

Approved

## UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN FACULTY AND STUDENTS

February 13, 2013

217 Coleman-Morse

1:00-2:30 p.m.

**Members present:** Catherine Rastovski, D. Katherine Spiess, Susan Ohmer, Kevin Barry, Abby Palko for Pamela Wojcik, Aimee Buccellato, Maura Ryan, Alison Rice, Grace Xing, Paulette Curtis

**Members absent and excused:** Jade Avelis, Monica Daegele, G. Margaret Porter, Alison Rice, Katie Rose, Rebecca Wingert, Jennifer Mason McAward

**Guests:** Ava Preacher, Catherine Pieronek, Stephanie Lyons, Ann Moran, and Kathy Brickley

### 1. Welcome

Prof. Susan Ohmer, chair, welcomed members to the meeting. Guests in attendance included Ann Moran, Graduate Student Program Director in the Career Center, and Stephanie Lyons, a graduate student in physics, who were invited to discuss mentoring.

### 2. Review and approval of November 12, 2013 minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the last meeting, where the faculty climate survey was discussed. The Chair has relayed the group's detailed comments to the Office of Strategic Planning for their review but these comments will not be posted publicly. Prof. Ohmer agreed to inquire if a date has been set for the survey. Prof. Ryan has been instrumental in recommending other campus groups who might serve as a focus group for the survey designers.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

Members commented on how challenging it is to locate the committee's minutes at the Provost's website. Prof. Xing suggested that members link to the committee's website, which will drive up numbers and make it easier to find.

### 3. Mapother luncheon guests

Two Mapother luncheons have been scheduled for the Spring 2013 semester.

- Thursday Feb 20: Nicole McNeil (Psychology) and Natalie Meyers (Hesburgh Libraries)
- Thursday April 18: Patricia Clarke (CBE) and Linda Przybyszewski (History)

Prof. Ohmer reminded members that at the last meeting, they had discussed using the Mapother luncheons in a strategic way. She invited suggestions for ways that next week's luncheon might be leveraged.

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Prof. Maura Ryan suggested that the discussion at the luncheon might emphasize the question of women's leadership on campus; she noted that the Provost has a particular responsibility for this issue, which is a concern for faculty generally.

Prof. Ohmer noted that leadership was one of the topics suggested as agenda items for the committee at its first meeting of this year. Prof. Cathy Pieronek asked what definition of 'leadership' has been established; no definition was chosen during the first discussion. It was agreed that there are many forms of leadership, which makes it harder to count and to define.

Prof. Ryan suggested that a luncheon discussion might focus on the relatively small number of female full professors relative to male; also on the difference in numbers for full time female SPF relative to male. Prof. Ryan noted that there is a lack of women in leadership roles 'of all kinds.' An angle to pursue in a discussion might be the question of what are the obstacles that prevent women from taking leadership roles. Prof. Ryan suggested discussion of why women say no to leadership, if women feel ill prepared for leadership, and why women's names never get in the pool to start with. It was suggested that some data on this whole question might be obtained from the Provost's Office.

Prof. Ohmer suggested that this discussion might best match with the April luncheon, as the two faculty guests are both tenured faculty and would be well positioned for this discussion. The two luncheon guests might be invited to attend the March UCWFS meeting in preparation for the luncheon. Prof. Paulette Curtis suggested that the introduction of this topic—women in leadership positions on campus—might come more effectively from Mr. Burish; this would allow the women faculty leeway to express their thoughts without pre-empting their voices. Perhaps they could be invited to speak with the committee after the luncheon, as well, to share their perceptions of the experience.

Prof. Ohmer said that the topic of today's meeting—mentoring—might be a good topic for the faculty invited to attend the February 20 luncheon.

Members turned to a discussion of the outcomes of past Mapother luncheons. Prof. Pieronek asked if faculty's impressions have been systematically collected; there has been little formal follow-up. When the Provost offers to pursue a topic raised at the luncheons, Prof. Ohmer has often been the 'go-to' person to execute that request.

A Mapother luncheon discussion experience was shared with members. A faculty member, engaged in a discussion about sought-for faculty members (young, Catholic, minority and/or women) with other luncheon guests and Mr. Burish, asked what is being done to insure retention of female faculty. The answer included the fact that ND's numbers for retaining women is lower because 'we take more risks with women.' Members discussed this topic at length. Members expressed distress at the perception that women might not be qualified to earn tenure. One member said that it might be necessary to consider whether the goal of diversifying the faculty is hindered by lack of planning as to what new faculty might need to be successful, just like a lack of prior planning for needed resources can hinder the success of individual students admitted with the goal of diversifying the student body.

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Just as the university is increasing its enrollment of students with a range of capabilities and has yet to sufficiently provide resources to support those students, for faculty there is no infrastructure for support. For some special groups of students there are plentiful resources provided; a more balanced infrastructure should be the goal.

Prof. Ryan noted that any time she has conducted research on this topic, ND 'comes out ahead of a lot of other places.' She agreed that there is broad inconsistency throughout the university; however, it is not accurate to say that women have made no progress in 40 years.

Kevin Barry indicated that the local culture and/or politics of a unit have significant impact on issues such as gender policies, even if the policies themselves are 'good at the top.' If local implementation differs from policy intent, then problems arise. It is necessary to shift the culture. Prof. Spiess noted that one way to shift the local culture is to retain women. Mr. Barry noted that bias can be expressed by both sexes. He referred to a recently published study in which the names of faculty on CVs were alternatively designated male and female; the CV was judged as less strong when it had a female name than a male name by a majority of evaluators both male and female. Prof. Xing noted that few of the female laboratory researchers she has hired have stayed in her lab.

Another member reported that it was possible to 'do it all' when she was in a prior position. She conjectured that the university is asking faculty to prioritize 'other people's children' over 'their own.' Even faculty drawn to the university's mission may be put off by this conundrum, and either leave or never even arrive at ND. She suggested that the committee could take a leadership role on this issue and suggested that the university as 'behind the times' on the work/life balance issue. She offered to forward to the group a list of recommendations put together by another campus committee on specific ways the university could become more family friendly; she noted that this is increasingly less a woman's issue and more a family issue. Paternity leave is even now being discussed on campus.

Dr. Curtis noted that the retention issue is an umbrella issue, related to climate, under which work/life and family concerns of all sorts fit. She would like to highlight this broader picture, perhaps drawing on anecdotal evidence from former faculty and staff who have left the university. This would open the opportunity to include the experiences of single faculty and staff that face a particular set of challenges.

As the university actively seeks to diversify the campus, the challenges need to be identified. And then an action-plan can be crafted to create solutions, with an infrastructure to support the various components of the campus population.

Dr. Curtis gave a brief summary of the ongoing activities of the Task Force on Diversity that was convened several years ago, of which she was and is a member. It was noted that the minutes of this committee might be 'fed into' that task force. The original focus of the task force was on student diversity. In its latest permutation, the group has been charged with formulating an action plan; at present, it is collecting feedback from stakeholder groups on campus.

The group discussed the kind of information that is available about why faculty leave. Professor Ryan noted that the College of Arts and Letters has conducted exit interviews for about 6-7 years. They are confidential, but in reading through them she has identified both “push” and “pull” factors. “Pull” factors that attract faculty to positions at other universities include an urban location, a stronger department in their field, colleagues in their area of research, or better opportunities for a spouse. Factors that “push” women faculty away can be broadly categorized as feelings of being marginalized or isolated. This may occur if faculty are not Catholic, or white, or straight. Professor Ryan notes that even faculty who are not Catholic may support our mission but still say they don’t feel as connected or involved. How can we build institutional or social communities to alleviate this feeling?

The group agreed that it would be useful to pull together what data exists on faculty retention and that the data might be augmented with interviews with focus groups of SPF, library, and T&R faculty.

A general discussion ensued about other factors that created a feeling that the social community of campus was fragmenting. The group noted, for example, that there is no printed phone book with which one can easily access home addresses and phone numbers. Even a pdf version would be helpful. There is no faculty club that provides a ready place where faculty can eat together. One member noted that it was difficult to find out when Masses took place in the Basilica today, Ash Wednesday. The committee felt that weak communication contributes to a lessening of a sense of community.

#### **4. Mentoring discussion**

The Committee invited Stephanie Lyons, a graduate student in Physics and founder of the Notre Dame chapter of the National Association of Women in Science, to discuss mentoring efforts in the College of Science. Ms. Lyons noted that the College supported the founding of this chapter and that there are now 80 graduate students in science on the listserv. Plans are to open the listserv to faculty and postdocs by the end of this semester and the postdocs are very excited about this opportunity. Ms. Lyons drew attention to the AWS program called “Mentornet” <http://www.mentornet.net/> that matches students with industry mentors or local mentors. This is an issue with women in science. There has been some informal mentoring: Kathleen Cannon buys lunch for graduate students, for example. Ms. Lyons said that she herself has been proactive in seeking mentoring; if one professor is unavailable, she seeks out another. Given the small number of women in physics, women faculty take on more leadership roles, not fewer ones.

Ms. Lyons pointed out that the Graduate School has taken a number of steps to improve retention, by using inclusive language, such as talking about “parenting” in relation to both men and women.

Ms. Lyons also told the group that it is difficult for graduate students to locate mentoring resources; students don’t know what is available to them. Email is not always the most effective way. She noted that Dean Sterling strongly supported mentoring efforts and so does the College of Science. The first lunch she held attracted 40 people. One strategy she has learned for these

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informal lunches is to build in 10-15 minutes for socializing and then 10-15 for members to present their research.

Students don't always see the value of mentoring activities. Department chairs and DGSs do a great job of drawing attention to professional development workshops but a student's adviser or faculty members don't always encourage participation and see these activities as "interfering" with the student's job of doing research. Yet these are important ways to develop a sense of community, and this is important for women in science, since there are many more men than women in the field.

Dr. Palko noted that women faculty, too, might benefit from learning how to mentor, since many of us completed our graduate work without experiencing the sense of community that these students seek. It would be helpful for faculty to have some workshops or discussion of how to mentor.

Members noted that a mentor did not be a student's adviser. In fact, sometimes there are questions that a student feels he or she can't ask an adviser, about work/life balance or spending more time with one's children, for example.

The Committee discussed ways to encourage faculty to mentor and graduate students to participate. Perhaps there could be a one-credit course in professional development as part of a graduate student's training. It might also be helpful to offer incentives for faculty to mentor, for example, putting funds into a faculty member's research account. If we believe mentoring is important, we need to make it a requirement, not an option.

## **5. Future Meetings of UCWFS:**

- March 20: noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Eck Center, Alumni Association Conference Room: Community Engagement/South Bend and Chicago

Guests: Jessica Brookshire, Public Affairs Associate Director, Jay Caponigro, Director of Community Engagement, State and Local Public Affairs; and an alumni association representative.

- April 24: 3:30-5 Eck Center Auditorium

ECDC update, RecSports, benefits, work/life balance, wellness programs, discounts, services for children with special needs. This meeting will be open to the campus and is intended to be interactive.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.