Commission for Women  
May Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 6, 2021

1) Joan Heminway called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2) Joan welcomed guest Rachel Day from the Office of Equity and Diversity. Rachel introduced herself.

3) The April minutes were unanimously approved by the voting members of the commission.

4) Joan opened the meeting with several general announcements.

   She reminded everyone of the application for membership in the 2021-22 Commission for Women, due on May 21, and encouraged all members who are interested in serving next year to apply.  
   https://cfw.utk.edu/members/application-for-membership-on-the-commission-for-women/  

   Joan also reminded committee chairs and co-chairs that all end-of-the-year committee reports are due Friday, May 7.

   She then shared that the Chancellor approved the CFW bylaw revisions adopted by the commission at its March meeting.

   Finally, she stated the TLI Inclusive teaching certificate, consisting of five modules, is available on Canvas for faculty and graduate students. The modules help participants develop a greater understanding of inclusive teaching practices.

   a) Joan reported that Mary Lucal will soon be announcing several return-to-campus activities and trainings, which will include information on transitioning children and pets.

   b) Joan announced the Knoxville Urban League is now accepting applications for the National Achievers Society, which is open to high school students in 10th-12th grade. She encouraged commission members to let qualified students know about the opportunity.

   c) A question was asked about the mask policy during the return to campus.
Janelle Coleman indicated that she did not have information on this policy but that she would check with Melanie in the Division of Diversity and Engagement to see if she has any updates.

She also announced the Austin-East anti-violence parade on Friday and encouraged members to attend.

Diane Kelly reported that employees will no longer need to “report in” using the health app as of June 1st and that the University plans to continue to follow guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She encouraged members to speak with their supervisors about any concerns regarding masking, social distancing, and other health and safety precautions.

Alison Buchan noted that questions are being raised about fully vaccinated groups working in close proximity. She asked if the groups would be in breach of campus policy if they do not wear masks. She also recognized the importance of observing confidentiality to protect individual employee privacy in inquiring about vaccination status.

Diane stated further guidance will be released as time goes by.

5) Committee Updates

Awards Committee

Alison stated the committee completed their principal assigned task for the year, which was evaluating the Chancellor’s award nominations and selecting the award recipients. She added the committee would be sending letters to the outstanding nominees who were not selected.

Joan acknowledged with regret that graduate and undergraduate students are not able to receive cash awards. Janelle noted that this is a UT wide fiscal policy that the University cannot provide gifts to students. She stated honoring students for their work is valuable and we should continue to do so however we must honor the fiscal policy.

Alison suggested the awards committee consider ideas to honor students in other ways.
Jamie suggested we include a spotlight on student winners in some of the UTK communications, such as an alumni newsletter.

Joan indicated her appreciation for the committee’s work during a difficult year.

Communications Committee

Joy Panigabutra-Roberts announced that Gretchen Neisler’s keynote video from the *Lighting Your Path Workshops* is now available on the CFW website. Joy thanked the committee members for all of their hard work throughout the academic year.

Joan thanked Joy and the committee for their work during this academic year. She stated this was the first year the commission had a communications committee separate from the events committee. She recognized Joy and the members for their achievements.

Equity Issues Committee

Bonnie Ownley reported that the committee had repeated the gender analysis of faculty compensation, as done last year, and added information about the salaries of faculty from underrepresented groups. She indicated that she will be sharing all of the data and results in the committee’s year-end report. Bonnie added they also examined non-tenure track faculty.

Michelle Kwon asked if the data would be shared with the commission and more broadly. Joan stated it would be disseminated throughout the commission and posted on the commission’s website.

Joy asked if we could change the term “non-resident aliens” to “non-citizens.” A discussion ensued. Bonnie agreed to make this change. Janelle stated that the ORIA is working on changing the term as well.

Diane commented on the term “alien” and the efforts to remove the term. She noted that her office has the data collected by the committee. In respect to non-tenure track faculty salaries, specifically lecturer positions in Arts in Sciences, she noted that the college will be coming up with a plan to use some of the 2021-22 raise pool money to address the disparities and raise the minimum pay for lecturers.
Joan expressed appreciation for the committee’s work.

Events Committee

Abby Sherman reported on the major events organized and hosted by the committee during the 2020-21 academic year, which include the “Burnout to Balance” session, the Read Aloud video, and the Lighting Your Path Workshops.

She indicated that the committee’s report recommends that the committee have more members and a budget to compensate speakers at events. She also highlighted a concern that staff employees may feel as though participation in a commission or committee is a luxury. The committee recommends that the commission reach out to the Provost to encourage supervisors and those in charge of academic units to promote staff engagement and prevent systemic discouragement.

The committee also recommended that the commission address workplace bullying.

Abby thanked the commission and the committee members for allowing her to serve as a committee co-chair.

Joan commented on the importance of the staff concern Abby mentioned and thanked the committee for its work.

Professional Development and Mentoring Committee

Jeannie Tennant reported on the current state of planning for the “one stop shop” for professional development that the committee has been developing. She thanked Lisa Yamagata-Lynch for her assistance in navigating the OIT terminology relating to the project. The committee worked with OIT and creative communications to place leadership and professional development on the campus calendar as event topic categories.

The committee plans to continue to work on its plan for the website into the summer, focusing on (among other things) content creation for each professional development “bucket” identified for inclusion on the website: health and wellness, diversity and inclusion, teaching and learning, career and employment, and leadership development. She noted the website’s functionality and the “buckets” as key design focal points.
Joan expressed gratitude for the committee’s accomplishments in bringing the website closer to reality.

Safety Advisory Committee

Megan Haselschwerdt reported that the challenge for her committee moving forward will be determining its future role. She acknowledged that several organizations on campus are already addressing safety needs and that it had been difficult to identify campus projects that are not already being done. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on the commission for the past three years, and Joan thanked her for her service.

Work and Family Committee

Thura Mack reported that the committee had reached out to the Division of Diversity & Engagement to provide input on the campus climate survey. However, the survey was put on pause for this academic year due to the pandemic. The committee also looked at UTK’s peer institutions to examine child care programs. They were able to meet with Kelli Houston, the founder of The Working Mothers Support Network at Ole Miss. She noted that work completed by the committee on child care programs may be important to the retention of faculty and staff.

Karmen Stephenson added that the committee had evaluated the purpose of their work and how to work collaboratively with other campus organizations.

Joan expressed appreciation for the committee’s work.

6) Joan concluded the meeting by again thanking everyone for a great year under difficult circumstances. She adjourned the meeting at 1:04 p.m.