Women’s Caucus Executive Board Meeting  
October 14, 2020 (2:30-4:30)  
Zoom

Present: Meaghan Davidson, Jennifer Semrau, Libby Bowen, Sherry Mendez, Zainab Shah, Lauren Bailes, Megan Wenner, Kelsey Cummings, Barbara Ley

Excused: Barbara Settles, Diane Goldsmith, Tywanda Cuffy, Naomi Nash, Lead Dodd, Elaine Warrick

Meeting Agenda approved

September Meeting Minutes approved

COVID Childcare Survey
  ● Barbara Ley will send the survey to the policy subcommittee for discussion. Then the subcommittee will bring the survey to the Executive Committee for final approval.

Co-Chairs Update
  ● The co-chairs met with Adam Foley, who had met with the AAUP board. AAUP is aware of the challenges facing women from a productivity, promotion and tenure standpoint. The AAUP understands the concerns regarding the way that stopping the clock for everyone can potentially hurt women. The AAUP wants more faculty to join—strength in numbers. There will be another meeting with co-chairs to meet with administrators and chairs. (Megan Wenner) There is also interest in bringing caucuses together for more events.

COVID, University Budget Cuts, and Anti-Racism Initiatives
  ● We discussed the current status of the faculty and staff budget cuts. Specifically, we discussed how the AAUP and University budget discussions have stalled, and that staff face a minimum of a 5% cut (but some units face a 7-7.5% budget cut).
  ● Libby Bowen noted that the faculty versus staff conflict narrative that the university has constructed is not helpful, and that it only benefits the administration. We need to reframe this. Meaghan Davidson asked whether we wanted to draft a statement challenging this framing.
  ● Barbara Ley asked why faculty are unionized but staff are not. Kelsey Cummins mentioned that there has been some past effort to unionize staff, but then there was an agreement that staff raises would match faculty raises, and it happened for a while but then it stopped happening. Libby Bowen suggested we look to other universities that
have unionized staff to see what we can learn from them. Meaghan Davidson said that PA and NJ university staff are unionized.

- Given that women constitute the majority of UD Staff, we discussed whether the policy subcommittee should develop a plan to push for staff unionization. Megan Wenner suggested that we reach out to past Torch award winner Karen Helsel-Spry about possibly moving forward with staff unionization talks again, as she was involved in part efforts to unionize UD Staff.
- Zainab Shah asked about the university’s anti-racism initiatives and whether faculty and staff of color are being pressured to do this work. We discussed how the current racial climate on campus—combined with the staff budget cuts, may be disproportionately impacting women of color, especially those who are staff members. Kelsey Cummings stated that she would obtain data regarding the racial demographics of UD staff. Meaghan Davison also stated that Adam Foley is working on a letter that faculty and staff can put in their files regarding their involvement in the caucuses.

Fall General Meeting
- We settled on a day: 11/19 at 3PM. Megan Wenner suggested we go forward with a save the date, and have Leah Dodd send out an invite. We discussed structuring the general meeting as an open forum around various topics such as childcare; the impact of COVID/budget issues on women faculty and staff; election outcomes and impacts; We also discussed the possibility of having HR reps come to meeting to answer people’s questions or having someone come to talk about strategies for managing life/work balance.
- We also discussed the need to market the general meeting to as many groups and caucuses on campus as possible to encourage a diverse representation of faculty and staff to attend the meeting. We discussed the importance of getting more people of color involved in the caucus.
- Jennifer Semrau also asked whether grad students can get involved with the women’s caucus. Megan Wenner followed-up by noting that the Pride Caucus has a few grad students as part of its board. Kelsey Cummings mentioned that this question has come up before, but because there are already so many female staff and faculty on campus, it has been assumed that it’s better to focus on their particular needs. This is still something that is definitely open for discussion.

Fireside Chat Update
- We discussed that the Fireside Chat was unlikely to happen this fall. We will revisit the issue at the beginning of 2021 to discuss the possibility of holding the event in the spring.

Next Board Meeting
November 11, 2020 2:30-4:30
Zoom