EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Overview

1. Affirmative Action is based on recognition and acceptance of the fact that the adoption of an EEO policy alone cannot ensure complete fairness and equity within the workplace and the AEU. Further steps are needed to relieve the effects of past discrimination, to eliminate present discrimination and to ensure that future discrimination does not occur. The notion of equity implies that everyone should have equal access to the decision making processes and the right to an equal level of service. There is an obligation on all of us to ensure that this is the case within DET, CIT and within the AEU. Affirmative Action refers to the range of positive or active measures undertaken by an organisation to achieve the goal of equal opportunity for members of a target group.
2. Within a Union context, this should mean identifying appropriate steps to ensure equal representation and participation in all the activities of the organisation. These steps can range from conducting a recruitment campaign to increase Indigenous membership, to introducing special training courses to encourage women to take a more active part in their Union, to establishing specialist committees or Executive positions tied to representation by members of designated groups.
3. An Affirmative Action program is a positive and continuing program aimed at securing EEO for groups identified as having experienced and/or continuing to experience discrimination.
4. Affirmative Action plans are developed to implement the broad goals and objectives of an Affirmative Action program. These plans concentrate on all elements of an organisation's personnel policy and management practices, and provide for the adoption of a range of results oriented approaches designed to remove discriminatory practices.

Women in Education

1. Within the AEU, the representation of women at all levels has depended more on the commitment of individuals than on any acknowledged need of the organisation or stated policy. In this situation, the future representation of women in proportion to their numbers in the membership cannot be assured.
2. In the EEO policy of the AEU it is essential that the needs of women be specifically addressed. The AEU recognises that other designated groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and the disabled, are under represented in DET, CIT and in participation within the Union.

Affirmative Action for Women in Education

The following procedures are to be pursued by the Union in the interests of EEO within education:

1. Women must have positive support from senior management and their peers to plan their careers and seek advancement within the education sector.
2. The system must publicise its EEO goals and make information readily available. To this end:
   (a) the Chief Executives of DET and the Canberra Institute of Technology must regularly and publicly support policies and programs aimed at achieving EEO.
   (b) Staff Equity Contact Officers must have sufficient resources to make regular contact with women at their workplace and to provide advice and counselling.
   (c) appropriate professional learning programs, including workplace based programs must be readily available. These programs should include appropriate speakers from outside Education such as senior women officers of the Public Service Commission and Office of the Status of Women. Where these programs are held at a central location, steps must be taken to ensure that all workplaces send at least one representative.
   (d) a senior person must be identified within each workplace to take responsibility for development and implementation of EEO goals.
3. Statistical analysis must be conducted and its results reported on a regular basis. Such analysis must include: the proportion of women by sector and teaching category; the

numbers of women in promotions positions at all levels; the numbers of women seeking promotion.

4. The EEO program must be developed to remedy under representation disclosed by the statistical analysis.
5. Recruitment and selection policies and practices must be reviewed to identify those which may discriminate against women and the EEO program adjusted to remedy these.
6. The system must ensure that women are represented on all committees, task forces, working parties including all selection panels, appeal panels etc.

Affirmative Action for Women in the AEU

The following procedures are to be pursued by the AEU in the interests of increasing the participation of women in the Union:

1. All AEU staff, Executive and Council are required to give positive support to the EEO policy of the Union.
2. The position of Assistant to the Secretary (Professional) for the Union will be maintained to actively support implementation of the policy within the decision making structures and at the Branch level of the Union.
3. The Union will continue to develop union training courses relevant and accessible to women members at Sub-Branch level. In addition, women members will be encouraged to attend Union training courses.
4. Reduced teaching loads for members of Sub-Branch Executives should be pursued to facilitate communication and to reduce the structural discrimination facing women which results from the workloads involved in these positions.
5. Regional interaction between Branches should be pursued in order to broaden the support for individual members and Sub-Branch Executives.
6. Each Sub-Branch is encouraged to appoint at least one Staff Equity Contact Officer and/or Women's Contact Officer at the beginning of each school year. This may be one person who combines the role.
7. The Federal AEU will continue to hold an Annual Women's Conference.
8. The positions of Assistant to the Secretary (Professional) and Assistant to the Secretary (Industrial) should be appointed in such a way as to maintain gender balance.