

**Commission for Women
Minutes
Thursday, September 4, 2008**

Attendance:

Pam Hindle (Chair), Kathryn Ellis, George Hoemann, Laura Graham, Laura Stansell, Denise Harvey, Joy DeSensi, Wendy Syer, Kerry Howland, Jenny Richter, Mary Papke, Jane Redmond, John Nolt, Cheryl Travis, Fadia Alvic, Margaret Crawford, Deb Haines

Pam Hindle called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. The agenda was as follows:

- I. Introductions**
- II. Report from the Commission for Blacks – Jane Redmond**
- III. Report from the Commission for LGBT People – George Hoemann**
- IV. Report from the Faculty Senate – John Nolt**
- V. Questions for Candidates for Chancellor**
- VI. Growing a Beloved Community**
- VII. Old Business/New Business**

I. Introductions – The meeting began with brief around-the-table introductions of all those in attendance. Each participant briefly introduced themselves and mentioned their position/department on campus.

- * Pam Hindle – Chair; Associate Registrar
- * Kathryn Ellis – GA; Law student
- * George Hoemann – Chair of the Commission for LGBT People
- * Laura Graham – Women’s Coordinating Counsel
- * Laura Stansell – Assistant Directory of Undergraduate Admissions
- * Denise Harvey – Office of the Chancellor
- * Joy DeSensi – Exercise Science
- * Wendy Syer – Center for International Education
- * Kerry Howland – Thornton Center
- * Jenny Richter – Equity & Diversity
- * Mary Papke – Ready for the World, Graduate School
- * Jane Redmond – Chair of the Commission for Blacks, Student Affairs
- * Fadia Alvic – Independent Study
- * John Nolt – Philosophy, President of the Faculty Senate
- * Cheryl Travis – Women’s Studies
- * Margaret Crawford – Construction Research Analysis
- * Deb Haines – Instructional Resources at the College of Veterinary Medicine

(Other attendees came in after the introductions)

After the introductions, Hindle mentioned that Nancy McGlasson will not be with the Commission for Women this year because she is too busy, but that she is with us in spirit.

II. Report from the Commission for Blacks (Jane Redmond) – Jane Redmond reported that there were no official announcements from the Commission for Blacks because their first meeting for the semester is not until next Wednesday.

She said that there are a couple of things the Commission for Blacks is working on. First, during the last semester (Spring 2008) they conducted an extensive survey on the attitudes and perspectives of black faculty and staff members. They are hoping to have a report based on the survey prepared in the next few weeks to send to the Chancellor and the university community. Second, the Commission for Blacks will be sponsoring a reception next Thursday to welcome their newest faculty and staff to the university. The Commission will be joining with the black student and professional organizations for this reception. Finally, Redmond said that the Commission for Blacks will “be doing their traditional things to address issues as they come up.” Hindle told Redmond to count us, the Commission for Women, as members.

Redmond and Hindle both expressed their hopes that the three Chancellor’s Commissions will be collaborative this year.

Redmond then added a short update on Jo Milton. She told everyone that Milton is getting stronger and is getting ready to take another round of treatments. Milton’s mother is still in Knoxville to help her out. Denise Harvey added that she spoke with Milton yesterday and that Milton had had two major tests that both showed improvement. The doctors recently told Milton they were amazed at how well she is doing. Milton has not had chemotherapy for two months, but is getting ready for another round. When another Commission member asked – Redmond and Harvey clarified that Milton’s breast cancer has returned.

III. Report from the Commission for LGBT People (George Hoemann) – George Hoemann started his report by saying that the Commission for LGBT People will hold their first meeting next Monday. Their meetings will be held the first Monday of every months, except for September and January when semesters are just starting.

Hoemann reported that the Commission has prepared a “state of the campus” report from its perspective that is now available on the Commission’s website. He said that Linda Hendricks, from Human Resources for the UT system, recently met with members of the Commission. This was the first time anyone from the system sat down with the LGBT Commission. They have requested similar meetings with the General Counsel office, but have not been able to arrange anything yet.

Hoemann reported that “Voices of Diversity,” a digital archive being done through the Ready for the World program, will become part of the library’s institutional research archive. He said that they have started doing initial interviews. Their goal is to open this project to the constituencies

that the three Chancellor's Commissions represent. The contact person for the project is Roger Weaver and he can be reached via e-mail at jweaver2@utk.edu or via phone at 946-2117.

Next, Hoemann reminded everyone that October is LGBT History Month. On October 16, two women who are married under the laws of Massachusetts will be appearing at Hodges Library at 1:00. The two women have written a book, Courting Equality, and have done a 28-year digital archives collection. That evening, the women will do a movie showing and book signing. Patricia Gozemba will be the primary presenter at these events.

Cheryl Travis asked Hoemann for some examples of the policy issues the Commission for LGBT People are trying to change on campus. Hoemann gave the university's bereavement policy as one example. He explained that if something were to happen to his partner, he would have to take annual leave because bereavement leave is not available to him. He said that this is a policy issue, not a legal issue. He then gave the example of TREC's addition of domestic partners to the spousal rate for membership as an example of a policy that has already been changed. He expressed his appreciation for the work of Alan Chesney and Rex Pringle in getting this change accomplished.

Travis followed up with a question about data related to the LGBT community on campus. Hoemann said that right now they are hoping for there to be a way for LGBT people on campus to self-identify. He said that a foundational problem for the community on campus is invisibility. He added that there is a sense on campus that to be LGBT you have to have a "coming out" – for many, this can be a psychological issue because they do not know how they will be received. He added that Linda Hendricks had some interesting ideas when they met and that the meeting was a good first step. He said that in four or five years he may be able to say "it's a good second step."

IV. Questions for the Finalists in the Search for a New Chancellor – Hindle said that should would like to know what kinds of questions members of the Commission for Women would like her to ask the finalists when she meets with them. Hindle, Redmond, Hoemann, and Jenny Richter will all be meeting with the finalists as part of the diversity group.

Deb Haines said that should would be interested to know what each candidate thinks he/she brings to the table for diversity issues.

Hoemann said that he thinks Hindle should ask each finalist for a commitment to the Bryn Mawr and Wellsley programs. He thinks those need to be protected.

Richter would like to know if these candidates have worked with ombudspersons in the past.

Hoemann added that it is not written in stone that the three commissions exist, so he would like to know what each candidate thinks about them. Nancy Goslee said that she does not think we would want to point out that the Chancellor has the power to eliminate the commissions. Mary Papke said she does not think any of the commissions are in danger for several years.

Papke said she would like to know what each finalist thinks he/she has done to promote diversity at their university. She suggested that Hindle not define diversity when asking this question – see how each candidate defines it. She thinks that will tell a lot about the candidate. Hoemann noted that only two of the candidate's current universities include information about gender identity on their websites.

Hindle said that she would like to know what the candidates think about pay equity issues.

Travis would like to know if the candidates support undergraduate programs that are involved in diversity. Related to this, Hoemann said it would be interesting to know what the candidates think about Ready for the World. Wendy Syer said she would like to know where they see Ready for the World going in the future, which Hoemann suggested would tell us how they are going to place this campus.

Hindle asked how many of the meeting attendants were planning to participate in the search process when the finalists came to campus. Several members raised their hands. Papke reminded everyone that the forums would be available as webcasts.

V. Report from the Faculty Senate (John Nolt) – John Nolt gave a brief report on the Faculty Senate. First, he said that the faculty gender study will continue this year.

Second, he said that the Faculty Senate has been dealing with the program closures that the President and Chancellor announced in June. The affected programs were the Industrial and Organizational Psychology minor in the College of Business, the Dance minor in the College of Health and Human Sciences, and the Audiology and Speech Pathology major in the College of Arts and Sciences. Nolt noted that the gender aspect of these program closures is that the Audiology and Speech Pathology department is made up predominantly of women. So, there is a question of what this closure will do to the campus gender balance. He said that the same could be said of the Dance minor.

Nolt added that the Faculty Senate has an obligation to make recommendations to the President about any program changes. He said that the Commission for Women may want to make some statements about these closures. He said that the Faculty Senate will be making its reports in October.

He said that right now the Faculty Senate is assuming that the Audiology and Speech Pathology program will be closed insofar as this campus is concerned. Matt Murray is preparing a report on that. He also said that the Undergraduate Council is dealing only with the Dance minor – John Rommeiser is involved in that.

Hindle said that she thinks the Commission for Women does have concerns about the gender effects of these program closings – she knows she does.

Haines asked how these decisions were made. Nolt mentioned that the percentage requirements were passed on to the college. The University suggested that each college make strategic cuts, not cuts across the board.

Travis brought up the issue of potential retirement slots. She said that right now there are searches for three out of thirty-five slots. Nolt said that at such time that Audiology and Speech Pathology moves somewhere else (to Memphis perhaps), money will be freed up. This means that the twenty-six slots that are currently frozen will open up down the line.

Wendy Syer asked in the Health Science Center in Memphis is supposed to absorb the cost if the Audiology and Speech Pathology program moves there. Nolt responded that no one is talking publicly about that.

Hindle asked is institutional research provided numbers related to the gender issue of these closures to the Faculty Senate. Nolt said no. He said the Faculty Senate has not gathered data on these issues yet. He did say, however, that if the percentage of the programs being closed was largely female, then you are obviously losing women on campus.

VI. Growing a Beloved Community – Hindle said that she would like for the Commission for Women to focus on the issue of “growing a beloved community” in the upcoming year. She said that she has been captured again by the language of Martin Luther King, Jr. who spoke about “beloved community.” Hindle said she looked at some of his speeches and writings about this on the internet. She thinks it applies to us here and to the work of the commissions, Ready for the World, and the Diversity Council. Hindle believes it has to do with raising people up and finding ways to connect, collectively and individually, and with helping us to bridge gaps. Hindle thinks that we can create a “beloved community” here at UT.

While searching for information on the internet, Hindle came across Grace Lee Boggs. Boggs is an activist who created communities and founded the Beloved Communities Project. In her autobiography, Living for Change, Boggs talks about radical inclusivity. Hindle would like for us to explore this.

Hindle asked is anyone knows more about Boggs and her work, or about Martin Luther King’s ideas. She would like to explore the possibility of having personal contact with Boggs, or perhaps with one of her protégés.

Papke said it may be interesting to have a week-long symposium on beloved communities during MLK Week. She said perhaps we could bring in an MLK expert or an artist. It was noted that the phrase “beloved community” MLK and has radical roots further back. Hindle thinks it would be outstanding to have a symposium and there was general agreement in the room. Hindle said that she is amazed by the power of language – she thinks it spurs people to action which is the result she would like. Hindle thanked Papke for the great idea.

Papke suggested searching for documentaries the library has already own. Harvey mentioned a group, Knoxville is Talking About Race, that is also discussing beloved communities. Papke

suggested that the Commission try to get a copy of or buy the interview Grace Lee Boggs did with Bill Moyers to screen that during the symposium.

Redmond added that student groups on campus do several things on MLK day. She said there is also an MLK organization in Knoxville that does a week-long celebration. She said perhaps the Commission could bring a small group together now to seek their support and to see if those organizations could assist with the symposium. Haines said that we should look into what we needed to do to reach the community as well as campus, and to help community organizations reach campus. She suggested advertising their events on campus and inviting them to our events. Margaret Crawford said that would be a good way of widening the university's community.

Nolt said he had a suggestion that may be controversial. He said that MLK was also a peace activist, so perhaps we could also reach out to the peace activist community in Knoxville. Papke said that if MLK is the foundation of what we are doing here we could also involve the Native American and Asian American groups, as well as other political activist groups, on campus and in town that would be interested in this idea of radical exclusivity. Laura Graham said that the Women's Coordinating Council does not have a lot of events scheduled for next semester, so they could help with this too.

Hindle said that a year ago she spoke with the Women in Black, but that they were not able to coordinate schedules. She said that we may try that again.

Papke added that we could show Sarah Hilliard's women in sport movie during that week. She said the movie shows global interest and includes another group, women interested in sports. Kerry Howland mentioned that she and Joy DeSensi have a connection to the Hilliard project.

Haines asked if the Commission might be able to connect with the library to use the entire month for movies.

Redmond said that it is all well and good to center some events around MLK day, but that it would have more of an effect to schedule events over two or three months, perhaps over the entire semester. Hindle said that was a good idea because we would not want to have a number of events competing with each other.

Howland asked when the Women of Color Summit will be – the response was March 12.

Papke said that she knows TVA has wanted to do something with minorities, so perhaps we could do something with them as well.

Nolt, returning to his idea of including peace activists, mentioned that Sister Mary Denis Lensch, who was arrested in Oak Ridge for protesting nuclear issues, might be able to participate. He said that he has her contact information, and added that she would need to be scheduled pretty far out.

Papke mentioned that films shown at the library now have to be picked up and started by the person who wants to show the film. She said this means that the Commission would have to have someone present at every event to do this. Haines asked whether there would be a possibility of showing films elsewhere on campus – for example, showing a film on legal issues at the law school. Graham suggested seeing if the film committee of the visual arts committee has any more room in its schedule and budget to help out.

VII. Old Business/New Business – Hindle asked everyone if there was any additional old business or new business that needed to be addressed.

Denise Harvey announced that Amy Blakely has more of the Ready for the World fall passports if anyone needed them. She said that there are several events related to the post-Katrina experience.

Graham announced that the Women’s Coordinating Council has posters if anyone wants to post them or hand out information on the group.

Redmond announced that the Black Cultural Programming Committee was sponsoring Debbie Allen in the Cox Auditorium on September 22.

Haines asked the attendants if they thought the Networker would be better if it were distributed as a pdf document, rather than being printed on paper. Papke said she thinks the paper version is needed, but that perhaps we could cut down on the number of copies made. Haines added that she really needs more committee input – right now she has been doing just about everything on her own. Papke said that we should not worry so much about events, but do more highlights of people on campus and more information in what the Commission does. Haines said she is just trying to think further down the road. Nolt said he thinks we need to move as much as possible toward becoming a paperless campus so he supports using a pdf version. He said this would also save money, which is a big issue right now. Haines said it might be possible to make it some that the e-mail messages link directly to the pdf document.

Hindle concluded that in the upcoming year we will also continue to discuss issues related to child care facilities on campus, pay issues, and mentoring issues.

Pam Hindle adjourned the meeting at 1:09 p.m..

Submitted by Kathryn Ellis