greater degree of diversity in the University community as well as an increased understanding of its overall value. To be successful, University officials are also responsible for providing the leadership that weaves the achievement of diversity initiatives into their own goals and thus into the very fabric of the institution as a whole.

Any member of the campus community should contact EOO for any assistance regarding complaints of discrimination. These matters will be responded to with prompt concern to facilitate resolution. If discrimination is found we will take appropriate steps to address it and as well as the factors leading to discrimination. The EOO staff, located in Cumnock Hall, C-4, will assist in resolving complaints and may also be contacted for inspection of the Affirmative Action Plan.

Since we are all protected under equal opportunity laws, each of us bears individual responsibility and accountability for personal behavior and conduct, and we must discourage inappropriate behavior. In this way, we can each best uphold the policies of the University of Massachusetts Lowell. We all share ownership in the equal opportunity program of this institution. In this way we can each contribute to a positive working climate, a deepened dialogue on diversity, and in the development of a culturally and racially diverse community of students, faculty and staff.

William T. Hogan
Chancellor

**Summary Statement
Affirmative Action Plan
University of Massachusetts Lowell
January 2006**

We are pleased to present the Executive Summary of the University of Massachusetts Lowell Affirmative Action Plan to the Board of Trustees, Administration and Finance Committee. The summary is sub-divided in two portions: Numerical workforce data provides an overview of the workforce and a three year history of changes within the workforce. The narrative portions describes the impact of the Transformation which resulted in an institutional shift in equal employment program administration away from one that focused almost exclusively on legal compliance to one that is more three dimensional as a necessary precursor to the implementation of affirmative employment initiatives. It also features an indication of the degree to which a positive human relation climate is necessary to be successful in achieving workforce diversity.

A brief description of the process used to reduce the administrative barriers to pursuing related initiatives also explains the development of an appropriate infrastructure. Planned initiatives are outlined with a projected implementation schedule to occur within the multi-year affirmative action plan.

Also highlighted are on-going activities that UML offers to the campus community and to the region. Lastly, the narrative addresses challenges that may impact the ability to meet initiatives. These will be included in the annual review and updating of the Affirmative Action Plan.

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AFFIRMATIVE INITIATIVES

Introduction

In 2004 the University of Massachusetts Lowell embarked on The Transformation Project, a comprehensive and radical reinvention that touches all aspects of the institution. Its goal is to create new ways to organize and deliver knowledge, to encourage focused research, and to promote a new image of the campus. We want to provide students with the most creative thoughtful and up-to-date curriculum possible, to allow faculty to expand their pedagogical, disciplinary and interdisciplinary interests, and to engage all staff and administrators in campus life and innovations. Three contexts are relevant to this comprehensive reinvention of the culture: the ability of the university community to meet global demands, the availability of state and local educational resources, and the need for campus level improvements in such areas as administrative efficiency, attracting a deeper pool of students, and retention of students. Other aspects central to this cultural change that are most pertinent to this executive summary relate to an intentional focus on the value of the human resources within the university community. This proactive approach also includes an emphasis on civility and the promotion of human dignity. These attributes are considered as essential to an academic institution that values quality research and learning.

Consequently, January 2005 marked the beginning of a major shift in equal opportunity and affirmative action program administration at UML. Central to this shift was the development of an updated image of the office which was symbolized by a change in the name to Equal Opportunity and Outreach (EOO) leaving behind the former title, Affirmative Action Compliance and Equal Opportunity (AACEO). This was accompanied by the development of an operational philosophy which is evident in the vision statement: “Strengthening the Recognition that All are Equal in Dignity.”

The initiatives undertaken as result of this shift reflects two of the strategic priorities of the Board of Trustees develop a first rate infrastructure, and continue a focus on diversity and a positive climate. These accomplishments are intertwined and highlighted in the balance of this section along with their connection to the implementation of future goals.

I. Accomplishments in Support of Strategic Priorities

Develop First-Rate Infrastructure

- Implemented Transition Process
- Restructured customer service model of Equal Opportunity
- Reorganized and expanded Equal Opportunity staff
- Revised methods to collect, store and maintain protected category data
- Improved internal processing of complaints and revised method for employees to request reasonable accommodations

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Prior to developing initiatives related to recruitment and retention, the above infrastructure initiatives emerged as crucial. Thus, barrier identification was necessary and began with a thorough review of work performed in EOO. This revealed that several functions, such as hiring activities, salary analysis, and employee relations were being performed in EOO and further that these functions needed to be reallocated to other more appropriate entities in the institution. However, the history of having provided these functions prevented the former AACEO staff from fulfilling a mission and achieving subsequent goals in the area of minority recruitment more aligned with equal opportunity management. Consequently, transition planning began in February. Implementation of the plan began campus wide in July 2005 and has taken priority in Equal Opportunity in order to facilitate realignment. The Transition Process is currently in Phase II and represents another fundamental shift for the institution. To date, it has encompassed the following items.

- Providing orientation sessions to staff and faculty regarding the reasons for the Transition Process and their roles.
 - Streamlining of processes and revision of forms related to documenting hiring activities to increase proactive hiring. ***Screening committees must now submit the names of applicants they plan to interview prior to contacting them.*** EOO provides appropriate consultation to ensure that qualified minority and women candidates are not overlooked. Formerly, staff only reviewed the evaluation of candidates after the selection had been made.
 - Guidance to selection committees on the areas of under representation and on the demographic breakdown of proposed interview pools.
 - Updating of all forms that request ethnic data to reflect ethnic categories similar to the 2000 Census.
 - Clarification of federal and state anti-discrimination laws to supervisors.
 - Increased collaboration of Administration and Deans in equal opportunity initiatives.
 - Standardization of process to request reasonable accommodations with appropriate guidance to faculty, staff and administrators as needed.
- ***Phase III of the Transition Process is projected to begin in January 2006 with a projected conclusion between June – July 2006.***

In addition to the Transition Process, EOO identified and addressed concerns regarding the collection, maintenance, and disclosure of sensitive information. Formerly, demographic data such as race, age, and date of birth was collected and stored in venues that were not limited to Equal Opportunity or to Human Resources. This led to the Retrieval Process that began in fall of 2005. As with the transition efforts, this also involves and affects the entire institution. In addition to reducing the potential violations related to storing personal information, it also reduces the potential for complaints from employees against supervisors based on availability of this information. EOO has provided training to administrative staff in the colleges and departments on the

preparatory steps they need to take before EOO staff arrive to remove hard copy documentation from files, create an inventory and determine the disposition of documents prior to storage in EOO.

➤ **The Retrieval Process is expected to conclude in August 2006.**

Both the transition and retrieval represent fundamental systemic changes that reduce liabilities that were inherent in the previous operational model. That model was limited to certain aspects of affirmative action compliance. The current model is more inclusive and presents the EOO staff as consultants to the institution on diversity matters, rather than as enforcers of the legal aspect of affirmative action. It allows for much more in-depth affirmative action planning. This structure is needed prior to expanding into non-traditional recruitment methods and venues. It will also enhance the legitimacy of any diversity recruitment efforts that result from recruitment activities.

A third barrier that appeared was the preparation and utilization of AACEO staff as indicated above. This left little room for more in-depth research of minority recruitment sources and alternative approaches to attract workforce diversity. These activities could not be conducted given that structure. In order to address this, staff was reclassified, reorganized in terms of function and received an additional 1.5 FTE. Restructuring of the staff represents another aspect of image change that included adopting a customer service model wherein staff members are assigned to provide support to departments and colleges rather than the previous model where staff related to departments and colleges based on isolated functional areas. The customer service model allows staff to provide comprehensive consultation on all equal opportunity issues. Consultation replaces the former and limited “compliance” role the staff played.

This preceded staff development and training activities to increase equal opportunity content knowledge of communication, race relations, multicultural issues, complaint processing and investigation, equal employment and anti-discrimination laws. Staff has also attended formal training to equip them to develop and conduct training for faculty and staff.

The current new structure and expanded mission allow the entire staff to be much more proactive and engaged with the university community. The effect of the progress made over the past few months is the growing perception of staff as equal opportunity practitioners.

II. Continue a Focus on Diversity and a Positive Climate

EOO has provided training/orientation for approximately 428 staff, students, faculty in the following subjects: Equal opportunity laws and hiring, desegregation, affirmative action hiring guidance, prevention of sexual harassment, transition plan, and retrieval of protected category data. The forums included formal training classes presented by EOO to the UML community, engagements as guest speakers, and guest lecturing in a graduate

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course. This training was fundamental to raise the overall level of knowledge and awareness regarding hiring and collection of data.

An additional new initiative of EOO is the presentation of year round displays depicting a wide variety of cultural and ethnic observances with explanation of the history to clarify the relevance of the display. Displays also depict the accomplishments of both genders as may be appropriate to the overall observance. This is an intentional effort to focus on inclusiveness to promote the understanding that equal opportunity laws and polices apply to all members of the university community.

Administrative announcements clarifying university policy on all equal opportunity programs, prevention of sexual harassment, disability/accommodations and veterans have been updated. The announcements emphasize common responsibility and accountability for maintaining a productive human relations climate in addition to legal compliance.

EOO and Student Affairs have coordinated responses to inappropriate student behavior in class and residence halls. (The prevention of sexual harassment training referred to above was specifically designed for residence hall staffs.)

UML continues to increase physical access to campus for persons with disabilities. The institution has devoted between \$150,000 and \$300,000 each year on reasonable accommodation requests and ADA accessibility upgrades. These include the installation of fire doors and magnetic hold-opens to aid in hallway accessibility and current construction of new accessible entrances to Lydon Library and Alumni Hall.

III. Planned Initiatives

The transition and retrieval initiatives, while temporarily increasing workload, will eventually allow staff to devote time to achieving the initiatives identified on the following page. The changed infrastructure also has laid the foundation for weaving the achievement of diversity goals into the fabric of the institution where all entities share in the responsibility as opposed to goals being the responsibility the EOO staff assumes solely and on behalf of the entire institution. The recruitment and retention efforts will focus on attracting minorities and developing/enhancing an environment where minorities can thrive. The foundation of these efforts is based on proven minority recruitment approaches that address several important aspects. These aspects reflect the need for the institution to establish individual connections with potential minority applicants who may require more recruitment activity individually than is needed to recruit non-minorities. It is also necessary to achieve credibility within minority communities so that efforts to recruit minorities are perceived as sincere. With this, a supportive environment must be present so that minorities who join the faculty or staff will remain with the institution.

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The goals presented are scheduled for implementation/refinement within the first 2-3 years of this affirmative action plan cycle. Clearly, the need for other initiatives may arise in the process of meeting these goals. Annual review of the initiatives will include revision of goals as needed to address unanticipated circumstances which may present themselves. In 2008-9 evaluation of initiatives will take place involving the administration so that a new 5 year plan may be published in 2010.

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GOAL AND INITIATIVES

PURPOSE(S)

TIMETABLE

Strategy to Attract Minorities – Outreach

Research minority organizations and recruitment sources	Identify potential viability of sources	June – July 06
Initiate contact with identified venues and professional and community affiliations	Negotiate costs for publishing job announcements Create conduits for UML entities to establish ongoing relationships	July – Aug 06
Plan a reception for key leaders and professionals in minority affiliations/organizations	Initiation of on-going relationships to engender authenticity with sources about recruitment efforts	Oct 06 – Feb 07
Host reception for key leaders and contacts	Meet with UML administration, Deans and others	Mar – Apr 07
Conduct reception annually	Maintain existing relationships; Initiate new on-going relationships	Apr 08, 09, 10, etc.
Increase minority representation as indicated; greater recruitment of African American/Black and Hispanic applicants (faculty and professional non-faculty staff)	See Shortfall in Persons on utilization charts	To be achieved throughout AA Plan cycle
Meet special concerns	See Areas of Special Concern	To be achieved throughout AA Plan cycle

Climate Maintenance Strategy – Education and Awareness

Presentation of training in sexual harassment prevention, civility, and other subjects	Positive human relations where minorities thrive	Start Mar 06
Prepare quarterly EOO newsletter on diversity subjects and cultural observances	As above	Jun 06
Continue cultural and ethnic displays	As above	On-going
Installation of elevator in Dugan Hall	Improved access	Dec 2006
Initiation of study for elevators in the Quad	As above	Jan 2007

IV. Affirmative Initiatives throughout the Institution

Consistent with our mission to assist in maintaining sustainable regional economic and social development, UML hosts programs that involve the larger Lowell community. It is significant to note that while certain programs highlight the involvement of minorities and women, the demographics in the City of Lowell include 16.5% Asian (Khmer and Thai), 14.0% Latino, and 4.2% African American or Black. Lowell has always had a high immigrant population as well. Thus, there are other UML programs available to the area citizenry that while not listed in this summary, necessarily impact minorities.

Initiatives and Services Affecting the Campus Community

- Center for Women and Work
- Center for Work and Family
- Council on Pluralism and Diversity
- Equal Opportunity and Outreach
- University Ombuds
- Office of Multicultural Affairs (hosting 14 ethnic, cultural, and religious student associations)
- Disability Services

Initiatives and Programs Provided to the Community and Region Curriculum

An increase in course offerings has expanded to include topics related to social diversity is expected to continue in response to student and faculty interest. Examples of this are contained within aspects of the Transformation. They include the development of a new global studies initiative, a strengthened the gender studies program, and preliminary planning for language and culture courses in Khmer and Chinese. A gender studies fellowship program has also been funded.

Admissions

College Fairs

- National Hispanic College Fairs: Boston, MA and Hartford, CT
- M.I.T. Science and Technology Fair (sponsored by New England Board of Higher Education)
- Youth Opportunity of Boston, MA
- Multiple Presentations at Higher Education Resource Centers: Boston, MA and Lawrence, MA
- M.I.T./Wellesley Upward Bound Summer Program College Fair
- H.O.P.E. Talent Search College Fairs: Boston, MA
- Roxbury Community College: traditional fairs plus individual visits in the fall and monthly in the spring
- Bunker Hill Community College: traditional fairs plus individual visits in the fall and monthly visits in the spring
- Northern Essex Community College: traditional fairs plus individual visits in the fall and monthly visits in the spring

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Outreach/Support

- Multiple special group visits throughout the year: Lawrence HS, local middle schools
- New Horizons Partnership Program between Lowell HS and UMass Lowell: multiple visits throughout the year
- Host UMaine Upward Bound Program
- Parent Night at Lowell (admissions application workshops in Spanish and Khmer)
- High School visits to cities of Boston, Brockton, Worcester, and Springfield, MA
- Host visits from guidance counselors from Lowell HS and Lawrence HS
- Presentations to College Prep Program
- Outreach telephone calling events to students of color inviting them to the Fall Open House
- Lowell and Lawrence Boys and Girls Club campus visits
- G.E.A.R. Up campus visits / "Admissions Jeopardy Game"
- Upward Bound: Middlesex Community College
- TRIO Grant Program: Lowell HS

Staffing

Admissions staff consists of members who are fluent speakers of Khmer and Spanish. Staff also serve as liaisons to the Society of Hispanic Engineers and the Association of Students of African Origin.

Athletics

- The National Youth Sports Program attracts approximately 300-400 "underserved" children, ages 10-16, from the city of Lowell and provides educational, athletic & enrichment programming during the summer. Despite the reduction in the federal budget, UML will be able to maintain the program for one more year.
- The NCAA Life Skills Program provides student-athletes with educational workshops and seminars in issues related to substance use, race relations, sexual orientation, etc.
- The National Consortium has recognized UML student-athletes for Academics & Sports during each of the past five years for conducting outreach programs that serve more than 10,000 people annually in communities with high minority populations. Programs range from a Christmas family adoption program, to mentoring young at-risk children, to conducting sports clinics at the Boys & Girls Club.
- Recruitment of athletes is concentrated in urban areas to recruit for men's and women's basketball, soccer, and field and track.
- Compliance with Title IX requirements: In the July 1, 2005, issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, UML was cited as a "leader in providing athletic opportunities for women". This is the result of being one of the 5 Division II institutions who have the highest representation of female athletes relative to female students. The Athletic Department is compliant with all but two Title IX

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requirements, scholarship and staffing. The Chancellor is currently reviewing plans to address these concerns.

Graduate School of Education

- The Demonstration School is a City of Lowell public preschool and elementary school operated on campus by UML that uses a trilingual educational approach to teach 80 English-, Spanish-, and Khmer-speaking children, age 3 to 10.
- GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), a five-year, \$4.3 million program, links more than 1,500 low-income students at Lowell High School and one Lowell middle school to education, mentoring, and information services on campus and in the community.
- Healthy Life Skills An evaluation consists of analyzing pre and posttests given to students in kindergarten, 4th, 8th, and 10th grades in the Lowell school system in order to evaluate the comprehensive health education curriculum.
- National Youth Sports Girls Clinics offers 240 girls (ages 10-16) sports instruction in three sports to build a true sense of teamwork.
- New Horizons prepares 100 economically disadvantaged and minority Lowell High School students for college with subject tutoring, counseling, and information on the application process.
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- Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) is a day of hands-on and interactive workshops for middle school girls led by professional women scientists and engineers.
- Young Scientists Program offers student-led health and science activities for young girls at Girls Inc.

College of Engineering

- Snap Shots: high schools visit/tour the University
- National Engineering Week celebration
- Chinese/Asian week celebrations with tours and gourmet tour
- Industrial Advisory Board Meeting – top CEOs and presidents advise the faculty on traits of engineers that the industry seeks
- MA Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Summit for superintendents of Massachusetts schools
- Middle school teacher program - “What is Engineering?”
- UMass President’s meeting on Education and Outreach
- ADI Conference held on campus with Analog Devices
- Corporate Tours
- DesignCamp: A program for 5th - 9th graders to learn technology through hands-on projects at UML during four one-week sessions
- DesignCamp Product Design Celebration (company fair)
- DesignCamp After School Program

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- Assistive Technology Program visits companies (disabilities)
- High School Assistive Technology Design Fair
- Current engineering students and faculty give engineering presentations at visits to local middle and high schools
- Visit Museum of Science
- Meet with Raytheon RSVA (Retired Engineers School Volunteers)
- Meet with Local High School Guidance Counselors
- Nanotechnology area hosts local middle schools
- College of Engineering Open House
- Lowell High Schools tours College of Engineering hosts tours by Lowell High School and Lawrence High School

AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

Advertising in traditional “mainstream” publications does not yield a high minority applicant pool. Non-traditional approaches will be explored to address these concerns as indicated in the Planned Initiatives section of summary.

The above concern does not appear to apply to certain Asian groups as related to faculty positions in Engineering. In terms of staff positions, the availability of the Asian population must be considered in light of the following social demographics. The Khmer ethnic constitute much of the local Asian population. Many are first or second generation immigrants. For those 20 years of age or older, English is often a second language. Additionally, there is a low occurrence of post secondary education stemming from socio-politico conditions affecting families prior to immigration to the United States. This is a barrier for those positions where a postsecondary degree may be required. (See Planned Initiatives, above).

Revision of administrative processes has been implemented to overcome concerns related to approval for position announcements and synchronization of publishing schedules of journals. Some of the concerns have been addressed by publishing more faculty announcements as “open until filled.”

Costs of advertising in minority publications and on websites devoted to minorities and women continue to be prohibitive for colleges and departments. See the Planned Initiatives section of summary for plans to address this concern.

A challenge related to location and the recruitment of more diverse populations is that Lowell hosts a smaller range of commerce and services oriented to these communities than one would find in a larger metropolitan area such as Boston. The institution is in the process of introducing a public relations campaign that highlights among other things its proximity to the Boston and its remarkable achievements in faculty research.

Gender equity in salaries continues to be reviewed.