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UT | Commission for Women

October 2008

NETWORKER

UTK Benefits from HERS Program

Over the past ten years, The University of Tennnesee at Knoxville has sponsored seven women faculty and administrators to participate in one of the three different Higher Education Resource Services [HERS] programs. A number of the participants have attended a 4-week onsite program the Summer Institute at Bryn Mawr, which has been affiliated with HERS for the past 32 years. The weekend program is available through the HERS University of Denver program, formerly held at Wellsley College in Massachusetts. This format allows those who are unable to attend a 4-week condensed session to participate over an academic season with curriculum held on weekends.

> The Summer Institute began as a joint project of HERS and Bryn Mawr College in 1976, with initial funding from the William H. Donner Foundation. The goal of the founders was to improve the status of women in the middle and executive levels of higher education administration, an area in which women traditionally had been under-represented. Today the HERS Bryn Mawr Summer Institute continues with the twin goals of preparing and advancing women for leadership in higher education administration. The program accepts women who are actively seeking increased administrative responsibilities.
> In the past thirty years, over 2,000 women administrators and faculty leaders from throughout the United States, and from Canada, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Nigeria, Sweden, Wales, Iran, Singapore and the Netherlands have graduated from the HERS Bryn Mawr Summer Institute. ~ HERS website www.hersnet.org

This year Dr. Dixie L. Thompson, Ph.D, FACSM, Professor and Head of the Department of Exercise, Sport and Leisure Studies and Director of the Center for Physical Activity and Health participated in the HERS Bryn Mawr Summer Institute. She was sponsored by the Chancellor's Office and selected to represent UTK through a process facilitated by UT Commission for Women.

Following is a brief interview with Dr. Thompson and some of her thoughts about her time at the Summer Institute.

How does HERS participation enhance the university?

HERS provides female leaders the opportunity to learn and develop skills that can be brought back to the institution. Participants in HERS learn from women who are on the cutting edge of higher education. The HERS experience creates an avenue for the infusion of new ideas into UTK. By sending women to participate in HERS, UTK is distinguishing itself as an institution that cares about the development of its women leaders. By sending the message that UTK cares about developing women leaders, it enhances recruitment and retention of faculty and administrators.

UT Participants of HERS program

Dixie Thompson, Professor and Head
Dept of Exercise, Sport & Leisure Studies (Bryn Mawr HERS 2008)

Maxine Thompson-Davis, Dean
Office of Student Affairs
Bryn Mawr HERS 2007)

Dena K. Wise, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist; UT Extension & UT College of Education, Health and Community Sciences. (Bryn Mawr HERS 2007)

Sarah Fisher Gardial, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Beaman Professor, Marketing (Bryn Mawr HERS 2006)

Carolyn Hodges, Vice Provost and Dean, Graduate School (Bryn Mawr HERS 2005)

Jan Lee, Associate Dean ~ College of Nursing (Wellesley HERS 2004-05)

Nancy Howell, Research Asst.Professor & Director of Assessment, College of Veterinary Medicine (Wellesley HERS 1998-99)

Anyone interested in more in-depth, personal information regarding the program may contact these participants.

What were topics of most interest?

As a professor about to take over the department head role, I was keenly aware of my need to learn in all areas of higher education administration. I was particularly interested in developing skills that will allow me to (1) lead through difficult budgetary times and (2) bring people with different perspectives together for common goals.

Did you learn any new tools and have you started implementation?

My department just undertook a day-long strategic planning session. The process we used was based on the "Appreciative Inquiry" model, which I was introduced to at HERS. Unlike the sometimes negative perspective that can result from SWOT analysis, Appreciative Inquiry begins with what we do well and then moves to where we want to excel and identify steps to get there. The faculty and staff were very accepting of the process, and we made great strides toward developing a plan for the future. Another major benefit was the development of contacts who can provide insight when facing challenges.

Dr. Thompson's comments are reflected by past participants and how the HERS program broadens their abilities, know-ledge about current trends and networking between other academies. Below are their statements and reflections of how they have benefited from HERS and how UTK has benefited from their experiences.

NANCY HOWELL, Ed.D., M.P.H. (1998-99 participant)
Research Assistant Professor & Director of Assessment~ College of Veterinary Medicine
As a HERS-Wellesley participant, I had the opportunity to attend seminars throughout the academic year, allowing me to assimilate HERS sessions with my ongoing position at UT. During our concentrated weekend seminars, those of us in the program shared not only individual growth during five months, but collective growth as our group learned, implemented our learning and refined approach to administration. I broadened my perspective and learned a great deal from both the formal presentations and the informal discussions with other HERS participants.

JAN L. LEE, RN, Ph.D., C.N.E. (2004-05 participant)
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor ~ College of Nursing
I highly value my experiences at the HERS Institute at Wellesley College, an intensive 3-day weekend program that met five times during the academic year. I gained through HERS a network of women contacts engaged in various aspects of higher education, all with aspirations of leadership in higher education. Participating in HERS extended my knowledge of higher education trends and challenges, as seen through interdisciplinary and interprofessional lenses, and provided unique access to highly successful women in academic leadership positions.

SARAH FISHER GARDIAL, Ph.D. (Bryn Mawr HERS 2007)
Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Beaman Professor, Marketing
My time at the HERS Summer Institute was transformative. I can think of no other experience that could have simultaneously offered 1) the breadth of knowledge regarding how campuses function, 2) the unparalleled opportunity to evaluate and hone my leadership skills, 3) a motivational context in which to con-template how and where I might use my talents in higher education, and 4) an opportunity for professional networking that continues to serve me to this day. I am certain I will never again have access to so many talented female leaders in higher education, forever altering my perception of my own future potential.

DENA K. WISE (Bryn Mawr HERS 2007)
Associate Professor and Extension Specialist
UT Extension and UT College of Education, Health & Community Sciences
For someone whose entire career has been spent at large public universities, HERS provided me with an exciting glimpse into the broader world of higher education including large and small private colleges and universities and the community college system. In addition to identifying and developing management and administrative skills, HERS connected me with a network of vibrant, motivated, accomplished women whose continued support nurtures and challenges my own development as a higher education professional."

CAROLYN R. HODGES (Bryn Mawr HERS 2005)
Vice Provost and Dean ~ Graduate School
Continued University support to send faculty/staff to the HERS Bryn Mawr Institute is an excellent and very important investment in the future of the campus. During the month-long invigorating and intellectually stimulating experience, participants in the Institute have the opportunity to shape and hone talents that promote career advancement, to develop perspectives that inspire and enrich their professional contributions and the roles they play on campus, and to build a network of professional colleagues in higher education. They are mentored by outstanding professional women who provide models of collaboration that can be replicated on our campus in numerous forms and on many different levels to serve our envisioned goals for engagement with students, faculty, staff, and the community. It is an essential professional development resource for the University of Tennessee.

Also prior to her hiring at The University of Tennessee Dr. SHIRLEY HASTINGS, Associate Dean of UT Extension Family & Consumer Sciences, participated in the HERS Summer Institute.

Those interested in applying to attend the HERS program in 2009 may contact Ms. Pamela Hindle, Chair of the Commission for Women. Notices of dates for application, submission and notification will be sent via e-mail and the CFW website at www.cfw.utk.edu.

The *Networker* is published two times each year by the UT Commission for Women and will be an e-publication located at the CFW website (www.cfw.utk.edu). Comments and suggestions may be forwarded to the Communications Committee in care of Ms. Deb Haines: dhaines@utk.edu or 865.974.0989. The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. Job No. E01-0130-025-011-08