The Equal Opportunity and Diversity Office

By Lee Bojarski

After serving eight years in the Army and as a student worker for the Veterans Center. I ended up working at the EOD office at the St. Paul Campus. My first thought was Explosive Ordnance Disposal. As a Combat Engineer serving multiple tours, I was not about to walk toward any bombs — that could make a great day bad faster than a top tier dragster. The EOD office at Metropolitan State University does, yes, deal with sensitive situations. They deal with the unseen issues that affect us as students and employees. The ones that shake us to the core: in short unprovoked negative actions we do to one another as individuals.

At Metropolitan State University, EOD actually stands for Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Under the guidance of Craig Morris, the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity and Diversity Director, your EOD office is taking a more active role in your life as a student.

Personally, I never knew anything of this office beside the traditional stereotypes. The EOD office is far more inclusive of student than you may think. Here is our traditional role:

**The Equal Opportunity and Diversity office**

1. Sponsors 1B.1 Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Policy and Procedure Training for all staff, faculty and student employees.
2. Assists faculty, staff and students who believe they have been harassed or treated unfairly.
3. Assists the university community with understanding, and application of federal and state laws and regulations that impose special obligations concerning equal opportunity and affirmative action. The director serves as the university's affirmative action officer and ombudsperson.
4. Monitors recruitment efforts and the progress of campus units toward achieving affirmative action goals, in collaboration with the Human Resource office and other university divisions.

**Enforce Equal opportunity for students and employees**

Your EOD office has an enduring commitment to enhancing your quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees.

**Enforce Nondiscrimination**

No person shall be discriminated against or harassed based on race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Key Policies and Procedures**

1. Affirmative Action Plan
2. University Diversity Plan
3. Metropolitan State University Procedure 101and 1010 - Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education
4. 1B.3 - MnSCU Board Sexual Violence Policy

In the future, you will notice we are going to shift from being just investigators and enforcers of the policies. We are going to become educators and mediators. We are willing to listen, learn and mentor any student organization, department and everything in between that is willing to roll up their sleeves and become part of a solution.

Handling complaints is one of our many jobs. What we are going to do is host training seminars and events on EOD. Let’s face it, not everyone goes to the St. Paul Campus, so we are going to multiple campuses to better reach the students and staff members. With that being said, keep an eye out for forthcoming announcements. Please don’t click delete right away; read it a little. Then if you’re not interested, go ahead and delete it.

We roughly have 11,500 students, of that 38 percent are of color, 25 percent need assistance, the average age is 32, and 8 are percent veterans. Those are just numbers, but the people they represent are real. They are your classmates, your teachers and coworkers. We want to celebrate our own personal identity. We all have a variety of faiths, backgrounds, ethnicities and ways of thinking. What we in our office strive for is understanding and acceptance. We as individuals are unique. Acceptance does not happen by filling out forms, numbers, going to rallies and seminars, or even kind gestures. How we do this is by embracing each other as equals. While we accept ourselves and others for what we are. Human. That simple philosophy has always made Metro State so great, our ability to look past everything and accept people for who they are.

This is coming from a man that has literally fought wars and lost friends against people with a different faith, background, ethnicity and way of thinking. However, I still able to look past all the wrong the few people did and look at people for who they are. Why can’t you? Remember we all are here to learn and make our communities better for everyone. Students, staff and faculty alike.

Our regular office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We are located on the St. Paul Campus in Founders Hall, Room 315. ALL are welcome and we have an open door policy.

Thank you!