

## **The City University of New York**

### **GUIDELINES FOR A UNIVERSITY-WIDE PROGRAM TO COMBAT BIGOTRY AND TO PROMOTE PLURALISM AND DIVERSITY:**

At the January 24, 1994, meeting of the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York, a resolution was recommended by the Committee on Public Affairs to promote University policy to combat bigotry and reaffirm our commitment to pluralism and diversity. Adopted unanimously by the Trustees, the resolution calls upon the Chancellor to report to the Board on steps taken by the University and the colleges in furtherance of the policy by October 31, 1994. The Chancellor was asked to develop guidelines, by the March Board meeting, in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the leadership of the University Faculty Senate and Student Senate. These guidelines are the result of the consultative process.

The adopted Board resolution includes six whereas sections which should be reflected in the development of appropriate plans:

The Board of Trustees of The City University of New York is committed to engendering values and implementing policies that enhance respect for individuals and their cultures.

- This commitment is manifested in the statement of principles and recommendations for action on pluralism and diversity in The City University of New York adopted by the Board on January 20, 1988.
- Our cultural and ethnic diversity – our pluralism – is one of our most valued, significant and important characteristics.
- The student body of The City University of New York now includes students who trace their ancestries to over 130 countries, as well as growing numbers of students who are of color, women, immigrants, older adults and disabled persons.
- We must be proactive in developing programs that both combat bigotry and other biases in all their forms, as well as build on the strengths that our multicultural, multiracial, multigenerational student body offers.
- Such programs should build upon successful models of curricular and co-curricular pursuits developed by both members of the CUNY community, as well as with the advice and assistance of the extended CUNY family of supporters and resource persons.

The development of appropriate plans should be consistent with the By-laws of The Board of Trustees, including but not limited to Article 15.0 Preamble which states:

*\* Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Student participation, responsibility, academic freedom, and due process are essential to the operation of the academic enterprise. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.*

*\* Freedom to learn and to explore major social, political, and economic issues are necessary adjuncts to student academic freedom, as in freedom from discrimination based on racial, ethnic, religious, sex, political and economic differentiations.*

*\* Freedom to learn and freedom to teach are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The concomitant of this freedom is responsibility. If members of the academic community are to develop positively in their freedom; if these rights are to be secure, then students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.\**

By August 1, 1994, the Central Administration and the constituent colleges shall prepare such plans for submission to the Chancellor. Such plans should include a progress report on activities envisioned in the Board's statement on Pluralism and Diversity, University and college programs, schedule and projected, to combat bigotry, and measures taken to advance the January 24, 1994, Board policy resolution. The plans should address the following elements:

1. A description of curricular and extracurricular programs and projects directed at the elimination of bigotry, encouragement of inter-group harmony, tolerance and respect and increasing understanding among members of the higher education community. This may include orientation and training programs, professional development, role-playing sessions, leadership conferences and retreats, lectures and seminars, discussions of pertinent research and scholarship, and improvements in methods for cross-cultural communication.
2. A clear statement of the availability of procedures and channels developed by the college community to expeditiously address allegations of bigotry, as well as intervention and conflict resolution alternatives that may be utilized. This should include how the institution is organized and which offices or individuals are appropriately designated to be accessible.
3. Early communication, by college officials, as the facts warrant, of institutional aversion to acts of bigotry, including the issuance of appropriate and timely statements condemning prejudice or discrimination, consistent with the first amendment. This should be done while simultaneously reaffirming the positive message of the extraordinary importance of a collegiate environment where all participants are protected, regardless of their background or social characteristics.
4. The availability of additional options for dispute resolution, such as mediation and conciliation resources both on or off campus, as needed and where appropriate. This

may include the identification of faculty and staff experts, experienced student leaders, alumni, or resource persons from the greater college and University community. Established offices, however, should remain on the front-line and serve as conduits to campus and external expertise, as deemed appropriate.

5. The dissemination of materials throughout the campus community in order to ensure maximum awareness and to provide visible evidence of an institutional commitment to an intellectually tolerant collegiate environment.

Efforts to combat bigotry and promote diversity should continue to be an inextricable part of the educational mission of the University, not an ancillary activity that is re-invigorated from time to time on ad-hoc basis. Our future efforts should build upon the excellent college and University-wide programs and activities that already exist, which were reviewed by the Board of Trustees, through its Committee on Public Affairs. This will permit CUNY to continue to rejoice in the cultural richness of its varied constituencies, unrivaled in American higher education, and reflective of the University's historic commitment to educate all those who seek upward social and economic mobility. At the same time, the University can continue to build bridges between those constituencies so that the most positive atmosphere for learning may be provided for generations to come.

Board Minutes, March 21, 1994