

## President's Commission on the Status of Women

### Minutes

12/8/15

Submitted by: Jessica Dutille

PCSW Members Present: Gail Carr, Jessica Dutille (Chair), Chantalle Forgues, Lauren Lavigne, Wendy Palmquist, Jenny Tyniec, Mary Beth Ray, Meagan Shedd,

Guests Present: Kayla Grimes, Ava Tyler, Noelle Ferris, Meredith Gagnon, Lindsey Stepp, Debbie Grotheer, Denise Normandin

### Agenda

1. Open Forum to hear concerns from campus community.

The meeting began at 12:30pm.

Jess welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

#### **1. Open Forum:** Facilitated by Lauren Lavigne

Lauren explained why it became important for the commission to host this open forum. She noted that we have been discussing work life balance to great length on the commission.

Ava discussed the work life balance challenges in regards to the admissions office.

Kayla elaborated on this and discussed compensation for extra time invested on weekends, or out of typical work hours.

Denise noted that everyone is encouraged to share concerns and circumstances with the Human Resources office. She explained how important it is to advocate for oneself.

Noelle shared her experience from a residential life perspective. When classes are not in session and there are curtailed operations, there are still staff members on campus who have to carry out necessary operations.

Historically single people without families to go home to were the people who ended up staying during off times. This is changing and getting better.

Gail spoke about the differences between the Operating Staff and PAT's. PAT's and faculty had different expectations, and the work is never done. She feels that our new president has a different perspective and seems to care a great deal about work life balance. She noted that the commission discussed the hours of the Center for Young Children and Families in meeting with President Birx this past semester. Gail mentioned that we have gone in ebbs and flows. She expressed her gratitude for everyone coming today to discuss these things.

Lindsey spoke about how childcare is a challenge on campus.

The Center for Young Children and Families doesn't work for everyone, especially staff who work over the summer, or for staff who work longer than the center's hours of operation.

Jess Dutille agreed and noted that the summers are incredibly difficult for staff members on campus in regards to childcare. She talked about how so much depends on the support or lack of support from supervisors.

Lindsey noted that it is also about the support of co-workers.

Jenny spoke about how these issues impact productivity. If we didn't have to worry about these things and what others think or say, how much more productive could we be?

Meredith asked if supervisors get together to discuss these issues.

Lauren noted that she doesn't think so. She shared a personal experience about when her child was young.

Kayla suggested that there should be a core set of guidelines, which would help us avoid inconsistencies.

Denise stressed the importance of advocating for oneself.

Lauren noted that advocating for oneself doesn't always work.

Kalya suggested that we need a set of tools from the Human Resources office to assist with advocating.

Denise encouraged the group to go to the Human Resources office, because they are there to look out for everyone's interests.

Noelle noted that the Human Resources offices gives the opportunity to keep everything anonymous and provides options to get information back to supervisors.

Gail discussed how not all supervisors are created equal. Some supervisors have probably never encountered some of the issues. She suggested that people go in pairs or groups to speak to supervisors if experiencing something similar.

Debbie spoke in regards to working weekends and not being compensated. She noted that there should be Human Resource rules for that.

Wendy agreed that there are guidelines for that.

Lindsey noted that PAT's have a minimum of 40 hours with no maximum.

Ava discussed the variance in work schedules at admissions and how taking a personal day is in many ways more difficult, because work builds up.

Wendy asked if the hours of operation were different at the daycare center on campus prior to it becoming the Center for Young Child and Families.

Gail said that she believes it use to closed at 5pm.

Meagan explained that currently it is open from 7:15am-5:15pm.

Discussion about the hours of operation of the Center for Young Children and Families.

Gail spoke about the lifecycle and how she went from needing to support her children with childcare to supporting her mother.

Jess agreed that this was a very important piece to keep in mind as we move forward in addressing these issues.

Noelle discussed how caring for others, regardless of age is really important in everyone's lives.

### **Concerns received from online survey:**

-All departments should be equal in the ability to work from home, have flex scheduling etc. UNH offers its employees one day at home, that alone would help. In addition a staff/faculty only gym with time to actually use it would be fantastic.

- For those who are PAT & OS, it would be great if the Center for Young Children and Families was open 12 months to allow parents to continue to work and not have to scramble to find child care during the summer months.

- I am concerned about the dissolution of the SAGE Center, and think it is sad and embarrassing that we no longer have an open center offered by the institution where students can go to volunteer, hang out, and get support on issues related to gender and sexuality. (I am aware of the new office and position, and think they pale in comparison to the community-oriented structure of SAGE.)

The 4-4 teaching load has negatively impacted my family and my daughter, given how little time I am able to spend with them due to the demands of the teaching load. I understand this less as a gender issue than a human issue, but since you asked about work-life balance, I can't help but mention it.

The meeting ended at 1:30pm.

- I am very concerned about the dissolution of the SAGE center and the ghettoizing of race/gender/sexuality/other "others" all into one understaffed, too-broadly-focused concern. This reveals an institutional lack of commitment/resources to an issue we declare we are committed to.

- I'm disappointed that the SAGE Center no longer exists for students. I think that subsuming the responsibilities of the SAGE Center into another office means subsuming the concerns of students served by such a center.

- I have some concerns about the number of women who are chairing principle policy making committees, departments, and doing a significant portion of the service work on campus. I'm not sure we have an equitable workload when it comes to teaching, advising, and service between men and women. It also seems reflected in the number of men who have won the scholarship award compared with women.

- Overall, working for Plymouth State University in this regard has been great. I would love to see childcare options expanded in the summer months for non faculty members. I will need to find childcare during the summers because I am a PAT and do not have them off. This poses challenges in general (openings and availability), however, it is also difficult for a child who is smaller in regards to the change in routine etc.... The Center for Young Children and Families is really great. They do a great job, and I am happy that we have that benefit here.

Lindsey noted that there is a work from home policy.

Denise confirmed that there are flexible work options available to employees.

The group agreed that other employers support flexible work arrangements to a greater degree.

Kayla talked about how it would be great to support women in developing negotiating skills. She mentioned the Women as Leaders course she recently took.

Gail agreed that hosting forums for women in regards to this would be beneficial.

Meredith spoke about how she likes the idea of working from home, but she feels it needs to be advocated by supervisors.

Denise noted that there is a *work life balance* tab on the Human Resources website, this includes flexible work options.

Lindsey and Jenny discussed how it is great that is there, but it would be wonderful if it were supported more.

Denise noted that this would be a good time to bring that forward, because President Birx is supportive of this.

Jess spoke about the PCSW's meeting with President Birx. He was very supportive of addressing this topic.

Lauren spoke about how she feels this is a trust issue. Supervisors need to allow people to do their work when they can, which will support them in being more productive.

Jenny discussed how President Birx was supportive of this and talked about getting creative.

Lauren noted that President Birx referred to it as "work life blend."

Noelle discussed the Community Development and Diversity office. She offered to answer any questions that she could, or pass along questions to Jill Martineau.

Jess explained that Jill had come to the commission to discuss her new role.

Meagan noted that there was a lack of transparency in the transition from the S.A.G.E. Center to the Community Development and Diversity Office. She feels that there has been

some misperceptions in regards to how the S.A.G.E. Center was being utilized, because there wasn't a lot of communication about this. Transparency is really important.

Noelle noted that the office is working hard to get off the ground.

Wendy asked if the needs have changed in regards to this, or if we are hearing about needs in a different way.

Debbie mentioned that when Delilah Smith left the S.A.G.E. Center started to change.

Denise stressed all the services available to help with work life balance and encouraged everyone to take advantage of these.

Gail spoke about how information use to be delivered in printed newsletters. Now there is so much electronic information, and we miss a lot of it.

Meagan agreed that it is easy to miss the information because we are constantly bombarded with electronic correspondence. She explained work life balance as a "work life purée." She discussed the concern about working on weekends; she feels it's unfair to be asked to do that.

Jenny talked about how many choices don't seem like a choice anymore (ex: can't afford childcare), etc.

Lauren spoke about how she is on the PAT Welfare Committee and they are talking about work life balance issues.

How do we manage everything? Are we expected to answer emails on weekends.

Jess spoke specifically about emails and the expectations about always being plugged into emails. She explained that Meagan taught her about timing emails to go out. Jess uses this tool if she is working at a time outside of operation hours.

Jenny noted that the students we are serving are also operating on different schedules. It is not always helpful for us to be in our offices from 8am-5pm, because our students aren't always available during that timeframe. There has to be some way to work around this so that it makes sense for us, as well as those we are serving.

Kayla asked if this is a one-time meeting and expressed that she learned a lot from this conversation.

Jess explained that the commission is committing to hosting one open forum each semester, and she invited everyone there to consider joining the commission.

Chantalle spoke about paternity leave and how helpful it is for mothers when their husbands can take time off.

Netflix gives unlimited maternity and paternity leave.

Meagan noted that many of these issues are not gender specific.

Wendy stressed that the commission is intentional about not making this gender specific. She noted that these concerns and issues also impact single people without children.

Chantalle noted that we definitely don't want to divide amongst ourselves.

Noelle talked more about this. Everyone has responsibilities outside of work that are equally as important.

Lauren discussed how colleagues in her office are intentional about supporting each other in balancing work and their personal lives.

Jenny spoke about how everyone has things to take care of in their personal time. We shouldn't compare ourselves to each other.

Jess stressed that everyone has to also take care of oneself, which is just as important as caring for others outside of work.

Lauren invited everyone to reach out to commission members with additional concerns or feedback.

Jess asked everyone present to reach out to her if they uncomfortable having their name listed in the minutes and or wants comments to remain anonymous.

Next Meeting: January 12<sup>th</sup>.