AS&E Equal Educational Opportunity Committee
Annual Report for 2002-2003

The full committee met seven times over the year and several subcommittees held meetings on specific issues. Provost Jamshed Bharucha, Vice President Steven Manos, and the AS&E Culture Center Directors all accepted the committee’s invitation to attend meetings and engage in discussion of issues in their areas of responsibility. The co-chairs also represented the committee at meetings with the Executive Committee, the Diversity Fund Review Committee, the Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience and various administrators.

I. Ongoing Issues

Many of the issues that concern EEOC are not amenable to “quick fixes” and require ongoing efforts. The following problems have been raised for a number of years, but remain of particular concern.

1. Hiring and retention of faculty of color and of women in areas where they are underrepresented.

The policies and programs of the past ten years produced substantial increases in the rates at which we hired female assistant professors and assistant professors of color. This is progress, but we have not yet diversified the faculty through all ranks and fields1. The absolute numbers of such faculty in the tenured ranks are still low and it will take many years of similar efforts to transform the ranks of the tenured faculty. Our successes in hiring will also be undercut if we can not retain these faculty members. EEOC salutes the AS&E administration’s decision to commission an outside consultant to study the retention problem. We recommend that the conclusions of the report be widely shared and discussed with the department chairs and relevant faculty committees.

2. Promoting the academic success of all students.

Formal and informal reports on student performance suggest that not all groups of students are reaching their academic potential. Problems such as poor advising, the anonymity of large classes, or unclear faculty expectations can be an unequal barrier to student success. Recent efforts to deal with these problems have not been well coordinated and our support systems don’t always provide the greatest help to the students with the greatest need. This has been a subject of EEOC concern for several years and the some of the committee’s conclusions are similar to the conclusions of the Undergraduate Task Force. We strongly endorse the Task Force recommendations2 for: a) a full-time Dean of the Colleges with responsibility for “oversight of undergraduate education” (page 19), b) an improved advising system (page 19), and c) “more [effort] to institutionalize [the] welcome to students of diverse backgrounds” (page 13).

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1 Tufts 2003 Self-Study Report to the NEASC (for accreditation) reported on page 87 that the composition of the tenured AS&E faculty was 29.5% women and 11.9% members of minority groups.
3. Ongoing education and workshops for faculty, chairs, and administrators.

Holding a Spring 2003 workshop for administrators, scheduling a Fall 2003 workshop for chairs, and the Spring 2003 commitments voted by the AS&E faculty represent a good start. Follow-through and follow-up are essential if these efforts are to have an impact. Trainers who run workshops always make the point that change is not accomplished by one-shot programs. Ongoing attention is needed and we recommend that planning begin for follow-up administrator and chair workshops during 2004.

4. Need for greater attention to diversifying staff and administration.

Although EEOC did not have data to review, there is a sense among committee members that Tufts has not made as much progress in diversifying its staff and administration as it has made in diversifying its students and faculty. The committee recommends more open searches, more outreach during searches, and systematic tracking of our progress in hiring.

II. Renewed Focus in 2002-2003

Two sets of issues were the subject of renewed focus by EEOC. The committee drew on and contributed to other campus discussion of these issues.

1. The campus environment for students from minority groups.

EEOC members were pleased that new efforts were made to address the campus environment for students. The creation of the Bias Response Teams for residential and general campus incidents is a concrete way to provide support for students and signal the standards of our community. Another visible initiative was the AS&E faculty’s passing of the three resolutions on race, ethnicity, and diversity education at the faculty and department level. The committee discussed these efforts and the difficult issue of how to deal with bias incidents that involve faculty members. Faculty-student incidents are harder to identify and address because they are often subtle or unconscious and are complicated by the teacher-student relationship. While the committee is not proposing any particular mechanism, there is a consensus that students need to feel safe to report incidents and that more faculty education is needed.

2. Support for those with disabilities.

An August 2000 report on “Disability Issues for Faculty and Students” by former Dean Bobbie Knable made a number of recommendations that continue to be relevant. The lack of coordination of various campus efforts has been a major problem and the needs are growing in areas such as learning disabilities. The designation of Ms.Yves-Rose SaintDic as Tufts’ coordinator is a starting point for addressing these needs in a systematic way. The committee recommends that she be given the support needed to establish and meet some benchmarks of progress.

III. New Initiatives in 2002-2003

1. EEOC Visiting Scholar/Practitioner

In response to a proposal submitted by EEOC, the AS&E Diversity Fund will be funding two EEOC Visiting Scholars or Practitioners during 2003-2004. The distinguished scholars and practitioners may be from any academic area, but their work must contribute to our understanding
or practices related to diversity. For example, we might host a scholar who studies the impact of 
stereotyping on student performance, or the designer of a successful program to boost the 
retention of female and minority students in the sciences. It is intended that these visitors 
contribute to both the intellectual life and the professional development of members of the AS&E 
community. Each visitor will be co-sponsored by EEOC and one or more departments/programs, 
and will spend 2-3 days in residence on campus. (Contact either of the co-chairs of EEOC for 
more information on this initiative.)

2. Student Awards

EEOC members agreed on the need to diversify the pool of students nominated for student 
awards and to create a student award that recognizes both academic performance and the potential 
for multicultural leadership. EEOC has drafted two proposals that will be submitted to the AS&E 
Awards Committee for their consideration during Fall 2003.

The first proposal suggests new language for the awards solicitation letters and a sample 
information form that departments and programs could use to collect information on out-of-
classroom activities of their students.

The second proposal is for a new student award to honor the career of Forrester B. Washington, 
the earliest identified African-American graduate of Tufts. The purpose of this award would be 
to recognize and encourage students who are good candidates to pursue academic or service 
careers modeled after that of Forrester Washington. (Washington was an Urban League 
executive, a researcher with the Department of Labor, and Dean of the School of Social Work at 
historically black Atlanta University.)

IV. Multicultural Service Award for 2002-2003

EEOC is charged with reviewing nominations and selecting the recipients of the Arts and 
Sciences Faculty/Staff Multicultural Service Award. Due to the strong pool of candidates, three 
recipients were selected. Professor Edith Balbach, Director of the Community Health Program, 
was recognized for promoting an inclusive learning environment in the Community Health 
Program by emphasizing diversity in advising, mentoring, internships, and course offerings. 
Professor Anne Gardulski of the Geology Department was recognized for her extraordinary 
efforts as Co-Chair of the 1996 Task Force on Race and her subsequent leadership on many 
formal and informal committees that have worked to improve the environment for all students 
and faculty. Ms. Deborah LeeKeenan, Director of the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School, was 
recognized for her success at defining the Children’s School as a place where cultural differences 
are embraced and active outreach is used to create a more diverse environment.

Submitted by,

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EEOC Co-Chairs for 2002-2003