Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki - Nigeria

GENDER POLICY

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BACKGROUND

The Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, was originally a campus of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). With the creation of Ebonyi State in 1996, the University was formally established through the Ebonyi State University (Law No. 7) in 1999. At establishment, the University's objectives were stated as follows:
1. To encourage the advancement of learning in Ebonyi State of Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general and to hold out to all persons, without distinction as to race, creed or sex, the opportunity of acquiring higher education

2. To provide facilities (as its resources permit) and to make it available for the pursuit of learning, especially such facilities that would give training that has concrete relevance to the needs of our society.

3. To foster the spirit of creativity, inventiveness, resourcefulness and patriotism.

4. To encourage and promote scholarship and conduct research in all fields of learning and human endeavor.

5. To relate its activities to the social, cultural and economic needs of the people of Nigeria in particular and the world in general

Vision of the University
To rank among the best citadels of learning in the world with excellence in teaching, learning, research and community service.

Mission of the University
To provide a conducive atmosphere for teaching, learning, research and rapid development in order to transform the hitherto, untapped, abundant human resources in Ebonyi State.

Philosophy of the University
The University is committed to high quality teaching, learning and research all aimed at ensuring the development of individuals and knowledge to support the growth of society. There is also commitment to continuously engage with immediate and wider community so as to understand and serve their needs. It also believes in the provision of opportunities for life-long learning as a key to human growth. Further, the University is committed to freedom, justice, truth and integrity in the pursuit of its activities, ensuring that her graduates are found truly worthy in "learning and character".

At the moment, the University has the following Faculties:
1. Agriculture & Natural Resource Management
2. Social Sciences and Humanities
3. Management Sciences
4. Basic Medical Sciences
5. Sciences
6. Clinical Medicine
7. Education
8. Health Science & Technology
9. Law

These run undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to Doctoral levels.

The University also has a number of specialized academic and research Centres including:

1. The Institute of Health Policy and Health Systems which is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO)
2. Centre for Crop Improvement & Nutrition, under which the GENES and MoBreed Projects are domiciled. These are Intra-Africa Mobility Scheme Projects funded by the European Union.

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Affirmative Action: A policy or program of taking steps to increase the representation of certain designated groups in all areas of life in institutions. It seeks to redress past discrimination or bias through active measures.

Curriculum: Refers to the content of an Education and Training Program.

Engender: The Process of ensuring that Planning and Programming is appreciative of and takes into account gender differences and concerns.

Gender: Social and cultural constructs based on sex. It is a term used to identify social, cultural and psychological features that identify one as male or female. It is the shaping of thinking, attitude and values of male and female.

Gender discrimination: Refers to unequal treatment of individuals or groups of people on the basis of their gender that results in reduced access to/ or control of resources and opportunities.

Gender Equality: Refers to the equal treatment of men and women, boys and girls so that they can enjoy the benefits of development including equal access to and control of opportunities and resources.

Gender Equity: Refers to the practices of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resources, responsibilities, power and opportunities.

Gender Identity: The conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of individuals as a gendered being. Gender identities are not fixed, they are constructed.

Gender Mainstreaming: The consistent integration of gender concerns into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, plans programs activities and projects at all levels.

Gender based violence: Any harmful act whether is sexual psychological or physical that is perpetrated against a person and is simply based on differences between male and females (Gender)

Gender Parity: A numerical concept referring to equal number of girls and women, boys and men relative to their respective numbers in the population

Gender Responsiveness: Refers to Action taken to correct Gender Imbalances.

Gender stereotypes: The uncritical beliefs and judgments about a person because of his/her gender but which is often not true.

Feminism: A belief that men and women are equal and they should be valued equally and have equal rights.

Matriarchy: A hierarchical system controlled by women; in which culturally women control political and economic structures. However few societies have been organized in this manner.

Patriarchy: A hierarchical system controlled by men; in which culturally men control political and economic structures.

Sex: Describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

Sexism: The subordinate of one's sex based on the assumed superiority of the other sex.

Sex disaggregated data: Data that is collected and presented separately on men and women

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome acts, sexual advance, requests for sexual favors or unwanted physical, verbal or non- verbal conduct of sexual nature.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Gender Policy provides a framework for promotion of gender equality in the workplace. Gender is a term used to identify social, cultural and psychological features that identify one as a male or female. It is the shaping of thinking, attitude and values of male and female. It has to do with the roles and responsibilities for men and women, boys and girls as seen by the different communities. The gender issue is further stretched by gender differences in the choices made, access and control of resources, power relations and participation

The policy considers equality as a development goal rather than focus on either gender as a target. Achievement of this goal requires EBSU to examine all its policies, programmes and projects for their impact on either gender with a view of achieving a gender equitable work environment.

1.1 Vision
Nurture Gender Responsiveness in EBSU.

Policy Vision
This gender policy will guide EBSU in its actions to eliminate barriers and gender inequality within the University community. The policy seeks to create a framework that will assist the University to encourage gender equality in all staff and student activities and ensure equitable participation and appropriate representation of both genders in all its decision-making processes. Specifically, the policy commits the University to applying the principle of gender equality in staffing, training and development, student enrolment and provide equal opportunities in teaching, learning and research.

1.2 Mission
Embracing Gender Responsive approaches in generation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge.

1.3 Rationale
The workplace is recognized as a relevant context in which gender injustice can take place if not checked. A participatory and inclusive approach aimed at confronting common challenges is the better way of achieving gender mainstreaming.

EBSU recognizes the need to consider the needs of both genders while undertaking the university programmes. This can only be achieved through a framework, which outlines strategies and guidelines for gender initiatives within the University.
The policy on gender mainstreaming will aim at guiding the institution towards ensuring a safe work and learning environment, which is free from all forms of discrimination for staff and students.

1.4 Objectives of the Gender Policy
EBSU will endeavor to:
i. To ensure that staff, students and other stakeholders work in an environment of mutual respect, free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and humiliation, thereby enhancing the dignity of both genders
ii. To ensure the involvement of the minority gender at any point in time in University - wide decision making process as a way of carrying everybody along and ensuring that decisions are collectively owned and defended.
iii. Ensure that all research, training, teaching and learning and development activities in EBSU are gender sensitive and aimed at bringing out the best in both men and women.

iv. To ensure that entry requirements into the university and related admission and recruitment and service delivery process for both students and staff reflect gender equity and are transparent and non-discriminatory respectively

v. To evolve a teaching and research culture that is gender sensitive and promotes non-discriminatory practices and procedures in all aspects of university including admissions, employment and service delivery

vi. To institutionalize the gender desegregations of all university data at the various points of generation and the periodic analysis of such data.

vii. To ensure development and implementation of Gender Responsive policies, programs and plans in the university.

viii. Continually strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders in handling of those gender issues so as to improve the level of satisfaction with services rendered.

ix. To develop a knowledge base that provides a broader understanding of Gender issues, perspectives by initiating training and research programmers in EBSU.

x. To establish and strengthen linkages with the government and other stakeholders to promote coordinated approach to gender issues particularly in EBSU and generally in the society.

xi. To ensure compliance with national and international obligations in Gender mainstreaming Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting for the effective implementation of the policy.

1.5 Scope of the Gender Policy

This Policy is line with global and national trends. This Policy shall address issues of access, equity, retention, transition, relevance and quality of service to persons of either gender. Application and implementation in relation to financing, management, coordination and governance of people of either gender at all levels is covered within this Policy.

1.6 Guiding Principles

This Policy is guided by the following principles:

a) Gender analysis will be part of all EBSU's policies, programmes and projects.

b) The dignity and integrity of every human being must be regarded with utmost respect.

c) Sustainable development is possible if based on equal partnership and mutual respect between male and female.

d) Affirmative action may be used to correct gender imbalances.

2.0 GENDER ISSUES INTERVENTION AREAS

2.1. Human Resources Management

(i) No person will deny a person of either gender access to opportunities for suitable employment in EBSU.

(ii) A qualified employee of either gender shall be subject to the same terms and conditions of employment and the same compensation, privileges, benefits, fringe benefits, incentives or allowances as any qualified employees.

(iii) EBSU will facilitate access to medical facilities for students and staff of either gender.

(iv) EBSU will endeavour to reserve thirty percent (30%) of all positions in employment for either gender.

(v) EBSU will endeavour to enhance gender balance in recruitment, training and development of its staff to various positions in the University

(vi) EBSU will endeavour to ensure that institutional work environments are gender responsive.

2.2. Students' Admission, Retention and Completion of Studies

EBSU will strive to achieve a gender balance in students' enrolment and completion rates in order to strike a balance in male and female population by ensuring gender sensitive approach is applied. To meet this objective, the university shall:

(i) Provide mentoring and enabling environment for enhancing quality academic performance for both male and female.

(ii) Adopt affirmative action in administration (if necessary)

2.3. Teaching and Learning

EBSU shall address any gender disparities in the teaching and learning research and consultancy in the university by:

(i) Identifying gender related factors that hamper effective teaching and learning processes and provide remedies with a view to achieving gender parity.

(ii) Ensuring a safe and friendly environment for teaching and learning which is responsive to the needs of both females and males.

2.4. Research and Scholarship

EBSU shall identify all the barriers to equality between women and men in research and scholarship and strive to achieve equitable representation in distribution of scholarships, access to research funds and participation in research projects by:

(i) Ensuring that research funds and donor information are deliberately accessible to all staff and students.

(ii) Promoting and support the participation of male and female staff and students in research projects.

2.5. Community Outreach and Extension

EBSU has a Collective Social Responsibility to the society. To ensure equal participation by either gender, the University shall:

(i) Offer professional knowledge and services to community members of both genders.

(ii) Market the university as gender sensitive center of excellence.

(iii) Create and involve the Gender committee in community outreach and extension work.

2.6 Provision of Services

EBSU will put measures in place to ensure that all service providers comply with the Gender Policy.

3.0 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based harassment and violence, both physical and psychological, is prohibited in EBSU.

EBSU is committed to putting into place measures designed to eliminate sexual harassment and forms of gender-based violence.

EBSU will develop and enforce university rules aimed at protecting staff and students from sexual harassment in matters such as staff-student interaction, dressing, organisation of dining and library facilities and use of gender-sensitive language.

EBSU will establish support centers (like psychology /social work clinics) and provide counselling services to promptly and effectively respond to and deal with cases of sexual harassment,

EBSU will ensure that all reports or records on allegations or complaints of sexual harassment are treated with confidentiality,

EBSU will enforce strict rules designed to protect students from harassment or violence in the students' halls of residence, especially the prohibition of cohabitation and regulations pertaining to visiting hours, and treat rape and related sexual offences as provided for in the Sexual Offences Act as crimes which upon proof will lead to the automatic expulsion or dismissal; EBSU will report such an offence to the law-enforcement authorities.

4.0 ROLE MODELS, MENTORS AND SPONSORS

Role models, mentors and sponsors are an important part of the working and learning environment. It is necessary to present positive role models to male and female staff and students. Mentors help to define the dream while sponsors are the dream-enablers. Mentors assist individuals to understand the unwritten rules, provide a map for the uncharted corridors to power, and reveal "the business behind the business".

Most of the role models, mentors and sponsors in most cases are male. This may partly be due to historical gender blindness. As a result:

(i) EBSU will present positive female role models in university-sponsored activities, undertake activities designed to raise the profile of female scholars and professionals,

(ii) EBSU will encourage gender sensitivity in male students and staff by presenting male role models who demonstrate gender sensitivity in their language and behaviour,

(iii) EBSU will facilitate or encourage senior staff to provide mentorship and sponsorship to young scholars and staff.

5.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

5.1. Requirements

(i) Implementation of the stipulated commitments will be overseen by **Gender Equity Implementation Committee, appointed by the Vice Chancellor.**

(ii) Center for Gender studies be put in place.

(iii) Effective implementation shall require a detailed financing strategy; management and coordination of structures; information and communication; monitoring and evaluation frameworks; contextual interpretation, review and amendment of the policy to align with changing trends and emerging issues.

The University Council

The Council of EBSU, as the employer, supreme governing body and the ultimate financial accounting authority of the University is:

(i) Responsible for ensuring that the institution fulfils its responsibilities for promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination.

(ii) The EBSU Council will receive an annual progress report on the monitoring and implementation of the Policy to enable its members to ensure that the policy is being operationalized.

(iii) The EBSU Council will further monitor progress on the implementation of the Policy.

(iv) Council discharges this responsibility through the management structures of the University.

5.2. The Vice Chancellor shall:
   i. Be the custodian of this Policy
   ii. Constitute the Gender Equity Implementation Committee
   iii. Facilitate implementation of the Policy and creation of partnerships
   iv. Establish Gender Issues unit.

5.3. Deputy Vice Chancellors

5.3.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellors take responsibility for activities of strategic importance to the University, for example: The research agenda, health and safety, teaching and learning, human resources, support and information services, planning and budgeting, estates strategy, etc.

In each of their respective portfolios, the University Officers and Managers shall be duty-bound to incorporate gender equality priorities and implementation strategies.

5.4. Deans/Directors, Head of Departments/Units

The above-mentioned stakeholders are responsible for the implementation of the Gender policy within their areas of responsibility.

This involves:

(i) Putting the policy and its strategies and procedures into practice;

(ii) making sure all staff are aware of their responsibilities, and receives support and training in carrying these out; and

(iii) Taking action against staff or students who discriminate on grounds of gender.

5.5. The Employees and Students shall:

(i) Participate in training sessions organized on gender issues

(ii) Maintain a conducive environment for either gender in the training areas and workplaces

(iii) Participate in gender issues baseline survey

5.6. Partners and Service providers

All partners, associates, contractors, professional, statutory and accredited bodies, and those who provide services to EBSU are responsible for complying with the Gender Policy.

5.7. The Gender Equity Implementation Committee shall:
  (i) Formulate guidelines on gender mainstreaming
  (ii) Review the Policy periodically
  (iii) Carry out a survey on gender representation at EBSU departments
  (iv) Sensitize and create awareness on gender issues
  (v) Plan and budget for gender Mainstreaming programmes
  (vi) Play advisory role to the Management on gender issues
  (vii) Consider Mainstreaming of Disability Policy.
  (viii)   Monitor and evaluate gender programmes and activities
  (ix) Develop a manual to operationalize the Policy.
  (x) Ensure that the Policy on Sexual Harassment is developed and put in place.

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION
  i.   The monitoring and evaluation of gender implementation programmes will be conducted by **Gender Equity Implementation Committee** to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the policy.
  ii. Performance monitoring and evaluation tools will be developed to include gender responsive indicators.
  iii. The Committee will further ensure that data relating to gender in the University College is updated annually.
  iv. The Committee will also monitor both staff and students to evaluate the degree of satisfaction with the services provided to either gender and then strive to implement the recommendations made in the assessments.
  v.   Breach of the Policy will be handled in accordance with EBSU rules and regulations.

7.0 Policy Review
This Policy will be reviewed in consultation with the EBSU Council.

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