

Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 1st September 2011

1. Call to order

Mary Papke called to order the regular meeting of the **Commission for Women** at **12:00 noon** on **Thursday, 1st September, 2011**, in Hodges Library Conference Room 605.

2. Roll call

The following persons were present:

Ron Tredway	Camille Hall
Heather Mason	Vincent Anfara
Leigh Schlactus	Kierstyn Lamour
Mary Papke	Maxine T. Davis
Taryn Norman	Joy DeSensi
Kathy Morgan	Priscilla Bright
Wendy Syer	Jenny Richter
Jenny Moshak	Leigh Shoemaker
Donna Thomas	Joan Cronan
Thura Mack	Rosa Thomas
Rachel Chen	

3. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes from Thursday, 5th May, 2011, were approved.

4. Open issues

a) Report by the Chair

- i. Mary Papke will meet with the Chancellor, the Advisory Board, and the Commission Chairs on May 6th, 2011. She emphasized the united front that the Committees will present and the need for transparency from the Administration on issues of diversity.
- ii. Mary Papke expressed concern that there has been a lack of movement recently in regards to campus diversity issues, and the Chancellor has not yet responded to the Commission's letter on diversity.
- iii. The Women in Higher Education in Tennessee conference will take place in Lebanon, TN, October 6-7th, 2011. Mary Papke asked the Commission members to let her know if they would like to attend.

b) Report of Committees and Faculty Senate

- i. Jenny Moshak reported from the Commission for LGBT People. The LGBT's slogan for this academic year is "P.A.V.E. the way" (Policy, Advocacy, Visibility, Education), and the Commission hopes to work closely with the Commission for Blacks and the Commission for Women.
- ii. Camille Hall reported from the Commission for Blacks: on September 30th, 2011, the Diverse Faculty workshop will take place.
- iii. Vincent Anfara reported from the Faculty Senate: the Faculty Senate will hold their first full meeting on September 19th, 2011.

Lauren Hill from the LGBT Commission contacted the Faculty Senate regarding benefits for domestic partners. Vincent Anfara reported that State law prohibits public funds being spent on benefits for domestic partners. The Chancellor said that this is a battle we cannot afford to fight right now, but Mary Papke said that the issue needs to remain on the table for the future. The LGBT Commission conducted a study 2-3 years ago to look at peer institutions' position on this issue, and many of these peer institutions do provide benefits for domestic partners.

c) Discussion with Joan Cronan and Donna Thomas about merger of athletic programs and its effect on women's athletics.

- i. There is a concern among women about the merger of women's athletics with men's athletics. Questions have been raised as to why this merger is happening, and how this will affect the strong program and its consistent record of success.

Joan Cronan explained that this merger was begun before Mike Hamilton's resignation. This merger began with President Petersen, when he asked how departments could run more efficiently. Since Mike Hamilton's resignation, Joan Cronan has taken over as Interim Director of Athletics, until a replacement can be found. Merging men's and women's athletics has been a national trend over recent years, and only the University of Texas' athletics remain unmerged. Donna Thomas similarly noted that this has been an evolutionary process, beginning with the creation of the Thornton Center eleven years ago, followed by merger of ticket sales, athletic business administration, sales and marketing, and public relations, and so on. Only Athletic Training and Strength and Conditioning remained separate. Joan Cronan explained that these departments have been placed under Senior Associate Athletics Director, David Blackburn's supervision, with Heather Mason in charge of Women's Strength and Conditioning, and her counterpart, Ron McKeefery, in charge of Men's Strength and Conditioning, and Jason McVeigh and Jenny Moshak in charge of Men's and Women's Athletic Training respectively. Because these four have comparable jobs and needs, the decision was made to put them under the one supervisor.

Donna Thomas assured the Committee that the University has approached the merger thoughtfully and methodically, and women's athletics are already seeing the benefits to the merger. She gave the example of the merging of the Event Management teams, which had been stronger for men's athletics.

The goal all along has been to maintain the Lady Vols' identity and voice. They are committed to their traditions, expectations, and philosophies, and they hope to pass these along to men's athletics. With this in mind, another example of benefits to the merger is the now consistent expectations placed upon academic success in both men's and women's athletics. Traditionally, expectations have been higher for women's athletics. The Athletics Program is committed to changing the culture of men's athletics at UT.

Any discrepancies between budgets for men's and women's athletic teams have been by and large corrected. While there are still some discrepancies, these are for appropriate reasons. For example, the men's basketball team has a higher recruiting budget than the women's because the women's team has the advantage of Pat Summit's reputation to recruit top players without needing a large budget.

Both Joan Cronan and Donna Thomas stressed that this is a merger and consolidation and not a take-over by men's athletics.

- ii. Joan Cronan noted the need for there to remain a strong woman in the role of Senior Women's Administrator, currently Donna Thomas. The Commission for Women expressed a similar need for Joan Cronan's replacement to be committed to maintaining the voice and identity of the Lady Vols. Joan Cronan agreed that senior women staff in athletics should remain involved in the important conversations and decisions regarding the future of athletics at UT.

The search committee for Joan Cronan's replacement consists of herself, Susan Martin, Dan Murphy, Charlie Anderson, and John Tickle. There is no timeline for when a hire needs to be made; instead, the committee maintains its active search until the right replacement can be made. The Commission has asked to be kept updated on the progress of the search.

e. Other Business

- i. Students have been asking how to honor and support Pat Summit since her announcement of her diagnosis of Alzheimer's. Joan Cronan suggested that donations be made to local Alzheimer's charities.

The Athletics Program is working in conjunction with UT hospital and local Alzheimer's charities to sponsor events. For example, the Baylor versus UT football game will be dedicated to Alzheimer's awareness and research.

November is also Alzheimer's awareness month.