

President's Commission on the Status of Women

**Annual Report
2008-2009**



Minnesota State University, Mankato

Respectfully submitted
by Jennifer Guyer-Wood and Denise R. Thompson
Commission Co-chairs

President's Commission on the Status of Women Annual Report 2008-2009

2008-2009 Members:

Jennifer Guyer-Wood	Co-chair (1 st year)
Denise Thompson	Co-chair (1 st year)
Jane Earley	Administrative Liaison
Elizabeth Lindstrom	Graduate Assistant
Maria Bevacqua	Women's Studies
Suzanne Dugan	Security
Linda Hanson	Affirmative Action
Wanda Viento	Women's Center
Julie Carlson	IFO Representative
Rosemary Krawczyk	IFO Representative
Betty Young	IFO Representative
Carol Endres	AFSCME Representative
Gail Abraham	AFSCME Representative
Carol Jensen	MMA Representative
	MMA Representative
Sara Granberg-Rademacker	ASF Representative
Megan Hagerty	ASF Representative
Deb Schulz	ASF Representative
Shannon Jeffries	MAPE Representative
Ludmila Lindahl	MAPE Representative
Deb Jesseman	HERS Participant

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Executive Summary

The President's Commission on the Status of Women was active this year. Continued initiatives include the, Mentoring Program for women employees, selection of a HERS Institute participant, awarding research projects of the year and awarding professional development and research grants.

Continued events include the fall reception for new women employees, the spring Women of Courage and Vision awards reception, and two listening panel events.

Primary issues concerning the Commission at this time are the need for a central reporting office for victims with a Point of Contact position, and a desire to investigate student parent concerns.

The Commission commends the Great Place to Work Taskforce for their work and for taking over leadership for the workplace bullying survey project.

New Initiatives and Updates on 2007 - 08 Initiatives

Point of Contact and the Workplace Bullying and Psychological Aggression Survey

The workplace bullying and psychological aggression survey follow-up is currently being led by the Minnesota State University, Mankato Great Place to Work Task Force. The President's Commission on the Status of Women, in collaboration with the Great Place to Work Task Force, will continue to explore the possibility of recommending a Minnesota State Mankato "Point of Contact" position to President Davenport for his consideration. This proposed position will be a full time staff position that will act as a confidential resource for all MSU faculty and staff to address their employment and other MSU environment concerns. Additional research into the development of this position will continue into the 2009-2010 Academic year.

Student Parent Issues

President Davenport charged the Commission with addressing student concerns related to parenting, including childcare, job opportunities, support services, parental leave, etc. The Commission invited the Student Parent Organization to a meeting in late spring to discuss a collaboration to begin to address these issues. The Organization's membership did not attend the meeting, so the Commission will continue to work on this issue in the fall. In addition to the Student Parent Organization, the Commission will invite the Non-Traditional Student Group to join the discussion.

Ongoing Projects and Events 2008 - 2009

Fall Reception for New Women Employees

The Commission and the Women's Studies Department sponsored this annual event on September 24, 2008. This long-standing reception is designed to welcome new women employees and develop networks for new and returning employees alike. At least 60 people attended this festive event.

Employee Resource Fair

The Commission had a presence with an information sign-up sheet as well as gifts and information at the Minnesota State Mankato Employee Resource Fair held by Human Resources.

Professional Development and Research Grants

This was the fifth 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.

We offer the grants in two disbursement periods (fall and spring) and this year awarded a total of \$2,253 in professional development and research grants, out of the \$14,615 total amount requested.

The PCSW awarded a total of 11 (4 students, 3 staff, 4 faculty) grants ranging from \$134 to \$500, and had to deny funding to 17 applicants. These funds continue to be critical to the advancement of women and the demand for these funds has steadily been far above the amount of funding available.

Suggestions for next year's committee:

1. Consider requesting a "statement of impact" from applicants after they are given funding – so that we can better understand how these funds helped their professional development and/or aspirations.
2. Consider adding a deadline for awardees to spend their funds, or to at least initiate paperwork with the PCSW Graduate Assistant.

Research Project of the Year Awards

This is the seventh year that the Commission has recognized excellence in research and projects pertaining to women. Faculty, graduate and undergraduate students are invited to submit projects and/or research for a \$350 award. This year there were no undergraduate submissions, one faculty submission, and three graduate submissions. The following three graduate projects were selected, funded, and honored at the Women of Courage and Vision Recognition Reception:

- Angie Anderson, Department of Speech Communication, for her paper, "Sexism in Politics: A Historical Inquiry and Analysis of the 2008 Presidential Race."
- Kelsey Maki, Department of Speech Communication, for her paper, "It's Always Something: Creating and Sustaining Feminist Humor on *Saturday Night Live*."
- Megan Orcholski, Department of Speech Communication, for her paper, "Writing the Self: An Exploration of Feminine Voice in *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*."

HERS Women's Leadership Institute

The representative selected to attend the HERS Summer Institute at Bryn Mawr College in Summer 2008 was Dr. Deborah Jesseman, a faculty member the Department of Educational Studies: K-12 & Secondary Programs. At the request of the Commission, Deborah conducted a Bryn Mawr experience informational session on Professional Development Day in January 2009.

For the past two years, the Commission has received a very small number of applications for the HERS Institute, perhaps reflecting the professional and personal difficulties many MSU women foresee in attending. This past year, to help encourage more women from different bargaining units to apply, the weekend HERS Institute in Denver, Colorado, was added as an option to the month-long HERS Institute held in the summer at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. It should be noted that the person selected this year has chosen to attend the weekend Denver Institute that will begin in Fall 2009, confirming that this addition was beneficial. Debra Schulz from the Registrar's Office was selected as the 2009 representative.

The Commission believes that as long as we have even one qualified candidate wishing to advance her leadership skills through this nationally-recognized program, we should continue to support our employees' participation. However, this Summer 2009, a group of women (mostly made up of past HERS participants) will initiate a week-long women's Leadership institute here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The Commission will consider this as an option for next year, hopefully in addition to sending one woman to participate at HERS.

Listening Panels

This year the Commission co-sponsored a listening panel with the President's Commission on Diversity on February 18, 2009. This was our most successful listening panel ever with 30 people attending. The Commission also held a listening panel on March 24, 2009, with 14 people attending. Notes are included in the "Campus Community Feedback" section for both panels

Issues raised included inclusiveness of committees for racial minorities, publicity of diversity events for students, environment for women leaders on campus, bullying, student parent issues, and an ombudsperson position.

Due to the good attendance at both events, the Commission would like to continue listening panels and hold them each semester.

Mentoring Program

Mentor Match was initiated by the PCSW in early 2008 as a voluntary project to help new female employees transition into their new roles and the campus environment by offering them a way to find other women on campus who are interested in volunteering as mentors. Commission member Dr. Julie Carlson, Department of Educational Leadership, developed a web project to bring university women together in mentoring relationships. She developed an online forum where volunteers can sign up as mentors, and mentees can find a mentor.

Mentor Match is accessed through a link on the PCSW website where information is provided on mentoring models, mentee benefits, recommendations for mentoring relationships, and a place to find potential mentors. (Note: CETL also offers a mentor program for new faculty members. Julie Carlson and Stewart Ross communicated about the Mentor Match Project before it was initiated, and precautions were taken to ensure there was not a conflict between the two. Female faculty members can participate in both if they so desire.)

The initial response to Mentor Match by current female employees was successful in terms of attracting over 40 women to volunteer as potential mentors. The Project does not, however, have a way to calculate the number of mentor/mentee relationships that have been formed. In late May 2008, all of the potential mentors from the site were emailed an open-ended questionnaire asking for their input on the success of the program. They were also asked to forward a similar questionnaire to their mentees, if they had one. Just over 50% of the mentor questionnaires were completed and returned. The majority of women indicated that they had not been contacted by someone seeking a mentor. Approximately five questionnaires were completed from mentors who had been contacted. Three completed questionnaires from mentees were received. The feedback received was positive, indicating that the information and set-up of the Project was successful and no recommendations were given for improvement. However, the low number of new female employees who sought out a mentor is something that needs to be addressed in the future. Publicity should be increased for advertising the project beyond the two emails sent from the President's Office and the one postcard (advertising several PCSW endeavors).

Salary Equity Issues

In spring of 2008, the Commission members reviewed salary statistics for our campus based on gender for FY08. The statistics were of concern to the Commission.

On December 4, 2008, three Women's Studies graduate students working on a class project came to discuss pay equity on campus with the Commission. The students distributed statistics they had obtained. They had already met with the AFSCME union, Linda Hanson in Affirmative Action, Lori Lamb in Human Resources, and other groups to discuss their concerns.

The student group asked that the commission continue the work that they began. The group recommended that the statistics be broken down into job titles, to make the information more comparable and understandable. They suggested that a PCSW Salary Equity committee might want to look into pay range information as well as work experience comparisons. The group

suggested that Lori Lamb is available for future questions and the Women's Studies club may also offer assistance.

On January 26, 2009, the PCSW Salary Equity sub-committee members met with Lori Lamb, Director of Human Resources. Lori explained that the summary statistics that were provided were misleading. Contracts and procedures determine the level at which employees' salaries are set, preventing individuals from having a significant amount of discretion in a specific salary. At this point, the sub-committee felt that they had gone as far as possible investigating the issue.

Women of Courage and Vision Recognition Reception

The President's Commission on the Status of Women, in collaboration with the Women's Center and Pan-Hellenic Council organized the 9th Annual Women of Courage and Vision Recognition Reception. A total of 338 individuals were nominated and the event attendance was around 200. For the second consecutive year, students produced a video of women and men talking about the courageous and visionary women they admire at Minnesota State Mankato. The Commission plans to continue this popular collaborative event to reward and empower women for their contribution to the campus community.

Marketing Plan

The university's integrated marketing team developed a marketing plan for the Commission which was shared with the co-chairs at a meeting in January 2007. Part of the plan was to develop a consistent positive visual identity. Since 2007, the Commission has used a standard graphic image developed exclusively for our communications and print pieces, such as invitations to events and informational mailings to employees. In FY 2009 intercampus mailings were decreased due to budget constraints. Intercampus mail and mass emails that were distributed conformed to the PCSW marketing plan.

Campus Community Feedback

Listening Panel Feedback

Diversity Dialogue

- Both Commissions don't seem to be inclusive. Commissions are missing diversity. How many non-white (male and female) have had the opportunity to make progress. We should not give less importance to racial minorities.

- MSU has a broad based definition. It exceeds those things that are matters of public law.
- The administration has the ability to work with bargaining units to encourage diverse representation on these commissions.
- Second the notion of expanding the definition of diversity. “Group think” can permeate a group – The Abilene Paradox.
- Sometimes it seems that international diversity is not getting enough emphasis. We talk about domestic diversity but the international focus is sometimes lost.
- When things are done for one group – it doesn’t mean that things are not done for another group. For example, it is ok to have a women’s commission working on women’s issues and it doesn’t mean that men are left out. How can we celebrate our heritage without offending others?
- In the area of multiculturalism, we are talking about those people that have and those that do not have or never will have. We should think about ourselves as a family. It’s like asking why don’t we have a Men’s studies program? Men have the power and are in the majority. Underrepresented people have not had the opportunities that majority people have had. I ask that those people that have always been on committees and have had the power and control consider giving up their roles so that others can have the opportunity.
- I am happy to be at this meeting and see different people come together. There are fantastic things going on almost every night. We are busy in our own worlds and we have to be careful in our choices. I encourage student involvement – I offer extra credit. That is nice but it’s not necessarily enough. I am hoping that this is the beginning of some conversations of how we can encourage more interaction because it’s in that interaction that something happens.
- I just came from talking to someone about developing an Indian Studies class. We live with the history that supported rewards for killing our people. It is hard to come into an environment and trust others and overcome the societal norms that have labeled us as bad people. We are struggling for our piece of the pie but who is running the bakery? We are discussing things that we don’t know anything about. It is easy to go to a training and count that as a symbolic gesture but we need to do more. We need to learn about who we all really are.
- I have this fear because when I talk about diversity and prejudice – I have a fear because many of my students do not believe they have biases. I would like to see more done for our students because I think that many of them are blind to the fact that they are prejudice.
- It’s not a matter of white or non-white, male or female. If you are on committees that are working on diversity – you should ask yourself am I diverse? Do I make an effort to go outside of my comfort zone? We know that there are more white than non-white so it is an appeal to both white and non-white to be more diverse. You see white people that are very multicultural. Dr. King said don’t judge a person on the basis of his or her skin color. I emphasize that management and unions attempt to have diverse representation. Some of us must be in front but it takes courage. All of you can have that courage and take that initiative. Look at how the Native Americans are struggling. We haven’t paid the Dakota people for the land where the university is built. They have given us a lot and yet we still ask them for a lot. What have we done for the Native Americans?

- As a student, I feel like there isn't a lot of outreach to students in general about these kinds of sessions. There needs to be more opportunities for students.
- I think it's important to get outside of the people we interact with in our Majors. In Education, you get into a block and then you are with the same people. I took an Anthropology class and we did an activity where I was a minority and I learned so much from that experience. We are going to be the educators and leaders in the classroom and we need to have more opportunities to learn.
- I like the comment that race has no meaning but that race makes the meaning.
- How can administrative offices become more involved? Should we bring in speakers from the cultural diversity office?

President's Commission on the Status of Women Listening Panel 3/24/2009

- Five women have lost their jobs (excluded administrators) under this administration. This is an immediate concern. How many women total and men total will be laid off? We never hear about other areas that were on the table to be eliminated. People feel frightened and intimidated. They don't want to be the squeaky wheel because they fear retaliation.
- From the bullying survey, do we know who was bullied gender-wise?
- Women who speak out are setting themselves up to leave. This is not a climate conducive to leadership for women. Women have to use male colleagues sometimes to get their messages across due to the climate here. Women faculty and staff who want to move up are not retained. We're short on women administrators. We should push for retention of women on campus.
- The campus climate for student parents is not encouraging. Our sister institutions do it better. Winona State has two times as many childcare facilities. Lack of childcare is a barrier to getting in and staying in school. Students with children are not accommodated by professors. We should use a disability services approach. Students could be mentored on how to approach faculty about these issues.
- The climate for faculty parents isn't good. Some won't bring their children on campus because of the looks they get. Our population is changing and our students are changing.
- What is the percentage of use of the Children's House for faculty/staff vs. students?
- The PCOSW annual report is a time for feedback and actionable items. Commission must report back to campus, and could request a report back from the President for accountability.
- There continues to be a need for an ombuds. This is important for the campus and would be a huge step forward.

Web Contact Form Feedback

The President's Commission on the Status of Women website includes a link to an anonymous feedback form. Submissions through the website are automatically forwarded to the co-chairs. A summary of issues submitted through the web is as follows:

- Victims of harassment, bullying, abuse of power and general mistreatment have given up their quests for justice, for relief or even for mere administrative acknowledgement of an ongoing problem. We have repeatedly studied and documented the ongoing problems of harassment, bullying, abuse of power and general mistreatment. We have not, however, effectively addressed these problems to the point of reducing them.
- It was suggested that the university create an ombudsperson or advocate position. This person's job would be to support victims, to provide guidance through the system and to make sure that the system works for the victim. This person should be a trained counselor victims can trust. Above all, this person should not be required to be "neutral" but an advocate.
- It also was suggested that the Commission encourage the administrative to develop a means for recognition of and dealing with the patterns of problem behavior of given individuals. The focus should be on preventing future problems.

Membership

One union questioned the Commission's membership term length. After discussion the Commission came to a conclusion that the current membership terms provide continuity, in order to accomplish more as a commission. The PCSW will maintain the current terms but continue to assess them and revisit this issue if this becomes a problem in the future. The Commission will also encourage the unions to appoint members who are diverse.

Graduate Assistantship

Elizabeth Lindstrom served as the Commission's graduate assistant position for a second year and was invaluable to the entire group and the co-chairs. She worked as the behind-the-scenes organizer, collaborator, event-planner, web manager, and "other duties as assigned", which is necessary with both co-chairs having to maintain their regular workloads. It continued to be efficient to house the graduate assistant in the Women's Center along with our archives. This helps us with space, record-keeping and continuity needs. Elizabeth continued to gain valuable experience in project management, workplace organization and empowerment of women.

Summary of New Recommendations

- Recommendation: The Commission will pursue opportunities to support campus women. Ie: (the Midwest Women's Leadership Institute, the clothing drive for women professionals, Maverick Scholarship Walk for Women Athlete, Girls and Women in sports day, etc.)
- Recommendation: The President's Commission on the Status of Women, in collaboration with the Great Place to Work Task Force, will continue to explore the possibility of recommending a "Point of Contact" position at Minnesota State University, Mankato to President Davenport for his consideration.
- Recommendation: Continue to offer the HERS Institute summer women's leadership program, giving the option of participating at Bryn Mawr or at the multiple-weekend HERS Institute in Colorado.
- Recommendation: When funds become available, increase funding for the research and professional development grants to keep up with the increasing number of requests we receive each year.
- Recommendation: Meet with the Student Parent Organization and the Non-Traditional Student Group to discuss collaboration
- Recommendation: The Commission will implement cost saving measures due to budgetary constraints during the upcoming fiscal year. Cost saving measures could include:
- Eliminating the poster series initiative permanently
 - Decreasing the graduate assistantship to 10 hours for spring 2010,
 - Instead of relying on emails and postcards, explore other options. It was suggested that we print some advertisements in office to save printing cost.
 - Promoting the PCSW more by connecting with other organizations and explaining what we do.
 - Preparing some publications for next year now, to save costs in our upcoming budget.
 - Discontinuing member name badges.