Commission for Women
Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2017

Attendance: Lisa Yamagata-Lynch, Casey Barrio Minton, Ashley Blamey, Rachel Chen, Thura Mack, Marla Roberts, Melissa Smith, Barbara Thayer-Bacon, Aaron Burnell, Jennifer Webster, Elle Johnson, Nancy Thacker

I. Approval of Minutes

II. Updates and announcements from co-chair Lisa Yamagata-Lynch
   a. Two women are leading the Pride of the Southland band.
   b. The faculty networking group, in collaboration with Provost’s office, has agreed to call on underrepresented junior and senior faculty to join the network. There will be an application process coming out soon.
      i. Commissioner inquired about the network focus: is the focus on tenure or non-tenure line faculty?
         1. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch responded she is unsure but will find out and report back to the Commission.
   c. HERS applications are currently being reviewed by former HERS institute participants. Two women will be selected.
      i. Rachel Chen discussed past experiences with HERS and opportunities for candidates.
   d. Women’s Coordinating Council is hosting the Take Back the Night on October 19th at 5 p.m.
      i. Elle Johnson discussed the main purpose of the event is to empower survivors of sexual assault.
   e. Ben Shapiro will visit UT on October 18th at 7 p.m. at the Alumni memorial building. The University is taking extra security measures during and after the event.

III. Status of Women report update
   a. Hillary Fouts met with Chancellor Davenport about the report a few weeks ago. She stated the conversation was positive and constructive. Our next step is to send the report to the Provost’s office to collaborate and move forward with our initiatives.

IV. Work-life balance committee update
   a. The report is not ready to be circulated, but Robyn Brookshire will share the drafted document with commissioners to solicit feedback. Jenny Ward and Mary Lucal are also involved.

V. Reports from other Commissions, Council, and Faculty Senate
   a. Council for Diversity and Interculturalism report from Melissa Smith. CDI recently voted to sponsor funds for an upcoming Arab student event and a lunch
and learn event. The diversity summit will be held on March 9th. CDI’s next meeting is on October 18th.

b. Commission for Blacks report from Barbara Thayer-Bacon. CFB recently discussed following CFW’s lead in organizing their committee work. They discussed issues surrounding recruitment and retention, and safety issues. They are looking to develop a policy committee that could address these issues. They also discussed change in leadership due to Dr. Susan Benner’s upcoming retirement in December. They discussed their role to the Chancellor, specifically if they serve as advisors and/or is there room to challenge various administrative initiatives and efforts.

c. Commission for LGBT People report from Nancy Thacker. The CFLGBT will be facilitating a LGBTQ+ faculty and staff open forum on November 1st; two session times are available, and advertisements will be distributed soon. They recently supported Pride Day and the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus visit to Knoxville and UT. They also held a faculty and staff fall social last week.

VI. Discussion of committees
   a. Nancy Thacker will send another solicitation for commissioners to sign up for committees. Next steps will be to designate a leader of each committee and establish goals for the year.
   b. The Work and Family committee will take on our priority regarding policy for leave during the arrival of a child. Other universities have policies in place, and we may look to them for guidance.

VII. Update from Provost’s leadership luncheon
   a. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch reported asking the Provost about having a guest, potentially from the Communications department, discuss methods of civil discourse and disagreeing peacefully. The Provost noted there is an existing committee that is looking into this concern and need. They are starting with a town hall meeting, and then will determine if a guest speaker, workshops, etc. are needed.
   b. Rachel Chen suggested we may have Jill Rutter visit the CFW to discuss the human trafficking issue in TN. She also suggested Frankie Wade may visit with the CFW to discuss women’s rights.
   c. The Provost will be visiting the CFW on December 7th. Nancy Thacker will send a solicitation for questions to address during the meeting.

VIII. Other announcements
   a. Thura Mack reported the library’s diversity committee is having a lunch and learn focused on student stress on October 26th from 12-1:30p.m. in the Mary Greer Room in Hodges Library. Clay Culp and Billie Amatus-Salaam will facilitate the conversations on stress management. Thura Mack will send an advertisement to be distributed to commissioners.
   b. Ashley Blamey discussed her role with Title IX and recent enhancements to the office, including new policies. The Title IX office’s goal is to let students know they are there to support students in whatever way they need. They also facilitate
trainings for the UT community. Their goal next year is to make a home-grown video that will be more easily accessible to UT employees.

i. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch will add Ashley Blamey to the agenda for each meeting moving forward.

c. Barbara Thayer-Bacon asked about updates on the search for UT’s new Provost.

i. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch reported there was no mention of the search process at the leadership luncheon. The Provost did discuss faculty lines during the meeting. The faculty to student ratio is currently 1:80, and new money is not coming in for new lines. The Provost discussed a need to close the ratio gap. A cluster hire will occur in collaboration with Oak Ridge, focused on data. There will be other calls and steering committees for new cluster hires; three have been set for this academic year.

d. Aaron Burnell discussed the CFLGBT priority to allow students to change display names in banner. The registrar’s office is currently working on this issue, and changes will roll out in November. The CFLGBT will work to advertise this new change.

i. Commissioner inquired about the impact on grading with the ability to change names.

1. Aaron Burnell responded the changes will address all systems, including canvas.

e. Elle Johnson reported SGA passed their first piece of legislation regarding the rescinding of DACA. Elle shared the statement SGA released with commissioners. SGA is also working on policy regarding sexual assault.

i. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch will add SGA to the agenda for each meeting moving forward.

IX. Adjourn