

UNIVERSITY of MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854

Office of the Chancellor

October 1, 2009

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 7
POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

We all experience-varying levels of ability in the span of our individual lives. Abilities also vary between people. In an era where people continue to work and learn longer than in the past, the need for adaptations benefit the common good. These adaptations require creativity and the will to overcome attitudinal and physical barriers to persons with disabilities. In this way, we can foster an environment where we focus on what can be achieved when building on abilities rather than being limited by perceptions about disability. This is the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amended of 2008.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell must assure equal employment opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities in our campus community. This is consistent with Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (amended in 1974), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Law.

The legal definition of a disabled person has three components. A disabled individual is any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities, (2) has a record of such impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such impairment.

I emphasize the importance of understanding the third component. Disclosing a disability is a private decision on the part of the individual. In both working and learning environments, it is critical that faculty, administrators, and supervisors refrain from assuming that students, staff, and colleagues are persons with disabilities.

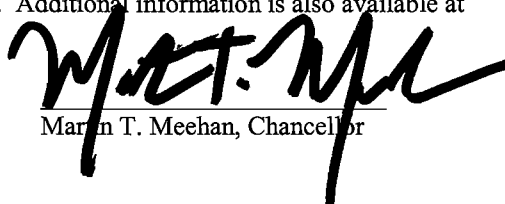
Faculty and staff who desire a reasonable accommodation under must contact Equal Opportunity & Outreach (EEO) to initiate the request, Cumnock C-4, UML North, 978-934-3565. Department Chairs and supervisors should refer all faculty and staff requests for accommodation directly to EEO. Applicants for employment may also request such accommodations for the interview process. Students who wish to request accommodation should contact Dr. Chandrika Sharma, Office of Student Disability Services, O'Leary Library 240, UML South, 978-934-4574. Any student, faculty member, or staff member may choose to notify the University now or at any future time of his or her desire to benefit under the program. Receiving an accommodation or declining one will not affect any employment or class evaluation actions nor will you be subject disciplinary treatment.

Consistent with best practices in higher education, the Director of Equal Opportunity, Mrs. Oneida D. Blagg will continue to provide consultation, compliance analysis, and recommendations on disability related policies and practices. This also includes involvement with the allocation of resources for persons with disabilities in this highly regulated area of anti-discrimination law.

Web-based diversity education continues to be available at www.uml.edu/equal. New employees are encouraged to complete this experience within a year of appointment to their positions. Those with supervisory responsibilities over others are expected to participate within 2 years of appointment to such a position, irrespective of when they may have joined the University.

Information obtained concerning disabled individuals must be kept confidential by law, except in the following circumstances: (1) Supervisors and faculty may be informed regarding restrictions and accommodations for those employees or students requesting reasonable accommodations, and (2) first responders may be informed, when and to the extent appropriate, if the condition might require emergency exit or treatment.

The Affirmative Action Plan is available for inspection from 9:00 to 4:00 weekdays in Equal Opportunity and Outreach, Cumnock Hall, Room C-4 on the North Campus. Additional information is also available at www.uml.edu/equal.


Martin T. Meehan, Chancellor