

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY -- POLICY

Board of Governors for Higher Education  
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Adopted:	08/24/77 (BR)	07/02/81 (BG)	Legal Citation: 28-5.1
Amended:	05/24/79 (BR)	07/19/84 (BG) 08/06/92 (BG) 05/20/93 (BG)	
Reaffirmed:	05/30/80 (BR) 05/28/81 (BR)	07/30/81 (BG) 07/07/83 (BG) 05/24/89 (BG) 08/06/92 (BG) 05/08/96 (BG)	

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It is the belief and the policy of the State of Rhode Island that the race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, handicap/disability, age (subject to certain limitations established by law) or veteran status of an individual should neither serve as a barrier to his or her equal opportunity for employment nor be the basis of harassment in the workplace. The Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education fully endorses this basic policy of nondiscrimination.

State and federal laws and regulations bar discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap/disability or veterans status. Notably, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, Presidential Executive Order 11246, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Persian Gulf Benefits Act of 1991, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991 prohibit employment discrimination. Rhode Island General Law 28-5.1 directs each state agency to make nondiscrimination the policy of the agency and to rigorously take affirmative steps to ensure equality of employment opportunity.

The Board of Governors for Higher Education recognizes that the mere elimination of discriminatory barriers to employment is often not in itself sufficient to provide equal opportunity. Consciously or unconsciously, practices or conditions may exist which adversely affect the employment opportunities of entire groups of people, most notably women, members of minority groups, and handicapped/disabled persons. The Board therefore directs the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education and the public institutions of higher education -- namely, the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island -- to pursue affirmative action through positive and aggressive measures designed to provide equal employment opportunities and to overcome the effect of any past exclusions.

Positive actions are required if employment opportunities are to be open to all and if work and academic environments are to be free from discrimination and harassment.

To meet these goals, the Board of Governors shall require the creation and implementation of affirmative action plans. While the chief executive officers at the public institutions of higher education and the Office of Higher Education shall be held accountable for the affirmative action programs, all management personnel shall share in this responsibility.

The Board of Governors furthermore accepts its responsibility to provide leadership in promoting nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity by ensuring that private institutions approved by the Office of Higher Education provide education for the people of Rhode Island comply with state and federal laws regarding equal opportunity.

The Board of Governors will commit and utilize a variety of resources in support of its policies and will make available to education agencies all possible assistance and resources in the provision of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.

The Commissioner of Higher Education is charged with ensuring that the personnel policies and practices of the Board of Governors, the Office of Higher Education, and the public institutions of higher education adhere to both federal and state laws and regulations and the policy and regulations of the Board of Governors regarding affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

The Commissioner is responsible for the development and promulgation of any additional regulations and guidelines necessary to achieve the purpose of the foregoing policy and for the imposition of appropriate sanctions or penalties where necessary, subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.