Commission for Women  
*Meeting Minutes*  
February 7, 2019

**Attendance:** Provost David Manderscheid, RJ Hinde, Dixie Thompson, Gretchen Neisler, Jill Zambedo, John Zomchick, Rachel Chen, Jamie Coble, Hillary Fouts, Melissa Grant, Amanda Hand, Megan Haselschwerdt, Joan Heminway, Catherine Luther, Bonnie Ownley, Abby Sherman, Jennifer Webster, Deborah Welsh, Lisa Yamagata-Lynch, Sharon Couch, Joel Anderson, Misty Anderson, Sarah Thomas, Jasmine Kreig, Rosie Sasso, Shea Kidd Houze, Matthew Theriot, Thura Mack

I. Welcome from Chair Rachel Chen

II. Approval of Minutes

III. Introductions from Commissioners and Guests

IV. Report from Chair Rachel Chen
   a. Review of CFW Excellence Fund, purposes for funding, and process of donation.  
      https://cfw.utk.edu/commission-for-women-excellence-fund/
   b. Review of events from Fall 2018: https://cfw.utk.edu/events/  
      i. Rachel Chen reported our panel discussion yielded follow up discussions and events for other groups on campus.
   c. Misty Anderson discussed the upcoming United at the Rock event to be held February 20th from 3-5pm. They will have a series of events that will unfold between 3-5pm, centered around putting our handprints on the Rock. But, they are also connecting with a community-facing volunteer fair in Student Health. There will be some (brief) speakers at 4 and again at 5, a mass choir singing “Draw the Circle Wide” at the end (sheet music here, recording here—all welcome to rehearse at 1:30 in Music 12 or show up and sing at 5), and a chance to sign up for a pilot Intergroup Dialogue project, directed by Dr. Joe Miles. You can find out more at https://elps.utk.edu/leadership-studies-minor/united-at-the-rock/.

V. Reports from Committees and Other Groups
   a. Safety Advisory committee. Catherine Luther reported the committee is collaborating with the Commission for LGBT People to develop a climate and safety survey. They also are collaborating with events committee to host an event during Women’s History month. They are proposing to host a screening of *RBG* with a follow up discussion afterward the screening.
   b. Work and Family. Update from Nancy Thacker via Jenny Ward. The committee is currently compiling the GRA/GTA and staff leave policy information of current and peer institutions. A few schools, not all of which are our peers, offer paid leave ranging from 2 weeks to 6 weeks with different conditions dependent on position. They also have been informed that there is disparity between leave for exempt and non-exempt employees at UT. In one UT department, two women are due at nearly the same time. One has four months paid, one has two weeks. They
plan to look further into the schools that offer paid leave, if they offer it equally regardless of status.

c. Professional Development and Mentoring committee. Joan Heminway reported they are working on planning programming at for Women’s History month. An empowering women panel discussion event will focus on navigating difficult conversations, specifically exploring productive and unproductive ways that conflicts are resolved at the unit level. Details are still being finalized, but they would like to have representation on the panel from a faculty unit head, a staff unit head, an expert on dispute resolution, and a scholar in the area of communication. More details to come.

d. Equity committee. Bonnie Ownley reported the gender/salary analysis has been their primary task. The main campus and UT’s Institute for Agriculture (UTIA) are collaborating on this issue.
   i. John Zomchick reported a recent meeting with leaders across administrative groups yielded agreement to share the updated data from November 2018. John Zomchick noted OIRA has said they do not have the expertise to replicate Lou Gross’s study. They suggested we may reach out to graduate students in business analytics or statistics to help conduct analysis.
   ii. Bonnie Ownley noted difficulty in controlling for certain factors. Specifically, how do annual percentage ratings (APR) come into play?
   iii. John Zomchick reported OIRA produces two charts for tenure-line faculty. They graph time at UT since appointment, last degree, and include a salary plot that starts at 5% from the average and goes up to 15% from the average. Overall, it shows average, time, and where an individual faculty is relative to average at a particular point in time, and faculty are identified by gender. However, we do not know what the APR ratings are from this data.
      1. Commissioners noted the data that exists limits reporting within department. The data points indicate how individual faculty fair relative to faculty in their department only.
   iv. Misty Anderson asked for clarification regarding the suggestion to seek out a graduate student to assist with an analysis.
      1. John Zomchick responded that we ask of the Provost’s office what kind of support we need to run the analysis once we receive the data.

e. Awards committee. Hillary Fouts reported they are reviewing nominations for our Chancellor’s Honors awards. They will meet next week to discuss and provide recommendations on a winner for each award. They are still exploring developing new award categories that recognize students and early staff members.

f. Events committee. Rachel Chen reported they are putting all effort into Women’s History Month in March. They are planning multiple events throughout the month. Great Women wear Orange, a poster exhibition event to highlight around 15 notable women, dates (proposed March 4 – March 15); a mindfulness workshop on March 11th; Empowering women event, date TBD; RBG screening
and discussion on March 4th; and we will support Women in STEM: Pipeline symposium March 26-27th.

VI. Questions and discussion with Provost and team
   a. Question 1: Have we considered campus-wide--and maybe mandatory--faculty education on mental illness and substance abuse? We would like to know more about faculty conduct in and outside the classroom that can be helpful or hurtful to students, faculty, and staff struggling with either or both, even if we do not know who they are. We also would like to be able to spot signs of each that may help faculty refer students and colleagues to the Counseling Center or other resources. Finally, we are interested in any observations about any of the foregoing that interact with race, gender, sexual orientation or identity, academic discipline, etc.
      i. Provost Manderscheid responded that he recently met with the Provost Student Advisory Committee and they discussed this issue. They spent most of their time talking about mental health and the importance of mental health resources for students, especially those with marginalized identities. More mental health services are a big interest among students. Provost Manderscheid asked Matthew Theriot and Dixie Thompson what we include in terms of faculty and graduate student education around mental illness and substance abuse during orientations.
         1. Matthew Theriot discussed working with representatives from student life and/or the counseling center and having them present at faculty orientations.
         2. Dixie Thompson reported GRA/GTA orientation sessions include discussions around these issues as well. Dixie Thompson also noted that their offices refer students and faculty to the Center for Health and Wellness (CHEW) regularly.
      ii. Provost Manderscheid stated he can bring this issue to the next Academic Council meeting with deans and department heads.
      iii. Megan Haselschwerdt stated that representatives from CHEW attended a faculty retreat in her department. They provided resources as well. She noted a refresher for faculty who did not receive this information in orientation may be helpful.
      iv. Shea Kidd Houze noted the importance of updating information and disseminating it throughout our units. Specifically, 974-HELP has moved out of CHEW. She also noted the importance of letting our community know that it is a 24/7 available reporting option. She also stated the office of student life is willing to help out by offering trainings and education for how faculty, staff, and students can access and use resources.
      v. Jill Zambito oversees the student counseling center. She noted their staff would be able to provide a training, preferably in May-August. They also have online resources, https://counselingcenter.utk.edu/self-help-materials/tao-self-help/
vi. Provost Manderscheid noted that inviting CHEW representatives to the Academic Council meeting may be helpful to inform deans and department heads of opportunities for trainings.

vii. Gretchen Neisler discussed importance of mental health resources and accessibility, and that this issue is often a discussion amongst her colleagues in the Center for International Education (CIE). She noted often international students may not seek help because of stigma.

viii. Provost Manderscheid noted some reluctance to create a mandatory training, because individuals often do not buy in to the information provided. Instead, an environment where individuals will pay attention and care about the issues would be more ideal. We want to show that we truly value these issues. He also noted there is increasingly less stigma attached to mental illness, and more people are willing to seek help. This means we have to be prepared to provide help.

b. Question 2: Over the years, our campus has struggled with how--and how much--to encourage interdisciplinary work between and among faculty. What are your current thoughts on the extent to which we should encourage interdisciplinary scholarship and creative endeavors and, assuming we should, how we could better incentivize scholarship across departmental and collegiate lines? Do you see gender differences or norms in interdisciplinary collaborations that either dishearten or encourage you?

i. Provost Manderscheid responded that he hopes we are fostering interdisciplinary work, and it stems from department faculty; however, he noted it is challenging because we can easily become siloed in our home departments. It sometimes becomes the job of dean and provost to show leadership with interdisciplinary work, otherwise we stagnate. We need to work to make sure scholars can seek opportunities to collaborate and thrive in them. He noted pushing department heads and deans to be inclusive of those collaborations is important.

ii. John Zomchick noted the Office of Research and Engagement is working to foster interdisciplinary research and scholarship. He stated that this office does not report to the Office of the Provost. And, momentum for research, notably funding, comes from Office of Research and Engagement.

iii. Catherine Luther discussed a former program at UT supported faculty across departments co-teaching courses. She shared her experience in the program and noted research and publication stemmed from the experience. The program does not exist anymore, but she suggested reestablishing it may be a way to foster interdisciplinary research.

iv. Provost Manderscheid discussed experience with something similar at his previous institution, where two departments would merge two topics (e.g., history of climate change), and students were drawn to it. He noted this is a valuable idea and asked RJ Hinde if this is a program we could recreate. RJ Hinde responded, yes.

v. Joan Heminway discussed a mistake we have made in the past around interdisciplinary research is that it tends to only come up around
tenure/promotion discussions. She noted it should come up in retention yearly. She also noted influence of shifting norms and expectations for scholarly work. She questioned, if there is a way to separately work on those norms? She stated knowing faculty who have been denied promotion due to differences in norms and expectations.

1. Provost Manderscheid responded that usually in circumstances of disagreement during the promotion period, where there is a split vote, the Provost’s office will flag the file. They give more attention to those cases. He stated agreement with Joan Heminway regarding differences in norms by questioning why are there split votes? He noted our needing to have earlier discussions about what our disciplines are becoming to work with evolution in research and scholarship.

2. Gretchen Neisler noted the importance of this issue and discussed a book project re: inter-disciplinary research and needs of faculty across the career spectrum. She noted we cannot do global work without transdisciplinary efforts, and the CIE thinks a lot about this issue. They are retooling the Ready for the World program to include a distinctive transdisciplinary option for faculty research. There also will be new student opportunities, and they are focused on modeling throughout educational programming for students to think critically through problems instead of racing into a solution; this includes considering thoughts of peers across disciplines.

vi. Bonnie Ownley noted the impact of transdisciplinary, collaborative work with women and men. And generally, women are not credited for the work, while men are. Not just credit in being listed as an author for the work, but in that women and men are rated differently.

C. Question 3: From the perspective of your office, what are the expectations of faculty who are requesting “early consideration” for promotion and tenure, particularly if they have spent multiple years at rank at peer/R1 institutions in tenure-track positions?

i. Provost Manderscheid responded that their office is paying attention to this issue. He noted the Board has paid more scrutiny to this issue. He noted in terms of restarting the tenure clock and discussions around at what point a faculty can go up for promotion, that there needs to be better training for department heads around this issue. He stated scholarly records should consider scholarship beyond the record at UT; research records should transfer over. He noted department heads play such a critical role in deciding when faculty can be promoted, and training will help bring more uniformity.

d. Question 4: What can we do to expand child care access at UTK for faculty and staff?

i. John Zomchick noted they are looking at childcare. They have an NSF grant to foster careers of women in STEM disciplines, and part of that grant commits them to address work/life integration issues including child care. They want to arrange for on-campus child care or close to campus,
and the next step in that process is to meet with Robyn Brookshire, Director of the ELC on campus. They also have discussed with Vice Chancellor Cimino the benefit of this effort, as cost has been a stumbling block.

ii. Provost Manderscheid noted that in the search for a new Chancellor, we should ask candidates what is going to be different this time around re: establishing this resource, as we have consistently come back to this issue, but nothing has been developed yet. He noted developing this resource has more to do with priority than cost.

e. Question 5: How will your office work with the new Office of Diversity and Engagement to promote a better culture and new initiatives within UTK? How do you see the Engagement piece working as it relates to gender?

i. Provost Manderscheid responded Tyvi Small is great to work with and he has the right approach. Rather than focusing on programming, Tyvi Small is focused on setting agendas, holding us accountable to them, and pointing to best practices. Provost Manderscheid noted holding deans accountable is huge, and their office is excited to work with Tyvi Small.

VII. Thank you to Provost Manderscheid and his office for joining us. Adjourn.