General Equal Opportunity Policy and Non-discrimination Statement Updates

University of Maine System Office of Human Resources

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Important Updates to UMS Board of Trustees Policy

Purpose
This memo outlines the effect of recent changes to the University of Maine System (UMS) Board of Trustees Policy 401: General Equal Opportunity.

Background
The General Equal Opportunity policy is based upon various state and federal policies and procedures, and its goal is to lay a foundation for the protection from discrimination and discriminatory harassment to all members of our community.

Effect of the revised policy
The non-discrimination notice used throughout the University System in its various publications and website must be revised to correspond with the Trustees' revised policy.

As indicated below, the revised policy seeks to provide protections to additional classes and/or clarify definitions of current classes already protected by law.

Revised Board of Trustees Policy 401 (new or clarified language shown in bold) effective 11/17/22:
In complying with the letter and spirit of applicable laws and pursuing its own goals of diversity, the University of Maine System does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, familial status, ancestry, age, disability physical or mental, genetic information, veteran or military status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The University provides reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

The University will regard freedom from discrimination and discriminatory harassment as an individual employee and student right which will be safeguarded as a matter of policy. Any employee or student will be subject to disciplinary action for violation of this policy. Retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint of discrimination or harassment
or who is involved in a complaint process will not be tolerated.
Definitions

Gender
A person’s actual or perceived sex, gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression, whether that gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression is different from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned at birth.

Gender identity
A person’s internal sense of being male, female, or something else such as agender, binary, gender fluid, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, or nonbinary. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others and may not be associated with the sex assigned at birth.

Ethnicity
A person’s demographic identity relative to a group of people sharing a culture that includes race, religion, language, and other cultural characteristics including ancestry or country of origin.

Familial status
One or more individuals (who have not attained the age of 18 years) being domiciled with--

- a parent or another person having legal custody of such individual or individuals; or
- the designee of such parent or other person having such custody, with the written permission of such parent or other person, or
- one or more individuals 18 years of age or older who lack the ability to meet essential requirements for physical health, safety, or self-care because the individual or individuals are unable to receive and evaluate information or make or communicate decisions.

The protections afforded against discrimination based on familial status shall apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

Ancestry
A person’s self-identified origin, descent, lineage, nationality group, or country in which the person or person’s parents or ancestors were born.

Disability physical or mental
An individual who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, OR
- has a record of such impairment, OR
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

Military status
An individual who is a veteran, current military personnel, reservist, member of the National Guard, or dependent family member of current military personnel.
Contact
Questions regarding these changes and/or general policy questions may be directed to the Director of Equal Opportunity via email at equal.opportunity@maine.edu or by calling the Office of Equal Opportunity at 207-581-1226.

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