

## General Counsel Discusses Discrimination Laws

by Heather Hosfeld

The General Counsel's Office and Human Resources recently conducted a Legal Updates session called "*Understanding and Applying Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Laws*". If you were unable to attend the session, you can download the presentation from our website by clicking on the "Legal Updates Program" link on the left side of our home page.

The session consisted of four components: (1) an overview of various equal opportunity and non-discrimination laws (for example, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act); (2) an overview of Lehigh policies and resources related to equal opportunity and non-discrimination; (3) remarks by Carl Moses on Lehigh's Diversity Initiative and Climate Survey results; and (4) a discussion of four case studies highlighting various non-discrimination issues.

As you know, Lehigh is committed to ensuring that it does not discriminate against any person based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, marital status, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Lehigh has chosen to protect personal characteristics beyond those required by federal, state and local law. It is important that all Lehigh employees understand what this means

and what their responsibilities are under the laws and Lehigh policy.

During the session, we highlighted some recent litigation verdicts. In one case, a University was ordered to pay \$1.275M in an age discrimination/retaliation lawsuit filed by an employee. A portion of the verdict was against individual employees at the University based upon their actions or their failure to act. In another case, a jury awarded \$850K to a College employee who claimed that her bosses failed to protect her from sexual advances by another College employee and then retaliated against her after she complained. These verdicts reflect the serious harm, both on an individual and institutional level that can result from discriminatory acts.

If you would like us to tailor a program specific to your department or college, please let us know. Our next Legal Updates session is on *Immigration Law & Compliance* and will be held on Friday, April 20 from 9-11am in UC 303. We hope to see you there.

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