Affirmative Action

What is Affirmative Action?

Affirmative action is a management tool designed to ensure equal employment opportunity. Affirmative Action programs prohibit discrimination in the workplace and seek to remedy past discrimination. As an Affimative Action employer, MIT must produce an annual affirmative action plan based on complete and accurate data about the demographic composition of its workforce.

Why Does MIT Engage in Affirmative Action?

MIT is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. All Institute employees and applicants for jobs at MIT have the right to full and equal consideration on the basis of merit and other relevant, meaningful criteria.

Because MIT receives substantial funding from the US government, it must comply with a range of requirements set forth by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. One of these requirements is that the Institute must take “affirming actions” that support the hiring, promotion, and retention of women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

How Does Affirmative Action Planning Work?

Affirmative Action planning monitors all employment-related actions to prevent discrimination from occurring or to detect it and eliminate it. MIT regularly reviews its workforce to determine if job categories exist in which fewer women, minorities, veterans, and/or individuals with disabilities are employed than are available in the workforce. If such "underutilization" is discovered, placement goals are established for the affected job categories to encourage and concentrate recruitment and outreach efforts, and to help measure the effectiveness of these efforts.

Annually, MIT prepares an Affirmative Action Plan that contains this utilization analysis and records affirmative action efforts to address it. Goals are targets, not quotas, and represent the good faith efforts MIT uses in trying to address underutilization. Good faith efforts not only include our outreach and analysis but also a systematic assessment of the quality and thoroughness of the work to implement programs and ensure equal opportunity.

What can I do?

As a hiring manager?

- Understand the basics of Affirmative Action, including the meaning of “underutilization” and “adverse impact.”
- Examine your decisions around hiring, promotions, and/or assignments to ensure they are in line with the Institute’s equal employment objectives.

As an Affirmative Action Administrator

- Understand your Affirmative Action plans so that you can educate your staff on where underutilization and adverse impact exist within your Affirmative Action unit.
- Utilize Human Resources. HR staff are always available to help you understand your plans and to assist you in recruiting a talented and diverse workforce.

Where can I learn more?

- Contact Wayne Turner, Director, HR Technology (wturner@mit.edu)