

**Advisory Committee on Women Faculty
Committee Report
January 2009**

Summary

The Advisory Committee on Women Faculty (ACWF), formed over the summer (2008) at the request of the Chancellor, met during the fall to discuss ways to improve the climate for women faculty at Washington University and to develop specific recommendations in this regard to the Provost and the Chancellor. In addition, the committee was asked to make specific recommendations for the allocation of new resources targeted to impact diversity that have been committed by the Chancellor over the next five years. These deliberations resulted in the development of three specific recommendations: (1) The establishment of the Office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity and the recruitment (through a national search) of an individual to lead efforts focused on improving the climate for women and underrepresented minority faculty and on increasing faculty diversity at all levels at Washington University; (2) the establishment of a Faculty Ombuds Office to provide informed and confidential counsel to faculty and to advocate, when appropriate, for individual faculty rights; and, (3) to utilize diversity funds provided by the Chancellor for the development of specific programs to promote the retention, advancement and professional women faculty at all levels. These recommendations were forwarded to the Provost in December 2008.

Background

In response to repeatedly expressed concerns about the climate for women faculty, the paucity of women in leadership positions and the lack of progress in these areas at Washington University, Chancellor Wrighton requested (in summer 2008) the establishment of a committee with faculty representatives from each School on the Danforth Campus, as well as from the Medical School. This Advisory Committee on Women Faculty (ACWF) was charged with making recommendations to the incoming Provost, Dr. Edward Macias, and to the Chancellor, about ways to improve the climate for women faculty in general, and specifically about ways to implement several recommendations in this regard made by the Association of Women Faculty (AWF) and the Academic Women's Network (AWN) in a letter to the Chancellor in the spring of 2008 (this letter is attached here). Dr. Gerhild Williams, Professor of German and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Diana Gray, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at the Medical School, were asked by the Chancellor to establish and to co-chair this committee. The following faculty members were recommended by the Deans of their respective schools to serve.

Diana L. Gray	Medicine	Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
Gerhild S. Williams	Arts & Sciences	Professor of German, Associate Vice Chancellor and Special Assistant for Academic Affairs
Joseph J.H. Ackerman	Arts & Sciences	William Greenleaf Eliot Professor of

Marion G. Crain	Law	Chemistry Wiley Rutledge Professor of Law
Mary Ann Dzuback	Arts & Sciences	Associate Professor of Education
Tonya E. Edmond	Social Work	Associate Professor of social Work
Alex S. Evers	Medicine	Henry E. Mallinckrodt Professor of Anesthesiology
Jeanne M. Nerbonne	Medicine	Alumni Endowed Professor of Molecular Biology & Pharmacology
Tava M. Olsen	Business	Professor of Operations & Manufacturing Management
Patricia J. Olynyk	Sam Fox	Florence and Frank Bush Professor in Art
Shelly Sakiyama-Elbert	Engineering	Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering

Leah A. Merrifield, Special Assistant to the Chancellor and Chair of the Coordinating Council for Diversity Initiatives (CCDI), was also asked to participate, and Ms. Jill Edwards, Administrative Assistant to Dr. Williams, was recruited to provide administrative support.

Committee Actions

At the outset, three ACWF meetings were scheduled: September 10, October 9, and December 4, 2008. The first meeting (on September 10) was focused on introductions, background discussion of the committee charge, overview of concerns and issues, articulation of goals and objectives for the committee, consideration of means to accomplish these goals, as well as how best to distribute the resources (totaling \$1.25 million over the next 5 years) to be provided by the Chancellor to develop and implement programmatic efforts and initiatives to address challenges related to improving the climate for women and increasing gender diversity. The point was made that the ACWF focus would specifically be women faculty as the CCDI (chaired by Leah Merrifield) is focused on addressing and improving ethnic/racial diversity.

The main issues/areas of concern for women faculty identified during the discussion at this meeting were:

- The overall climate at Washington University that results in the marginalization, both subtle and aggressive, of women. The view was repeatedly expressed that it is this climate that needs to change and that to realize this, the administration must be committed, assertive and proactive.
- The absence of women in leadership positions on the Faculty of both campuses and in the University Administration.
- Whether change could be realized given the present “top down” administrative structure and the nearly complete absence of transparency in matters of many senior level appointments and recruitments.

- The need for leadership at the “top” to embrace the concept of excellence through diversity, to articulate goals, monitor and evaluate progress in efforts focused on improving the climate and increasing diversity, to consult with concerned/enlightened components of the academic community at Washington University and elsewhere, to involve new approaches to address these issues and to develop new programs to increase diversity and improve the climate.
- The need for an individual (or individuals) and an office (or offices) focused on assisting faculty with concerns and grievances, i.e., an ombuds person/office. This individual would be focused on the concerns of the faculty, not the administration.

In addition, there was considerable discussion about how best to utilize the diversity resources (noted above) to improve the climate for women overall, as well as to promote the career development of individual faculty.

At the second ACWF meeting (on October 9), Lynn McCloskey (Assistant Provost, Senior Analyst) was invited to present a summary of the findings/analyses of the 2007 faculty survey. Additional analyses specific to the Medical School data were presented by Diana Gray. The results of the faculty survey were quite clear. There were a number of areas of overall faculty dissatisfaction, particularly with regard to expectations, transparency, mentoring, career development and advancement. There were some clear differences in the responses and relative levels of job satisfaction between male and female faculty, as well as between faculty on the Danforth and Medical School campuses. These presentations were followed by committee discussions about the possible need for additional analyses and/or another faculty survey focused on the climate at Washington University, as well as discussions about specific steps that could/should be taken immediately to establish guidelines and programs to move forward. In the interest of moving forward, three subcommittees were formed and charged with formulating specific recommendations that would then come back for consideration and discussion by the full committee to facilitate the formulation and articulation of the committee’s recommendations to be sent to the Provost. The following subcommittees were formed: (1) Faculty Development and Diversity Subcommittee (Tonya Edmond, Jeanne Nerbonne, Tava Olsen); (2) Allocation of Resources Subcommittee (Marion Crain, Mary Ann Dzuback, Diana Gray, Shelly Sakiyama-Elbert); and (3) Ombudsman Subcommittee (Joseph Ackerman, Diana Gray, Leah Merrifield). Each was charged with identifying and discussing the major important issues, identifying approaches to address these important issues and to effect changes that would impact faculty diversity and the climate for women faculty at Washington University.

Subcommittees met, reports were prepared (each is available on request) and circulated to all members of the committee. At the third ACWF meeting (December 4), these reports, focused in the following three (3) specific recommendations, were present and discussed.

1. Establishment of the Office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity. The office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity should be provided with a clear mandate, together with staff and resources, to develop and implement new and innovative approaches to effect real change in the climate for women (and underrepresented minorities) at Washington University. This office, reporting directly to

the Provost and the Chancellor, shall be charged with establishing and implementing means to increase diversity in the faculty at all levels, defining realistic goals, timelines and benchmarks, and clear methods for assessing progress in this area on both the Danforth and Medical School campuses. It is suggested that a national search should be conducted to recruit an individual to fill the position of Vice Provost and to lead this office. There was some discussion of the anticipated/expected benefits of this centralized approach and the establishment of this office in terms of the likelihood that real change would/could be realized. While the majority of the committee strongly supported the proposed Vice Provost Position/Office, the view that a decentralized approach, in the form of an advisory committee to the Provost, would be more effective was also expressed by some committee members.

2. Establishment of a Faculty Ombuds Office (or offices; there might be need for two, one on each campus) to provide confidential, independent, nonpolitical, and knowledgeable counsel and, where appropriate, advocacy for faculty members. The Ombuds Office should probably be placed under the purview of the office of the Provost (or the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity) to signal the focus/emphasis on faculty. The Ombuds person should be selected from the ranks of the senior faculty, and the office will require part-time staff support. An assessment procedure should be implemented to allow the Provost to judge the effectiveness and case load of the Ombuds Office.
3. The diversity funds (provided by the Chancellor as noted above) should be used to promote the advancement and retention of women faculty at all levels. Suggested ways to do this are the establishment of:

Temporary (2- to 3-year) Chairs (~\$45-50K) for women faculty at the Assistant or Associate Professor level to enable them to advance their careers through more focused academic effort in conjunction with the assistance of a post-doc, graduate student or fellow of their choosing. In addition to more time to focus on their research, these faculty women would participate in chair/leadership training opportunities, either here at Washington University at other institutions. The leadership mentoring opportunities would also be offered to graduate students or postdoctoral fellows working with these women faculty. The goals would be to provide these women faculty with information about University operations, with skills to assume leadership positions and with the assistance to take care of their normal University obligations.

Also suggested is a small grants program (~ \$5K) for women faculty at the Assistant Professor level to provide individuals with additional limited financial resources to support career development. The awards could be used at the discretion of the faculty member but might include monies for technical assistance, travel to meetings, child care at meetings or at home during such travel, bridge funding for those who are balancing family and work responsibilities during the preparation of grant applications.

Both of these programs would involve an application process, and would require the establishment of a review committee(s).

In addition, it was suggested that some of the funds be used to host a Women and Diversity Conference, perhaps in collaboration with the CCDI, to bring strong leaders in diversity and role models to campus for a conference and to invite junior faculty to meet and to network with these individuals.

As suggested above, there was considerable discussion about the first recommendation and the committee was asked by the co-chairs to vote either for the recommendation of the ACWF Faculty Development subcommittee to establish the Office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity at Washington University or for the alternative proposal to establish an Executive Committee to advise the Provost (and the Chancellor) on issues relating to Faculty Development and Diversity. The majority of the committee (by a vote of 8 in favor versus 3 opposed) voted to recommend (to the Provost) the establishment of the Office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity. Following the vote, it was also noted by several committee members that the establishment of the Office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity did not preclude the formation of an advisory committee (or committees). The other two recommendations were approved for forwarding to the Provost without further discussion or dissenting opinions. Committee members also noted that it was understood that all three recommendations needed further refinement and detail for successful implementation, and indicated their willingness to assist the Provost in these efforts.