

**The University of Tennessee at Martin**

**Affirmative Action Plan**

**For**

**Persons with Disabilities**

Data Period from

October 1, 2007, through September 30, 2008

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

Persons with Disabilities

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## 1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Board of Trustees of the University of Tennessee on September 28, 1979, approved and included the following policy statement of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action:

It is the policy of The University of Tennessee not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, or being a veteran with a disability or a veteran of the Vietnam Era. This policy extends to recruitment, employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off, termination, compensation, training, benefits, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

Employment opportunities will not be distinguished on the basis of sex unless sex is a bona fide occupation qualification. Employment opportunities will not be distinguished on the basis of age except where age is reasonably taken into account as a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any statutory objective of a program or activity administered by the University.

The University will take affirmative action to recruit, employ, and to advance in employment minorities, women, veterans with disabilities, and veterans of the Vietnam Era. Reasonable accommodations will be made for otherwise qualified veterans with disabilities and other persons with disabilities.

Further, it is the policy of the University of Tennessee, as stated in the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy, that affirmative action will be taken with regard to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities, as defined by the Department of Labor and the Department of Education, will be recruited, hired, trained, promoted, and transferred without regard to their disability unless it prevents the effective performance of a particular job. The University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM) is committed to ensuring that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program, activity, or facility of UTM on the basis of disability. To facilitate this commitment, reasonable accommodations will be made to provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Reasonable physical changes have been made to make facilities more accessible for persons with disabilities.

## 2. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

The University of Tennessee at Martin disseminates its Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policy internally:

1. Through publication in faculty handbooks, personnel manuals, the Affirmative Action Plans, and other UTM publications;
2. By posting a copy of the policy on campus bulletin boards;
3. Through administrative issuance of oral and written affirmative action reminders to supervisory personnel and other employees;
4. Through management training programs;
5. Through employee orientation sessions; and
6. By annual solicitation of disability identification through the Office of Equity and Diversity

UTM disseminates the policy externally:

1. By informing recruitment sources of the policy, both verbally and in writing;
2. By written notice to local and national community action and service organizations that administer programs designed to improve employment opportunities of minorities and women;
3. By including in job announcements published in the news media that UTM is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer;
4. By including a statement on job application forms that UTM is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer and
5. By written notice to contractors that UTM is and EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer.

Copies of The University of Tennessee at Martin's **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS** are

distributed to Vice Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and other administrative officials. These persons are responsible for communicating the contents of the *PLAN* to other supervisory personnel. Furthermore, the *PLAN* is available upon request to any employee, applicant for employment, or any EEO interest group in the Equity and Diversity Office, Room 240F, Gooch Hall, Monday – Friday. 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

Mr. Gary Rogers, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and Mr. Theotis Robinson, Vice President for Equity and Diversity, have responsibility for system-wide efforts to ensure that affirmative action is taken and that equal employment opportunity is observed throughout the University system. The Equity and Diversity Officer for The University of Tennessee at Martin is Dr. Ann Duncan, Associate Professor of Education and Equity and Diversity Officer; she reports to Chancellor, Dr. Tom Rakes. Dr. Duncan, Dr. Jerald Ogg, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Mr. Al Hooten, Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance, and Mr. Phillip Bright, Director of Personnel Services, have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that affirmative action is taken and that equal employment opportunity is observed at UTM.

The Equity and Diversity Officer prepares the annual *AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN*, conducts utilization and availability analyses, and assists in taking actions necessary to maintain equal opportunity within the UTM campus. She also investigates complaints and serves as liaison with off-campus agencies. Also, Dr. Duncan is the Title VI Coordinator for UTM. The Director of Personnel is responsible for all staff non-exempt employment, training, and promotion.

All Vice Chancellors work with the UTM System Vice Presidents and General Counsel to ensure that the *UTM AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS* are implemented within their areas of responsibility. As such, they ensure that appropriate attention is devoted to affirmative action

activities and that the principles of equal employment opportunity are pursued by the deans, department heads, and supervisors within their areas.

Employees are evaluated on their affirmative action (diversity) commitment during their performance and progress review annually.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Equity and Diversity Officer, in addition to the responsibilities mentioned previously, serves as an advocate for employees with disabilities and as a compliance officer for the University.

As an advocate, the Officer provides information to:

1. Raise the consciousness of supervisors (Vice Chancellors, Deans, Chairpersons, and Directors) relative to disability biases encountered by Americans with disabilities in employment;
2. Improve conditions in employment for employees with disabilities; and
3. Raise the consciousness of supervisors relative to the needs and problems of citizens with disabilities.

As a compliance officer, the Equity and Diversity Officer provides information to supervisors relative to legislation and litigation involving the employment of Americans with disabilities; investigates all grievances brought to her office by employers with disabilities; works with supervisors to right the wrongs against employees with disabilities, which is done to protect the rights of employees with disabilities and to protect UTM against lawsuits.

It should be noted, again, that UTM will continue to offer employment, promotion, and training opportunities to persons with disabilities in exempt and non-exempt positions. Further, in

offering employment/promotion to persons with disabilities, the amount of salary offered will not be based on their receipt of any type of disability income or other benefits received from other sources.

Finally, supervisors are strongly encouraged to make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. Further, supervisors who have vacancies are strongly encouraged to make a concerted effort to identify and employ qualified persons with disabilities in faculty and staff positions.

## **5. RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

The University of Tennessee at Martin has employed and continues to employ persons with disabilities in all seven of the EEO-6 categories. As a result, the University has professionals with disabilities employed in administrative, faculty, and staff positions. However, the number continues to be small.

It should be noted that all employees are mailed a survey form and are requested to provide information about their disabilities and special needs. There are those individuals who prefer not to identify themselves as persons with disabilities.