

Subject: RE: draft memo on institutional discrimination by race and sex at AUI/NRAO
From: Tony Beasley <tbeasley@nrao.edu>
Date: 4/19/19, 17:01
To: James Condon <jcondon@nrao.edu>

Jim,

In the memo, you have described several historical incidents and some recent events which you believe violations of stated policies and principles have occurred. In particular, you have referenced the recruitment of two active staff members who (you appear to believe) unfairly benefitted from minority status and flawed policies. A lot of what you discuss is before my time as Director, and I have no opinion about your claims, or feel any imperative to address what you believe happened. I will note that you invoking specific recruitments the way you have in this memo may violate the confidentiality you agreed to before participating in those processes, and makes it difficult for me to distribute this document for broader discussion.

You have claimed that Jewish, Asian and non-Hispanic white men at the Observatory are being discriminated against, and are afraid to express those views for fear of retaliation. You have certainly expressed this view, but I'm afraid I cannot and will not take this assertion seriously until others come forward. In recent years we have taken several steps to enable people at all levels of the Observatory to express themselves either directly and anonymously regarding their concerns, and frankly you are the only person making claims like this that I encounter. I urge you to encourage these people to come forward confidentially, without concerns about retaliation, talking privately with me.

In section 15 you have made several detailed suggestions about ways to end NRAO Institutional Discrimination, and restore the civil rights of employees in "overrepresented" groups. At this point I believe our "standard language" in recruitments and the workplace are in order and consistent with best practices, and I do not see any changes required there. Your key suggestion is to delete our diversity programs and initiatives (both NRAO and AUI), which you believe violate the stated principles, and remove diversity both as one of our priorities and as one criteria for assessing management and administration. I unequivocally reject this suggestion. I consider our current processes to be well defined and non-discriminatory. I will continue to review all program language and programs and ensure they are consistent with Federal/NSF regulations and intentions.

Jim, I hear what you're saying, I just don't see it the same way. I do not see it a zero-sum game... that improving one group diminishes another. F. Scott Fitzgerald once said "The test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function". NRAO, AUI and frankly most of the 21st century human race are grappling furiously with issues of equity and equality, using ideas like workplace diversity as tools. Many people (including both of us) are aware of the contradictory problems that can be generated when addressing difficult issues. Let's be a first-rate organization and continue to function with important goals and strong programs, noting the difficulties that may be encountered, and scaling

our responses in proportion to the real damage incurred.

I consider this issue closed, thank you for your efforts to voice your concerns and thoughts.

Tony

From: Jim Condon <jcondon@nrao.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 3:51 PM
To: Tony Beasley <tbeasley@nrao.edu>
Subject: Re: draft memo on institutional discrimination by race and sex at AUI/NRAO

Tony:

Unless you believe that there is no institutional discrimination at AUI/NRAO, I think you should "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." Section 15 gives more detailed suggestions.

Jim