

**AS&E Equal Educational Opportunity Committee (EEOC)  
Annual Report for 2008-2009  
August 28, 2009**

The full Committee met three times in the Fall semester and six times in the Spring. We dealt with a number of issues this year, but primarily discussed ways to work with the administration to increase campus-wide support for diversity and climate sensitivity. These discussions continued from last year in the wake of the issue of racial and ethnic bias and freedom of expression which arose as a consequence of *The Primary Source* publications in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. These actions led to a ruling by the Committee on Student Life (CSL) in the Spring of 2007 against the Source's actions, and the subsequent reversal of the CSL decision by President Bacow. Our agenda was also spurred by the Spring 2009 verbal and physical bias incident directed toward members of the Korean Students Association.

In response to dissatisfaction with this reversal, President Bacow formed the Task Force on Freedom of Expression (2008) led by Professor Jeswald Salacuse, which was charged with drafting a statement on Freedom of Expression for Tufts University. Per their request for comments from the public on a working draft, EEOC submitted a comment via their website. In this statement, we outlined several concerns with the statement concerning how it would be implemented, a lack of vision for how it would address broader issues concerning creating and maintaining a climate supportive of diversity, and framing of diversity issues in ways that seemingly engage only those who are directly affected by "negative" events. We called for the administration to play a greater leadership role in engaging the broader campus community, not simply members of underrepresented groups and their expressed allies. This statement is appended.

Admittedly, many of our concerns were outside of the Task Force's charge. Hence, the development of the EEOC Comment to this draft statement contributed to EEOC drafting a Letter of Concern to Deans Sternberg and Abriola. In it, we reiterated our concerns and our desire to work with the administration toward broadening participation in activities that will help to create and maintain a climate on campus that is supportive of diversity. Both Deans were quite responsive, and each attended EEOC meetings to provide the Committee with information on AS&E activities relevant to these concerns. Each of these meetings led to some specific recommendations on how to proceed, which is a part of the continuing work of EEOC and the Deans. In general, these activities center on encouraging Departments and Faculty to be more explicit in describing their activities related to Diversity and Climate.

In addition to these meetings with the Deans, EEOC also invited several guests to meetings for the purposes of information gathering, and brainstorming about areas that the Committee might focus its future efforts. We received reports from Margery Davies and Lisa Coleman concerning data and issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. We met with student representative of the Open Letter Coalition (Sofia Nelson, Jennifer Bailey, Ikenna Acholonu), who had submitted a letter to President Bacow, published in the Daily in Spring 2007. We also met with Yvette Dalton-McCoy (Associate Director, Graduate Diversity Programs) and Travis Brown (Manager, Center for STEM

Diversity) to get information surrounding recruitment and retention of undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups.

In addition to the activities in committee, the EEOC chair attended a meeting of the AS&E Executive Committee to discuss the COACHE report on Tenure-Track Faculty Satisfaction, as well as a meeting between members of the administration and students from the Open Letter Coalition to discuss how to move forward on issues of diversity and climate.

The Committee once again had a strong set of candidates for the 2008-09 AS&E Faculty/Staff Multicultural Service Award. This year's awardees are Associate Professor Kim Ruane from the Department of Mathematics, and Carmen Lowe from the Writing Fellows program. Their service to Tufts is greatly appreciated.

EEOC would like to thank those outside administrators and students mentioned above who were able to attend meetings this past year. We'd also like to thank Lisa Coleman from the Office of Institutional Diversity and its staff for their support for our meetings this year. Finally, we'd like to thank the AS&E Executive Committee for their continuing support.

Submitted by,

Keith Maddox (Psychology)  
EEOC Chair for 2008-2009

APPENDIX:

EEOC Comments on the Draft Statement of Freedom of Expression (10.16.08)

Professor Salacuse,

The Equal Educational Opportunity Committee (EEOC) would like to commend the members of the Task Force on Freedom of Expression for their efforts over the past 10 months in soliciting input from various constituencies across the University in drafting this document. In our view, the document attempts to set very broad guidelines for conduct among members of the University community considering the balance between the rights of freedom of expression and freedom from harassment. In this way, the document is quite consistent with the specific charge of the committee. However, in expressing these comments in this venue, our hope is that the Trustees, President, Provost, and Deans recognize that, to many, this statement represents an insufficient step toward progress. Our concerns outlined below have to do both with the content of the statement and with some broader issues that the statement brings to the fore.

In general, we fear that the statement does not adequately address the central concerns underlying the events that prompted the formation of the Task Force. These include the actions of the Primary Source, the outcome of a judicial process by the Committee on Student Life (CSL), and the subsequent selective dismissal of one aspect of the CSL decision by President Bacow.

First, it is unclear how this document will affect how we proceed in Arts, Sciences, & Engineering in the event of another incident of this nature. There are no stated guidelines for the enforcement of the statement, nor explication of the process by which potential violations will be identified, adjudicated, and disciplined. The footnote referring the reader to specific policies governing students, faculty, and staff merely begs the question. We are concerned that relegating this issue to a footnote has negative consequences. While we recognize that disciplinary action should be a last resort, we worry that the footnote creates the perception that the definition of harassment and the procedures for dealing with it are of secondary importance. Insofar as the statement as a whole seeks to set guidelines for conduct, we worry that many may overlook the footnote and fail to understand the full implications of the policy. The footnote status also trivializes the need to examine the University's definition of harassment. The events of the past suggest that the existing definition, policies and procedures were not sufficient. This is the question that has been of central concern to the students and faculty in AS&E over the past 10 months. Again, we recognize that this was NOT a part of the charge of the committee. However it is unclear how this statement will facilitate the process of clarifying these policies, and leaves a great many people dissatisfied. We implore the administration to 1) better communicate exactly how this statement will shape the policies and procedures in AS&E, and 2) include members of the community in this process, including existing student and faculty committees with relevant expertise and experience.

Second, the document does not address the broader issue of how to create and maintain a campus climate that is supportive of a diverse population. For some time before the most recent incidents, members of underrepresented groups and their allies have been motivated by a concern for broader issues regarding campus climate with respect to

diversity. Unfortunately, these concerns only seem to come to the fore in the aftermath of negative events such as direct and indirect threats to body and mind that impede the intellectual and social development of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. If there was any positive consequence of the most recent, well-publicized incidents, it is that they served to bring a larger segment of our community into a conversation that has been taking place at Tufts for a very long time. What is unclear is how long that broader population will remain engaged. But we see this as an opportunity for the administration and the broader Tufts community to take advantage of the momentum gained from these events to encourage proactive positive change.

In our view, the climate surrounding issues of diversity on campus is in need of direct attention by the very highest levels of the administration, and the broader campus community. The administration should work directly to broaden the community of students, faculty, and staff working toward creating a more inclusive and supportive campus climate. The administration should also work to keep this broader community engaged in these efforts, as a central component of the University's educational goals. Existing campus committees such as EEOC and CSL have been underutilized, yet willing partners in this endeavor in the past, and EEOC would like to reaffirm our enthusiasm to work with the administration in the future. But the key is to bring a broader segment of our community on board with these goals – individuals who do not necessarily see themselves as affected (positively or negatively) by the campus climate with respect to diversity when, in all likelihood, they are affected. These individuals will be more likely to engage these issues if the University's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive educational climate is communicated from the highest levels of the administration, and reinforced through policies, programs and departmental curricula.

Our final concern is one of framing diversity issues, and an opportunity to shift perspective. We, like many others, have tended to frame our concerns about diversity in the context of reactions to adverse events. This is a natural response. This reactive approach focuses on the negative consequences of a non-diverse, non-supportive campus climate in efforts to enlist others to work for change. These concerns are justified and important. However, this reactive focus only engages members of underrepresented groups – those who are directly and negatively affected by these events. This focus often fails to engage members of majority groups, who should share the burden of dealing with these issues. In order to more effectively engage all members of our community, campus leaders should adopt a proactive framing of diversity-related issues; one that emphasizes the positive outcomes that can be enjoyed from a diverse, supportive campus climate. The administration should work to encourage individuals to be proactive in their efforts rather than reactive. This reframing may help people to realize that we all can benefit from diverse population by working to create a supportive climate for everyone. We learn from each other in many ways, but we learn from each other the most when each of us is at his or her best. This message is most effectively communicated when it comes from the top.

On behalf of EEOC,

Keith Maddox, Chair