

Minority Impact Statement

In 1991, Chancellor Stukel introduced a policy requiring that "all proposals for new programs and policies (both academic and general), be accompanied by a minority impact statement." The initial memo of 1991 specified that the minority impact statement (1) identify any disproportionate or unique impact of proposed policies or programs on UIC's minority students, staff, or faculty; (2) provide a rationale for the existence of programs or policies having an impact on minorities; and, (3) cite evidence of consultation with minority groups in cases where a policy or program had identifiable impact. The term "minority" refers to females; persons with disabilities; individuals who are gay, lesbian or bisexual (if known); Latinos; African Americans and Native Americans.

UIC's increasing commitment to a multicultural environment and increased educational opportunities for minorities has prompted continuance of the minority impact statement policy. As with many policy statements, the original memorandum has generated a number of questions, especially surrounding the questions of *when* and *to whom* it applies. MIS-Document A (attached) attempts to answer some of the most frequently asked questions pertaining to the minority impact statement. While MIS-Document A is a step in the right direction, we feel that an additional step is necessary in order to implement the MIS policy as effectively but unobtrusively as possible. Therefore, **we are asking that each Dean, Director, and Vice Chancellor assign one member from their unit to be in charge of coordinating and/or overseeing the minority impact policy.** The Office of Academic Affairs will meet periodically with these designated individuals for familiarization with the complete minority impact statement process. We ask that each unit submit the name of their designated MIS Officer by March 17, 1995. At this time, we will schedule a date for our first meeting.

MIS-DOCUMENT A: GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE MINORITY

IMPACT STATEMENT

MIS-Document A addresses key facets of the MIS (Minority Impact Statement) as they relate to coverage and implementation. The relative newness of the MIS policy means that other questions will arise as implementation of the policy progresses. Questions should be addressed to David L. Torres, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (U20247@UICVM, 413-3472).

It is important that the spirit of the UIC-MIS policy not be lost in rhetoric or technicality. The spirit of the policy is simple and straightforward -- we want to ensure that, whenever we introduce programmatic changes at UIC, that these do not conflict with our commitment to a multicultural environment and/or fair and equitable access to educational opportunities for minorities. In general, a rule of reason standard should be applied in assessing (1) when the policy should apply and (2) in weighing the need for a new policy versus its impact. At minimum, the UIC-MIS policy compels us to confront and discuss the issue of equal opportunity. Hopefully, it will go beyond this to foster the growth of Diversity at UIC.

INTENT OF THE MINORITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The UIC Minority Impact Statement policy strives to ensure that the university, through its policies and procedures, does not unfairly trammel the interests of students, faculty and staff from under-represented groups. The key phrases here are *unfairly trammel* and *groups*. By "unfairly trammel" we make reference to policies or procedures that may be biased, unjust, unethical or inequitable as these pertain to the collective interests of members from under-represented groups. There are no concrete measurements for what constitutes bias, unjust or unethical treatment, or inequities. Rather we must rely on rule of reason and professional judgment.

By "groups" we refer to the fact that the UIC-MIS policy does not focus on the individual, or on isolated instances, but rather, on policies and procedures *affecting classes or groups of individuals beyond a single occurrence*. Because the university maintains high standards and, for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness, organizational control, it will always be the case that some individual interests are sacrificed for the betterment of the collective interest. Isolated instances or acts against the individual are not covered by the UIC-MIS policy unless they can be shown to have implications for affecting the classes or groups of individuals designated herein.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "POLICY"

The dictionary definition of policy is a "course of action, procedure or standard designed for the sake of expediency, facility or predictive of success, directly or indirectly affecting classes or

groups of individuals beyond a single occurrence." Policy, as an umbrella term, also encompasses the term "program," which can be defined as any activity that makes repeated use of university resources, including budgetary resources. For purposes of the MIS policy, internal office procedures, personnel decisions affecting one individual, so long as they follow UIC personnel policies, and non-recurring activity are not covered under the definition of "policy" or "program."

WHAT IS MEANT BY "IMPACT"

The MIS policy is anchored not to the concept of "impact" so much as to the concept of *disproportionate impact*. The university's interest is to ensure that one group or another does not bear an unacceptable burden as a result of policies or programs. We cannot guarantee that all policies will be group-neutral; however, through adherence to the UIC policy, we *can* commit to thinking out the implications of program or policy changes, identifying potential disparate effects and/or inequities, and adopting only those changes that are justified as necessary for the betterment of UIC as a whole.

WHAT GENERAL PHILOSOPHY SHOULD GUIDE THE REVIEW PROCESS?

New policies or programs should be scrutinized for (1) their probable effect; (2) their tendencies; and (3) their objectives, so far as these relate to the questions of who will be affected and how they will be affected. The social and political well-being of the UIC community should be the standard against which these areas are weighed. If new policies and/or programs enhance the social and political well-being of the UIC community, these effects should be duly noted (and applauded); if they detract from such well-being, the introduction of new policies or programs should be debated thoroughly and allowed to exist only upon a showing of necessity or great cause. If new programs and policies do not affect the social and political atmosphere of UIC, then the UIC-MIS policy remains dormant.

The UIC-MIS policy should be considered an enhancement to legal mandates that call for equal opportunity and affirmative action. At minimum, the new policy buttresses the efforts of state and federal law; however, the intent of the UIC policy is to advance our own vision of producing an environment that presents diversity as a positive force.

WHAT POPULATIONS ARE COVERED UNDER THIS POLICY?

The term "minority" in MIS refers to females; individuals with disabilities; individuals who are gay, lesbian or bisexual (if known); African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans. Coverage under the UIC-MIS policy is broad. Faculty, Staff, Patients, Applicants for university positions (including students), and the external community are covered. Again, the policy is not meant to cover every conceivable case, but rather, the *probable* case, given a proposed policy's objective(s) and tendencies.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE INITIAL REVIEW?

An initial Minority Impact Statement should contain a problem statement describing the need for the new policy. The statement should present be limited to a 1 or 2 page response. A suggested outline is as follows:

- I. Descriptive Statement of the Initiative, Program or Policy
- II. A description of the purpose to be served by the above
- III. Who is likely to be affected? How will they be affected?
 - A. For the "Who?" question, it is important to remember that this policy seeks to advance diversity; therefore, the focus should be limited to this area
 - B. For the "How?" question, consider the following categories, which is not meant to be a complete list:
 - a. financially
 - b. geographically
 - c. physically
 - d. socially
 - e. demographically (quantitative representation)

Initial reviews are submitted to David L. Torres, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, 2710 UH (M/C 103), 601 South Morgan Street. In most cases, review of programs, initiatives, or policies will not go beyond the initial review. In other cases, further investigation might be necessary. The latter will be done as a collaborative effort between the Office of Academic Affairs and units concerned.