FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Why does UMass Boston establish affirmative action goals?
UMass Boston is considered a federal contractor. Federal contractors are required to establish and make a good faith effort to achieve affirmative action goals for females and minorities. While good faith efforts are also required for the employment and advancement in employment of protected veterans and persons with disabilities, actual numerical placement goals are not set in these instances.

How are affirmative action goals established?
Goals are based on analytical studies that set placement goals for groups of jobs, not for specific positions. These groups are composed of jobs that are similar with regard to their content, pay, and opportunity. Based on a comparison to population statistics both external and internal to the university, a determination is made whether a placement goal is required. The objective of goal setting and their subsequent accomplishment is to have our workforce reflect the population from which we attract faculty and staff. Progress against placement goals is monitored based on the number of hiring or promotional opportunities that occurred in under-represented job groups.

How do I know if there is a goal within my area of responsibility?
When an opening occurs, the Office of Diversity will check that opening against established placement goals. If there is a placement goal, they will notify the search committee. Then the search committee will initiate a good faith effort to attract qualified candidates to fill the position. A special outreach recruiting action is one example of such a good faith effort.

Is there a difference between a placement "goal" and a "quota"?
A placement goal is something we must strive to achieve or make reasonable efforts to bring about a desired result. We may make such efforts and still not reach the goal. The emphasis is on striving. We are not required by law to reach goals without exception. Quotas offer no such flexibility. While it is possible for an employer to be required to achieve a specific numerical target for hiring, such situations arise as a means of correcting a long-standing situation where minorities and/or women are unable to secure employment. Such a determination would come from either a government agency as part of a conciliation agreement or through a court action. Affirmative action relies on the concept of goals, not quotas. It encourages employers to achieve desired representation of minorities and women in the workforce.

What is a search committee's responsibility, once a goal has been set for one of my positions?
The committee’s responsibility is to ensure equal employment opportunity in the hiring process. Committee members are expected to interview qualified candidates, including internal candidates, who might help meet the placement goal. In addition, they are encouraged to participate in outreach activities within the community for the purpose of attracting qualified individuals to the university. Finally, they are required to keep interview records and to complete evaluation forms at the conclusion of the interview process to document the hiring decision. In no case are they required or expected to hire or promote unqualified applicants for the position.
What is meant by "good faith effort"?
The objective of affirmative action is to bring about an improvement in the representation of minorities and females in the work force. The emphasis is on results. Therefore, effective good faith efforts should ultimately lead to tangible results. **Examples of good faith efforts include extra outreach efforts in recruiting, an extension of a job offer to a qualified minority or female candidate even though the offer may be rejected or retention strategies such as mentoring or training and development opportunities for female and minority employees.**

If there is a goal, and no qualified minority or female applicant is available, can I hire someone else?
The affirmative action program does not require the university to hire a person who lacks qualifications to perform the job successfully, or to hire a less qualified person in preference to a more qualified one.

If there is no goal, am I free to hire anyone I want?
We are still required to provide equal opportunity for all openings. That is, we must consider for employment qualified applicants and make selections from that group of applicants. As an equal opportunity employer, UMass Boston welcomes qualified applicants for hire or for promotion. Decisions regarding hiring, promotion, training, compensation, discharge, and other employment-related matters must be made on the basis of qualifications and be nondiscriminatory with regard to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, disability, Vietnam era veteran, or other protected veteran status.

Who can I contact with questions in regard to affirmative action goals or programs?
The Office of Diversity and Inclusion
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