

## **President's Commission on the Status of Women**

### **Minutes**

**4/14/15**

Submitted by: Jessica Dutille

Present: Gail Carr, Jessica Dutille (Chair), Wendy Palmquist, Mary Beth Ray, Meagan Shedd, Karen Schaffner, Jenny Tyniec

### **Agenda**

1. Update on Sex Bingo Ad
2. Housing Issue (for student with child)
3. Theo Kalikow Awards Ceremony
4. Sammy Adams Performance for Spring Fling
5. Discussion about Work Life Balance

Jess welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **1. Update on Sex Bingo Ad**

Jess explained to the group that a student contacted her in regards to an ad for the Sex Bingo event. The ad featured a woman biting her lip, similar to the Fifty Shades of Grey image, as well as silhouette of a woman in a suggestive pose. She sent the ad out to the PCSW members for feedback. The commission decided on the following response:

On behalf of the President's Commission on the Status of Woman, I want to thank you for reaching out to us in regards to this ad for Sex Bingo. As a group we do feel that the ad could be offensive for women because it objectifies the female body. It is an unbalanced representation that seems to utilize a heterosexual male gaze and reinforces sexual stereotypes. The connection to 50 Shades of Grey is also concerning considering the research suggesting relationships between unhealthy behaviors and reading the book. Though we are sure that there are good intentions behind the ad, we feel that it doesn't promote inclusiveness, equality, or empowerment. In addition, it doesn't adequately explain the event. Our group feels that perhaps some clever sex-related trivia could be used to pique interest instead of using these images. We appreciate you taking this opinion into consideration, and we hope that the event is successful.

The Dean of Students office, the SAGE Center, Planned Parenthood, and the PCSW were not in support of the ad. Initially students suggested creating an additional poster with a male figure, but later decided on a simple black background instead of using the images.

#### **2. Housing Issue (for student with child)**

Jess discussed how she has been working with a newly accepted student, who will be starting as a first year student this coming Fall. She is 18-years-old and has a son who will be 12 months by the time she begins classes. She was told by residential life that she eligible to live

on campus, but that her son is not. This created a barrier for the student and she considered withdrawing. She has since secured housing through Plymouth Apartments and was able to get a used Jeep.

Jess is meeting with Tom Weeks and Debbie Grotheer in regards to this policy on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>.

Jenny was in residential life at another institution. She feels that we need to look at the policy. She also noted that this is revenue that we are turning away.

Wendy mentioned that non-traditional apartments use to be known as family housing.

Gail noted that PSU also use to have a non-traditional house on campus.

Wendy suggested that we ask how many non-traditional apartments are available.

Meagan suggested that we ask if the student wants to live on campus with her child.

### **3. Theo Kalikow Awards Ceremony**

Alice suggested asking future award recipients to prepare an acceptance speech.

The commission members all agreed this is a good idea.

Gail noted that we had a great turnout at the event (close to 60 people).

Jess noted that President Steen's speech was fantastic.

Meagan mentioned that the Women's Studies Council requested the text of the speech to post on the website.

Karen will update the PCSW website with the new award recipients.

### **4. Sammy Adams Performance for Spring Fling**

Alice raised the concern about Sammy Adams, who will be performing for spring fling. His songs include misogynistic lyrics.

Meagan spoke about how Sammy Adam's lyrics are highly offensive. She acknowledged that there is a price point that we have to work with, but we have brought artists to campus with highly offensive lyrics. She mentioned Mac Miller as an example.

Gail noted that she would be interested in learning about the selection process.

Wendy suggested finding out who the advisor is for Spring Fling.

Meagan agreed it would be great to understand the selection process.

Wendy mentioned that there are sensory issues involved.

Karen suggested that we could ask for a process change.

Gail noted that it is student fee driven and that students are voting.

Wendy noted that part of the rap genre is to push boundaries.

Meagan noted that we should be able to push boundaries without being offensive. She talked about the culture that we are trying to build on campus and discussed inappropriate behaviors of students.

Mary Beth talked about a group of boys on campus that was screaming inappropriate things to a group of people down the street. She suggested starting a dialog about the implications of offensive language and behavior.

Jess suggested that the commission continue to discuss this topic at future meetings.

Gail asked what other institutions do in regards to this.

Jenny spoke about at Hartford rappers are brought in because they draw the crowds.

## **5. Discussion about WLB**

Karen discussed how she, Gail, Lauren, and Denise Normandin sat down to look at the agreement that President Steen signed. They looked at all the policies. They determined that PSU does have policies in place and put together a report on their findings. Karen will email the report to commission members.

The group discussed sending out a survey to employees including the following questions:  
Are you familiar with USNH leave time policies?  
Have you taken a full week vacation or more in the last two years?  
Do you and your supervisor speak about leave time/days off and balancing your time during “peak” workload times?  
Is your supervisor supportive of your work/life balance?  
Do you feel you are required to check work emails and phone messages during days off?  
Are you male or female?

Karen noted that the group feels that the best time to send out a survey would be in the Fall. The group would like to offer a workshop(s) on this topic. She mentioned that perhaps Faculty Week would be a good time for a workshop.

Wendy noted that she believes that this year Faculty Week will be dedicated to URSA.

Gail discussed the issue of additional responsibilities of employees. This is especially unclear for PAT staff members, who do not receive overtime pay.

Karen discussed how even when a supervisor is supportive of employees taking a day off, the rest of the office might not be supportive.

Jenny spoke about how she is especially passionate about this topic. She found herself thinking a lot about this in terms of reduced time and using earned time.

There was a discussion about earned time relative to faculty vacation.

Meagan expressed concern of specifying “Female Guilt” as a workshop title, as males experience this as well.

Jess spoke about how guilt in general is a great workshop topic.

Meagan spoke about fear being a component of work life balance.

Karen talked about how as a campus we need to support employees in taking their earned time.

Jenny talked about how she sees employees looking towards their supervisors for cues on what expectations are, especially among newer professionals.

Jess discussed how the term “work life balance” suggests that our lives are or should be compartmentalized, instead of focusing on the whole being.

Jenny spoke about how flexibility needs to be a part of the discussion.

Karen noted that there are resources available through HR. She talked about how the group discussed finding the best way to reach people. Perhaps we should bring workshops to a departmental meeting, etc.

Gail mentioned how Lauren spoke about the expectation of staying in touch over the weekend, and how boundaries have changed.

The group discussed expectations that are listed in syllabi in regards to being able to contact professors, specifically over the weekends.

Jess thanked everyone for their time and for the great work they are doing.

**Tentatively: Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-1:30pm.**

