The Equal Opportunity Office, with its three parts, is an integral part of the diversity efforts of the University of Washington. It has overall responsibility for UW adherence to civil rights laws in terms of policy and practice, plays an essential role in the provision of disability accommodations to students, employees and members of the public, and offers a wide range of programs targeted at but not limited to the special needs of women.

I. The Equal Opportunity Office

Federal contractors are, as a condition of receiving federal contracts, required to comply with Presidential Executive Order 11246 as amended. The Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) is responsible for preparing an annual affirmative action plan regarding employment, with a focus on race, ethnicity and sex and including a myriad of special reports on various facets of the employment process. This report must be up to date each year in order to assure satisfactory review whenever the U.S. Department of Labor Office for Federal Contract Compliance chooses to conduct an audit. Failure to comply with these requirements can theoretically lead to disbarment from federal contracts and in reality to imposition of additional odious and intensive auditing requirements. The employment data used by many units in the diversity appraisal are gathered and presented in a manner designed to meet strict federal auditing requirements.

EOO prepares reports for other federal and state agencies as well. For example, the U.S. Department of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) annually requires a number of employment reports focusing on the race and sex of employees.

State law requires that the affirmative action plan be submitted as well to the Washington State Department of Personnel for audit and subsequent review and approval by the Governor’s Affirmative Action Policy Committee (GAAPCom). Washington law requires that affirmative action efforts include consideration of persons with disabilities, Vietnam era veterans, disabled veterans, and persons 40 and over. These groups are therefore included in the affirmative action plan of the University of Washington.

On a decennial basis, Washington State Office of Financial Management meets with various state agencies and institutions to discuss how race and other affirmative action data will be collected. Both Student Affairs and EOO participate in these meetings. Recent discussion has centered on how the state should collect data that is comparable to the 2000 census and its inclusion for the first time of multiracial categories. When the federal government is able to determine how or whether it is going to change its reporting requirements, EOO will match any new requirements. It is our hope that all federal agencies will make changes, if any, at the same time; there are signs, however, that Education (IPEDS reports) is not coordinating with Labor (affirmative action plans).
newly released census data on occupations, used in the affirmative action plan, does include multiracial categories. It may be helpful for the diversity appraisal process to include a discussion of how the University of Washington will approach bridging to any new data collection approaches.

EOO has responsibility for the collection of affirmative action data from newly hired employees and for decennial resurveys of employees to respond to federal or state changes in category definitions and to allow for changes in status (e.g., disability and veteran’s status). Race/ethnicity data are collected in some detail, then rolled up to meet the current reporting requirements. For example, individuals are encouraged to indicate which Asian groups they identify with and whether they are of more than one race; these data are then forced into current reporting formats as required, but the underlying detail is preserved.

EOO is responsible for analyzing all and collecting some affirmative action data on applicants. At this time, EOO collects all faculty data and most professional staff data; the latter will be collected as part of the new UW Hires project as soon as it goes live. Classified data are already collected by Human Resources, then sent to EOO for analysis.

Faculty applicant data collection has become part of a larger effort to improve the faculty hiring process. In brief, departments send ads for new faculty positions to EOO, where the ads are reviewed for compliance with several federal laws, then posted on the web. Departments are reminded at that time to use the Faculty Toolkit and other resources available to them. Staff provides training to academic departments in how to use the web-based data collection system and to comply with federal regulations regarding wording of advertising.

There is considerable interest in the departments in using faculty applicant data to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach. As this approach is considered, it is important to keep in mind that, by federal law, applicants must be told that response to the request for affirmative action data is voluntary and failure to respond will not affect their application; with this mandatory introduction, only 65% of applicants furnish information on their race, sex, etc. Caution is therefore in order when using applicant data.

EOO reviews faculty hire packets before they are sent to the Regents for final approval. This review checks for compliance with legal matters. The overall faculty hiring process stresses that responsibility for faculty diversity rests first with the faculty itself and then with the deans to assure that their faculty are making appropriate efforts in this area. Deans take this responsibility seriously and do not depend on EOO to “police” their actions.

Per Gubernatorial Executive Order 89-01 and various federal regulations and court opinions, the University requires Prevention of Sexual Harassment training for its employees. The training is tailored to the specific employee group. EOO provides training to new employees not in the medical centers and to medical residents. (The medical centers include sexual harassment issues in their employee training; Vice Provost
Steven Olswang presents sessions to new faculty and teaching assistants; and Ombudsman Lois Price Spratlen visits all academic departments for training sessions on a three to four year cycle.) This training has developed over time to include materials on a broad range of civil rights issues.

As part of its contribution to general UW diversity efforts, EOO provides support to the Advisory Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues, and Advisory Committee on Disability Issues of the larger diversity committee. In addition, EOO participates on: the Faculty Senate Special Committees on Minority Faculty Affairs and on Women; the President’s Advisory Committee on Women; and the University Human Resources Committee. It will be part of the upcoming NCAA review of the intercollegiate athletics program to assure focus on diversity issues. EOO provides special reports on employment patterns to all of these groups as requested.

EOO maintains a web page with information about equal opportunity and affirmative action. The workforce display and utilization analysis portions of the affirmative action plan are displayed, with data from October 1997 to the present. Other features include guidelines for fair pre-employment inquiries, and required non-discrimination policy statements to ensure equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation. In addition to materials directly produced by its staff, EOO maintains web pages for general campus purposes: e.g., the report of the President’s Ad hoc Committee on Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian and Transgender Issues, the Bradford report, the Faculty Toolkit, and faculty advertisements.

EOO staff provides advice to the University community on affirmative action and equal opportunity matters.

EOO participates in the Interinstitutional Committee of Affirmative Action Officers and the Pac-10 Affirmative Action Officers, and the Assistant Provost is a member of the Governor’s Affirmative Action Policy Committee.

The Assistant Provost serves as the University Title IX Coordinator (sex discrimination), Title VI Coordinator (race and ethnic discrimination) and Affirmative Action Coordinator, all positions required by federal or state regulations and with responsibility for policy oversight.

II. Disability Services Office

Responsibility for accommodating members of the University community who are disabled is shared by a number of offices. Disability Services Office (DSO) is specifically responsible for determining and arranging accommodations for: academic employees including faculty and graduate student employees; staff employees; members of the public; and students of Educational Outreach and other non-matriculated programs. The office serves as well as a resource to job applicants and prospective students.
DSO provides direct services to employees with disabilities in need of assistive equipment, interpreters, readers, and facilities modification. Staff provides consultation and disability management as needed to Human Resources for employees with complex disabling conditions. DSO staffs perform job analyses as required for case management; a Job Analysis Index is maintained for use by Human Resources and UW departments. For employees who can no longer perform the essential functions of their positions, DSO manages a University-wide alternative job search in an attempt to identify and place the employee in a vacant position for which the employee qualifies.

DSO works to coordinate disability accommodation policy and practice in three significant ways. It facilitates the Disability Accommodation Resource Team (DART). This group consists of representatives of Human Resources (Benefits, Employment, and Policy), Workers Compensation, the Attorney General, and DSO. DART staffs complex disability cases. DSO initiated and continues monthly meetings of the staff who provide accommodations to students on the Bothell, Tacoma, and Seattle campuses and through Educational Outreach. This coordinated effort assures that the same standards are used for all students to determine and provide accommodations. DSO also initiated and chairs monthly meetings of the Disability Policy Group, consisting of representatives from DSO, Human Resources, and the Attorney General. Disability law is relatively new and constantly evolving; all of these groups allow the University to be responsive to the needs of members of its communities, while at the same time assuring consistency across a large institution and conformity to an ever-changing legal environment.

UW responsibility for overseeing the purchase of equipment and services for disability accommodation is assigned to DSO. It is responsible on the Seattle campus for recommending capital expenditures to improve accessibility; Planning and Budgeting then funds the projects.

DSO staff participates in many UW committees regarding disability issues. The Standing Accessibility Committee reviews plans for new construction and major remodels, and recommends priorities for improved physical accessibility. The Committee on Accessibility at UW Medical Center has a similar function for that facility. Staff is part of the ad hoc committee studying standards for accessible web pages.

The interpreter coordinator is part of the DSO staff. She arranges interpreters and real time captioning for all University units on all three campuses except for the two medical centers. The creation of the position of interpreter coordinator was an important one in showing the Deaf, Deaf-Blind & hard of hearing communities the value placed by UW on access. This effort has paid off in that these communities are aware that when they have opportunity to interact with the University of Washington, their access needs will be addressed. The coordinator has also engaged in significant efforts regarding student development and retention. In cooperation with students, she has established a weekly “signing lunch” on campus. Students and staff who know sign language are invited to attend, bring a brown bag lunch and meet others who sign. It has proven to be a great social, networking
time for students and staff. This sort of activity enables students to feel at home and a part of the university community. The provision of interpreting and captioning services for presentations, organization meetings, etc. also enables students to have access not only in their academic settings but the other crucial “university experience” venues and leads to retention.

DSO staff provides training on disability accommodation issues to Human Resources staff, individual departments, and on an as needed basis. It participates as well in the Training and Development “Employment Law” class, held semiannually.

Staff members are active in the community. For example, staff takes a leadership role in the Disability Employer Accommodation Network (DEAN) with other public employers; this group provides continuing education in disability case management. The interpreter coordinator has continuing involvement with agencies in the community such as Abused Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services, Hearing Speech & Deafness Center and Lighthouse for the Blind Deaf-Blind Program, and the Lighthouse for the Blind’s Deaf-Blind Program. This involvement has served to strengthen and maintain that rapport and has resulted in invitations to participate on a panel discussing how UW has addressed access needs for Deaf employees.

The Assistant Provost serves as the University ADA Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator, positions required by federal regulation. She also provides a level of appeal to students and faculty unhappy with offered academic accommodations and to other members of the University community, from staff to patients, who question disability accommodations offered to them.

III. Women’s Center

The Women’s Center offers a variety of programs targeted at but not limited to women.

Since 1998, Making Connections has coached and counseled high school students when it is most needed—the teenage years. Pre-college is a time when decisions are being made regarding the student's future. Making Connections is an outreach effort that is open to all students, but specifically targets girls, students of color, first-generation college-bound students, students from single-income households, and those from immigrant and refugee communities entering their sophomore through senior year of high school. Students are exposed to females and ethnically diverse adult role models serving in Making Connections as staff, mentors, presenters, guest speakers, volunteers, and other leadership positions.

In the 2003-04 academic year, 98% of the participants in Making Connections are female, 56% qualify for free or reduced lunch, 24% have taken or are currently taking ESL classes. Over 50% identify themselves as the first in their family to pursue a college degree. The program participants are from the following racial and ethnic backgrounds:
43% Asian or Asian Pacific Islander American, 30% African or African American, 11% Caucasian, 6% Latina or Mexican American, 6% Multi Racial, 3% Native American.

Making Connections engages students and their families in the college admissions process to increase access and opportunities in higher education. This is done through on-going mentoring, individual counseling, monthly college prep sessions with the Associate Director and Program Coordinator, campus visits, a practice PSAT and SAT session donated by the Princeton Review, and presentations from admissions and financial aid counselors. Parents are invited to quarterly college preparation sessions with local experts.

70% of Making Connections graduates enroll at the University of Washington. Thus far, four have been employed with the UW Women's Center as a part of the work-study program. Currently, two women of color run the Making Connections Program. Both women have extensive experience working with youth, multicultural communities, and in higher education. External Communities

The Re-Entry program is designed to provide students with the information needed to achieve a successful return to college after a significant time away. Prospective students are helped to realize their undergraduate and graduate educational goals. Fall and Spring Orientations to which potential community college transfers are invited provide an opportunity for students from all walks of life and all ages to connect directly with resources from various campus departments, including Admissions, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, and the Office of Minority Affairs. Each orientation includes a keynote speaker who speaks of her/his success as a returning student.

The Re-entry program provides personalized counseling and support to over 500 women and men a year, ranging in age from the mid-20s to the early 70s. Returning students are referred to the Women’s Center from the external community and from campus advisors.

The Lifelong program offers over 400 continuing education classes and workshops to the campus and greater community. Courses include creative arts, personal and professional development, computer training, non-violence and peace, GRE preparation, foreign language and travel, writing, financial success, and fitness.

Academic Success courses assist both high school and postgraduates to accomplish their educational goals. The GRE Prep courses are popular and effective. Additional graduate preparation courses offer help in selecting the appropriate graduate program for each student and present the steps necessary for successful graduate school admission. New SAT Prep courses reach out to high school students providing an opportunity for success in higher education.

The Lifelong Learning Program serves over 2,500 people each year ranging in age from high school to senior citizens. 277 diverse instructors teach these classes. 11% of these instructors are people of color and 4% are male. Classes reach out to an audience of over
60,000 in the greater metropolitan area. On campus specific requests for classes are accommodated, such as self-defense classes offered in the dorms.

The lectures, forums, special presentations, and conferences presented each academic quarter by the Women’s Center provide students, staff, faculty, and community members with opportunities to hear research and perspectives from leading scholars and leaders from campus and the community on a broad range of subjects. Over 1500 people have participated in these events during the last two years.

These programs are self-sustaining or funded by grants and donations. Only two of the six positions in the Center are state funded. Development is therefore an important function of Center staff. Development efforts to date have been quite successful, as reflected in the broad program offerings. In addition to program support, donations have included two scholarships, one for nursing students and one for persons who have experienced domestic violence.

IV. Staff

The staff in these three offices represents diversity on many dimensions--race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, veteran status, country of birth. Our commitment to diversity involves embracing our differences as well as our similarities, on a personal level, as well as into the operations of our programs. We feel privileged and proud to be a part of these important efforts to provide opportunities, equality and social justice to all members of society.