To: Rice Faculty and Staff
From: President David W. Leebron
Re: Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action

I write to you to reaffirm Rice University’s commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

As a federal contractor, Rice University is obligated to take Affirmative Action toward recruiting, hiring, and advancing women; members of underrepresented minority groups; individuals with special veterans status; and the disabled in hiring and promotion. Even absent any legal obligation, a commitment to inclusiveness remains vital to our success as an educational institution of the highest caliber. The Rice Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution concerning cultural inclusiveness in September 1997 and reaffirmed the University’s commitment against discrimination in a resolution in Fall 2002. I have attached copies of these resolutions, as well as Rice’s Affirmative Action policy.

At Rice, we have made some visible progress in expanding this diversity. Faculty, staff, and students who bring diverse points of view, different skills, interests, and life experience contribute to the educational mission of the university. Please join with me and the Board of Trustees to continue this progress by:

- reaffirming the worth and dignity of each member of our community by according respect and courtesy to all on campus, regardless of position or office.
- taking care not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or veteran status.
- increasing our efforts in employment to recruit and retain those who are underrepresented in our campus community: women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and individuals with special veterans status. We need to pay particular attention to making reasonable accommodations to provide access for persons with disabilities.
- moving beyond personal biases, preferences, and preconceived notions so we can work more harmoniously and fruitfully with one another.
- remaining alert to, and seeking to eliminate, differing perceptions or treatment in classroom and other academic interactions so that all students can participate and perform to their fullest potential.
Individuals who feel that they have suffered discrimination have the assurance that they can bring the matter to the Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Programs without fear of intimidation or reprisal by colleagues or persons in authority. Rice University prohibits retaliation against any employee or student for filing a complaint or serving as a witness in the investigation of a complaint.

The progress that Rice makes in achieving an effective faculty, staff, and student body that includes people from many different backgrounds requires the combined efforts of us all. Accordingly, I remind deans and department chairs, faculty, managers, and supervisors of their critical role in building and maintaining a diverse and dynamic university.

Attachments (3)

DWL/syg
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THE RICE UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT TO CULTURAL INCLUSIVENESS

Rice University is convinced that it can most effectively carry out its “Enduring Vision” in a learning community drawn from the full range of ethnic and cultural traditions represented in Houston, our nation and throughout the world. Further, in the spirit of academic excellence, the University recognizes its educational responsibility to prepare its students to live, work, serve, and lead in our increasingly diverse society.

The Rice commitment to cultural inclusiveness, therefore, is not represented merely in numerical terms. It is much more. It represents a way of thinking, seeing, and behaving that demonstrates a learned understanding and respect for all ethnic and cultural traditions. Cultural inclusiveness at Rice embodies the University’s commitment to an atmosphere of civility and rich dialogue where the various traditions can contribute to a sharing of perspectives in the pursuit of scholarship and truth. It includes the acknowledgement – both individual and collective – of those ethnic or racial groups whose contributions to the history of our nation and the University deserve far more recognition than they have been accorded in the past. It also includes the recognition and celebration of the cultural differences that bind together the Rice community.

September 18, 1997
POLICY NO. 815-96

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

It is the policy of Rice University to attract qualified individuals of diverse backgrounds to its faculty, staff and student body. Accordingly, Rice University does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or veteran status in its admissions, its educational programs, or employment of faculty or staff. The University takes affirmative action in employment by recruiting, hiring and advancing

• women
• members of a minority group
• Vietnam era veterans, and
• special disabled veterans

The Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Programs is responsible for administering these programs. The Director reports directly to the President of the University. The AA/EEO office develops and maintains a systematic procedure of reporting and monitoring to insure full compliance with this policy. Complaints that allege discrimination or harassment should be brought to the attention of the Director. The Director will investigate the complaint and recommend ways to resolve the problem.

November 30, 1973
Revised: June 12, 1975
Revised: July 12, 1982
Revised: September 3, 1987
Revised: December 10, 1990
Revised: February 28, 1992
Revised: February 1, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Resolution Reaffirming the University’s Policy Regarding Non-discrimination

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees reaffirms and upholds the University’s policy as stated below:

It is the policy of Rice University to attract qualified individuals of diverse backgrounds to its faculty, staff and student body. Accordingly, Rice University does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or veteran status in its admissions, its educational programs, or employment of faculty or staff. Therefore,

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees commends the actions of the President, the Faculty Council, the Rice Student Association and other student-lead organizations regarding their reaffirmation and support of the University’s policy regarding non-discrimination.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the appropriate officers of the University be and hereby are, authorized and directed, for and in the name of the University, to take such actions and execute and deliver such documents as may be deemed necessary or desirable by such officers to effectuate the foregoing resolution.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that any prior actions taken by such officers that are within the scope of the foregoing resolutions are hereby ratified, confirmed and approved.