

SPRING 2009

Nick Sanchez—Editor

From the Vice Provost



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE

EOO: Bridging the Gaps

Hello,

Welcome to our first iteration of the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) Newsletter! We felt that this would be a helpful on-line resource to keep you in touch with the many programs and projects associated with the Equal Opportunity Office and to inform you about legislative updates that relate to the legally protected categories of race, sex, sexual orientation including gender expression/identity, national origin, religion, age, disability and veteran's status.

Every quarter we will issue a newsletter that will help connect you to many of the significant efforts underway across campus to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness. A special feature of the newsletter will "Highlight" an individual, department, or organi-



zation on campus that is engaged in an equal opportunity / affirmative action related project, program or class.

Western Washington University is one of the most inspiring places to do equal opportunity type of work. A major reason for this is the tremendous goodwill that exists about fairness and valuing diversity.

In recent years our nation and state have experienced a huge demographic shift in the numbers of English as Second Language (ESL) speakers who are and will be, entering the work force in greater numbers. It is critical that each of us take a moment to reflect if we are as culturally competent as we need to be.

This is an especially appropriate time to appreciate and recognize that differ-

ences enrich our lives, our work, and our institution. On behalf of myself and my staff in the EOO, we want you to know we are appreciative of all your hard work and efforts in this area, and look forward to continuing our work together!

"This is an especially appropriate time to appreciate and recognize that differences enrich our lives, our work, and our institution."

~Dr. Sue Guenter-Schlesinger

Inside this issue:

Veteran Outreach	2
New Campus Maps	2
Dual Career Accommodation	3
Accessible Signage	3
Supreme Court Decision	3
Zero Tolerance: Sexual Harassment	4
EO Office Mission	4

HIGHLIGHT:

Kayla Britt, Intern Equal Opportunity Office



Kayla Britt is currently serving as the EOO Intern. Her work focuses on equal opportunity and affirmative action issues pertaining to student

employees. Kayla believes that student employees should reflect the rich diversity that exists on campus and is developing a proposal to enhance student employment processes.

Kayla is Western's AS Vice President for Diversity, serving in her second term. She was recently recognized at the Women of Color Empowerment Dinner, and received their Annual Award.

Kayla has worked to institute and maintain organizational changes to help in accommodating the growing ethnic minority population on Western's campus. She brings a breadth of knowledge and experience to our EO team!

"Student employees should reflect the rich diversity that exists on campus."

~ Kayla Britt

Veteran Outreach: EO Meets with Local Sailors

As an extension of its “Bridge to Workforce Diversity Program,” the EO Office has reached out to the sailors from the Naval Station Everett.

Working in accord with Naval Station Everett’s Transition Assistance Program (TAP), Nick Sanchez of the EO Office, meets with sailors who have chosen to end their Naval career and seek employment elsewhere. If it were up to Nick, they would all work at WWU, and he meets with them regularly to let them know about employment opportunities at Western. Being a Marine Corps veteran himself, Nick knows the pressure that comes with choosing to leave the military.

For a lot of these young vets, this will be the first time that they have prepared a resume and the first time they may face a formal interview. Nick explains it this way: “I try to provide insight into the application process at



The EO “Bridge to Workforce Diversity” Program reaches out to local sailors.

Western and give them some confidence by letting them know that they are wanted here.”

Nick also understands that the transition from military employment and civilian employment can be made easier with some coaching.

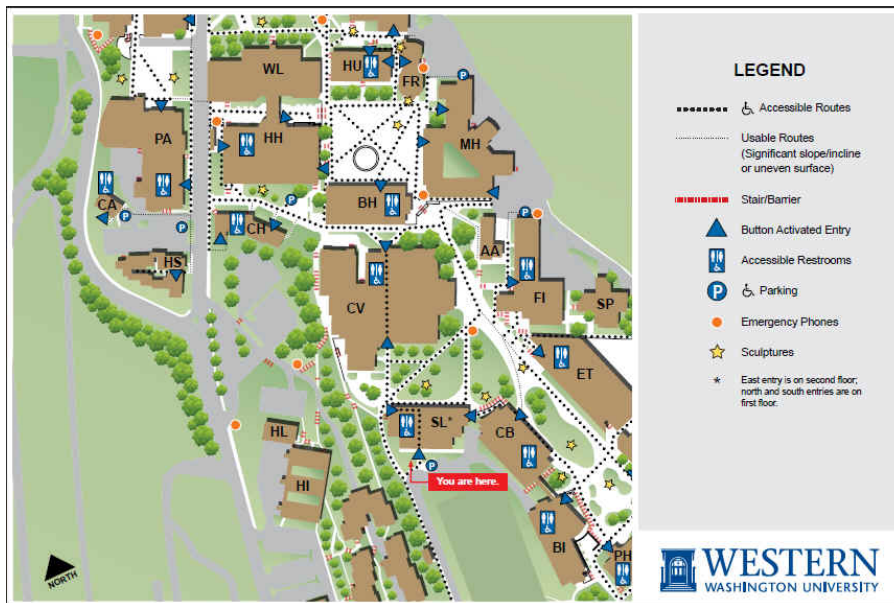
“I let these young servicemen and women know that institutions like the Navy and Western need a lot of the same type of work to be done to com-

plete their respective missions. There are a lot of MOS’s (military occupational specialty) that translate almost seamlessly into the job descriptions and skills needed at our university.”

The ultimate goal is to employ some of these soon-to-be-veterans. Many veterans have learned excellent leadership skills and have often proven themselves extraordinarily prepared for success in the civilian workforce. The Bridge to Workforce Diversity hopes to open wider doors for veteran employment at Western.

“I let these young servicemen and women know that institutions like the Navy and Western need a lot of the same type of work to be done to complete their respective missions.”

~ Nick Sanchez



New Campus Maps

the location for all automatic doors, and for ADA accessible restrooms.

Developing this new accessible campus map was a collaborative effort, involving the Equal Opportunity Office, Facilities and the disAbility Resources for Students Office. We also worked closely with a variety of other individuals and offices on campus, including University Police, Environmental Health and Safety and the Office of Sustainable Transportation. The initial work locating and measuring slopes was done by a graduate student, Matt Saylor, who worked under the supervision of Stefan Freelan, Environmental Studies.

The campus map is just one of the few projects resulting from the campus accessibility survey conducted in 2007-2008 and is part of Western’s new “ADA Transition Plan.”

For the first time, Western will have maps located across campus that are “ADA (Americans with Disability Act) friendly.” In the middle of June, we should start to see the new campus maps and directories replace the old ones all around campus. Not only do these maps reflect changes such as

adding the new Academic Instruction Building, but they also feature “Accessible Routes” (routes deemed accessible by ADA standards), as well as “Usable Routes” (routes not meeting ADA standards, but which are often found to be usable by persons with disabilities). The maps will also show

Dual Career Assistance: Clearer Procedures; More Effective Use

Western's Appointment of Opportunity Policy outlines conditions under which a request may be made to waive the normal search process. One example is "Dual Career Assistance" (DCA) in which a request can be made to consider the spouse or partner of an individual applying for a position at Western or one already employed.

While the university understands the importance of the competitive search process and its impact on the quality and diversity of the workforce, it also

understands that there are select situations where it may be appropriate to waive that requirement.

DCA provides support to faculty and professional staff by allowing their spouse or partner to be considered for employment under very specific circumstances. There must either be an open position available or an identified need (and corresponding resources) for which a position might be created. In addition, there must be a full evaluation of the spouse or partner by the

appropriate faculty and/or staff of the hiring department. DCA is not a guarantee of employment, but rather a process that reflects Western's commitment to exploring options that respond to increasing numbers of academic couples. The Appointment of Opportunity policy and the DCA procedures can be read on the web at: www.wvu.edu/policies



Signs Point People with Disabilities to Accessible Restrooms

In a joint effort with Facilities, The disAbility Resources for Students and Students for Disability Awareness, the Equal Opportunity office is coordinating the installation of approximately 60 new signs that will direct people to restrooms accessible to those with disabilities.

The beauty and history of the buildings here at Western is renown, but what is lesser known is that the age that gives these buildings so much character also causes their restroom facilities to be outdated and many times not up to ADA (Americans with Disabilities) codes for accessibility. The new signs will not only inform

people seeking disability accessible restrooms if the particular restroom is accessible, but in addition, inaccessible restrooms will have signs that direct one to the nearest accessible restroom.

These new signs resulted from the updated ADA campus survey that was conducted last year and was the first of its kind since 1993. This campus wide survey was an exhaustive assessment of accessibility of all buildings at Western. The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) represented by key faculty, staff and stu-



dents, supported signage as a high priority among multiple needs for accessibility enhancements on campus.

It is the aim of Western and the EOO to ensure that the entire campus is accessible to all of our students, faculty and staff. This is just one step toward a much larger goal.

Do you have a suggestion that would make the campus more accessible? If so, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office, (360) 650-3307 TTY: (360) 650-2535.

Supreme Court Reaches Sexual Harassment Decision

The U.S. Supreme Court recently unanimously ruled that the anti-retaliation provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 apply to employees who voluntarily cooperate with an employer's internal investigations, even if the employee didn't initiate the investigation and has filed no formal charge.



In *Crawford v. Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County*, the Supreme Court held that Crawford's participation in the internal investigation was indeed protected opposition of discrimination. The fact that she had responded to someone else's questions, rather than provoking the discussion herself, did not change the fact that

her statements were made in opposition to perceived sexual harassment in the workplace.

"This ruling helps encourage individuals to feel less fearful about participating in an investigation."

~Laura Eckert



Zero Tolerance for Sexual Harassment

Have you signed up for the mandatory Sexual harassment Prevention Training for all employees? If not, you need to. It's WWU policy, and it's the law.

Western's aim has always been to provide a work environment free from discrimination of any kind. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, and WWU has zero tolerance for such behavior. Anyone found to have sexually harassed another is subject to a full range of sanctions, including termination of employment.

According to Diane Brearley, the EO Office Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Coordinator, it is important for you to understand both your rights and responsibilities where sexual harassment is concerned. No



Sexual Harassment Prevention: It's Everybody's Business!

person should have to work in an environment that is sexually hostile and WWU's policy on sexual harassment ensures that you do not have to.

You can learn about what sexual har-

assment is and what it is not, as well about the discrimination complaint process at Sexual Harassment Prevention Training.

Since 2006, EO Office staff have provided this training to over 2,000 faculty, staff and student employees. Classes are offered frequently and you can sign up at:

<http://west.wvu.edu/training>. Any questions? Call Diane at x3307. Individuals who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment are encouraged to report such incidents to the EO Office.

"It is important for you to understand both your rights and responsibilities where sexual harassment is concerned."

~ Diane Brearley

Meet the EO Staff:

Sue Guenter-Schlesinger, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Equal Opportunity & Employment Diversity

Laura Eckert, J.D.

Senior Executive Equal Opportunity Associate

Nick Sanchez, J.D.

Equal Opportunity/Employment Diversity Specialist

Diane Brearley

Administrative Assistant

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Coordinator

Debra Young

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We welcome your suggestions or comments about our Newsletter!

The Equal Opportunity Office Mission is to:

- Provide leadership to facilitate institutionalizing affirmative action/equal opportunity concepts and actions into everyday operations and activities.
- Advise and assist the Western Washington University community in ensuring an equal opportunity environment, free of discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Assist with proactive efforts to create a diverse workforce of faculty and staff in order to redress imbalances in the workforce and enrich the University experience.
- Advise and assist the University community in developing and appreciating an inclusive community of students, faculty and staff.

We're on the Web!
www.wvu.edu/eoo