EEOC has been active on many fronts during 2003-2004. The full committee met seven times and there were numerous meetings of subcommittees. The Committee benefited from formal and informal discussions with several administrators and student groups. While all of the issues mentioned in the EEOC reports of recent years remain relevant, this report contains brief summaries of the issues on which we spent the most time during 2003-2004.

1. Educational Needs of AS&E Students with Disabilities

During 1999-2000, former Dean of Students Bobbie Knable conducted a study that examined disability issues for students and faculty in AS&E. She documented the need for better long-term planning and more short-run services. Since the Knable Report, the population of AS&E students requiring disability services has nearly doubled but we have not added support staff or established adequate coordination of services. This has led to a severe strain on the ability of the AS&E Disability Services Office to keep up with demand. For example, providing minimal support for one hearing impaired student for one semester’s classes may take dozens of separate actions to arrange for course materials and interpreters or note taking. Activities outside of class require additional support. AS&E is at risk of failing to meet our educational obligation to these students and failing to satisfy the ADA laws.

EEOC understands that the Committee on Specific Learning Disabilities, Deans Glaser and Ernst, and Tufts’ Office of Equal Opportunity have also been involved in recent discussions of these problems. We urge immediate action to improve AS&E services and future steps to improve ADA oversight and expertise at the University level. More specifically, we propose that AS&E hire an additional full-time staff member to arrange services for AS&E students with disabilities and establish an expanded AS&E Disabilities Services Office to coordinate the provision of academic and non-academic services that are required by this group of students.

2. Diversity of Administrative Appointments in AS&E

Over the last three years, AS&E has experienced an unusually large number of openings in high-level administrative positions. The number of these positions filled by women is impressive, but we have not made similar progress in appointing individuals of color to administrative posts. EEOC suggests that the administration look for ways of attracting more candidates of color for our administrative openings. This may involve changing the way job descriptions are framed, revising the priorities of search committees, and extending searches with inadequate candidate pools. The outreach and oversight procedures we follow in faculty searches are a model that could also be applied to administrative searches.

3. Issues Raised by Students

EEOC has undertaken a new initiative to communicate with students about concerns and problems that affect their educational experience. The first step was sending delegations to visit with students in three of the six AS&E centers: the Asian-American Center, the LGBT Center and the Womens’ Center. Some of the students’ issues were a surprise to EEOC members. The following list contains the issues that EEOC spent the most time discussing.
• The role of fraternity parties during orientation, the need for first-year students to be better educated about the risks and rewards of the fraternity scene, and the need for other attractive social options on campus.

• The paucity of AS&E courses that deal with Asian-American, Latina/Latino, Womens’ and LGBT issues. Since many of these courses are naturally interdisciplinary, the AS&E propensity to fund courses through departments makes it hard for courses in these areas to gain support.

• The difficulty that students have in dealing with insensitive or offensive behavior by faculty or staff. Many students believe that professors can identify them from handwritten comments on course evaluations and that problems mentioned on course evaluations rarely result in any corrective action. Many students don’t know what channels they can use to report problems with faculty or staff.

• Concern that the efforts of some national organizations to identify and challenge programs that select participants by race or ethnic background will lead to less AS&E support for the open programs offered by the “Group of Six” Centers.

• The lack of sufficient space for meetings or programs within the Centers. It was suggested that new meeting spaces within the Centers could also be used as classroom space for seminars or discussion groups.

4. Improved Education for Teachers and Advisors

EEOC discussion of our own lack of familiarity with some of the important lessons from educational psychology suggest that AS&E faculty would benefit from a more systematic program of workshops for teachers and advisors. One EEOC experiment is our co-sponsorship of the Diversity and Cognition Colloquium Series for Spring 2004. During Fall 2004 we plan to co-sponsor at least one public lecture and one workshop for faculty and staff.

5. Miscellaneous Notes

EEOC members have found the public reports of the Bias Intervention Program to be a useful way of educating the community on the nature of offensive behavior and on the support that is available for students who experience incidents of bias.

The co-chairs of EEOC will be attending a May 5th briefing on the results of an outside consultant’s study on faculty retention (the Kaleidoscope Report.) We expect this report to restart discussions on ways to improve faculty mentoring and retention in AS&E.

We welcome feedback from all members of the Tufts community and suggestions for next year’s agenda.

Submitted by,

David Garman (Economics) and Mary Glaser (Mathematics)
Co-Chairs of EEOC for 2003-2004