

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN FACULTY AND STUDENTS**  
**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**MEETING OF October 11, 2011**  
**4:00-5:30 p.m. Main Building, Room 500**

**Members present:** Maura Ryan—chair, Kevin Barry, Jennifer Mason McAward, Paulette Curtis, Jade Avelis, Catherine Rastovski, Kathie Newman, Don Pope-Davis, Alison Rice, Susan Sheridan, Diane Wagner

**Members absent and excused:** Tracy Bergstrom, Aimee Buccellato, Anne Huntington, D. Katherine Spiess

**Permanent Invited Guests present:** Kathy Brickley, Ava Preacher

### **1. Welcome**

Prof. Pope-Davis opened the meeting, as the designated representative of the Provost's Office. He welcomed members to this first meeting of the academic year, and reviewed the charge of the committee. This committee was convened in order to provide guidance to the administration on a wide range of concerns related to the welfare of women faculty, staff and students. He circulated a copy of the charge as contained in the Academic Articles; this (and other committee charges) was revised t an Academic Council meeting in May, 2011.

Prof. Pope-Davis proceeded to the election of a chair for the academic year. He noted that Prof. Susan Ohmer has resigned her position as chair with her acceptance of a new position at the university as the Digital Media Program Manager. He thanked Prof. Ohmer for her dedication to the work of the committee and noted the many advances in women's welfare that were initiated under her leadership. Prof. Pope-Davis nominated Dean Maura Ryan as a candidate for chair for the 2011-2012 academic year. Prof. Susan Sheridan seconded this motion. Dean Ryan was unanimously elected chair. Dean Ryan thanked members, and she issued an invitation to all members to hold the chair as a co-chairman with her. She noted that there would be a benefit to have a non-administrative member as the chair.

Finally, Prof. Pope-Davis presented to the committee the annual report of the UCWFS, as drafted by chair Ohmer. This report has already been approved by the Academic Council to which it is yearly presented. He noted that the report will be posted at the Academic Council website soon, and that it can be transmitted electronically to members for distribution to all interested constituencies.

Prof. Pope-Davis thanked members for their service to the university and excused himself from the meeting.

### **2. Chair's report**

Dean Ryan presented a brief agenda of topics to be reviewed and updated during this first meeting of the year.

A. Mapother Lunches

Dean Ryan reviewed this initiative, which was endowed by an alumnus, to promote communication between women and the Provost's Office concerning the flourishing of women faculty in all areas of campus life. Two tenured and two untenured women faculty are invited to a working lunch with the Provost in each semester. This semester's schedule is as follows:

Nov. 8: Susanna Monta, Associate Professor, English and Crislyn D'Souza-Schorey, Associate Professor, Walther Cancer Institute Chair.

Dec. 7: Amanda Hummon, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry and Jessica Hellmann, Assistant Professor, Biology.

Dean Ryan asked members for nominations for future Mapother Lunches. Members provided suggestions and were invited to email any further ideas to Dean Ryan. Nominees should be both tenured and untenured professors. She noted she would contact nominees to arrange the Spring 2012 lunches.

Prof. Paulette Curtis informed members that the alumnus who endowed this initiative will be visiting campus during the Fall 2011 semester, as part of a cultural presentation at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. Dean Ryan said she would investigate the possibility of a lunch meeting with him.

B. Climate survey update

Dean Ryan reviewed the Spring, 2011 discussion about a climate survey, during which Erin Harding Hoffman presented several survey tools to members for feedback about what features and questions would be most appropriate for the planned climate survey. Dean Ryan reported that the instrument has been chosen, and the participating group—the Colonial group of universities, of which ND is a member—has agreed to participate by employing the same instrument at each institution. This was an important requirement for Provost Burish, who is concerned to acquire comparable data by which to evaluate the data collected at ND. The survey will be distributed at the institutions in Spring, 2013.

Members discussed the survey. It was agreed that the two year wait was a disappointment; the committee will be responsible to insure that this initiative does not get sidelined. The Provost's Office asks the committee to assist in promoting the survey and in crafting ways to insure faculty buy-in and participation. The instrument chosen is the AAU tool, because it contained the right mix of questions and took a productive approach to the collection of data on the gamut of working conditions on campuses. While a variety of surveys have been done on campus in the past, this differs in that it has a broad audience focus. The goal is to develop a substantive, comprehensive picture of what it is like to work and teach at ND. The data will be broken down by gender, ethnicity, and other categories. It is hoped that the data will help to move analysis from the anecdotal, impressionistic level.

Members discussed the campus climate briefly. It was noted that single faculty women are a category

that is often overlooked and underserved on campus. Prof. Curtis noted that this constituent group would benefit from a meeting place and an organized group. Others agreed more broadly that a faculty meeting area in which casual, informal, after-hours or lunch gatherings can be held is missing from the campus. It was noted that the Faculty Club was shuttered a number of years ago; the old practice of faculty gathering for lunch in the Oak Room of the South dining hall has also disappeared. These regular, casual encounters enable faculty to 'get out of their own silos.'

Dean Ryan noted that this broad concern can be added to the year's agenda.

C. Lactation rooms: More lactation rooms have opened on campus; find the locations at the link on the HR website. This committee has played a big role in initiating and following up on this development. <http://hr.nd.edu/work-life-blance/lactation-rooms/>

D. Forum on benefits/ECDC: Dean Ryan reported that the 2010-2011 forum was successful. Members were asked whether another one would be useful. Those who had attended last year's attested to its value. All agreed that another forum would be a good idea. Dean Ryan asked members to suggest campus partners to invite to participate in the forum.

E. Resources for parenting and pregnant students: Dean Ryan has been approached by the President's Office which is doing a study of the available resources for pregnant and parenting students. She solicited members to provide information on any resources they are aware of to serve this population. She suggested that this might be an agenda item for the year.

Prof. Newman noted that the Graduate School is working with Student Life to establish a clearer picture of graduate student life at ND. She wondered whether there is full communication on campus of all the groups interested in this kind of information. A coordination of efforts would be efficient. Jade Avelis, graduate student representative, mentioned that the Graduate Student Union has started a fund for financial support to undergraduate and graduate students, not limited to child issues. It was noted that this fund has been endowed. Prof. Susan Sheridan reported that her department has started a fund to help pay childcare costs for assistant professors who need open time for writing.

Dean Ryan stated that the goal of the study is to produce recommendations for improvement. She noted that the narrative of graduate student life is a complex narrative, and it is hoped that the report will be presented as a complex narrative.

F. 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Coed education 2012-2013: Dean Ryan suggested that the committee begin to consider how it would like to participate in campus events to mark this important milestone.

### **3. Agenda ideas for 2011-2012**

Dean Ryan solicited suggestions for agenda items that the committee will address during this academic year.

1. Support for single faculty and staff women—consideration of obtaining a dedicated space and allocating resources
2. Investigation of current funding options for graduate and assistant professors for childcare
3. Gathering information about campus resources for pregnant and parenting students
4. Investigation of the idea of a webpage, such as that sponsored by women in the College of Arts and Letters, with links to campus and city resources for family matters, in the broadest sense. This might increase visibility for women and their issues. In addition it might increase the visibility of the committee.

Members discussed some options for this idea, including a Facebook group or a Linked-in group where subgroups could identify one another. Kevin Barry wondered if this is an idea that might be effectively executed by the President's Office, which has the necessary resources to create a webpage in the committee's name. There would be a role for both HR and the Provost's office in such a webpage.

Members agreed that a separate agenda item is increasing the visibility of the committee. One benefit of this would be to widen the audience to include those who may be currently underserved. To this point, Prof. Newman suggested that members could send a message to their constituents, identifying themselves as a contact person on the broad topic of the campus welfare of women. In addition, it was suggested that the GSU and the Undergraduate Student Government could be asked to send a message reminding members of the committee's existence and mission.

5. Women in campus leadership roles—follow up on past recommendations concerning this issue; possibly initiate new recommendations, such as mentoring programs, training and leadership programs, and identification of women faculty who might be interested in administrative positions (ND Lead).

As time had expired, members were invited to send to Dean Ryan other agenda items, and the meeting was adjourned.