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Commission for Women

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Commission for Women
Annual Report

June 30, 1988

Much of the work of the Commission this past year has been accomplished through sub-committees. During spring 1987, a sub-committee created by-laws to govern the operation of the Commission. In the fall of 1987, sub-committees were established on (1) women's health; (2) recruitment; (3) safety; (4) programming; (5) child care; and (6) the Networker editorial advisory committee. An advisory committee was also established to consult with the chair on an as-needed basis. Carol Guthrie has served her second year as the Networker editor while Bernadine Andrew has worked as a student assistant.

Many tasks the Commission has worked on this past year relate to issues that have been ongoing. The Cumberland Child Care Center, which the Commission was influential in seeing implemented, has continued to be a success. Unfortunately, the demand for child care at the Center far outweighs the space and availability. A last count shows approximately 180 children on the waiting list.

Asked by the Chancellor to report on child care priorities, the Commission responded by listing (1) infant care and (2) expansion of present facilities. In April, the Chancellor appointed a child-care committee to study the most effective ways to expand child care on campus. While much work remains to be done, we have seen an increased commitment to employer-sponsored child care.

Another committee was formed at the request of the Chancellor to study maternity leave policies on campus. The committee found that 12-month faculty, exempt and non-exempt staff were covered well under present policy. However, the committee found maternity leave for 9-month faculty to be stated rather vaguely.

The Safety Committee continued to respond to the need for additional lighting on campus. A tour of the campus revealed at least 36 areas where lighting could be improved. Commission members assigned priorities to those areas and sent a list to the Chancellor. Lighting on campus has generally improved since the Commission's last lighting survey conducted several years ago. In addition to inadequate lighting, members found several lights being left off at night and several needing repairs.

Pay equity continues to be a concern to women on campus. The Study of Faculty Salaries shows a noticeable difference in salaries between male and female faculty members. At present, a plan for exempt salary administration is being implemented throughout the UTK campus. The Commission has been assured by Homer Fisher that a study of pay equity on exempt positions will be done as soon as the data are available.

The Programming Committee resurrected the Focus on Women Luncheons this year. In March (1988), Dr. Norma Mertz spoke to a group on "Mentoring: Why Women Aren't Mentored?" In May (1988), attorney Agnes Thornton Bird spoke on "Advancements in Equal Rights for Women." Moreover, the Commission established professional development grants for women to provide a means of professional growth above and beyond the resources of the departments. Two grants were awarded during fiscal year 1987-88. The Chancellor has agreed to fund approximately 15-20 awards for next year.

Dr. Regina Smith became our third nominee to attend the HERS Institute at Bryn Mawr. The past two participants, Dr. Nina Elliott and Dr. Ann Prentice, have found the Institute to be invaluable.

The Commission for Women co-sponsored with Women's: A Health Promotion Center a mobile mammography unit on campus. Approximately 325 women availed

themselves of this service with the unit being on campus for five weeks.

In addition, the Commission presented a resolution to the Faculty Senate Fringe Benefits Committee to have asymptomatic mammography covered by all State health insurers. From that committee, the resolution went to the Faculty Senate, where it was passed unanimously.

Additionally, the Commission for Women members revised the substantially improved Affirmative Action Plan and made suggestions for revisions on procedure for filing sexual harassment complaints. The question of the status of continuing part-time faculty was once again discussed. One improvement was made with continuing part-time faculty now eligible for the Alumni Teaching Award. Further clarification of this position category is needed.

While the Commission has experienced an active year, important issues remain, as delineated below:

- * Pay Equity continues to receive attention. As long as women throughout the country earn 70¢ for every dollar earned by a male, problems will exist. The campus needs to continue its review of pay equity on an on-going basis.

- * Child Care remains a pressing need for mothers and fathers. The lack of facilities available for infant care in the Knoxville area points to a critical need for expansion of this service.

- * A study comparing tenure and promotion between female and male faculty members would be beneficial. In addition, a formal career development program is needed. Women desire a formal means of preparing themselves for the work force and for promotion into higher-level positions. More internships for women are essential.