



Ozarka College

Retention Action Plan

Statement of Intent

It is the intent and goal of Ozarka College to retain enrolled or employed African Americans and other members of minority groups as students, faculty, and staff. Through its policies and actions, the College will maintain a supportive environment which promotes the success of all students and employees.

All students and employees, both full-time and part-time, will be treated equally without regard to race, color, gender, religion, ethnic origin, age, marital status, or disability, unless one of those factors is a bona fide occupational qualification. In keeping with its Affirmative Action Plan, the College will consider only the availability and qualifications of individuals in exercising its hiring and recruiting responsibilities.

When African Americans and other members of minority groups enroll or are employed, other employees and students will conduct themselves in accordance with established policy in all day-to-day relations and shall not, by word or action, deprecate another individual or interfere with his or her performance because of race, color, gender, religion, ethnic origin, age, marital status, or disability.

Objectives

1. The overall purpose of Ozarka College's Retention Action Plan is to demonstrate its active commitment to a policy of equal opportunity and, in particular, to provision of support and services necessary to enhance retention of African Americans and other members of minority groups as students and employees.
2. The college will uniformly apply rules and regulations concerning employment, including, but not limited to, equality of wages, advancement, and promotion to ensure compliance with federal Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action guidelines and regulations.
3. The College will also uniformly apply rules and regulations regarding admissions. As an open admissions institution, Ozarka College admits as students all individuals with a high school diploma or GED or, in the case of concurrent enrollment, those high school students who have been recommended by their counselor and principal or superintendent. Scores on such instruments as the ACT or ASSET tests will be used solely for placement of students into English, mathematics, and/or reading courses and not as a basis for denying admission to any student.
4. Retention of students and employees who are African Americans or members of other minority groups will equal or exceed the retention rates of Caucasian students and employees.

Related Ozarka College Policies

Board Policy 2.00 mandates the promotion of effective employee relations based on the development, communication, and administration of uniform personnel policies and procedures. All College managers are expected to promote employment of individuals based on their ability to perform needed tasks. Individuals are to be evaluated solely on the basis of their performance of assigned duties and responsibilities and are to be compensated equitably. Individuals shall be treated at all times with consideration and respect, and employees are expected to view their work with a sense of personal responsibility and loyalty.

Board Policy 2.13 states that non-renewal of full-time faculty appointments occurs only for disciplinary and performance reasons or for reduction in force because of declining enrollments. Adjunct appointments are for one semester only. In practice, failure to renew adjunct appointments when similar courses are needed is rare and occurs only for performance reasons.

Board Policy 2.30 recognizes that employees deserve the respect and cooperation of those with whom they work. To this end, the College emphasizes the need for a quality work environment free of harassment and prejudice of any kind. Employees are specifically prohibited from making statements or taking actions that are potentially offensive and embarrassing to other employees, students, or visitors. Failure to adhere to normal standards of courtesy and consideration may lead to disciplinary action. Any experience or observation of harassment or prejudice of any kind at the College must be immediately reported to the College Affirmative Action Officer and the President.

Board Policy 2.35 describes conditions for College reimbursement of expenses connected to continuing professional development, a benefit available to all employees. All employees are encouraged to improve job performance by staying current in a field and by strengthening existing knowledge and skills. Employees may receive reimbursement for courses taken at other colleges or universities and for professional seminars. In addition, all employees and members of their immediate family may enroll in courses at Ozarka at no tuition cost.

Board Policy 4.02 states the College's assumption of responsibility to offer basic academic skills instruction and services to assist students who are not adequately prepared for college-level work to gain the skills and knowledge necessary for success in their program of study, entry into the job market, or transfer to a four-year institution of higher education. When students demonstrate through diagnostic testing or classroom performance that they do not possess the basic skills and knowledge necessary to complete the desired course or program successfully, they may be enrolled in developmental education. In addition, the College provides personal and small-group tutorial services in its Learning Laboratory and through its federally-funded Student Support Services program (open to low-income, first-generation, and/or handicapped students). Financial aid counseling is also available to students to ensure their understanding of becoming a financial aid recipient. The College provides career counseling to potential students and to current students to assist them in making program and career choices that are realistic and congruent with their interests and aptitudes.

Board Policy 4.21 mandates direct personal contact between faculty academic advisors and students as key to retention. Advisors assist each advisee with registration to assure enrollment in courses which support adequate progress toward completion of that student's academic objectives. Advisors also refer students experiencing academic difficulty to the counselor, Learning Lab, or Student Support Services, as appropriate.

Board Policy 4.25 requires faculty to adhere to College policy regarding discrimination in all interactions with students. Cases of perceived harassment or discrimination are to be reported promptly to the Personnel Officer, who will investigate and take appropriate corrective action, if necessary.

Board Policy 5.30 states the purpose of counseling services at the College. All students may obtain individual and/or group counseling in such areas as identifying abilities or occupational interests, developing realistic educational or career plans, improving study skills, working through personal matters, interpersonal relationships, and other concerns. Career opportunity information is offered to all students without regard to race, color, gender, religion, ethnic origin, age, marital status, or disability. Students are encouraged to explore the broad spectrum of curriculum and career choices available to them without prejudice.

Communications

The President of Ozarka College, or designee, shall undertake the following steps to ensure that all employees are advised of and understand the College's policy of non-discrimination and its interest in actively and affirmatively providing equal opportunity to all students and employees.

1. A copy of this Retention Action Plan shall be made available to each employee, together with a memorandum from the President stressing the firm commitment of Ozarka College to enforce it.
2. The Plan shall be included and thoroughly reviewed by the Affirmative Action Officer in orientation of each new employee on entry of duty.
3. The Plan shall be prominently displayed on the employee bulletin board.
4. The plan shall be made known to individuals involved in the recruitment of both students and personnel.

Implementation

The President, with the assistance of the Affirmative Action Officer, shall be responsible for implementation of the Retention Action Plan. Duties include:

1. Reviewing and evaluating reports on the retention of students and employees who are African Americans or members of other minority groups.

2. Reporting annually to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and to the Ozarka College Board of Trustees on the retention of students and employees who are African Americans or members of other minority groups. ADHE will then communicate results to the appropriate legislative bodies, as required in Act 1091 of 1999.