

RESPONSE TO :

CIVIL RIGHTS

COMPLIANCE REVIEW

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

REPORT

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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STEVEN A. SLACK, PH.D.
DIRECTOR, OARDC
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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THE OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

INTRODUCTION

The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) at The Ohio State University (OSU) was pleased to participate in this professionally conducted review. The overall review purpose and the regulatory authority vested in CSREES serve as a useful tool to aid in advancing both the letter and spirit of related laws, regulations, and policies. In particular, OARDC is appreciative of the time, effort, and sincerity of the review, which we are now utilizing to further strengthen our commitment to inclusion and diversity of both ideas and individuals.

Feedback from all review participants has been positive. The overview of OARDC and the review process as stated on pages i, ii, and 1 – 3 are correct and well stated.

MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (pages 4 – 5) OARDC officials should ensure that individuals responsible for civil rights are clearly identified.....

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 1): OARDC will modify its organizational chart through expansion and use of asterisks(*) and footnotes as to where civil rights questions, inquires, or complaints may be directed, i.e. Head, Human Resources, OARDC or to their service department head. Service department heads follow the protocol of directing such issues or complaints to Human Resources (HR) – OARDC and HR advises the Director’s office if the case requires action or monitoring. Academic department heads and their faculty and staff work directly with the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences’ (CFAES) HR Office. All offices have full access to University – level compliance and legal offices.

The chart will be further modified via a footnote directing employees to the Leader, FAES Office of Diversity Development, regarding training and development.

Upon acceptance of this response document by CSREES, the OARDC Director will make the Report and Response documents available on our employees’ website. An electronically delivered letter will advise all employees of the availability of these reports and will reiterate our commitment to civil rights and diversity as well as to rules, regulations, polices, and protocols. In particular, the letter will call attention to the protocols and channels for questions, inquires, and complaints, as well as to diversity training opportunities and to that office. That letter will include university level personnel listings, as well as OARDC and College personnel, who are charged with

compliance. This provides the employee with multiple options for seeking counsel and filing complaints.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION (pages 5 – 7) (1 of 2) OARDC should encourage linkages; (2 of 2) OARDC should develop a plan to ensure a broad spectrum of Ohioans by race, ethnicity and gender are included on advisory committees.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 2): OARDC is continuing its efforts to link with 1890's colleges for the mutual benefit of all. Specific meetings are being planned. While Ohio has relatively few native American Indians, Ohio was home to five nations who were for the most part expatriated. Thus we recognize the importance of linking with the 1994 institutions.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 2 of 2): In order to insure a broader spectrum of Ohioans become fully vested stakeholders in all levels of the research process and product, OARDC is preparing a *Stakeholder Relations Plan*. Groups and individuals from social, community, business, and commodity interests will be included. Also the OARDC Support Council, a legally recognized advisory committee, is being reviewed to yield a greater breadth of advisors. In all these activities, race, ethnicity, and gender will be given important consideration.

GRADUATE STUDENTS (pages 8 – 12) (1 of 2) OARDC should encourage CFAES units to review the recruitment process.....; (2 of 2) OARDC should encourage academic units to extend recruitment efforts to domestic racial and ethnic minorities.....

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 2): CFAES, while well represented with minorities from throughout the world, still struggles to attract domestic minority graduate students. To that end OARDC and the total College leadership team, including faculty leaders, are fully committed to recruitment and retention of domestic minority graduate students and has resources set aside to support that commitment.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 2 of 2): OARDC, in partnership with the Vice President for Agriculture's full cabinet, will continue to work with and support our academic departments in their efforts to recruit domestic racial and ethnic minorities. A fund exists at the College level to support such recruitment and to bring domestic minority graduate prospects for a campus visit. OARDC also already provides Graduate associateships designated for minorities.

EMPLOYMENT (pages 12 – 13) (1 of 2) OARDC should monitor units for discriminatory issues.....; (2 of 2) The Director should encourage the hiring of racial ethnic minorities in OARDC research support departments.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 2): OARDC is recommending to the Office of the Vice President for Agriculture that each academic program revisit and reiterate to all members of their faculty, staff, and students the protocols established by the College and University for addressing any civil rights related questions and where complaints may be filed. As stated earlier, OARDC is clarifying to all our service departments and to all academic departments that receive OARDC support, our policies and protocols related to civil rights questions. Furthermore OARDC will encourage through the Vice President's office that all academic units make greater use of our College's Office of Diversity Development for training. Additionally OARDC will follow the lead of OSU Extension in providing additional training to all our staff.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 2 of 2): The OARDC Associate Director (for support services, facilities and personnel) and the Leader, Human Resources- OARDC have been charged with implementing the recommendations by seeking to increase the minority applicant pool in research support departments personnel searches.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (page 14) No recommendations received

CIVIL RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY TRAINING (pages 14 – 15) (1 of 2) OARDC should promote civil rights training in units not located on the Columbus campus; (2 of 2) OARDC should develop a system to ensure faculty and staff certify that they have taken civil rights training.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 2): The OARDC Associate Director in charge of OARDC non- academic department personnel has been charged to plan civil rights and diversity training for employees at all OARDC sites through the College's Office of Diversity Training. Strategies developed by OSU Extension will be included.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 2 of 2): OARDC, building on the previous recommendation in this section, will monitor and record participation in training. Guidance will also be sought from the OSU Office of Human Resources – Consulting Services (Ms. Olga Esquivel-Gonzalez, Affirmative Action Officer).

**INTERNAL EVALUATION PLAN FOR CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITIES (page 16)
No recommendations received.**

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION (pages 16 – 17) (1 of 2) OARDC should include information concerning the filing of program complaints.....; (2 of 2) OARDC should continue to support academic units, outreach efforts and ensure underrepresented and underserved groups have access to research information.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 2): OARDC will join with OSU Extension to ensure that the protocols for filing program complaints are published and are consistent with *AND JUSTICE FOR ALL*.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 2 of 2): OARDC, in cooperation with OSU Extension, is committed to and will continue to advance programs and techniques for ensuring that research information is fully accessible to all clientele, with specific attention paid to reaching the underserved and underrepresented.

ACCESSIBILITY (pages 17 -18) (1 of 1) OARDC should encourage departments and faculty to ensure research programs have a means similar to *OhioLine* for disabled to access programs.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 1): OARDC, in collaboration with the College and the University, will continue to pursue new avenues to make information, programs, and participation in the research process, per se, more accessible and more meaningful to persons with disabilities. OSU Extension has outreach expertise in this area and we will seek their counsel and follow their lead.

Limited Language Proficiency (pages 18 -19) (1 of 1) OARDC should develop a LEP policy as Federal guidelines are developed.

RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE (to 1 of 1): OARDC will monitor the development of Federal LEP guidelines and will develop policies and programs to comply with any forthcoming federal guideline. In the meantime, OARDC, working with OSU Extension, will continue to expand the translation of materials for minority clientele and employees.

OARDC, through the Office of the Director, affirms that the compliance review findings, characterization of OARDC, and our response to this review are all-important elements and will be fully incorporated into our policies and standard operating procedures. OARDC, our College, and our University are fully committed to the ideals that underpin civil rights. To that end we will continue to build on this report through our own self-assessment, always seeking to move ideals into policy and practice for the benefit of our employees, students, stakeholders, and organization. The process has been a positive learning experience, providing a set of sound recommendations for improvement that has left us with a model of how we can better self-evaluate.

On behalf of all those who participated, we wish to thank Joyce Okpah, Team Leader and Norman Pruitt, EO Specialist, CSREES –USDA, for their dedication to a fair and meaningful process. We also express appreciation in that their line of inquiry and the resulting report yielded an excellent teaching tool in that voices external to our organization reiterated messages regarding civil rights and embracing and celebrating diversity that are articulated at all levels of leadership throughout the University, including FAES and OARDC.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Slack, Ph.D.
Director, OARDC
October 20, 2005