Question 4: Affirmative Action plans and practices – What can we expect in terms of implementation and hiring of faculty and staff?

What is the problem/situation? An Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) is an equal opportunity tool for management, which consists of different reports and analytics based on employee and job applicant data. By federal regulation, federal contractors (receiving contracts at or above a certain amount) are required to produce an AAP on an annual basis that includes analytics for ethnic minority identity and binary sex/gender identity data. Other, less detailed analytics are required for disability identity and protected veteran identity. A university work group, convened by Equity and Access Services, has been redeveloping VCU’s AAP structure over the past three years, from a “single establishment” plan encompassing all units and 10,000+ positions grouped in 11 “Job Groups” based on EEO codes, to 25 “multi-establishment” plans with positions placed in 100+ Job Groups according to similar responsibilities, opportunities, and compensation. A redeveloped AAP structure, provides more meaningful analytics for divisions and schools to monitor the diversity of applicant pools and to allocate resources to target recruitment efforts accordingly. Over time the analytics can be used to detect trends related to representation in VCU’s workforce, assess effectiveness of recruitment efforts, and identify individual, institutional, or systemic barriers to progress toward “Placement Goals.”

What does the literature/research have to say about it? Underrepresentation in the higher education workforce nationally, particularly in tenured faculty job groups, continues largely unabated, while representation in the college student population is increasing. Representation and pay equity must be examined according to “overlapping identities” and by Job Group/level/position type. For sex/gender data collection, 33% of transgender individuals indicate they would prefer not to be assigned to either male or female gender (2015 U.S. Transgender Survey). The “movement” to expand upon or remove gender identifiers will continue to gain momentum, and employers are encouraged to carefully consider their practices around gender identity. Still, for now sex/gender data analysis and reporting for AAP purposes remains based on binary gender. While employers are not prohibited from offering nonbinary options for self-identification, any such nonbinary identifications would have to be disregarded for the AAP data and even potentially replaced by binary identifications by the employer.

What does the work group recommend?

1. Complete redevelopment of the university’s AAP structure.
2. Ensure data integrity.
3. Integrate the AAP process into systems, training, and communication channels.
4. Provide role-appropriate and general knowledge-building opportunities.
5. Systematically assess and report on the effectiveness of measures to address underrepresentation and make Placement Goal Progress
APPENDIX - P4 Question 4


http://www.ustransssurvey.org/


https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/diversifying-faculty

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