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Annual Report

Commission for Women
1986-87

Prepared by

Judy Webster, Chair

Commission Members

Dr. Linda Burton
Ms. Charlene Rice
Ms. Joan Cronan
Dr. Jerry Askew
Dr. Nancy Goslee
Ms. Lucy Hamilton
Dr. Jeanette Jennings
Dr. Marcia Katz

Ms. Susan Kemppainen
Dr. Suzanne Kurth
Ms. Beverly Sweeney
Ms. Helen Mays
Dr. Patricia McClam
Dr. Martha Lee Osborne
Ms. Eleanora Overbey

Ms. Maxine Thompson
Ms. Wylene Vrba
Dr. William Shurr
Mr. J. Otis Cochran
Ms. Juli G. Stewart
Dr. Lynn Blinn
Ms. Becky Wilkerson
Dr. Faye Julian

Systems

Ms. Krystyna Ball
Ms. Betsy Child
Ms. Charlotte Brooks

Students

Ms. Billiee Pendleton-Parker
Ms. Margaret Webb
Ms. Jill Stevens
Ms. Esther E. Watkins
Ms. Gina Godfrey

The Commission for Women's charge is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor concerning women's issues and to make recommendations on programming, policies, and procedures that affect women staff, faculty and students on the UTK campus. In order to pursue these goals, the Commission has held monthly meetings throughout the academic year.

We were involved in the Chancellor's decision to establish a child care center on campus, and subsequently have served in an advisory capacity with representation on the Child Care Advisory Board.

We played a significant role in the search and interview process for the Director of Affirmative Action.

Our second nominee to attend the month long administrative training program at Bryn Mawr this summer is Dr. Nina Elliott.

During the period of time last Fall Quarter when assaults had become a visible problem on campus, the university administration used a lighting survey that had been done by the Commission several years ago as part of the decision making process to increase lighting in the darker areas of our community. We will continue our work in advising the University of women's safety issues.

Publishing the Networker as a communication from us to all women on campus is a continuing accomplishment of the Commission. Our editor, Carol Guthrie, who is just completing her first year with us, has done an excellent job of selecting and writing informative articles and including relevant announcements. We commend her and are pleased to announce that she will continue as editor during the next academic year.

On July 1, 1987, Linda Burton, assistant director of UTK Personnel, will become the next Chair of the Commission for Women. She has been a member of the Commission for four years and I am confident that she will serve us well as our leader and advocate.

This is my last annual report for the Commission, and I would like to take the opportunity to review some women's issues that are national in scope but also of major concern to us at UTK.

Pay Equity: Whether viewed in terms of equal work for equal pay or, as in comparable worth, equal pay for work of equal value, pay equity will remain at the top of our list for years to come. Economic discrimination against women has been illegal since the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was passed, yet it persists. Here at UTK, we have studied faculty salaries for more than ten years on an annual basis. We have made progress at times with equity adjustments, but then seem unintentionally to regress (as evidenced by the most recent report on faculty salaries).

Affirmative Action: This year's Supreme Court decisions have been heartening. For the present, Affirmative Action seems more secure. Most definitions of affirmative action include mention of plans to recruit minorities. We, at UTK, have just produced our first true affirmative action plan. Previous incarnations of the document were really only guidelines. Affirmative action may also include programs that assist women in competing for jobs on an equal basis. We hope for an administrative commitment to fostering the careers of women, and we look forward to the arrival of a new director of affirmative action on campus. We have an opportunity to improve our record considerably.

Integration of work and family life: It has been said that what every working woman needs is a "wife," but then women would have to pay them, wouldn't they? How many would take the job? In the United States, our focus on the individual's rights and privileges has naturally led many women to believe that they must bear children, care for them, and earn a living, all on an equal basis with men, who usually have fewer nurturing responsibilities.. Considering that humanity as a whole reproduces itself, and while there are individual choices to be made, it is women who will bear society's children. Is it not possible then that they deserve additional support in the workplace? At UTK, we have already taken a step in this direction by funding a campus child care center for our faculty and staff. We hope for a serious look at maternity leave and infant care possibilities as further desired steps to be taken.

Sexual harrassment: Frequently an individualized form of discrimination directed at one or several victims, sexual harrassment is still a problem. At UTK, we need to publish our policies widely, develop procedures that allow complaints to be made in confidence, educate both male and female employees, and take swift and consistent action against those who are guilty.

These are only a few of the issues on our agenda. The work remaining to be done is overwhelming at times and discrimination is becoming more subtle. Much of the discrimination against women that occurs on our campus is unintentional. For example, whenever vacant positions are filled by promoting from within or reorganizing the responsibilities of individuals already on the payroll without advertising the opportunity widely, the chances of discrimination are great. When decisions like this

are made, the positive reasons for realigning personnel are negated by the lost opportunities for women. It is true that a few women have benefitted from these administrative adjustments, but it is difficult to believe that a serious commitment to affirmative action exists when these kinds of decisions are routinely made without considering the consequences for women and other minorities.