Commission for Women  
April Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, April 1, 2021


1) Catherine Luther called the meeting to order.

2) The March minutes were unanimously approved by the voting members of the commission.

3) Catherine thanked Joy Panigabutra-Roberts for taking the initiative to urge the creation of a statement on the senseless killings of six women of Asian descent and the continuing violence against the AAPI community. She also expressed her appreciation to Megan Haselschwerdt and the other members of the safety committee for putting together a statement about AAPI faculty, staff, and students and a related resource list.

4) Catherine announced that Vice Chancellor Small endorsed the bylaw amendments which were voted on during the March meeting. We are still waiting on the approval of Chancellor Plowman.

5) Joan encouraged members to visit the commission’s website monthly. Each month, Joy and the communications committee work on adding resources. Most recently, Joy shared an extensive list of resources for Women's History Month.

6) Committee Updates  
   a) Awards Committee
      Jill Zambito stated they will be sending out the recognition letters next week to individuals that were nominated but not selected for the CFW Chancellor’s Awards.

   b) Communications Committee
      Joy acknowledged the violence against the AAPI community on March 16. She thanked the commission co-chairs for quickly responding and distributing a statement. She encouraged the commission members to view the interview
between Joan Heminway and Professor Valorie Vojdik about Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She also announced the addition of the UT Libraries Special Collections on Women’s History Month to the commission’s website. The committee has been working on social media guidelines and preparing to create a Twitter account for use in the fall. Joy announced she will be stepping away from the commission after the end of this academic year to focus her attention on her tenure application. She expressed her appreciation to the commission, co-chairs, and communications committee members. The CFW co-chairs and members thanked her for her service.

c) Equity Issues Committee
Jamie reported that the committee has been evaluating faculty compensation data from 2019 and 2020. In terms of gender equity in 2019, the average female faculty salary was less than 90% of the average male salary in two departments at the assistant level, six departments at the associate level, and 21 departments at the full professor level. In 2020, there are still salary discrepancies in two departments at the assistant level, six at the associate level, and 25 at the full professor level. The committee is digging into the data to try and understand the differences.

The committee is also looking at the same analysis for underrepresented racial groups as compared to average white faculty salaries. In 2019, salary discrepancies were identified in four departments at the assistant level, seven departments at the associate level, and 16 at the full professor level. In 2020, there were salary discrepancies in three departments at the assistant level, eight at the associate level, and 13 at the full professor level.

d) Events Committee
Abby reported that the Lighting Your Path workshops went really well. They have received very positive feedback. The participants expressed interest in attending a similar type of workshop annually. She acknowledged and thanked Natalie Feller for assistance in logistically planning and organizing the events. Abby recognized Gretchen Niesler for her powerful and inspiring opening speech.

e) Professional Development and Mentoring Committee
Kristin reported they are still working on the centralized professional development website. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch and Gretchen Niesler have joined the committee’s effort.

f) Safety Advisory Committee
Megan Haselschwerdt reported the committee began the process of identifying practices in gender-based harassment that do not rise to the level of a fireable offense. The committee has split up the SEC schools and reached out to each of their Title IX offices to gather best practices. She suggested the committee focus on the safety of historically underrepresented people on our campus.

**g) Work and Family Committee**
Karmen reported they have been investigating childcare supports at SEC institutions. This month, the committee will compile the information gathered and assess trends in order to make a recommendation.

**7) Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Diane Kelly, presented on new campus initiatives.** The following task forces and working groups have been created: Faculty Review and Promotion Taskforce, which consists of the Equity and Fairness, Lasting impact of COVID, and Periodic Post-Tenure Performance Review working groups; Faculty Mentoring Taskforce; Non-Tenure Track Faculty Taskforce; and Faculty Handbook Style Working Group. The groups will work on creating policies, recommendations, procedures, and evaluations regarding various topics consistent with their respective charges from the Provost.

The office, in partnership with other divisions on campus, has created professional development opportunities for faculty through the Research Development Academy, the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, UTK Leadership Development Program, and the SEC Academic Leadership Development Program. Teaching and Learning Innovations, part of the Division of Faculty Affairs, also developed opportunities such as the Course Redesign Institute and Inclusive Teaching Certificate.

She reported that the Provost’s Office is working on improving communications to include inclusive language when advertising initiatives and events.

She announced that Elements has been upgraded to include diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts toward Research, Scholarship, and Creative Works; Teaching; and Service and Outreach.

She discussed future efforts toward updating the language in the automated system messages, faculty recruitment guidance and resources, and supporting associate professors.

Catherine welcomed questions from the commission for Diane.
Megan asked if Dr. Korritha Mitchell’s upcoming presentation would be recorded. Diane indicated the recording would not be recorded at Dr. Mitchell’s request.

Joan asked Vice Provost Kelly if there had been any discussion around utilizing Elements to help acknowledge and recognize invisible labor by offering credit to faculty for things that have not historically been considered in assessing teaching, scholarship, or service. Diane responded this is something that has been discussed and may be evaluated in the future. She also noted that there are differences between invisible labor and workload overload, both of which can prevent women from spending time on their scholarship. Joan added that sometimes the workload overload comprises undervalued labor. Diane stated she welcomed recommendations for Elements.

Catherine asked if any discussions had taken place on incentivising employees to participate in DEI work who otherwise would not engage in this kind of work. Diane acknowledged the difficulty of engaging some individuals in DEI efforts. She stated that adding the piece in Elements and formally recognizing the effort is one way to help with this matter. For units, she suggested everyone agree to make the efforts a requirement and place it in an area such as the service category.

Joy asked if the Diversity Action Plans (DAPs) are to be used as a vehicle to include DEI activities in faculty evaluations. Diane articulated her support for the connection between individual faculty DEI activities and the achievement of DAP goals. Joy added that the DAPs are a great tool to elevate the DEI goals and work necessary to achieve the goals.

Janelle Coleman added that each responsible DAP party will be meeting with the Division of Diversity and Engagement (DDE) twice per semester. There will be an opportunity to discuss these topics with the colleges and non-academic units to discuss best practices. DDE wants to emphasize that diversity work is everyone’s responsibility.

8) Catherine thanked Diane for her presentation and adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm.