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CHAPTER 4 - STUDENTS

The University of Texas at Austin
Office of the President

Policy Memorandum 4.120
March 15, 1999

SUBJECT: STUDENT POLICY ON RACE RELATIONS

Statement of Principles

In order to educate undergraduate and graduate students of diverse social, economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, it is essential that The University of Texas at Austin provide equal educational opportunities for all students. The University also should foster understanding of cultural diversity and cultivate the ethical and moral values that are the basis of a humane social order. To fulfill these aspirations, The University must strive to establish and maintain an environment free of intimidation, humiliation, and harassment.

Racist attitudes and beliefs may be revealed in threats and other communications or acts of violence, hatred, abuse of authority, or ill-will that assault the person or the sense of self-worth of members of our community. Such communications and acts vilify, ridicule, and humiliate, and also can cause serious emotional distress, impede the learning process, and, in the form of "fighting words," may provoke a violent response. Racist behavior brings dishonor to the perpetrator, demoralizes and disrupts the academic community as a whole, and diminishes the stature of The University. For all of these reasons, The University unequivocally condemns racist behavior in all of its forms.

The University also is committed to the principles of free inquiry and expression. Members of the University community have the right to hold, vigorously defend, and express their ideas and opinions, to flourish or wither according to their merits. Respect for this right requires that members of the community tolerate expression of views that they find abhorrent. But whatever the legal boundaries of free speech, the members of an educational community should adopt voluntarily standards of civility that reflect mutual respect, understanding, and sensitivity among its diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. In particular, members of the faculty represent The University and have a special role and position of

authority with respect to students. They should treat students with respect and should be sensitive to the impact of their words and opinions on them.

Race Relations Education, Counseling and Mediation

The Director of the Multicultural Center has been given the primary responsibility for educating students about their responsibilities under this policy. That office may offer to provide mediation services for students who encounter issues under this policy. Confidentiality in mediation activities shall be maintained to the extent permitted under the law, and the rights of individuals involved will be protected.

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