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1987 Bylaws Committee Minutes and Bylaws Draft

Commission for Women

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TO: Members of the Commission for Women

FROM: Bylaws Committee

DATE: June 1, 1987

RE: Proposed Bylaws

The Commission for Women Bylaws Committee has met and drafted the enclosed proposal for discussion at our June 4 meeting. Please study the document in advance if at all possible and come prepared with suggestions for revision.

Thanks.
I. PURPOSE

The UTK Commission for Women is a body appointed by the Chancellor to advise on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of University programs, policies, and services designed to improve the status of women. The Commission is related administratively to the Vice Chancellor for Planning and Administration.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission:

1. Shall recommend changes in policy or procedure relative to the concerns of women;

2. Shall make recommendations concerning new and existing academic and extracurricular programs;

3. Shall recommend and encourage research to assess the status of women at UTK and compare their status with that of women at other institutions and agencies;

4. Shall consult in the evaluation, revision, and implementation of an Affirmative Action Plan, and in so doing promote the hiring and promotion of women;

5. Shall advise and consult with all University officials on the needs and status of women; and,

6. Shall pursue ways of providing to campus and community information on Commission and University activities related to women.

III. COMPOSITION

A. Membership. The UTK Commission for Women shall consist of no fewer than 24 members, with a proportionate number of faculty members, exempt and non-exempt staff members, and students, all equitably distributed among the various colleges, schools, and administrative units of the University.

B. Chair. The Commission shall be headed by a Chair recommended to and approved by the Chancellor.
III. COMPOSITION (CON'T) -

C. Committees. Committees shall be formed as needed; volunteers to serve on such committees shall be solicited.

D. Graduate Assistant. A graduate assistant shall be chosen to aid the Chair in her duties by attending and taking notes at Commission meetings, editing Networker, or performing whatever other tasks the Chair may assign her.

E. Secretarial Support. The Chair shall be provided with a full- or part-time secretary, a senior clerk-typist of at least grade 4.

IV. SELECTION OF CHAIR -

At least one month prior to the election, nominations shall be solicited from the Commission members by a nominating committee (see Section III C) and shall be restricted to present or past members of the Commission. Ballots shall be mailed to Commission members at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the election is to take place and may be returned by mail, by messenger, or in person at the election meeting itself. The Commission's recommendation to the Chancellor shall be determined by a simple majority of the vote.

V. MEETINGS -

A. Frequency. The Commission shall schedule regular monthly meetings at a time to be agreed upon at the beginning of each academic year. Additional meetings shall be scheduled as needed. The agenda at these meetings shall be determined by the Commission itself and may include items placed on it at the request of the Chancellor; or a member of the faculty, staff, or student body with a grievance or concern; or of any member of the UTK community with an issue which might demand investigation. All meetings shall be open to any member of the UTK community.

B. Rules of Order. The meetings of the Commission shall be conducted according to Roberts' Rules of Order.

VI. BUDGET -

The Commission for Women, being an advisory body serving at the pleasure of the Chancellor, shall be provided with funds through the Office of the Director of Affirmative Action to cover such expenses as telephone service, graduate assistant, secretarial assistance, and the publication of Networker, a periodical put out by the Commission and intended to serve the female faculty, staff, and student body at UTK.
VII. APPROVAL AND AMENDMENTS -

These bylaws shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Commission taken by ballot, and may be amended by a similar vote taken at two successive regularly-scheduled meetings. Both bylaws and amendments will become effective upon the approval of the Chancellor.
Members present: Gina Godfrey, Suzanne Kurth, Martha Lee Osborne, Juli Stewart
Members absent: Susan Kemppainen (resigned)

The meeting began at 1:35.

Martha Lee Osborne discussed Section II and the possibility of breaking it down into the responsibilities of the chair and members.

Suzanne Kurth called Section II 2 "a very strange statement." Osborne agreed that it was, as extracurricular referred more to the Women's Coordinating Council than to the Commission for Women, and academic referred more to Women's Studies than to the CFW. All agreed to change Section II 2 to read "Shall make recommendations concerning new and existing academic and extracurricular programs."

Kurth said Section II 4 should read "Shall consult..." rather than "Shall assist..." She said anything suggesting that the Commission was actually aiding in something happening, was misleading.

Kurth also objected to the word "ensuring" in II 6. Osborne suggested changing the section to read "provide to campus and community information concerning..." Juli Stewart suggested "Shall pursue ways of providing information on Commission and University activities..." Kurth said she also would prefer that, because she preferred "pursue" over "ensuring" in this case. Kurth suggested deleting "community" from II 6, saying that campus is where almost all of the Commission's work and influence are.

Gina Godfrey suggested spelling out the existence of Networker somewhere in the bylaws to make it an issue and force the Chancellor to consider it when thinking about funding for the CFW. Osborne said she'd also considered that.

Osborne asked if anything had been left out that belonged in Section II.

Kurth suggested putting in something specific about promoting the hiring and promotion of women, other than the mention of the Affirmative Action Plan. Osborne suggested changing Section II 4 to read "Shall consult in the evaluation, revision, and implementation of an Affirmative Action Plan, and in so doing promote the hiring and promotion of women." All agreed to this change.

Kurth suggested the Commission should be smaller, in order to be more effective. She said no issues actually get discussed at the meetings because of the size of the group. Stewart asked Kurth what would be a viable number of members, taking into consideration that not everyone attends the meetings. Osborne pointed out that this number should be large enough to provide a balance among the group, with representatives from all the colleges, and staff and faculty. Gina Godfrey asked how many people usually attend the meetings.
Kurth suggested the main work of the Commission could be done in sub-committee meetings, to break down the group, facilitate discussion and make people feel more involved. Stewart and Kurth both stated they felt the only use for meetings of the whole Commission would be for everyone to be able to meet with Dr. Wheeler or others who could provide important information.

Kurth pointed out the inflexibility of non-exempt staff members to be able to come to noon meetings. Osborne pointed out they get a lunch hour and could just bring their lunch with them to the meetings.

Kurth suggested having open forums, as the Commission has in the past. Osborne said it's harder to get free for an open forum than for a scheduled meeting. Kurth said she knew.

Kurth objected to the Chancellor being referred to as "he" in the bylaws and said she preferred non-sexist language. Kurth and Osborne agreed the Chair should be referred to as "she."

Regarding Section III, Stewart said making members representative of certain colleges would help them to feel they're representing people.

Kurth said it would be a good idea to just say there should be x number of members on the Commission, and if one or two colleges are not very well represented, that can be made up for during rotation. Stewart agreed the committee should go ahead and specify a number for the commission as a whole. Kurth said two dozen sounded reasonable to her, agreeing with a number suggested earlier by Stewart. Osborne suggested that Section III A be changed to read "The UTK Commission for Women shall consist of no fewer than 24 members, with a proportionate number of faculty members, exempt and non-exempt staff members, and students, all equitably distributed among the various colleges, schools, and administrative units of the University." All agreed with this change.

Kurth pointed out the word "him" in Section III B. Osborne deleted it. Kurth also to delete "and her advisory committee" from Section III A. Osborne agreed.

Godfrey asked if any mention would be made of the students' terms, or if they were up to SGA. Osborne said they were up to SGA.

Kurth suggested ending Section III B after the first sentence and either deleting the rest of the material or putting it elsewhere in the bylaws.

Kurth also suggested deleting Standing from the title of Section III C, Standing Committees. All agreed.

Osborne suggested this change for Section III C: "The Chair shall solicit volunteers for an advisory committee, if she sees one necessary."
Kurth wanted some mention that committees are voluntary and didn't want to specify numbers of committee members necessary. Osborne said she had wanted to specify numbers to ensure a balance between the representatives from various areas of the University, but that it might not be necessary. Stewart said it might not be possible. Osborne said Section III C could be changed to read "Chair will form committees as she sees fit." Kurth suggested "as needed" instead of "as she sees fit." Osborne suggested "as needed. Volunteers will be solicited." Stewart objected to "solicited." She also pointed out that this wording restricted the formation of committees to the Chair's idea of need. Osborne suggested Section III C be made to read "Committees will be formed as needed. Volunteers will be solicited."

All agreed not to mention Networker under committees.

Kurth objected that everything on page two seemed to begin with "The Chair" and suggested that III D be changed to begin with "A graduate assistant" rather than "The Chair." Stewart suggested not spelling out so many duties under III D. Kurth agreed that the graduate assistantship had been made to sound like a full-time job. Osborne suggested omitting Section III D altogether. Godfrey asked if the committee was considering putting the graduate assistant under Section III E. Osborne suggested that III D be made to read "A graduate assistant shall be chosen to aid the Chair in her duties by attending and taking notes at Commission meetings, editing Networker, or performing whatever other tasks the Chair may assign her." All agreed to this change.

Stewart said she definitely wanted to keep Section III E and that the wording of it was fine. Kurth agreed.

Kurth said that in the section on meetings, it should be brought out that everyone is welcome. Also in Section IV (Section V on the second draft), Stewart suggested adding "or concern" after "grievance."

Kurth said there should be a separate section about procedures for the election of the Chair. Osborne agreed.

Kurth said she was glad Networker was in the section about the budget. Stewart said the graduate assistant should be there as well. All agreed to put the graduate assistant in the budget section, between telephone service and secretarial assistance.

Stewart suggested presenting the bylaws at the June meeting and voting on them in July, which would coincide with the beginning of the new Chair's first term. Kurth and Osborne suggested the Commission wait until Fall to vote. Stewart said the bylaws could be sent out now and voted on in September. Osborne said the bylaws and ballots could be distributed in June, or in September and voted on in October, or the committee could wait and present the bylaws in October. Stewart said that the bylaws could be distributed in June and voted on in July, plus taking mail-in votes. Kurth said she wanted the bylaws passed by a two-thirds vote. Osborne agreed, saying it should be a two-thirds vote, taken by ballot and amended by a similar vote, taken by ballot at two successive meetings.
Stewart suggested, and all agreed to, changing the last sentence in the section on approval and amendments to "Both bylaws and amendments will become effective upon the approval of the Chancellor."

Godfrey said there should be some statement about interpretation of the bylaws. Osborne and Kurth disagreed.

Osborne asked Kurth where she wanted the section on the election of the Chair to be put.

Stewart said she wanted some mention of motions to be put in the bylaws. Osborne suggested the section on meetings be subdivided into A) Frequency and B) Rules of Order, and adding "the meetings of the Commission shall be conducted according to Roberts' Rules of Order" to the section on meetings.

Stewart suggested making the election section Section III. Osborne suggested calling the section Selection of Chair rather than using the word "election." Osborne suggested wording the section in this way: "At least one month prior to the election, nominations shall be solicited from the Commission members by a nominating committee (see Section III C) and shall be restricted to present or past members of the Commission. Ballots shall be mailed to Commission members at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the election is to take place and may be returned by mail, by messenger, or in person at the election meeting itself. The Commission's recommendation to the Chancellor shall be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast." Osborne asked whether it should be a simple majority or a two-thirds vote. Kurth said a simple majority of the ballots received. It was decided to strike the part about selection of an assistant chair.

Osborne asked if the intention to reduce the number of Commission members should be spelled out in the bylaws. All said no. Stewart said that instead, the reduction idea should be mentioned in a separate report given at a Commission meeting.

Kurth left the meeting at 3:05.

Stewart and Godfrey said they had nothing to add.

The meeting ended at about 3:15.