

Winthrop McNair GEPA Statement

Background from the U.S. Department of Education

(www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc)

“The Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).”

*“The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: **gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age**. Based on **local circumstances**, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity.”*

Local Circumstances

At Winthrop, none of the following characteristics impede equitable access or participation in opportunities: Gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. In fact, Winthrop recruits and welcomes diverse populations. Founded as a women's college in 1886, Winthrop has a long history of serving underserved populations. Over 2/3rds of Winthrop's undergraduate population is female and about 1/3rd are underrepresented.

As described in the need section, around 30% of Winthrop's undergraduates who are U.S. Citizens come from underrepresented groups. Winthrop's Office of Disability Services cultivates an atmosphere of accessibility and independence for the members of our campus community who possess a disability recognized under the ADA. This fall, Winthrop will establish the office of adult services designed to support our growing population of non-traditional students and/or military veterans. This office will be housed on the same floor as Winthrop McNair. Finally, Winthrop also actively recruits diverse faculty in a variety of ways including using competitive salaries and encouraging faculty to recruit a diverse group of peers at professional conferences (see March 2012 Faculty Conference minutes http://www2.winthrop.edu/facultyconference/FC_agenda_materials_December022011.pdf).

Program Purpose

Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is funded through a multi-year renewable TRiO grant from the U.S. Department of Education. \$220,000 in federal funding is provided each year to help 25 studious sophomores, juniors, and seniors who meet first-generation, income and/or under-represented criteria prepare for and succeed in doctoral programs. The U.S. Department of Education describes the program in this way:

“This program prepares participants for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. Participants are from disadvantaged

backgrounds and have demonstrated strong academic potential. Institutions work closely with participants as they complete their undergraduate requirements. Institutions encourage participants to enroll in graduate programs and then track their progress through to the successful completion of advanced degrees. The goal is to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society.” (Downloaded on 8/24/09 from <http://www.ed.gov/programs/triomcnair/index.html>)

Below are the steps Winthrop will take to ensure equitable access to and preparation in the McNair program.

- 1) Uphold relevant University Policies regarding equity in access and participation.** The University’s policies regarding the employment environment and accommodating students with disabilities serve as the basis for Winthrop McNair’s policy to foster equitable access and participation.

Winthrop’s Policy for Faculty and Staff

“It is the policy of Winthrop University that all employees have the right to work in a positive environment which is free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (forty-plus / 40+), protected disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law. Further, it is the policy of the university to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.” (Downloaded on 6/5/2012 from http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/hr/policies/ADA_Complaint_Procedures.pdf)

Winthrop’s Policy for Students with Disabilities

“Winthrop University upholds the rights of enrolled students with disabilities to secure academic accommodations and access to campus programs and services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.” (Downloaded on 6/5/2012 from <http://www.winthrop.edu/hcs/default.aspx?id=23201>)

- 2) Ensure that all online program communication is conveyed in accessible formats, as per the University policy regarding Section 508** (Downloaded on 6/5/2012 from <http://www.winthrop.edu/web/accessibility/>)

- a) “A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).*
- b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.*
- c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.*
- d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.*

- e) *Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.*
- f) *Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.*
- g) *Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.*
- h) *HTML Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.*
- i) *Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.*
- j) *Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.*
- k) *A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a website comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.*
- l) *When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.*
- m) *When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in, or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).*
- n) *When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.*
- o) *A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.*
- p) *When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.*

- 3) Deliberately and prudently recruit applicants and personnel who represent McNair eligibility requirements including race, ethnicity, and U.S. Citizenship.**
- 4) Advertise requests for participant and personnel applications using online resource and physical locations that are easily accessible to underrepresented and disadvantaged populations.**
- 5) Review all existing program communications, documents, and policies to ensure the language and procedures are inclusive of and welcoming to groups historically underrepresented.**
- 6) Include a discussion of this policy in the training of new personnel.**

- 7) Solicit and use constructive recommendations from new program contacts regarding ways to improve Winthrop McNair equity in access and participation.**
- 8) Post this statement on the program website.**

Last Updated June 7, 2012