

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

**Annual Report  
2006-2007**



**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

Respectfully submitted  
by Kelly Meier and Susan Taylor  
Commission Co-chairs

Minnesota State University, Mankato

**President's Commission on the Status of Women  
Annual Report  
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**2006-2007 Members:**

Maria Bevacqua (fall), Women's Studies Representative  
Kelly Biers, MSSA Student Representative (spring)  
Katie Boone (fall), Graduate Assistant to the Commission  
Julie Carlson, IFO Representative  
Jane Earley, Administrative Liaison to the President  
Carol Endres, AFSCME Representative  
Margaret Frazee, MMA Representative  
Susan Freeman (spring), Women's Studies Representative  
Kelly Holland (spring), Graduate Assistant to the Commission  
Kristeen Giese, Student Representative  
Sara Granberg-Rademacker, ASF Representative  
Rosemary Krawczyk, IFO Representative  
Kelly Meier, ASF Representative, Co-chair  
Deirdre Rosenfeld, Women's Center Representative  
Susan Taylor, ASF Representative, Co-chair  
Denise Thompson, Excluded Administrator Representative  
Shannon Villwock, MAPE Representative  
Kenneth White, Affirmative Action Officer  
Betty Young, IFO Representative

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## **Executive Summary**

This year was an exciting and active one for the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Clearly, the dominant issue for the group this year was workplace bullying. With funding appropriated through the strategic priorities budget this group began planning for a campus-wide workplace bullying and psychological aggression survey. The Commission reviewed the credentials of several potential consultants to help with the survey and ultimately selected Drs. Loreleigh Keashly and Joel Neuman. A representative steering committee was formed and the Commission co-chairs agreed to serve as steering committee chairs. Dr. Davenport appointed human resource director Lori Lamb to serve as a third co-chair of the steering committee. The projected survey implementation date is early in fall 2007.

New issues addressed by the Commission this year include planning for a women's mentoring program, development and implementation of a marketing plan, and creation of a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) committee to develop recommendations to increase the number of women in the sciences.

The Commission also continued previous projects and events this year, including a fall reception for new women employees, the Women of Courage and Vision Awards, research grant awards, professional development grant awards, research project of the year awards (undergraduate, graduate and faculty), and selection of the Bryn Mawr Women's Leadership Institute participant.

Issues to discuss this year include the Commission's charge, membership, and graduate assistant. We applaud the President's actions regarding the Sexual Violence Education Coordinator position and the Best Place to Work initiative. We would like an update on the women's leadership initiative assigned to the Professional Development Committee.

## **Addressing Workplace Bullying**

### **Bullying Complaints**

This year the Commission continued to hear concerns from employees about workplace bullying. The Commission members agreed that the group's role is not to resolve complaints, but to communicate those to the President for resolution under his direction. Employee concerns were summarized to protect requested anonymity, and those concerns were sent to the President.

### **The Workplace Bullying Survey**

The primary work for the Commission this year was advancing the workplace bullying survey project. With funding appropriated through the strategic priorities budget this group began planning for a campus-wide workplace bullying survey. The Commission reviewed the credentials of several potential consultants to help with the survey and ultimately selected Drs. Loreleigh Keashly and Joel Neuman. A representative steering committee was formed and the Commission co-chairs agreed to serve as steering committee chairs. Dr. Davenport appointed human resource director Lori Lamb to serve as a third co-chair of the steering committee.

The Commission co-chairs presented brief information about the survey and consultants at meet and confer meetings early in spring semester 2007 and the consultants visited with key stakeholder groups in February 2007 to gather feedback and provide information.

The steering committee co-chairs remained in frequent contact with the project consultants through regular phone conferences and will continue to do so through the summer. The steering committee met several times on campus this year; meetings will resume in fall. Commission and steering committee co-chair Susan Taylor developed a business case presentation (see Appendix A) for use by committee members with multiple groups prior to the survey in an effort to convince employees to complete the survey. The steering committee reviewed and approved the presentation and developed the list of groups to whom the business case should be presented. The committee agreed that the President's cabinet should be the first to see the completed business case. A request was sent to Carol Stallkamp requesting time on a summer cabinet meeting agenda for this presentation. The projected survey implementation date is early in fall 2007. A detailed history of our work is in Appendix B.

## **New Initiatives**

### **Mentoring**

The Commission recognizes the need for women mentors on campus. Commission member Dr. Julie Carlson volunteered to spearhead this initiative and has developed an initial plan for the Commission's review. Dr. Carlson anticipates initiating a web-based forum in the spring of 2008, where women can request mentors from a list of volunteers. This would not be a program requiring ongoing monitoring, but will serve as a connection site for mentees to find mentors.

### **Marketing Plan**

The Commission co-chairs met with the integrated marketing team in fall 2006 to discuss development of a marketing plan. A plan was developed and shared with the co-chairs at a meeting in January 2007 (see Appendix C). Execution of the plan will further promote support for and the empowerment of women. Initial work implementing the plan involved restructuring the Commission's website. A website framework was developed by a sub-committee and is online. The Commission requests funding to purchase ITS time to continue work on the website and to develop an integrated suite of communications.

*Request: The Commission on the Status of Women requests a budgetary allocation of \$1500 to jumpstart the marketing plan.*

As the Commission strives to improve marketing and outreach to the campus community, we recognize the need for a positive working relationship and the need to be perceived as valued by the President. We appreciate the opportunities to participate as representatives in university-wide initiatives, such as the enrollment management summit. In order to send more positive messages about the relationship between the Commission and the President, we recommend the following:

#### *Recommendations:*

*The President attends a Commission meeting each semester to discuss current issues.*

*The President hosts an event at the end of the academic year to honor Commission members.*

*Commission representatives are invited to represent the President at community events (such as the annual YWCA Women of Distinction event), at campus events or on committees as appropriate.*

### **STEM Committee**

At the request of President Davenport the Commission pursued involvement with the Enrollment Management Committee to provide recommendations regarding increasing the number of women in the sciences. A sub-committee was formed with Commission members, Enrollment Management members (including an admissions representative and a CSET representative), CSET faculty and CSET students. Susan Taylor and Angie Bomier co-chaired the sub-committee.

The group met several times and reviewed institutional and national data related to women in the sciences. The group also reviewed best practices in recruitment and retention of women in the sciences and developed a preliminary list of recommendations for year-end presentation to the Enrollment Management Committee (see Appendix D). The Commission co-chairs participated in the President's enrollment management summit in March 2007.

*Recommendation: continue this committee with leadership from CSET and voluntary participation of Commission members.*

## **Annual Projects and Events**

### **Fall Reception for Women**

The Commission and the Women's Studies Department sponsored this annual event on September 13, 2006. This long-standing reception is designed to welcome new women employees and develop networks for new and returning employees alike.

*Recommendation: continue sponsoring a fall welcome reception for new women employees.*

### **Women of Courage and Vision Recognition Reception**

The Commission on the Status of Women, in partnership with the Women's Center and Panhellenic Association hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women of Courage and Vision recognition reception on March 29, 2007. This program invites university students and employees to nominate female students and employees for recognition as outstanding women. All nominees are honored and receive a certificate and souvenir. This year's program recognized a record number of 398 women (an increase from 300 in 2006). This event has become a highly recognized opportunity to reward and empower women for their contribution to the campus community.

*Recommendation: continue the partnership offering these awards. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends that the President publicly recognize each of the award recipients.*

### **Research Grants and Professional Development Grants**

This was the fourth year that the Commission on the Status of Women offered professional development and research grants to university community members. Stipends were available to students and employees to attend professional conferences concerned with the status of women, or conduct research in this area. Funding criteria are:

- 1) Relation of the activity to the status of women;
- 2) Applicant's financial need and access to other sources of funding;
- 3) Extent to which the activity benefits the applicant, campus or local community.

This year, the Commission restructured the grants to offer two disbursement periods (fall and spring) and awarded a total of \$3500 in professional development and research grants.

In fall we awarded nine (6 students, 3 faculty) grants ranging from \$50 to \$300 and had to deny funding to twelve applicants. In spring we awarded nine (5 students, 4 faculty) grants ranging from \$210 to \$375 and denied funding to four applicants. These funds continue to be critical to the advancement of women and the demand for these funds is growing.

*Request: The Commission on the Status of Women recommends a \$2500 increase in funding to increase access to continued professional development for women.*

## **Research Project of the Year Awards**

This is the fifth year that the Commission has recognized excellence in research work pertaining to women. Members of the university community are invited to submit projects in one of three categories: faculty, graduate student and undergraduate student. This year there were no faculty submissions, so two graduate projects were selected. This year's winners were:

### Graduate Student Project of the Year

Lila Kahmann (Women's Studies)

"Margaret's Story: A Feminist Perspective of Insider/Outsider Status"

### Graduate Student Project of the Year

Lynn Kuechle (Speech Communication)

"Extraordinary Ordinary: Mothering in the Face of Unattainable Social Norms."

### Undergraduate Student Project of the Year

Danielle Thomsen (Political Science)

"The Decision to Run: Stories of Women in the Minnesota Legislature."

## **Bryn Mawr Women's Leadership Institute**

Dr. Jean Harr from the College of Education was chosen as the Bryn Mawr participant for summer 2006. At the request of the Commission, Dr. Haar conducted a Bryn Mawr experience informational session on Professional Development Day in January 2007. Approximately 20 employees attended and asked questions but only four women ultimately applied for the university sponsorship to attend the institute. The small number of applicants is a reflection of the commitment required to attend the institute, a commitment that makes it professionally and personally difficult for many women to attend. Jennifer Guyer Wood was selected as the summer 2007 participant.

*Recommendation: The Commission on the Status of Women recommends creating a Commission sub-committee to investigate alternative opportunities for women, including the new Bryn Mawr shorter sessions offered in Colorado.*

## **New and Ongoing Issues**

### **Review of the Commission's Charge**

The Commission on the Status of Women has a three-fold purpose as it pertains to women's concerns and issues:

- 1) To identify and define current and emerging issues and make recommendations to the university on how these issues should be addressed.
- 2) To review progress on these recommendations.
- 3) To provide advice and guidance to the President as the university implements new policies and programs to improve the status of women at the university.

The above stated purpose was last articulated by Dr. Richard Rush in 2000 and was reiterated by Dr. Richard Davenport in fall 2002.

Commission members perceive the group as one that exists to serve the President as he strives to make our campus equitable and positive for women. At times, this may mean communicating concerns to the President if those reporting feel they have no other way to safely report their concerns. The Commission does not serve as a resolution body, but as a communicative one, particularly for those who are not being served through regular channels.

President Davenport sent a letter dated April 5, 2007 (see Appendix E) stating "... the purpose of the Commissions is not to act as a forum for complaints." The Commission members believe this letter instructs the group to no longer hear concerns from the campus community. This statement seems to contradict the group's understanding of its purpose, particularly the Commission's tradition of hosting open Listening Panels where employees may voice concerns.

The Commission has a rich history of serving as a body that is accessible and welcoming to anyone with a concern. The Commission members seek clarification on the President's charge for this group.

*Request: The Commission on the Status of Women requests clarification on the April 5, 2007 letter regarding Follow up to March Meeting.*

### **Membership**

In an effort to more effectively address concerns impacting women on campus, the Commission requests that the Director of Security and the immediate past recipient of the Bryn Mawr Women's Leadership Institute be added as standing, ex-officio members. If the Bryn Mawr sponsorship is replaced with different leadership options, the Bryn Mawr membership slot would either be eliminated or replaced with the recipient of an alternative leadership program. The addition of these members would enhance the integration of new ideas, thoughts and concerns.

*Recommendation: The Commission on the Status of Women recommends that the Director of Security and the immediate past recipient of the Bryn Mawr scholarship be added as standing, ex-officio members.*

### **Sexual Violence Education Coordinator**

The Commission applauds the institutional support of a full-time Sexual Violence Education Coordinator. The efforts dedicated to education and providing support and advocacy for victims is impressive.

### **Women's Leadership Program Initiative**

In the fall of 2005, the Commission was charged with creating a proposal to address the leadership development of all women on campus. A proposal was developed and submitted to President Davenport in the spring of 2006. During our FY 06 wrap-up meeting, President Davenport informed the Commission that the Professional Development Committee would be taking the lead on this project. The Commission asked the human resources director for an update in fall 2006; she indicated she was waiting on further communication from the President before proceeding.

*Request: The Commission on the Status of Women requests an update on the progress of this program. The Commission fully supports development of a women's leadership program on our campus, understanding that commitment to such a program will require substantial resource commitment.*

### **Graduate Assistantship**

The Commission's graduate assistant position was invaluable to the group this year. The student hired for the year (Katie Boone) did an outstanding job fall semester, then transferred to a different position mid-year which was a great loss to the Commission. Before leaving she developed several documents to assist the incoming assistant and future co-chairs with planning and executing Commission events and projects.

A new assistant (Kelly Holland) was hired for spring semester and she stepped in to spearhead several projects. She worked collaboratively with the women's center graduate assistant to organize and plan the Women of Courage and Vision event. She helped organize the Project of the Year awards and the grant awards. She created media releases, scheduled full Commission and sub-committee meetings and meeting rooms, took meeting minutes and researched topics assigned by the co-chairs.

This year's graduate assistant was able to work out of the student leadership development and service learning area with co-chair Kelly Meier. Next year's co-chairs are Dr. Rosemary Krawczyk (psychology) and Susan Taylor (development). Neither of the co-chairs have discretionary space to house the graduate assistant. The Commission would like to have an assigned office for the graduate assistant and for central storage of archived records and event

items. Currently these items are stored haphazardly (or lost) in previous co-chairs' offices. Elizabeth Lindstrom is hired as the graduate assistant for next year.

*Request: The Commission requests assignment of an office to be shared by the graduate assistants from the President's Commission on the Status of Women and the Diversity Commission.*

### **The Best Place to Work**

The Commission applauds and embraces the President's vision of making our campus the best place to work. We appreciate the opportunity provided to discuss this initiative at our meeting with the President on March 8, 2007 (see Appendix F). The Commission continues to have interest in participating in the process of transforming our work culture through positive change.

*Request: The Commission requests an update on this initiative and would appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the process of making our campus the best place to work.*

**Summary of Requests and Recommendations  
Submitted by the President's Commission on the Status of Women**

**We request:**

- a budgetary allocation of \$1500 to jumpstart the marketing plan.
- clarification on the April 5, 2007 letter regarding *Follow up to March Meeting* (specifically about the directive to no longer listen to concerns.)
- an update on the progress of the Women's Leadership program assigned to the Professional Development Committee.
- assignment of an office to be shared by the graduate assistants from the President's Commission on the Status of Women and the Diversity Commission.
- an update on the Best Place to Work initiative and would appreciate the opportunity to be involved in this work.
- a \$2500 increase in research and professional development grant funding due to increased interest in these grants.

**We recommend:**

- the President's attendance at one meeting each semester to discuss current issues.
- that the President host an event at the end of the year to honor Commission members.
- that the President invite Commission members to represent him at community events (such as the annual YWCA Women of Distinction event), at campus events or on committees as appropriate.
- continuing the STEM committee with leadership from CSET and voluntary participation of Commission members.
- continuing sponsorship of a fall welcome reception for new women employees.
- continuing the Women of Courage and Vision awards with a public recognition of recipients by the President.
- creating a Commission sub-committee to investigate alternative leadership opportunities for women, including the new Bryn Mawr shorter sessions offered in Colorado.
- adding the Director of Security and the immediate past recipient of the Bryn Mawr scholarship as standing, ex-officio members.