Commission for Women
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2018

Attendance: Rachel Chen, Jamie Coble, Kiley Compton, Hillary Fouts, Melissa Grant, Megan Haselschwerdt, Catherine Luther, Marla Roberts, Abby Sherman, Melissa Smith, Jenny Ward, Jennifer Webster, Deborahah Welsh, Lisa Yamagata-Lynch, Sharon Couch, Ashley Blamey, Nancy Thacker, Mary Lucal, Shea Kidd Houze, Matthew Theriot, Rosie Sasso, Christina Moradian, Dixie Thompson, Alyssa Garbien, Thura Mack

I. Welcome and Introductions
   a. Call meeting to order: The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm by Rachel Chen, Chair.

II. Approval of Minutes
   a. Approved

III. Report from Representative from University Women’s Club
   a. The representative reviewed the history and development of the club. The group includes UTK faculty, staff, and alumni. They organize monthly luncheons, parties for special event, and sponsor scholarships for women returning to University after years in the field. Commissioners were invited to join the club and informational pamphlets were distributed.

IV. Report from Past president of AAUW – Anne Loy
   a. Anne Loy reviewed the history of AAUW, its purpose, and UTK’s membership with the organization. Anne reported the Chancellor’s office nominated two UTK women last year to attend the annual conference; Morgan Hartgrove, former SGA president, was selected but unable to attend. Madison Stevens was selected to attend in her place and represent UTK.
   b. Anne discussed Start Smart, a 2-hour workshop offered by AAUW that empowers women with the skills and confidence to negotiate salaries. The workshop informs young people on the importance on negotiating salary and benefits and prepares them to advocate. There are options for online training as well. More information can be found at www.aauw.org
   c. Anne discussed AAUW funding to support women and gender equality. They offer special funds for grants and fellowships; $3.9 million was awarded to women and non-profit organizations dedicated to bettering the lives of women last year. They also offer a legal fund for issues such as sexual harassment lawsuits.
   d. Anne provided handouts detailing methods to apply for membership for students and faculty, and staff; workshop information (Elect Her – to support women running for political office; Start Smart – gender pay gap issues); and AAUW’s current strategic plan.
V. Report from Dr. Dixie Thompson, in her role as a coordinator of the women’s leadership group and past-HERS recipients group.
   a. Past-HERS recipients group meets at least once a semester. The group is designed as a social network for these women to connect and share ideas. One of their major commitments is to continue encouraging UTK to support women faculty and staff as HERS candidates and recipients.
   b. The women’s leadership group includes faculty and staff across academic units. The group is designed as a social and information sharing network so that members may stay informed and offer support to each other. Many of the members are employed at the level of director and/or department head, but not all. There are members from academic and non-academic units (e.g., ORE, Student Life, Human Resources). They meet once a month and host a speaker at each meeting. Speakers are selected for various topics related to key issues the group hopes to address throughout the year. This group grew out of the College of Arts & Sciences at a time when there were very few women at the level of associate dean and department head. Those few women began meeting as a unit, and eventually launched the campus-wide women’s leadership group.
   c. Dixie Thompson encouraged others to join. Interested individuals can email her at dixielee@utk.edu to join the listserv.

VI. Report from Dr. Matthew Theriot regarding the Ascend program launch
   a. UTK was recently awarded a NSF grant to launch the UT Ascend program. The purpose of the program is to promote growth of women and faculty, particularly in the STEM fields. Dr. Veerle Keppens, 2017 recipient of the Angie Warren Perkins award, is a PI on the grant. Many departments across campus are involved with the grant and development and implementation of the program. Alyssa Garbien will serve as the program coordinator. In sum, the program will offer programs, resources, and services to support women faculty in STEM and other academic fields.
   b. The program has three major initiatives: (1) recruitment of women to STEM fields, (2) understand how to build community among women faculty, including promoting networks for social and research purposes, and (3) understand how to change policy, particularly addressing campus climate issues that negatively impact women faculty in areas such as work-life balance.

VII. Report from CFW Chair, Dr. Rachel Chen
   a. Rachel reported on recent meeting with Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, Chip Bryant and team. We have newly established a Commission for Women Excellence fund, with a $2000 donation as a starting base. There is flexibility in how we may use the funds. The purpose of this CFW Excellence Fund is to provide resources for the following: Women’s leadership development opportunities that would send undergraduate or graduate women to leadership development conferences; Scholarships for undergraduate students; Fellowships for Distinguished Women scholars/faculty; Funding for a series of Women’s Lectures; and Other initiatives that would provide opportunities to empower women and enhance women’s education. Rachel noted anyone can donate to the
fund. Checks can be made out to *UT Foundation*, and include *Commission for Women Excellence fund* in the memo line. There also will be a portal to donate through our website [www.cfw.utk.edu](http://www.cfw.utk.edu) under the *Give to Diversity* tab on the main page.

i. Rachel also discussed creating scholarships named for specific donors of large contributions to our fund. The minimum level to establish an endowment is $25,000 and at that level it would spin off approximately $1,000 per year.

b. HERS candidates. A committee of UT’s HERS alumnae carefully reviewed five applications and nominated two candidates for the Chancellor’s consideration. Chancellor has approved the nominations: Lisa Yamagata-Lynch and Kate Jones.

c. November 7th Panel Discussion on Equity, Sexual Harassment Prevention, and Bully-Free Workplace. Mary Lucal, Jenny Richter, and Ashley Blamey will serve as panelists. The purpose of the event is to discuss strategies to address issues surrounding sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. The event will take place in Strong Hall 101 from 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Rachel encouraged commissioners to forward the flyer advertisement throughout their units. The Office of the Provost will provide refreshments.

VIII. Report from standing committees

a. Safety advisory. Catherine Luther reported the committee has developed a few agenda items during their past two meetings. They hope to learn what the Title IX office is doing in terms of bystander prevention and sexual harassment, especially on online platforms. They also hope to learn what UT law enforcement is doing on these same issues, and how they are trained to address them. The group has discussed potentially surveying students regarding their experiences related to sexual harassment and interactions with law enforcement and/or the Title IX office. They may look specifically at the international and/or LGBTQ student population, as they are vulnerable groups.

i. Commissioners discussed policies and information related to appropriate behavior on online platforms. Ashley Blamey reported UTK does have policies that address issues of stalking and harassment via online platforms and the Title IX office has a legal liaison to assist in proceedings when needing.

b. Work and Family. Jenny Ward reported recently meeting with Greg Kaplan, chair of the benefits and professional development committee within the Faculty Senate. Previous efforts on parking accommodations for pregnant individuals and/or new parents was successful; new policy is in the works. The committee is still looking into parental leave policies, particularly for graduate assistants. Jenny reported as of 2014, 26% of all U.S. undergraduate students are raising children, and 33% of U.S. graduate students are raising children. These figures were derived from The Pregnant Scholar Project ([www.thepregnantscholar.com](http://www.thepregnantscholar.com)). This website offers information and addresses Title IX issues related to pregnancy and parenting; Jenny noted it may be a valuable resource moving forward in their efforts.
i. Kiley Compton noted the NSF Ascend fund supports family leave for faculty.
c. Equity. Mary Lucal noted the committee is working to meet with various UTK administrators, more than likely in December. They will have more to report at that time.
d. Awards. Hillary Fouts reported the committee is meeting later today. They will be discussing potentially restructuring rotation of award criteria for the UT Notable Woman award. They also are considering how the CFW may honor students.
i. Rachel Chen noted the Chancellor has agreed to award $1000 to the recipients of both the Angie Warren Perkins and UT Notable Woman awards.
e. Events and Communication. The committee is working to advertise our upcoming panel discussion on November 7th. Rachel encouraged commissioners to let her know of other events or issues happening across campus so that advertisements may be distributed.

IX. Women@UTK [HERO@UT] [SHERO@UT] [Women with BIG Ideas@UT] Newsletter initiative. Rachel Chen reported the Chancellor and Provost will support this initiative. We have the opportunity to honor women across campus and shift our campus culture through this effort.
a. Mary Lucal noted the promotional aspect of this initiative. We should consider who we distribute the publication to so that we can influence the promotion of women across units.

X. Report from other groups
a. Commission for Blacks. Sharon Couch reported the CFB has connected with leadership across campus. Their primary focus is to effect policy change for the wellbeing of Black UTK faculty, staff, and students. The CFB surveyed its members to develop a strategic plan. Mattering and belonging were reported as key factors in feeling connected to campus. As a result, they are focused on how they can create programs and lasting policies that promote feelings of mattering and belonging. They hope to continue using research to drive their efforts. They also are planning a celebration/meeting for December where members of all commissions may gather. More information will be shared as details are finalized.

XI. Other reports
a. Rachel Chen noted the Chancellor will visit with us in December. Nancy Thacker will send out a document to gather questions via the listserv.
b. Rachel Chen will send commissioners the questions she has received thus far for our upcoming November 7th panel discussion. She will ask commissioners to add questions to the list.

XII. Adjourn - Rachel Chen adjourned the meeting at 1:01 pm

Minutes submitted by: Nancy Thacker