

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN FACULTY AND STUDENTS
November 12, 2012
500 MAIN
12:00-1:30 p.m.

Members present: Jade Avelis, Catherine Rastovski, D. Katherine Spiess, Susan Ohmer, Kevin Barry, Pamela Wojcik, Aimee Buccellato, Katie Rose, Maura Ryan, Margaret Porter

Members absent and excused: Kathie Newman, Alison Rice, Rebecca Wingert, Grace Xing, Jennifer Mason McAward, Paulette Curtis

Guests: Ava Preacher, Catherine Pieronek, David Bailey—Associate Vice President, Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research, Tatiana Combs, Paul Miller

1. Welcome

Prof. Susan Ohmer opened the meeting and welcomed new member Katie Rose, undergraduate student representative, to the committee. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of October 8, 2012 meeting minutes

The minutes of the October 8, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Mapother lunches: updates and request for nominees

Prof. Ohmer briefly reviewed the creation of the Mapother endowed luncheon, at which female faculty members meet with the Provost. The luncheon was created in an effort to help foster communication between women faculty and the provost. The faculty include both tenured and untenured and from a range different disciplines at the university.

Prof. Pamela Wojcik, UCWFS member, participated in the most recent lunch (October, 2012). She reported that the experience was a pleasant one, in part because she got to meet another female faculty member from a different discipline. She enjoyed the conversation with both the faculty member and Mr. Burish; among other topics, they discussed graduate student work and life at ND.

Prof. Wojcik noted, however, that there was no coherent purpose for the lunch. It is not a requirement, functionally or structurally, to discuss issues pertaining to women at ND. Whether or not there will a practical or policy outcome from this lunch is not clear. She suggested that there could be a more focused purpose to the event, including even an agenda. Prof. Ohmer agreed that there seems to be potential for a more successful strategic use of the occasion. Prof. Aimee Buccellato, who participated in the lunch several years ago, seconded Prof. Wojcik's experience. Members discussed the suggestion that UCWFS encourage invitees to prepare a set of topics (3 was a suggested number) for each lunch. The committee could meet with the invitees, share meeting minutes, suggest a cooperative approach and even select pro-active invitees. Prof. Ohmer said that the Provost is likely to follow up on ideas that get presented or

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issues that are raised, so it behooves the committee to make use of this opportunity to foster dialogue with administration.

Members were invited to suggest nominees. Prof. Ohmer thanked members for their suggestions, and she invited members to contact her with other suggested faculty.

4. Faculty Climate Survey, Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research

Prof. Ohmer welcomed guests David Bailey, Tatiana Combs, and Paul Miller from the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research, who have come to discuss the Faculty Climate Survey that they plan to distribute in spring 2013. The discussion about this survey has been ongoing for more than a year, under Erin Hoffman Harding and now under David Bailey. UCWFS has been involved in these discussions from early on, and today's meeting is a further opportunity for UCWFS to provide feedback about the selection and the wording of questions.

Mr. Bailey reminded members that the content of the survey under discussion today is confidential. It is still a working draft of the instrument.

Mr. Bailey turned the presentation over to Ms. Combs, the leading 'genius' behind the survey. Ms. Combs recalled that OSPIR staff members visited the committee in spring 2011, to discuss the various instruments that might be used to survey faculty on the climate of ND. From two viable instruments, the AAU instrument was chosen as the basis of the survey, and a consortium of institutions agreed to participate in a common survey. This consortium, The Colonial Group, includes Boston University, George Washington University, Lehigh University, Northeastern University, University of Miami, University of Notre Dame, and Southern Methodist University. The instrument consists of core questions, agreed upon by all participating Colonial Group universities, and the addition of common optional questions. In addition, each institution can opt to add school-specific questions. ND will host the online survey, which will be distributed to all full-time regular faculty. It is particularly useful in this kind of survey to have comparable data from other universities.

Ms. Combs reviewed the sections of the survey, inviting comments and questions from members. The group is eager for feedback to insure the questions elicit the kind of information that is desired and to insure that faculty find the survey sufficiently engaging to complete it.

Members offered detailed feedback to the Core + Optional Questions as they reviewed each question individually. Ms. Combs noted that there has been an effort to create both general and specific questions. This kind of balance usually elicits the best information overall.

Members agreed generally that the approach of the survey was 'agreeable' and 'useful.' Mr. Bailey noted that changes to the CORE questions would have to be vetted with the consortium. He invited further feedback from the committee, as it reviews the survey draft.

There was a discussion of ways to promote a high response rate to this survey. Mr. Bailey stressed that a high response rate is 'critical' to the positive outcome of such an undertaking. He invited any suggestions for promoting participation. Members discussed the need to involve

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campus groups as a way to ‘drive the survey forward.’ The group has worked hard to keep the survey at a length that will not discourage participation.

Prof. Buccellato noted that a clear statement about the way that survey results will be analyzed and evaluated, and that there is an intention to implement changes based on the survey outcomes, would encourage participation. Prof. Ohmer added that it should be stressed that faculty have participated in the construction of the survey, and that faculty have asked for this survey.

In addition, members suggested that a free week of good parking in the winter months might be an enticement.

Prof. Ohmer thanked the guests for the informative presentation. As time has expired, the meeting was adjourned.