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Commission for Women

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Women faculty share the "how-tos" of success

Women need strong academic credentials, perseverance and a healthy sense of humor in order to succeed today in academia. That was the consensus of a panel of women faculty who led a brown bag discussion of the challenges that await aspiring female academics. Approximately 30 faculty, staff and students attended the March 10 event that was co-sponsored by the UTK Commission for Women and the Student Government Association.

Dr. Judy Cezeaux, assistant professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and Engineering Science, spoke of the importance of her female faculty mentor as she went through graduate school. Long-range planning is also important. "If you aspire to high-level administration, this is a process that begins in graduate school. You have to be aware of the paths that must be followed," she said.

"Don't talk yourself out of options too early," advised Dr. Nancy Goslee, professor of English. "I made some tradeoffs early in my career that might have hurt me; however, my department offered me a tenure-track, full-time position once Title IX went into effect, so my career recovered." Dr. Norma Mertz, professor in the College of Education, worked her way up from a staff to a faculty position "though perseverance, projects that kept me visible and a sense of humor."

"You have to be aware of the paths that must be followed." ~ Dr. Judy Cezeaux

Making contacts across department and college lines was high on everyone's list. "Natural bridges of communication may not be there in your department, but you can make those bridges elsewhere," said Dr. Kimberly Gwinn, associate professor and first female faculty in the UTK Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology.

Dr. Susan Riechert, professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, offered this viewpoint: "If you are the best you can be in your field, and a diplomat and colleague within your department, then the male faculty will overlook your sex or be indifferent to it." Graduate students in the audience asked for advice on juggling family and career. They also noted that in some instances, few male faculty made themselves available as mentors. Students were advised by the panel not to give up, but to work to let male faculty know that they are serious, career-minded academics.

CFW committees submit year-end reports

Communications Committee

A new CFW homepage made its debut, providing access to minutes, membership, and committees of the commission. The homepage can be accessed through the UTK homepage Web sites under Commission for Women. Wmnspeak, a listserv for discussion of issues of interest to women was also established. To subscribe, send an e-mail to:

LISTSERV@UTKVMI.UTK.EDU.

Then type:

SUBSCRIBE WMNSPEAK (your name).

Equity Issues Committee

The committee focused on three areas for the 1996-97 year: gender issues related to budget reductions; equity issues related to part-time employees; and equity issues related to Henley Street parking assignments.

The committee reviewed the July 1996 layoffs and did not find gender bias in that action. The 1997 layoffs also will be reviewed. The committee also addressed issues of concern to part-time employees. A statement with a proposed University position regarding the value of part-time faculty

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Good News!

Eighteen of the 24 top graduates at Spring Commencement were women.

Dr. Elaine Breslaw, professor of History, has published Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem, a new analysis of the Salem witch-hunts.

Marianne Custer, costume designer and director of the Graduate Design Program in the Department of Theatre, has received funding from the Edward R. Kook Endowment to develop a new resource on modern European costume design.

Dr. June Gorski, professor of Health, Leisure and Safety Sciences, was awarded the national alumni public service award for her work on community health issues.

Dr. Joanne Logan, associate professor of Plant and Soil Science, was awarded the W. S. Overton Faculty Merit Award for Notable Contributions.

Catherine Wilt, senior research associate in the Energy, Environment and Resources Center, was invited to attend President Clinton's Summit on Volunteerism. Wilt co-directs the Tennessee Solid Waste Education Project at UT. She co-chairs the National Recycling Coalition's "Recycling to Build Communities" program. Wilt says the recycling movement is a good example of volunteerism.

GTA positions open

Women's Studies has openings for two graduate teaching assistants for the coming year. One position is half-time, the other quarter-time. If you are interested call Dr. Nancy Goslee, 974-6967 or the Women's Studies office, 974-2409.
CFW committees recap accomplishments, challenges

(Equity Committee continued)

was developed jointly by the Equity, Legal/Legislative Issues, and Part-time Employees committees. The Equity Committee examined issues related to parking access, safety and costs at the Henley Street Building. In cooperation with the Safety Committee, a neighborhood meeting was held and issues were discussed with building occupants. The committee was concerned about gender equity in parking assignments and did not find evidence of inequity.

The committee reviewed the 1996/97 Study of Faculty Salaries and was pleased to note that for the second consecutive year, no statistically significant difference was noted when salaries were compared based on gender. There was also a slight improvement in the average salary difference for full-time faculty, with male faculty salaries leading female faculty salaries by $1,092 this year, as compared with $1,166 last year.

Safety Committee

A series of Neighborhood Safety Meetings were held during March and April where students and staff discussed safety issues with Phil Scheurer, vice chancellor for Administration and Student Affairs. Meetings were held in the Conference Center, Claxton Education Building and Claxton Addition, McClung Tower and Humanities Building, Ayres Hall, Communications and Student Services Building, and on the Agricultural Campus. A formal response to the issues and concerns voiced in the meetings will be sent to building representatives and will be placed on the Commission's listserv.

The committee also attended the SGA Campus Safety Walk and contributed to ideas for better campus lighting and visibility, blue light phones, and crosswalks. It is anticipated that improvements will be implemented by Fall Semester.

Work and Family Committee

The committee changed its name from Child Care Committee to Work and Family Committee to more clearly reflect the mission and scope of this group. The committee completed revisions to the Work Schedule Personnel Procedures so that it would better address and support flex time, thus initiating the process for administrative approval and inclusion in the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual. The committee noted the likelihood of increased fees for UTK daycare consumers. CFW President Susan Martin wrote to Chancellor Snyder regarding these concerns and the impact that increases in daycare fees will have on university faculty, staff and graduate students.

Legislative/Legal Issues

This new committee joined efforts with the Equity Issues and Part-time Employees committees to examine and highlight common concerns of part-time faculty and staff. UTK administrators with budget responsibilities were sent suggested guidelines urging standardization and consistency regarding job category, position, description, benefits and salary for part-time faculty or for full-time adjunct faculty and instructors.

Outstanding Women Data Bank

Plans are under way this fall to establish a data bank of outstanding UTK women faculty. This data will be used to recognize women for outstanding teaching, research and service awards.

Networker is published three times each year by the Commission for Women. Comments and suggestions may be forwarded to the Communications Committee in care of Loretta Price: mprice@utk.edu or 423/974-9746.

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