

Action plan would end employment, salary discrimination

by Sara Schweider

A tough new plan designed to help the University hang on to its \$18.7 million in federal funds is being worked out by the administration this week.

The plan, called the Affirmative Action Plan (AAP), would equalize all University women's salaries with men's salaries of the same category. The plan would also set specific guidelines for hiring, recruitment and promotion of minority group members and women in the University system, according to Barbara Coffey, equal opportunity coordinator for the University system.

The plan also includes:

1) a computerized survey of all University employees: pay, experience, category of work. The survey is not yet complete, but will permit an analysis to be made which will help the University set goals for itself to improve employment opportunities for minorities and women;

2) an upgrading of minority and female recruitment;

3) guidelines on hiring of minority and female employees; and

4) a review of University promotion practices in regard to women and minority students.

The rough draft must be approved by the three NU campus chancellors and the Board of Regents. Coffey said she "hoped it would be approved and in effect by mid-June."

It will then be submitted to the Federal Office of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to meet requirements of the Office of Civil Rights. HEW withheld federal money from New York's Columbia University last year for failing to have such a plan.

Out of a total budget of \$128.8 million, the University gets \$18.8 million from the federal government that "eventually" could be jeopardized if an AAP is not put into effect at NU.

"... The employer (the University) hereby agrees with the Commission to establish a specific program of affirmative action set forth ... to assure that the recruitment and hiring practices of the employees afford equal employment opportunity for minority groups and women."

"If the plan is approved, it will provide, among other things, equalization of all women's salaries at NU with men's salaries of the same category and experience," Coffey said Monday in an interview.

"This does not mean that men who were to get raises will not get them," she emphasized. "The women will get salary increases to the same level as their male counterparts. Regular salary increases for good work and years of experience will be given both men and women in addition to the increases to women," she said.

There is some question within the administration about the length of time that should be taken to equalize women's salaries with men. Some sources thought pay raises to cure inequities between men and women would be spread out over a three-year period; others said chancellors of the three campuses

would attempt it all at once beginning this July, pending approval of the plan by the regents.

Pay increases for women that are being paid less than men for the same job and amount of experience will be financed within the regular University budget, Coffey said.

"It's just a matter of re-distribution," she said. "We also have to wait for the survey to determine the extent of salary differences, (between men and women) which are not as large as you might expect," she said.

The plan is already written, but awaits completion of a computerized statistical survey of all NU

"... No employee should receive an increase of more than \$600 per annum above his June 1972, salary ... except that an additional adjustment may be made for outstanding performance ..."

employees. The survey will profile each job category and will "show the soft spots in regard to discrimination," according to James Maynard, NU research analyst.

He said questionnaire forms will be mailed out later this week to about 14,000 University employees.

"What we're doing is supplying basic data to determine if a problem exists," (regarding discrimination of females and minorities) Maynard said. He said he hopes to have most of the questionnaire forms back within two weeks and the survey "completed by June 1."

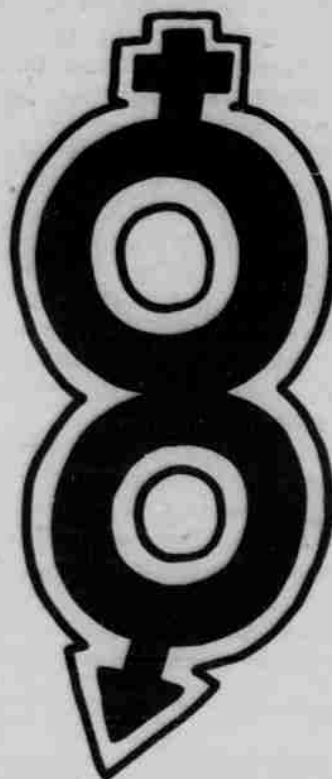
One section begins, "... The University, as the leading educational institution of the State of Nebraska, is determined to take the leadership in applying and carrying out all of the principals of non-discrimination."

The plan also provides that each campus have a person to insure equal opportunities to minorities and women. None of the three campuses presently employs such a person, although Coffey's office is responsible for the entire system, Coffey said.

"The plan provides goals, objectives, timetables—not quotas—on what one can reasonably expect to employ in good faith in employment of females and minorities. We are aware of the difficulties in finding qualified people that fit these objectives. But we must set goals to find minorities and women with the credentials," she said.

She indicated that minority group members with proper credentials can be found in the same place as white people with qualifications for jobs. In addition, the University can look at black colleges, or recruit more blacks into graduate studies programs.

"There are provisions in the AAP that the University will seek out colleges and universities that have a sizeable representation of minority group persons and females both graduate and undergraduate



schools who will be qualified to fill University positions. In contact with these school's professional organizations, special mention will be made that the University is seeking qualified minorities and female personnel," Coffey said.

"Some preferential treatment for women and minorities in regard to vacancies will be recommended," she said. "It is an active program to insure that minorities are hired," she said.

Another part provides for an "employee

"The signing of this agreement is not not an admission by the employer of any violation of said title and statute. It does reflect his desire to take the affirmative action ... to assure that employment opportunities are made available to minority group individuals and women."

scholarship program." The employee scholarship program provides that an employee may take 12 hours per year at the University. The AAP encourages the use of it. It helps individuals upgrade themselves and put themselves into a better position to move to greater responsibilities and better pay," Coffey said.

The plan also includes a review of nepotism policies in the University system, Coffey said. Nepotism is employment of individuals within the same family by the University.

"The nepotism policy was originally established to avoid favoritism between members of the same family who were both working for the University," Coffey said.

The policy change deals with complaints and confusion concerning promotion and pay scales of women whose husbands are also employed by the University—and vice versa. "The policy is being revised to assure that it does not work to the disadvantage of women," she said.

The AAP is the result of a long process of legislation, both federal and state, beginning with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Coffey said.

"Executive orders under Johnson and Nixon have put teeth in the Civil Rights Act," she said. Because the University receives federal money, it must adhere to contracts of compliance under the Health, Education and Welfare Department (HEW)."

The senior contract compliance officer of the Office of Civil Rights, which is a part of HEW, visited NU in March, 1971, and "advised you (the University) to strongly proceed," Coffey said.

Shortly thereafter, the job of Equal Opportunity Coordinator for the NU system was created, and Coffey actively began in that capacity in Nov., 1971.

In Feb., 1972, the University voluntarily negotiated an agreement with the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission pledging "certain assurances that there will be no discrimination in

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