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Revision Responsibility: Director of Human Resources  
Responsible Executive Officer: Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 05:01:02:00](#) Columbia State Affirmative Action Plan  
[TBR Policy 05:01:00:00](#) [Columbia State Policy 05:05:00](#)  
[TBR Policy 06:01:00:00](#) [Columbia State Policy 05:12:00](#)  
[TBR Policy 06:02:00:00](#) [Columbia State Policy 05:24:00](#)  
[TBR Guideline P-010](#)  
[TBR Guideline P-080](#)  
[TBR Guideline P-090](#)

## **PURPOSE**

To provide policies and procedures and define processes to ensure equal employment opportunity to employees and applicants for employment, and equal opportunity to students for enrollment. Also to define policies and procedures relative to discrimination, harassment, and nepotism

## **POLICY**

Columbia State adheres to Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) policies and guidelines relative to Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Discrimination and Nepotism, and shall comply with all anti-harassment provisions of the law pursuant to TBR policy and guidelines. The TBR policies and guidelines are incorporated into this policy by reference herein.

[Policy 5:01:02:00 Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#)  
[Policy 06:01:00:00 Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment or Sexual Misconduct](#)  
[Policy 06:02:00:00 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment](#)  
[Guideline P-010 Personnel Transactions & Recommended Forms](#)  
[Guideline P-080 Discrimination & Harassment - Complaint & Investigation Procedure](#)  
[Guideline P-090 Nepotism](#)

- I. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination
  - A. Columbia State hereby reaffirms the policy of the Tennessee Board of Regents that Columbia State Community College does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by Columbia State Community College. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:



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- B. Similarly, Columbia State will not, on the basis of a protected status, subject any student to discrimination under any educational program. No student shall be discriminatorily excluded from participation in, nor denied the benefits of, any educational program.
- C. Columbia State will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class. Such action shall include, but is not limited to:
1. Recruit, hire, train, and promote persons in all job titles, without regard to any of the foregoing prohibited factors.
  2. Base decisions on employment so as to further the principle of equal employment opportunity.
  3. Ensure that promotion decisions are in accord with principles of equal employment opportunity by imposing only valid requirements for promotional opportunities.
  4. Ensure that all personnel actions, such as compensation, benefits, transfers, layoffs, return from layoff, college-sponsored training, education, tuition assistance, and social and recreation programs, will be administered without regard to any of the foregoing prohibited factors.

II. Harassment (see [Columbia State Policy 05:24:00](#))

Columbia State adheres to [TBR Policy 05:01:02:00, Section III](#), [TBR Policy 06:01:00:00](#), [TBR Policy 06:02:00:00](#) and [TBR Guideline P-080](#) relative to harassment. The TBR policies and guideline are incorporated into this policy by reference herein.

[Policy 5:01:02:00 Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#)  
[Policy 06:01:00:00 Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#)  
[Policy 06:02:00:00 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment](#)  
[Guideline P-080 Discrimination & Harassment - Complaint & Investigation Procedure](#)

Columbia State will be a place of work and study for faculty, staff and students free of sexual harassment and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin,



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sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class. Harassment constitutes a form of discrimination. Harassment in the workplace or the educational environment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. The Director of Human Resources, in consultation with the TBR Office of General Counsel, will investigate and resolve all complaints of unlawful harassment as required by applicable policy and/or Guideline P-080.

### III. Nepotism

Full-time, part-time, student or temporary college employees who are relatives shall not be placed within the same direct line of supervision, whereby one relative is responsible for supervising the job performance or work activities of another relative. For the purposes of this policy, a “relative” is defined as a parent, foster parent, parent-in-law, child, spouse, brother, foster brother, sister, foster sister, grandparent, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or other family member who resides in the same household.

### IV. Consensual Relationships

Consensual relationships between supervisors and their subordinates and between faculty and students are strongly discouraged since such relationships could lead to undue favoritism or the perception of undue favoritism, abuse of power, compromised judgment or impaired objectivity (see [TBR Guideline P-080, Section III](#)).

### V. Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action, Title VI, and Title IX Officer

The Director of Human Resources shall serve as the College’s Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) Officer, Title VI and Title IX coordinator. In the role of EEO/AA Officer, the Director of Human Resources will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and with all applicable EEO laws, regulations, policies and guidelines, receiving, reviewing and investigating equal employment opportunity complaints and appeals and making recommendations regarding their disposition to the president (unless policy or guideline requires otherwise), reviewing the effectiveness of the EEO/AA program, and recommending improvements to the president.

## PROCEDURES

### I. Affirmative Action Plan

A. The Director of Human Resources will prepare the College’s affirmative action plan for submission to the TBR each year according to Board guidelines. Annual goals and objectives by EEO category will be established based upon an analysis of the data:

B. Distribution of Affirmative Action Plan



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A paper or electronic copy is provided to the President. The Director of Human Resources will provide a summary of the plan to the vice-presidents as part of the annual budget review. A paper copy is available in the Office of Human Resources.

- A. The office or individual requesting the survey will be responsible for any costs associated with the survey.

II. Nondiscrimination Statement for Publications

The College's nondiscrimination statement shall be included in all publications and shall read as specified in [Columbia State Policy 07:20:00 Publications, Forms, Printing, Letterhead and Business Cards](#).

III. Vacancy Recruitment & Employment Process

Columbia State recruits for vacancies within the framework of the College's Affirmative Action Plan. Applications are accepted for vacant, regular positions.

A. Employment Requisitions

1. Responsibilities of the Office of Human Resources

Prepares an "Employment Requisition" form, upon receipt of notification of a vacancy or an approved new position, meets with the hiring supervisor to review the hiring process, including:

- a. Review of the position description and to update with approvals as necessary (see 2.a. below).
- b. Assist, as appropriate, in the development of questions for the interview process.
- c. Determine advertising scope and duration in consult with the hiring supervisor.
- d. Confirm that applicant review panel is selected and within diversity parameters.
- e. Review and approve interview questions for appropriateness.

2. The Hiring Supervisor

- a. Reviews the job description and, if needed, works with the Office of Human Resources to ensure ADA, essential and supplemental functions, knowledge, skills, abilities and job standards are up-to-date.
- b. Recommends scope and duration of recruitment media.
- c. Selects and recommends applicant review panel to the Office of Human Resources.

3. Applicant Review Panel



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- a. Review all qualified applicants.
  - b. Provide hiring supervisor with feedback regarding assessment of applicants' "pluses" and "minuses" and other feedback that will assist in the hiring supervisor's decision of interviewees.
4. Approvals required for completed requisition
- a. First level supervisor
  - b. Second or next level supervisor
  - c. Dean, Associate Vice President or next level supervisor
  - d. Vice President for the area of responsibility
  - e. President

**B. Advertising Process**

1. All regular full-time and part-time positions not filled through internal processes will be posted externally and be available for access through the Columbia State and TBR external web sites.
2. Faculty, Administrative, and Professional Staff Positions advertising may include:
  - a. Local newspapers
  - b. Regional publications
  - c. National publications
  - d. Professional publications (as deemed appropriate for the specific position)
  - e. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) mailing list and ListServ
  - f. Tennessee Department of Employment Security
  - g. The Columbia State website
  - h. Career & job search Internet sites
3. Clerical and Support Staff Positions advertising may include:
  - a. Local newspapers
  - b. Surrounding county or regional newspapers
  - c. Tennessee Department of Employment Security
  - d. The Columbia State website
  - e. Career & Internet web sites

**C. Application Process**

1. Timeline



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The Office of Human Resources, in conjunction with the chair of the applicant review panel, will develop a timeline for the recruitment process and either establish a deadline for accepting applications or publish a “start of applicant review” date.

2. Minimum Criteria

The Office of Human Resources will screen applications and indicate candidates who do not meet the minimum qualifications stated in the position description. When necessary, the hiring manager may be asked to clarify whether specific education/certifications meet the stated requirements. Only applications for candidates meeting minimum criteria will be available for review by the applicant review panel.

D. Applicant Review Panel

1. The hiring supervisor or Vice President/President appointee will serve as the chair of the applicant review panel.

2. Initial Screening

- a. The Office of Human Resources will release to the applicant review panel all applications deemed to meet the minimum qualifications.
- b. The Office of Human Resources and the applicant review panel chair will assist panel members with the review of applications.
- c. The Director of Human Resources, or a designee, will meet with the applicant review panel to conduct affirmative action training, review the employment process and the role of the applicant review panel in the process.
- d. The applicant review panel members will evaluate candidates and provide input to the hiring supervisor to complete the “Recommendation for Interview” form, and develop and finalize a list of questions to ask during interview of candidates accepted by the hiring supervisor for interview.
- e. The applicant review panel chair will submit the “Recommendation for Interview” form to the next level supervisor and up to the highest level authority required by that department who may revise the list. The Office of Human Resources will review the list and may adjust the interviewees selected to ensure the validity of the affirmative action process.
- f. For certain “upper-level positions” as specified in TBR Guideline P-010, Section III., the Office of Human Resources must forward to the TBR a list of recommended interviewees and other information as required on TBR Form A-1 “Certification of Search Pool for Upper Level Administrative Vacancies” by routing it through the TBR electronic approval system.
- g. Upon approval of the interview list, the office of human resources will advise the applicant review panel chair that interviews can be scheduled. (NOTE: The Director of Human Resources may, at the request of the administration, schedule executive level interviews or other interviews.)



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3. Interviews

- a. The applicant review panel chair (or in the case of executive level openings, the Office of Human Resources) will schedule candidate interviews.
- b. The applicant review panel will evaluate interviewees, restricting comments to job-related criteria only and provide input for the hiring supervisor to complete the “Recommendation for Employment” form.
- c. Reimbursements for interview travel expenses are not normally authorized, except in the case of difficult to fill positions. Exceptions to this procedure may be made by the president.

4. Employment Recommendation and Hiring Process

- a. The hiring supervisor may elect to conduct telephone verifications of employment and education on finalist candidates to consider for an offer of employment.
- b. At the completion of the interview cycle and the review by the review panel, the chair will discuss the candidate outcomes with the supervisor(s) and unless designated otherwise, the appropriate Vice President/President prior to making a recommendation for employment.
- c. The hiring supervisor and/or the next level supervisor will complete the “Recommendation for Employment” form and meet with the Office of Human Resources to discuss and agree upon recommendations for date of employment and salary to be offered.
- d. The conditions of offer of the recommendation for employment will be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer and upon approval will forward the recommendation to the appropriate Vice President.
- e. The Vice President will review the recommendation for employment.
  1. Upon agreement with the recommendation, the Vice President will forward to the president for approval.
  2. If Vice President does not agree with the recommendation, the Vice President and Director of Human Resources will meet to discuss the recommendation for possible amendment. Upon agreement of both, the recommendation will be forwarded to the president for approval. If the recommended salary or other conditions are amended, the adjustment from the original recommendation will be documented on the form as agreed by both the Vice President and the Director of Human Resources.
  3. After the recommendation for approval is approved by the President, the form will be returned to the Office of Human Resources who will inform the hiring supervisor of the approval of the offer. In the case of upper level hires, the Office of Human Resources must forward to the TBR for approval, TBR Form A-2 “Approval for Appointment Recommendation” form by routing it through the TBR electronic approval system before an offer of employment can be made.



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- f. Dependent upon the position, the hiring supervisor, appropriate Director, Dean or Vice President, or the Director of Human Resources may make the formal offer of employment to the selected candidate.

IV. Reclassification

Reclassification of existing administrative/professional or clerical/support staff members will only be done in accordance with the [Administrative/ Professional Staff Classification Compensation Plan, Columbia State Policy 05:05:00](#).

V. Position Descriptions

- A. Upon initial hire, all full-time employees will receive a position description from the office of human resources.
- B. Supervisors will review position descriptions annually at the time of performance review or prior to recruiting, whichever comes first, in order to:
1. Determine if areas of responsibility are current.
  2. Determine if areas of supervision are current (if applicable).
  3. Review the essential and supplemental functions of the position and ensure they are consistent with the requirements of the American Disabilities Act.
  4. Determine if qualifications are current.

*Deleted, consolidated or created new forms; new policy format and updated titles); April 7, 2014 (Updated links to TBR policies and guidelines); April 13, 2015 (Update wording of nondiscrimination statement per TBR Notice of Nondiscrimination); August 29, (Updated language and processes); August 12, 2020 (Updated to comply with new Title IX regulations)*