

University Committee on Women Faculty and Students
Annual Report for the Academic Year 2010-2011
Prepared for the University of Notre Dame's Academic Council
by Susan Ohmer, Chair

Executive Summary

The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students (UCWFS) met five times over the course of this year. A significant change that occurred during this year is that the Academic Council passed the changes the UCWFS recommended to its membership and charge in the Academic Articles. The new description and charge, which reflect the Committee's actual practices, appear below.

Throughout the year the UCWFS noted that many areas identified in its 2008 report have become the focus of individuals, groups, and offices across campus. The UCWFS finds that it can accomplish many of its goals by working in concert with other groups. An example this year was its collaboration with the Graduate School, which drafted a proposal to recommend family-friendly policies for graduate students. Members of the Committee also serve on the Board of ECDC and on the Notre Dame ECDC group and the Committee met with representatives of these groups during the spring. This participation has enabled members to gain information, share perspectives, and participate in broader initiatives of concern to women faculty and students, such as work-life balance.

During this academic year, meetings and discussions focused strongly on work /life balance, childcare policies, and the importance of communication across various groups on campus. This report summarizes key meetings and decisions that relate to these issues.

1. Revised Membership and Charge

On May 17, 2011, the Academic Council passed the changes recommended by the UCWFS to its membership and charge. According to this revised description from Article IV, section 3, subsection (I) of the Academic Articles:

The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students consists of thirteen representatives from the faculty, four student representatives and three non-voting members. Nine faculty members of the committee are elected and four appointed by the President. Seven of the faculty members are elected from the teaching and research faculty of the Colleges and Schools: two from Arts and Letters, one from Business, one from Engineering, one from Science, one from Law, and one from Architecture. One faculty member is elected from the library faculty and one from the special professional faculty. The remaining faculty members on the committee, one of whom is a Vice President and Associate Provost or his/her designee, are appointed by the President. Four students—two undergraduates and two graduates—are appointed by the appropriate elected representatives of the Student Government and the Graduate Student Union. Elected committee members serve staggered three-year terms. Appointed members serve one-year terms. No one serves for more than six consecutive years. The Director of the Office of

Institutional Equity, the Director of the Gender Relations Center, and one of the University's Sexual Assault Resource Persons, as designated by the chair of the committee, serve as non-voting members of the committee. The committee elects as chair one of its tenured faculty members.

The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students considers policies, practices, and the general environment at the University as they relate to women faculty and students. The committee may make recommendations for action to the President and Provost or, as they direct, for action by the other officers of the University and the Academic Council. The committee should meet regularly and should publish a record of its deliberations for the University community. The chair of the committee provides an annual report of its activities to the Academic Council.

Membership for the academic year 2010-2011 consisted of the following faculty, students and invited members:

*Donald Pope-Davis, Vice President and Associate Provost
Susan Ohmer, Assistant Provost and Interim Director of the Hesburgh Libraries, chair
Kevin Barry, Special Professional Faculty representative
Tracy Bergstrom, Library Faculty representative
Aimee Buccellato, School of Architecture
Jessica Collett, College of Arts and Letters
Paulette Curtis, Associate Professional Specialist, College of Arts and Letters
Amber Handy, Graduate Student Representative
Emily LeStrange, Undergraduate Representative
Jennifer Mason McAward, Law School
Ken Milani, Mendoza College of Business
Kathie Newman, College of Science
Allison Regier, Graduate Student Representative
Alison Rice, College of Arts and Letters
Maura Ryan, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters
Catherine Soler, Undergraduate Representative
Diane Wagner, College of Engineering*

Invited members who served ex-officio were:

*Kathy Brickley, Associate Vice President and Senior Counsel, Office of General Counsel (ex-officio)
Jannifer Crittendon, Director, Office of Institutional Equity (ex-officio)
Catherine Pieronek, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director, Women's Engineering Program, Office of the Dean, College of Engineering (ex-officio)
Ava Preacher, Associate Professional Specialist and Associate Director, Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Letters, and Sexual Assault Resource Person (ex-officio)
Heather Rakoczy Russell, Director, Gender Relations Center (ex-officio)*

2. Promoting Family-Friendly Policies

During the 2010-2011 academic year the Graduate School drafted a proposal to recommend family-friendly policies for graduate students. Several members of the UCWFS served on the drafting committee and Associate Dean Barbara Turpin met with the UCWFS to seek feedback and to update the group on the progress of the proposal.

Through this initiative, the Graduate School sought to achieve two goals: (1) to articulate and post on the Graduate School's website a statement of commitment to the objective of assisting graduate students to achieve a balance between career and family and (2) to make structural changes to Graduate School policy to provide such assistance.

After thorough and informative discusses with Dean Turpin, the UCWFS voted to support the Graduate School proposal and drew attention to other issues as well, such as the deteriorating state of graduate student housing and the need for improved health care for graduate students' children. These discussions brought concerns to the attention of the Graduate School, increased awareness of and support for the family-friendly initiative among UCWFS members, and raised other issues that were referred to the Benefits Office. The Graduate Council later passed these proposals at its January 2011 meeting.

Committee members noted the various ways that the UCWFS could assist in the implementation of these policies. In their roles as graduate student advisers, directors of graduate studies, and recruiters for department programs, they could disseminate information about these policies to current and prospective students. Committee members also emphasized the importance of talking openly about work-life balance and of assuring students, male and female, that they could take advantage of these policies without jeopardizing their careers. Members emphasized the role that communication plays in acclimating students to their professional roles. By talking about work-life balance now, faculty can help students perform more effectively as they move forward in their professions.

The topic of supporting families also formed that main focus of another meeting in the spring. The UCWFS heard an update from Linda Kroll, chair of the ECDC/ND committee. John Affleck-Graves constituted this group to serve as a standing committee that would provide a regular conduit for communication between the University and the child care center. Ms. Kroll gave a powerpoint presentation that explained the role of the committee, the background of ECDC, the relationship between ECDC and Notre Dame, financial information about the center, its enrollment process, including the tiered tuition system and wait list policies, and studies for a possible expansion of the facility.

Ms. Kroll also noted that the ECDC/ND committee has begun to develop a website that will provide detailed information to Notre Dame families about family-related topics, such as off-campus childcare, family-friendly activities, and local schools. It is hoped that the website will become operational during the 2011-2012 academic year.

Ms. Kroll discussed a study that the ECDC/ND committee completed to examine the feasibility of building a second facility that would serve the demand for infant care in the Notre Dame community. After she reviewed the licensing and accreditation requirements for this age group and the number of infants who could be served, the

UCWFS concluded that such a facility did not seem feasible. However, the UCWFS felt strongly that the Notre Dame should explore expanding the spaces available for 2-5 year olds.

Ms. Kroll also drew attention to the work of the Office of Human Resources, which has worked to develop spaces on campus where nursing mothers can express their milk. The Office has identified and equipped rooms in various buildings that are available to faculty, staff and students. Ms. Kroll thanked the UCWFS for gathering information that informed this decision and for sharing news about this new resource.

Each of these presentations made clear that family life issues continue to concern the members of the UCWFS but also underscore how the UCWFS has forged strong ties with ECDC, the Office of Human Resources, and the Graduate School, ties that enable all of these groups to draw on one another for information, feedback, and support.

3. Fostering Communication Between Faculty and Administrators

In various discussions over the last several years, faculty have asked that the Provost's office conduct a climate survey of faculty to detect areas of success and areas needing further attention. In response to these requests, Provost Burish asked Donald Pope-Davis and Susan Ohmer to work with Erin Hoffman Harding and the Office of Strategic Planning to identify or develop a survey instrument that could be administered. Ms. Hoffman Harding, associate vice president for strategic planning, and Ms. Tatiana Combs, survey program manager and consultant, met with the UCWFS to review two instruments that were being considered for this survey. The Provost would like to collect peer information as well and Notre Dame has secured the participation of several other universities in this project. A joint effort presents a significant opportunity for both collective and collaborative information gathering that will lead to useful benchmarking and more insights into the data that is collected.

The two instruments under consideration for Notre Dame's survey are the HERI Faculty survey from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and the AAUDE instrument, which focuses on institutional equity and faculty climate and allows universities to add supplemental questions. Committee members reviewed each instrument carefully and concluded that the AAUDE instrument better captured the issues that have concerned this committee over the last several years, such as mentoring, hiring, leave policies, and general environmental conditions. The Office of Strategic Planning has since announced that it plans to administer the AAUDE survey during the 2012-2013 academic year. Committee members also recommended ways to incentivize faculty to participate in the survey process.

In another, ongoing effort to enhance communication between faculty and administrators, UCWFS members continued to nominate women faculty to have lunch

with the Provost as part of an endowment by alumnus William Mapother ('87). The endowment was created "to aid communication between the faculty and the administration and to help female faculty thrive and advance at Notre Dame." Twice each semester the Provost has lunch with two women faculty, two tenured women at one lunch and two untenured women at the other lunch, who represent different colleges and schools. The UCWFS is charged with developing a list of women faculty to invite. This year Diane Wagner (Assistant Professor, Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering) and Elizabeth Archie (Assistant Professor, Biology) accepted the Committee's invitation during the fall. During the spring semester, Jennifer Tank (Professor and The Ludmilla F., Stephen J. and Robert T. Galla Chair in Biological Sciences) and Christina Wohlbrecht (Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies for Political Science) participated, as well as Kasey Buckles (Assistant Professor, Economics and Econometrics) and Atalia Omer (Assistant Professor of Religion, Conflict and Peace Studies/Kroc Institute). The Committee thanks these colleagues for accepting this invitation.

Looking ahead to next year, the UCWFS plans to participate in some way in celebrations of the 40th anniversary of co-education at Notre Dame. The Committee will also continue its ongoing work with the Office of Human Resources, ECDC/NC, and other campus groups whose projects serve to advance the interests of women faculty and students at Notre Dame.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Susan Ohmer

Susan Ohmer, Chair