

**The Northwestern University Organization of Women Faculty:
Consultant Report and Recommendations**

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Executive Summary

Background of the Report

Since its inception in 1981, the Northwestern University Organization of Women Faculty (OWF) and its sister organizations have driven significant changes in Northwestern University policy and programs—changes that have benefited both women faculty and the University as a whole. In recent years, however, OWF has seen reduced faculty involvement in OWF activities and, as a consequence, reduced activity and influence of the organization as a whole.

In response to the decline in OWF active membership, the steering committee for OWF determined that OWF should engage a consultant to 1) evaluate and assist in redevelopment of the OWF Web site; 2) conduct general internal and external research on the status of women faculty at universities of stature comparable to Northwestern; and 3) make recommendations, based on this research, for OWF initiatives for the 2005-2006 academic year and beyond. Kathleen Carmichael was hired as consultant and the project was conducted and completed in the three-month period from July 1, 2005 through September 30, 2005.

Internal and external research was conducted in conjunction with OWF Web site redevelopment. Internal research included a review of archived OWF documents, meetings with University Women's Center director Renee Redd and members of the OWF Steering Committee, and analysis of reports and guidelines authored by relevant University committees and the Office of the Provost. External research included a survey of gender equity initiatives, Web sites, publications and policies sponsored by universities of stature comparable to Northwestern; interviews and correspondence with key officials at peer institutions; and a search for new sources of funding available to OWF members and initiatives.

Consultant Findings and Progress

Evaluation of Peer Institution Reports: Because of variations in data quality and collection practices, findings from peer institution reports could not be used to make accurate quantitative comparisons of universities' progress in the area of gender equity reform. It was, however, possible to select four "best practice" reports that could be used as models for future Northwestern University studies. In addition, a review of reports yielded a list of proven institutional strategies for promoting diversity and equitable treatment for men and women faculty.

OWF Web site: Following an evaluation of OWF membership needs and interests, it was determined that the OWF Web site should be redeveloped as a membership resource in accord with current University Relations standards for site design. In keeping with these objectives, new content pages were added with information on funding opportunities, links to women faculty resources and reports at peer institutions, and a directory of women faculty at Northwestern. In addition, several new Web-based communications strategies have been made available to OWF.

OWF Programming: It was determined that OWF-sponsored workshops may be an efficient way to publicize OWF and increase membership participation. One possibility would be a workshop on University resources and strategies available to women faculty and graduate students who are new to the process of seeking funding and writing grants. Such programming would be especially timely given that the Office of Fellowships and WCAS have both recently updated and expanded the resources and services available to faculty and graduate students seeking funding. Preliminary contacts have been made with Stephen Hill, Assistant Director for the Office of Fellowships and Eliza Earle, Grant Coordinator for WCAS, in preparation for a possible workshop on researching and obtaining grants and fellowships.

Membership in the American Association of University Women: At the prompting of OWF and the Women's Center, Northwestern University has become an institutional member of the American Association of University Women. AAUW is an advocacy group dedicated to furthering the education of women and girls all over the world. The AAUW website, www.aauw.org, holds an impressive collection of activist guides, proprietary research, funding opportunities and links on women's issues in the U.S. and elsewhere. Institutional membership makes Northwestern University women faculty and graduate students eligible to participate in AAUW events and to apply for AAUW fellowships, grants, and awards.

Evaluation of the Faculty Diversity Committee: The Faculty Diversity Committee's role in helping the University increase the number of women and underrepresented minority groups on the faculty was evaluated. Particular attention was given to information regarding disbursements from the Faculty Diversity Fund and the FDC's guidelines, "Recruiting and Retaining Minority and Female Faculty: Some Suggested Best Practices." Preliminary analysis of FDC reports suggests that OWF may wish to request more detailed data on Fund disbursements. In addition, FDC search committee guidelines appear to fall far short of "best practice" search committee guidelines established by peer institutions.

Establishment of a University Ombuds Office—Preliminary Findings: Data from peer institutions indicates that Northwestern is "behind the curve" in its failure to establish a University Ombuds Office. Major universities with ombuds offices include six of the eight Ivies, six of the Big Ten and many other institutions of note, including the University of Chicago, Stanford, MIT, CalTech, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and multiple University of California institutions. In response to these findings, preliminary research was conducted to determine the administrative benefits and costs associated with the establishment of a University Ombuds Office. As part of this effort, interviews were conducted with ombudspersons at key peer institutions. Early findings indicate that it is both feasible and advisable for OWF to pursue measures that will promote the establishment of a University Ombuds Office.

Key Messages and Recommended Initiatives

Based on OWF's historical record, external research, and current organization objectives, five key messages were developed. The redeveloped OWF Web site and recommended initiatives have been designed to reflect the messages below:

Message 1: *OWF gives back to its membership more than it asks of them.*

Message 2: *As part of its mission to help Northwestern University keep pace with peer universities, OWF forges links with organizations and institutions across the country that support diversity and gender equity.*

Message 3: *OWF is committed to doing what it can to ensure that measures taken by the University to promote diversity and gender equity compare favorably to those taken by institutions of comparable stature. Where it finds shortfalls, OWF will work to remedy them.*

Message 4: *OWF is committed to doing what it can to ensure that measures taken by the University to promote diversity and gender equity are pursued in fact as well as form.*

Message 5: *OWF's past efforts have made Northwestern University a better place for everybody—faculty and staff, graduate students and undergraduates, men and women, in all their diversity. OWF takes this legacy seriously and current initiatives reflect this.*

Recommended initiatives (below) are designed to be completed in the course of the 2005-2006 academic year:

Recommendation 1: Finalize OWF Web site resources.

Recommendation 2: Sponsor junior faculty workshops.

Recommendation 3: Publicize availability of AAUW fellowships and grants to women faculty and graduate students.

Recommendation 4: Nominate candidates for AAUW awards

Recommendation 5: Develop AAUW Scholar-in-Residence proposal and solicit peer institution participation in a Midwestern Gender Equity Conference.

Recommendation 6: Establish an OWF liaison to the Faculty Diversity Committee, who will request additional data from the Faculty Diversity Committee to help OWF evaluate the success of the Fund for Faculty Diversity in achieving its primary mission.

Recommendation 7: Request revisions to Faculty Diversity Committee guidelines for recruiting and retaining minority and women faculty.

Recommendation 8: Advocate the establishment of a University Ombuds Office to serve faculty, students, and staff.

Introduction

In June of 2005, the steering committee for the Northwestern University Organization of Women Faculty (OWF) determined that the organization should engage a consultant to 1) evaluate and assist in redevelopment of the OWF Web site; 2) conduct general internal and external research on the status of women faculty at universities of stature comparable to Northwestern; and 3) make recommendations, based on this research, for OWF initiatives for the 2005-2006 academic year and beyond. Kathleen Carmichael was hired as consultant and the project was conducted and completed in the three-month period from July 1, 2005 through September 30, 2005.

This report is an account of the consultant's activity and details research findings, progress on the new Web site, and recommendations for OWF future initiatives.

History of OWF

Since its inception in 1981, OWF and its sister organizations (the Committee for Women in the Academic Community or COWAC, as well as the Program in Gender Studies) have driven significant changes in Northwestern University policy and programs, including the establishment of the Women's Center, measures to establish gender equity in faculty pay and benefits, and the development of much-needed policies and procedures for handling sexual harassment.

While OWF defines itself as an advocacy group for women faculty, past OWF activities have unquestionably benefited all members of the University and even enhanced University prestige. The University Women's Center serves Northwestern women faculty, staff and students alike. OWF-driven, family-friendly leave and tenure-clock policies are available to all tenured and tenure-track faculty—men and women. And the comprehensive sexual harassment policy and procedures (first advocated and drafted by OWF in 1983) have led Harvard University in its 2005 "Report of the Task Force on Women Faculty" to designate Northwestern a "best practice" institution (52).

Current State of OWF

In recent years, however, OWF has seen reduced faculty involvement in OWF activities (especially amongst junior faculty) and, as a consequence, reduced activity and influence of the organization as a whole. Several factors may have influenced this decline in faculty participation:

- **Reduced OWF visibility:** In 1994, COWAC assumed OWF's role in spearheading administrative reforms. The newly established committee took over such tasks as data collection and analysis of women's salaries and representation at various levels in the University; institutional climate surveys; and advocacy for improved childcare at Northwestern. This may have led to generally decreased visibility for OWF and a consequent decline in active membership.

- Inadequate communications among women faculty: Junior women faculty may be aware of gender-based inequities that affect them as individuals, yet may remain unaware that their experiences are shared by others at the university and that OWF offers opportunities for voicing concerns about such inequities.
- Perceived “costs” of membership and involvement: Junior and senior women faculty may deem involvement in OWF to be overly time-consuming and a potential source of career-damaging conflict with colleagues and University administrators.
- Perceived lack of direct benefits from OWF membership and involvement: Junior and senior women faculty may not see how OWF activity will translate into direct benefits for them.

With COWAC currently undergoing reorganization, it is vital that OWF reanimate its membership and resume its historical role as a primary advocate for women faculty at Northwestern University and a key driver of progressive, equitable policies that benefit every group in the University community.

Guidelines for Recommended Initiatives

In order to address factors that have limited OWF active membership, it was determined that the majority of the recommended initiatives should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Require minimal investment of active members’ time
- Be easily completed within one academic year
- Create positive, high-profile “buzz” for OWF
- Improve communications among women faculty and graduate students
- Incorporate significant material benefits for active members
- Enhance active members’ standing in the Northwestern community
- Enhance active members’ standing in the U.S. academic community

Research Methodology

Internal Research

Internal research included the following:

- Meetings with key senior members of OWF and Renee Redd, Director of the Northwestern University Women's Center.
- Web site development and communications consultations with Mark Schaeffer of the WCAS Multimedia Learning Center.
- Examination of the OWF Web site and related Northwestern University sites.
- Reviews of reports and guidelines authored by the Committee on Women in the Academic Community, the Faculty Diversity Committee, University Relations, the Administrative Infrastructure Planning Committee, the Internal Communications Working Group and other reports from the Office of the Provost.
- Communications with Steve Hill of the Office of Fellowships, Eliza Earle, Grant Coordinator for WCAS, and Elizabeth Earl of HRIS.
- Review of OWF history and archived material.

Findings will be discussed in connection with related initiatives.

External Research

External research included a survey of gender equity initiatives, Web sites, publications and policies sponsored by universities of stature comparable to Northwestern; interviews and correspondence with key officials at such universities; investigation of public service organizations whose agendas dovetail with OWF's; and a search for new sources of funding available to OWF members and initiatives.

Peer Institutions: Findings and Recommendations

“Status of Women Faculty” Reports¹

Constraints

A cursory examination of peer institution reports on the status of women faculty revealed that findings from these reports could not be used to make accurate quantitative comparisons of universities’ progress in the area of gender equity reform. Significant variations in the reports’ data quality and collection practices precluded the use of their findings in any graphical, “side-by-side” representation of institutional progress.

Other common reporting problems included the following:

- Inconsistent use of lecturer data: Data on women lecturers were frequently included in tallies for “total women faculty,” which boosted those totals. Numbers for this group, however, were rarely broken out separately and lecturers were almost invariably neglected in discussions of salaries, benefits or general university privileges.
- Dominance of public relations objectives: Reports that focused on the institution’s recent pro-diversity measures frequently lacked data on the institution’s quantifiable long-term progress in achieving specific gender equity and diversity objectives.
- Publication of “combined” reports: Combined reports that simply covered the general “status of women” (faculty, students and staff) or “diversity” at the institution in question typically provided data so general as to be relatively useless for OWF purposes.

Best Practice Reporting

Several reports, however, raised important questions and/or offered useful techniques for “benchmarking” a university’s progress against that of its peer institutions. These reports should be considered as possible models for Northwestern University’s future reports on the status of women faculty.

A selection of “best practice” reports includes the following:

- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, *Report of the Committees on the Status of Women Faculty*, March 2002. A follow-up to the 1999 landmark study of gender equity among faculty at MIT, this report is a compendium of assessments from five separate committees, each evaluating one of MIT’s five schools. The establishment of separate committees appeared to promote discussion of specific

¹ A CD with status of women, status of women faculty and institutional diversity reports from 26 institutions has been furnished along with this report. URLs for reports and women faculty resources at peer institutions are provided in Appendix A.

departmental concerns, rather than vague institutional trends.² The reports are notable for their statistical rigor, candor and public commitment to the improvement of conditions for women faculty.³ The report is unique in mentioning the status and treatment of lecturers (though not within the scope of the original mission) as a subject that calls for additional study.

- **Stanford University**, *Report of the Provost's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women Faculty*, May 2004. Stanford took part in the original, nine-member gender-equity conference sponsored by MIT in 2001.⁴ Less ambitious in scope than the MIT effort (and undoubtedly less expensive), the report is notable for its candor and the care it takes to investigate statistical anomalies (see the discussion of “outlier data” below). As part of the general gender equity project, the report also foregrounds the university’s creation of a Web site database (<http://universitywomen.stanford.edu>) that includes “links to policies, reports, and resources relating to women faculty throughout the nation” (6).
- **UCLA**: In spring of 2001, UCLA established four committees to investigate questions of gender equity among faculty: a data committee, a climate committee, a health science compensation committee, and a gender equity oversight committee. Two of the four reports deserve special commendation.
 - *Gender Equity Data Committee: Final Report*, Winter 2003. This exceptionally clear and detailed report outlines ideal “content and characteristics” of a comprehensive academic personnel database that would allow for longitudinal analysis of salary and advancement patterns over time. Such a database would be key in efforts to assess progress in achieving gender equity among University faculty.
 - *An Assessment of the Academic Climate for Faculty at UCLA*, Gender Equity Committee on Academic Climate, April 2003. This report combines data from a general survey administered to all faculty with findings from several focus groups. The final report includes copies of the survey instruments and regression models for survey scales, all of which could serve as admirable models for similar surveys by other institutions. Focus group findings were likewise valuable insofar as they pointed up divergences between institutional policy and practice, e.g. reporting

² The school-by-school approach may also promote some healthy competition regarding each school’s commitment to meeting gender equity objectives. Thus the “Report of the School of Engineering” boasts that the Dean has taken a personal role in enforcing policies, “turning back proposals to hire specific candidates from departments that have not searched sufficiently for women” (3). The “Report of the School of Science” opens with a dramatic narrative of women faculty’s struggles and flatly asserts that its dean is “a strong champion of the women’s cause,” who battles resistant administrators on their behalf (7). Interestingly, the “Report of the Sloan School of Management” is the least impressive of all five.

³ The fact that the study received outside funding from the Ford Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies doubtless also encouraged a certain degree of analytical rigor.

⁴ Conference attendees included the California Institute of Technology, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, the University of California-Berkeley, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and, of course, MIT.

concerns that women faculty were scrutinized more closely than men when they took leaves permitted by university policy.

- **Harvard University**, *Report of the Task Force on Women Faculty*, May 2005. While this report makes problematic use of women lecturer data, it is to be commended for its point-by-point list of “best practice” work-life policies and institutions and its parallel assessment of Harvard policies (49-58). The report also raises the intriguing suggestion that it may be possible to create “part-time” tenure-track positions.

Strategies for Promoting Gender Equity

Many peer institution reports and Web sites documented tactics that helped significantly advance institutional gender-equity programs. Findings listed below inform the primary and secondary initiatives advocated by this report.

Recommended strategies include the following:

- **Obtain Publicity:** Publicity surrounding MIT’s 1999 report sparked reporting and gender equity reform efforts in research institutions across the country. Similarly, widespread press concerning remarks by Harvard University President Lawrence Summers led Harvard to commission multiple task forces to study gender equity issues and to publicly commit \$50 million over the next ten years to the institution’s promotion of gender equity. Well-maintained Web sites devoted to gender equity initiatives (such as that constructed by Stanford University) can also help boost awareness.
- **Forge Relationships:** Collegiate relationships with institutions and organizations notable for progressive policies can help exert pressure on University administration to implement much-needed reforms. MIT’s 2001 nine-member gender equity conference helped spur reforms at California Institute of Technology, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, University of California-Berkeley, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and, of course, MIT.
- **Seek Outside Funding:** Outside funding for gender equity initiatives both provides much needed financial support and encourages a high level of rigor and candor in analysis. MIT received financial support for its study from the Ford Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The Rutgers Institute for Women’s Leadership and the Ford Foundation co-sponsored *Unprecedented Urgency: Gender Discrimination in Faculty Hiring at the University of California*, a chilling study of the sharp decrease in women faculty hires in the University of California system following the passage of Proposition 209.⁵ Similarly, an ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation supported the University

⁵ This 2005 study is required reading for anybody who believes that the battle for gender equity in faculty hires has been won, or that low numbers of women faculty simply reflect the existence of a small candidate pool. The study points out that after Proposition 209 crippled affirmative action programs, “men were being given ‘preference’ by being hired at rates 30% above their availability in the PhD pool” (1).

of Michigan, Ann Arbor’s development of a “Faculty Recruitment Handbook” that explains how to conduct successfully a search that targets candidates from groups underrepresented in a specific university or discipline.

- **Develop Search Committee Guidelines:** The University of Michigan Ann Arbor, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Penn State University, the University of Washington, the University of Minnesota have all published handbooks including detailed affirmative action guidelines for their faculty search committees. The guidelines include concrete recommendations and resources for promoting diversity-friendly faculty recruitment practices. It should be noted that such guides, to be effective, must recommend specific resources and courses of action.
- **Establish an Ombuds Office⁶:** Major universities with ombuds offices include six of the eight Ivies, six of the Big Ten and many other institutions of note, including the University of Chicago, Stanford, MIT, CalTech, and multiple UC institutions.⁷ The advantages derived from the establishment of an ombuds office will be discussed in greater detail below. In brief, an ombuds office serves as a mediator and advisor for faculty, staff, and students at the University. The office typically authors annual reports that provide data (aggregate, with all identifying information stripped) that can be used to identify consistent sources of conflict in the University and to suggest strategies for addressing individual grievances as well as general inequities in University policies, operations and culture. The office also serves as a much-needed source of support for an institution’s most vulnerable populations and provides a vital, confidential “feedback loop” that can help the University evaluate institutional strengths and weaknesses.⁸
- **Establish Partner Placement Programs:** Special funds and personnel for relocating and finding employment for faculty spouses are cited by multiple reports as a major feature of best practice recruitment programs. “Higher Education Recruitment Consortia” or “HERCs” established in northern and southern California and the New Jersey area include major universities such as UCLA, Stanford, UC Berkeley, and Princeton. (Information on membership can be found at www.socalherc.org, www.norcalherc.org and www.njherc.org.)

⁶ Not all ombuds offices serve all members of their respective university communities. Some serve only students, or faculty or staff. Marsha Wagner of Columbia argues convincingly, however, that the establishment of separate offices does not represent a “best practice” and runs the risk of turning the ombuds office into an advocate for its select population. Wayne Blair and Laurie Mesibov, both ombudspersons for UNC Chapel Hill, also note that although their office technically is supposed to serve only faculty and staff, students nevertheless “track them down” for assistance (Personal interviews, Aug. 2005).

⁷ Brown University’s Faculty Executive Committee is conducting research on establishing such an office, making Dartmouth the sole holdout among Ivy League institutions. Big Ten holdouts include Penn State, Indiana-Bloomington (home to the Indiana Conflict Resolution Institute, oddly enough), Purdue, and, of course, Northwestern.

⁸ Ombuds officers interviewed commonly identified graduate students as the “most vulnerable” population on campus.

- **Re-Evaluate the “Star System”:** Both Stanford and MIT reports stress the almost inevitable gender inequities build into the academic “star system” which encourages faculty to field outside offers to get preferential treatment at their original institutions. They report that because women faculty are often less mobile than their male counterparts (generally because of family obligations), this system of negotiation and reward typically disadvantages women faculty. Stanford’s *Report of the Provost’s Advisory Committee* relates this to patterns evident in an analysis of “outlier data” in its faculty compensation study:

In a number of categories, the data reveal no significant disparities by gender.... On the other hand, disparities of varying magnitude appear in a number of categories in several schools, although there is no distinctive pattern by category or by school. Some, but not all of the gender differences appear to be statistically significant.....

But even where no statistical significance emerges, several major concerns remain. The first is that the overall pattern of difference is unidirectional. Where disparities occur, virtually all involve men receiving higher compensation or support than women. (7; emphasis mine).

Interviews and Correspondence

Following initial research, interviews and correspondence were conducted with officials from key institutions. Interviews were limited, owing to constraints imposed by the academic schedule (summer vacations and the subsequent bustle of the school year’s start). Interview findings will be reported in conjunction with primary and secondary recommended initiatives (below) and in appropriate report appendices. Contact information for interviewees and correspondents is provided in Appendix B.

Key contacts include the following (to whom many thanks are due):

- Marsha Wagner, Ombudsperson, Columbia University
- David Rasch, Ombudsperson, Stanford University
- Cynthia Hudgins, Senior Project Administrator, NSF ADVANCE Project, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- Wayne Blair, Ombudsperson, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Laurie Mesibov, Ombudsperson, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Linda Greene, former Ombudsperson for Women Faculty, University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Thomas Sebok, organization contact, University College and Ombuds Association (UCOA)

Consultant Findings and Progress

OWF Web site⁹

Based on an evaluation of OWF constituency needs, it was proposed that the OWF Web site be repositioned as a membership resource—a place to learn about OWF activities but also a place for women faculty to find funding, investigate gender equity issues at Northwestern and elsewhere, and network with a powerful community of scholars, researchers and entrepreneurs.

Proposed resource pages include

- **Funding:** Includes links to AAUW funding opportunities and NU offices that can assist women faculty in locating and obtaining funding. This page can also be used to showcase awards obtained by University women faculty.
- **NU Resources:** Includes links to OWF affiliates and information resources at NU
- **Other Resources:** Modeled on Stanford's list of external resources, it includes an extensive collection of links to women faculty status reports, women faculty organizations, women's centers at peer institutions as well as other sites of interest.
- **Directory of Women Faculty at Northwestern**

Proposed communications options include

- **OWF Web log:** Would allow OWF to post general announcements and news that would be visible to all site visitors. See the Multimedia Learning Center site (<http://web.mmlc.northwestern.edu>) for an example.
- **General Membership Listserv:** Would allow interested faculty to subscribe via an address posted on the site (e.g. owf-info@northwestern.edu). A moderator would screen listserv membership (in part to avoid "spambots"), but the listserv would be open to any legitimate women faculty subscribers. The listserv would disseminate OWF announcements, surveys and general news.
- **Steering Committee Listserv:** Restricted to the steering committee, project committees and key associates, the listserv would allow the steering committee to make confidential announcements, post updates on committee endeavors, and hold brief discussions.
- **OWF Discussion Center:** Using the Blackboard Course Management system, IT can create a private forum for OWF that would allow only those "enrolled" in the site, with NU Net IDs, to enter and discuss issues under consideration by OWF.

A full-text draft, new logo and home page demos have been completed for the OWF Web site.¹⁰

⁹ OWF owes a considerable debt to Mark Schaefer of the WCAS Multimedia Learning Center for his expert work on the proposed site designs, logo designs and electronic communications strategies.

¹⁰ Please note that all text and designs for the OWF Web site have yet to be finalized. Full drafts will be provided to Steering Committee members tasked with finalizing the OWF Web site.

OWF Funding Workshop

In order to raise OWF's profile in the University community and increase junior faculty participation in OWF activities, it was proposed that OWF sponsor workshops of interest to new and junior faculty. In conjunction with the launch of the new resource-intensive Web site, it was proposed that one workshop could focus on University resources and strategies available to women faculty and graduate students who are new to the process of seeking funding and writing grants.

Proposed Workshop Leaders

Steven Hill, Assistant Director for the University Office of Fellowships has indicated that he would be willing to present at an OWF workshop. Eliza Earle, Grant Coordinator for the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, may be able to offer additional speaker recommendations or may be available to speak about WCAS updates to resources for faculty seeking funding. Both offices are in the process of updating their Web sites to offer access to a more comprehensive array of search engines and grant writing tips.

AAUW Membership

What is AAUW?

The American Association of University Women is an advocacy group dedicated to furthering the education of women and girls all over the world. The AAUW Web site, www.aauw.org, holds an impressive collection of activist guides, proprietary research, funding opportunities and links on women's issues in the U.S. and elsewhere. AAUW institutional membership is extensive and includes Princeton, Columbia, MIT, Duke and many Big Ten institutions.¹¹

Northwestern Membership

Renee Redd has arranged with Jean Shedd of the Office of the Provost to obtain institutional membership for Northwestern University. The OWF "Funding" page will link to the AAUW Web site and will highlight fellowship, grant and award opportunities available to women faculty and graduate students through that organization. The Office of Fellowships and the WCAS Grants Office have also been notified of the University's new membership status.

Benefits of AAUW Membership

General membership benefits include the option to participate in AAUW-sponsored events and programs, as well as access to AAUW resources, including those of the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund and the AAUW Educational Foundation.

¹¹ A list of AAUW institutional members can be found at http://svc.aauw.org/join/value/cu_listing.cfm. As of this report's completion, the list had not been updated to show Northwestern University membership.

Fellowship and grant opportunities now available to the Northwestern community include the following:

- **American Fellowships:** Multiple fellowships available to both women graduate students and faculty, with awards ranging from \$6,000 to \$30,000.
- **University Scholar-in-Residence Grants:** Available to women faculty conducting research on gender and equity, these awards are for up to \$100,000 for a two-year project, depending on the nature of the project. Proposals “must show significant institutional cost-sharing beyond basic indirect costs” and must provide other evidence of the institution’s commitment to the proposed project.
- **AAUW Awards (individual):** AAUW presents Emerging and Senior Scholar Awards, Travel Awards and Women of Distinction Awards among others. Candidates must be nominated by faculty from their own institution.
- **AAUW Awards (institutional):** The AAUW Progress in Equity Award, awarded annually by the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund, recognizes programs that advance equity on campus and provide models for other institutions.

Information on additional AAUW-sponsored funding opportunities is available at http://www.aauw.org/fga/fellowships_grants/index.cfm. Information on additional AAUW-sponsored award opportunities is available at <http://www.aauw.org/fga/awards/index.cfm>.

Evaluation: Fund for Faculty Diversity

Establishment of the FDC

In October of 2000, the Office of the Provost formed a Faculty Diversity Committee (FDC) to help the office “assess Northwestern University’s progress in increasing the number of women and underrepresented minority groups on the faculty and to suggest initiatives and mechanisms that might support this goal” (Faculty Diversity Committee *Report to the Community: 2003-2004*). The FDC publishes annual reports on the University’s efforts and progress in meeting these objectives.

Establishment of the Fund for Faculty Diversity

Increasing numbers of major universities acknowledge the importance of cultivating a faculty that reflects the diversity of their student populations. Some have committed significant sums to such efforts. The University of Pennsylvania maintains a Gender Equity Recruitment and Retention Fund, which (in the 2004 fiscal year) expended \$1,040,954 on efforts to increase the presence of women faculty on campus.¹² In August

¹² Details can be found in the April 19, 2005 edition of the University of Pennsylvania *Almanac* (www.upenn.edu/almanac).

of 2005, Columbia University announced that it would dedicate \$15 million to accelerate its current efforts to increase faculty diversity in the arts and sciences.¹³

In accord with general trends and recommendations from the Faculty Diversity Committee, Northwestern University established its own Fund for Faculty Diversity. “In its initial [2001] report, the Faculty Diversity Committee reported the University’s decision to make available \$1,000,000 to support initiatives that increase the numbers of minorities and women on the Northwestern tenure and tenure-track faculty in disciplines where they are currently significantly underrepresented” (Report to the Community 11).

The report notes that “administrators and faculty are invited to propose appropriate uses for these resources” (11). In the 2003-2004 academic year, seven proposals from five schools—“Communication, Education and Social Policy, McCormick, Medill and Weinberg”—were submitted and received funding.

FDC Progress: Some Concerns

The activity of the FDC and the establishment of the Fund for Faculty Diversity are laudable and deserve OWF support. Nevertheless, it is not clear that FDC efforts are enabling the University to keep pace with peer institution efforts to promote faculty diversity.

Areas of concern include the following:

- **Sub-standard recruitment efforts:** The 2003-2004 FDC report notes that “there are more Northwestern units making offers to women at a rate below availability [compared to the pool of available women doctorates] than above it” (7; emphasis mine). These statistics are of obvious concern to OWF as are any signs that the University is failing to keep pace with the efforts of peer institutions.
- **Lack of publicity for the fund:** Findings from a committee meeting with African-American and Hispanic faculty indicated that the Fund may be under-publicized to academic units (12).
- **Lack of incentive planning:** The FDC report documents no additional strategies or incentives to encourage historically under-diversified departments to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Fund.
- **Lack of accountability in fund distributions:** The FDC report nowhere affirms or demonstrates that the recipient departments for the five schools cited—“Communication, Education and Social Policy, McCormick, Medill and Weinberg”—were ones in which minority and women faculty have been “significantly underrepresented.”

¹³ See <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/05/08/diversity.html> for the full story.

Evaluation: Diversity Hiring Guidelines

In May of 2004, the Faculty Diversity Committee distributed a three-page document entitled “Recruiting and Retaining Minority and Female Faculty: Some Suggested Best Practices” (Appendix B). The guide was created in response to the Committee’s observation that “success in the recruitment and retention of women and minorities has been less robust than might be desired” (1).

The establishment of such guidelines is in accord with best practices of key research institutions and should be applauded. In their best forms, such guidelines offer detailed, practical advice to search committees that may be committed to making diversity hires but lack experience in conducting such searches. (See the University of Michigan Ann Arbor’s 26-page *Faculty Recruitment Handbook* for an excellent example.)¹⁴

Diversity Hiring Guidelines: Some Concerns

As they stand, however, Northwestern’s guidelines lack several elements of “best practice guidelines.” Key omissions include the following:

- Guidelines for composition of search committees
- Guidelines for discussing dual career considerations with candidates
- Criteria for evaluating the efficacy and success of search strategies
- Contract negotiation strategies and fair-play policies
- Specific tips for managing the entire process¹⁵

In addition, some of the University guidelines may actually undermine diversity initiatives. Thus, while the guidelines correctly note that “women and minorities may be especially sought for service on search or other departmental or school committees,” the guide simply recommends “insulating” junior faculty from “requests to perform extraordinary institutional service” (3). The guidelines do not suggest that such service be compensated or recognized as part of “the important work required for tenure.”

Regrettably, the guide in its current form may do more harm than good, insofar as it

- implies that good intentions (rather than concrete strategies) are sufficient to bring about faculty diversification;
- may encourage the University community to believe that it has taken sufficient steps to educate search committees on how to most effectively recruit women and minority faculty;

¹⁴ The UM Ann Arbor guide is available for download at <http://www.umich.edu/~advproj/handbook.pdf>.

¹⁵ The guide’s first tip—“Be proactive”—offers little more than exhortations to the search committee to be “energetic” and ends with an unfortunate misstatement: “Northwestern needs to identify such scholars and persuade them to be considered here” (1; emphasis mine). Clearly the guide could benefit from some careful proofreading as well.

- may cause well-intentioned faculty and administrators to discourage newcomers from participating in committees, mentoring and other programs that further University diversity goals. Such recommendations may be particularly unsettling to faculty who regard such work as an ethical obligation. The recommendation may thus actually undermine retention efforts.¹⁶

Evaluation: Establishment of a University Ombuds Office

What is an Ombuds Office?

The University College and Ombuds Association (UCOA) summarizes the function of an ombuds office as follows:¹⁷

- Serves as a neutral, independent, informal, and confidential conflict management resource for members of the University community, including faculty, postdocs, staff, and students.
- Advocates for fair processes and fair administration of those processes, not for one person or a particular outcome in a conflict.
- Identifies and draw attention to systemic issues that are causing or may cause conflict, and make recommendations to address them.
- Promotes the learning of skills to improve the understanding and management of conflict by individuals, staff, faculty, and student groups throughout the institution.
- Advocates for a fair, effective conflict management system and for just, equitable, and respectful treatment of all members of the University community.

Precedents

Thomas Sebok, spokesperson for UCOA, estimates that approximately 150 ombuds offices exist at universities and colleges in the United States and Canada (correspondence, August 29, 2005). David Rasch, ombudsperson for Stanford University sets his estimate even higher, suggesting that the number of established offices may be 200-300 (Personal interview). Major universities with ombuds offices include six of the eight Ivies, six of the Big Ten and many other institutions of note, including the University of Chicago, Stanford, MIT, CalTech, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and multiple UC institutions.

The sheer number of universities that have ombuds offices, and the representation of key research institutions among them, make it clear that Northwestern is lagging its peer institutions in a significant way.¹⁸

¹⁶ The UCLA climate survey discusses this problem at some length and includes suggestions that such work be compensated ([An Assessment of the Academic Climate for Faculty at UCLA](#), Gender Equity Committee on Academic Climate, 2003, 28).

¹⁷ Adapted—the full text of the “Ombudsperson Job Description” may be found at http://www.ucoa.org/prospective/doc_position.html.

¹⁸ Wayne Blair, ombudsperson for UNC-Chapel Hill, noted in a recent interview, “Setting up this office, Laurie [Mesibov] and I knew we were behind the curve. You guys are *really* behind the curve” (Personal interview, 29 Aug. 2005).

The University's failure to keep pace with peer institutions should be of particular concern to OWF, given that ombuds offices (in addition to their other functions) offer recourse and counsel to especially vulnerable populations, which have historically included women faculty and graduate students. While sexual harassment policies and resources offered by the Women's Center provide valuable support to vulnerable populations, they are not necessarily positioned to address the myriad systemic issues that may hinder the advancement of women in the academic community.

External Research: Interview Findings

Interviews were conducted with ombudspersons from four peer institutions to establish the value that the ombuds office was perceived to have to university administration.¹⁹

Interviewees were as follows:

- Marsha Wagner, Columbia University.
- David Rasch, Stanford University
- Wayne Blair, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Laurie Mesibov, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Linda Greene, University of Wisconsin Madison

Interviewees were asked to describe the major benefits that they felt the administration enjoyed from the establishment of a university ombuds office. Select responses included the following.²⁰

- Reduced staff turnover; reduced costs associated with staff turnover
- Fewer lawsuits; reduced legal costs
- Better university/student relations; improved responses to university development efforts
- Reduction in potentially embarrassing confrontations between highly placed university officials and aggressive complainants
- Reduced likelihood that terminated faculty, staff, and students would take retaliatory action
- Reduced adverse publicity, since complainants were encouraged to handle grievances through internal channels
- Expedited management of internal institutional conflicts
- Early detection of workplace theft
- Early detection of workplace harassment issues
- Improved community morale

¹⁹ Interview opportunities were limited, given that the interviews were conducted in late August, when many schools were just starting the academic year. This report is deeply indebted to the ombudspersons who nevertheless found time to answer questions.

²⁰ For a more extensive synthesis of interview findings, please see Appendix C for an in-depth Q & A.

Internal Research: Report from the Provost

Internal NU documents draw conclusions that likewise suggest (indirectly) the value of such an office to the University community. The October 2004 *Report and Recommendations* of the Administrative Infrastructure Planning Committee (reporting to the Office of the Provost) focuses heavily on staffing issues. Recommendation 1, “Positioning Staff as a Capital Asset” notes pervasive discontent among faculty regarding University policies (or lack thereof) with regard to the University’s efforts to recruit and retain qualified staff:

There is a widespread dissatisfaction with the level of administrative support being provided to faculty and others at Northwestern, and faculty are increasingly expressing the wish that the University regard administrative staffing as an asset that needs to be more closely studied, strengthened, and valued. To date, the University has focused attention and resources on faculty and student quality but has not made staff quality a strategic differentiator. (4)

Report Recommendations

As part of a general plan to reposition staff as a “capital asset,” the report makes various recommendations: that the University engage an external consultant, update position grading, experiment with different administrative support models, and reward best performers.

Report Omissions

However, the report includes no plans for soliciting feedback from the staff themselves. The closest the report comes to such a recommendation is to suggest that the Office of the Provost arrange to “solicit feedback on an annual basis from the deans, vice presidents and their staffs on the value and quality of services they are receiving from central administrative functions” (6). While such information might have its uses, it is unlikely to offer a comprehensive view of systemic flaws in management of this “capital asset.”

Conclusions

A University ombuds office would provide a mechanism through which staff, faculty or students could point out, on an ad hoc basis, less-than-obvious problems with current University administrative structures or management methods. Preliminary findings from both external and internal research indicate that it is both feasible and advisable for OWF to pursue measures that will promote the establishment of a University Ombuds Office.

Recommendations

Key Messages

Based on OWF's historical record, external research, and current organization objectives, five key messages were developed. The redeveloped OWF Web site and recommended initiatives have been designed to foster OWF institutional outreach and to reflect the messages below:

Message 1: *OWF gives back to its membership more than it asks of them.*

Message 2: *As part of its mission to help Northwestern University keep pace with peer universities, OWF forges links with organizations and institutions across the country that support diversity and gender equity.*

Message 3: *OWF is committed to doing what it can to ensure that measures taken by the University to promote diversity and gender equity compare favorably to those taken by institutions of comparable stature. Where it finds shortfalls, OWF will work to remedy them.*

Message 4: *OWF is committed to doing what it can to ensure that measures taken by the University to promote diversity and gender equity are pursued in fact as well as form.*

Message 5: *OWF's past efforts have made Northwestern University a better place for everybody—faculty and staff, graduate students and undergraduates, men and women, in all their diversity. OWF takes this legacy seriously and current initiatives reflect this.*

Recommendation #1: Finalize OWF Web site

It is recommended that OWF create a committee dedicated to finalizing OWF Web site redevelopment. This committee will work in partnership with design and communications specialist Mark Schaefer of MMLC, and Kathleen Carmichael, researcher and content developer. Key areas to be finalized include the following:

- Design—logo, Web site, use of faculty and university photos
- Preferred communications and site publicity strategies
- Web site content, categories, and links
- Selection of listserv moderators and “first responders” for membership questions
- Selection of OWF webmaster

Estimated Time Frame: Completion by the end of Fall Quarter, 2005; modest revisions to be completed throughout the 2005-2006 academic year.

Recommendation #2: Sponsor junior faculty workshops

It is recommended that OWF establish a workshop planning committee to organize events designed to publicize OWF and increase active membership. The committee would solicit firm workshop commitments from senior faculty and administrators who would be especially well suited to speak and answer questions on workshop topics.

The committee may wish to consider holding a workshop on University resources and strategies available to women faculty and graduate students who are new to the process of seeking funding and writing grants. Such programming would be especially timely given that the Office of Fellowships and WCAS have both recently updated and expanded the resources and services available to faculty and graduate students seeking funding.

Preliminary contacts have been made with Stephen Hill, Assistant Director for the Office of Fellowships and Eliza Earle, Grant Coordinator for WCAS, in preparation for a possible workshop on researching and obtaining grants and fellowships.

Estimated time frame: Recurring events. Can be held throughout the academic year.

Recommendation #3: Publicize AAUW fellowships and grants

In order to publicize the availability of AAUW fellowships and grants, it is recommended that OWF draft an e-mail to be sent to appropriate contacts in all schools of the University. The e-mail would include the following:

- A statement that Northwestern University is now an institutional member of the American Association of University Women
- Link to AAUW with a brief notice that funding opportunities are available through the organization
- A request that the e-mail be forwarded to appropriate faculty and graduate students

Estimated time frame: Completion by October 7, 2005 (earliest AAUW funding application deadlines fall on November 15, 2005).

Recommendation #4: Nominate candidates for AAUW Awards

It is recommended that the OWF Steering Committee develop a short list of women faculty of significant accomplishments to nominate for Emerging and Senior Scholar Awards and other AAUW awards as appropriate. All women faculty are of course encouraged to nominate candidates independently as well.

Estimated time frame: Nominations must be received by February 10, 2005.

Recommendation #5: Develop AAUW Scholar-in-Residence proposal

It is recommended that OWF establish a committee that will work in conjunction with the Women's Center, the Program in Gender Studies, and the Faculty Diversity Committee to create a plan for securing an AAUW Scholar-in-Residence grant in conjunction with larger University diversity and outreach goals.

The committee may wish to consider organizing a multi-institution Gender Equity Conference as part of their proposal. Such a conference could be modeled on MIT's 2001 nine-member, invitation-only gender equity conference which helped spur reforms at participating institutions. This would afford OWF an excellent opportunity to engage in outreach and establish relationships with peer institutions and organizations notable for progressive policies.

Outreach strategies for this effort could be conducted in conjunction with outreach efforts implemented in conjunction with other recommended initiatives (below).

Estimated time frame: The deadline for notification of intent for the AAUW "Scholar in Residence" grant is December 1, 2005 (proposals are due February 1, 2006).

**Recommendation #6:
Create OWF liaison to the Faculty Diversity Committee**

The FDC is one of the most prominent, and potentially most powerful, pro-faculty diversity organizations in the University. Given the intersection of the Faculty Diversity Committee's work with OWF's mission, it is recommended that OWF select one member of the Steering Committee to serve as liaison with the FDC. The OWF liaison can both communicate OWF concerns to the FDC and keep OWF informed of FDC findings and initiatives.

It is also recommended that the OWF liaison request additional data on the distribution of monies from the Faculty Diversity Fund, both in order to confirm that the departments in greatest need of diversification are receiving funding, and to ascertain that the available resources are being employed to the fullest possible extent.

Estimated time frame: Completion by end of Fall Quarter, 2005.

**Recommendation #7:
Review and redraft Diversity Hiring Guidelines**

It is recommended that OWF appoint a committee to review the FDC paper, "Recruiting and Retaining Minority and Female Faculty: Some Suggested Best Practices."

The committee is advised to review the document in light of recruitment and retention guidelines from peer institutions. This would afford OWF an excellent opportunity to engage in outreach and establish relationships with peer institutions and organizations notable for progressive policies. Cynthia A. Hudgins, Senior Project Administrator for the NSF ADVANCE Project at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, has agreed that OWF may use their *Faculty Recruitment Handbook* as a model. She has also agreed to answer any questions OWF may have on this issue.

The committee may determine whether it should redraft the policy itself or recommend such a redraft (with supporting documentation) to the Faculty Diversity Committee. The OWF committee may also wish to suggest strategies for acknowledging and rewarding all faculty for their participation in committee and mentoring work that benefits University culture as a whole.

Estimated time frame: Redraft or proposal for redraft completed by end of Spring Quarter, 2006

Recommendation #8:**Advocate the establishment of a University Ombuds Office**

It is recommended that OWF establish a committee to continue investigation of the feasibility and benefits of establishing an ombuds office at Northwestern, with the objective of developing a proposal for submission to the University Provost.

The committee is advised to draw upon resources assembled for this report as it identifies key stakeholders and considers strategies for achieving administrative buy-in from University administration and the Northwestern community at large. This would afford OWF an excellent opportunity to engage in outreach and establish relationships with peer institutions and organizations notable for progressive policies. Current ombuds officers from Columbia, UNC Chapel Hill, and Stanford have all agreed to serve as resources to OWF as it continues this study. (Full contact information for interviewees as well as additional resources are listed in Appendix B. Contact Kathleen Carmichael for information on additional interview candidates.)

The committee is also advised to contact additional ombuds offices of note, given the limited number of interviews conducted for this report.

Estimated Time Frame: Outreach efforts and investigation of proposal feasibility completed by end of Winter Quarter, 2006.

Works Cited

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- Gender Equity Data Committee: Final Report*. University of California, Los Angeles, 2003.
- “Gender Equity: Third Annual Report.” *University of Pennsylvania Almanac*, 2005.
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- Hudgins, Cynthia, A. (Senior Project Administrator, NSF ADVANCE Project at the University of Michigan). “Re. UM Faculty Recruitment Handbook.” E-mail to author. 11 Sept. 2005.
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- Rasch, David (Ombudsperson for Stanford University). Personal interview. 29 Aug 2005.
- Report of the Task Force on Women Faculty*. Harvard University, 2005.
- Report of the Provost’s Advisory Committee on the Status of Women Faculty*. Stanford University, 2004.

Reports of the Committees on the Status of Women Faculty (includes reports from the School of Architecture and Planning; the School of Engineering; the School of the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; the School of Science; and the Sloane School of Management). Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002.

Sebok, Thomas. "Re. UCOA General Information." E-mail to the author. 29 Aug. 2005.

Wagner, Marsha L (Ombudsperson for Columbia University). Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2005.

Wagner, Marsha L. "The Ombudsman's Roles in Changing the Conflict Resolution System in Institutions of Higher Education." Paper prepared for the Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Atlanta Georgia, May 8-9, 1998.

West, Martha S.; Lakey, Gyongy; Lokke, Kari; Paw U, Kyaw Tha; and Ham, Sara. *Unprecedented Urgency: Gender Discrimination in Faculty Hiring at The University of California*. Institute for Women's Leadership, Rutgers University. 2005.

Appendix A: Links to Women Faculty Organizations and Reports

Case Western Reserve University

Women's Faculty Association

<http://www.cwru.edu/orgs/wfa/>

Center for Women—Faculty Page

<http://www.cwru.edu/provost/centerforwomen/fa/link.html>

Faculty Diversity Office

<http://www.cwru.edu/president/aaction/aaceo.html>

Faculty Senate—Committee on Women Faculty

http://www.cwru.edu/president/facsen/frames/committees/women_faculty/wfcom.htm

Report of the CWRU Equity Study Committee

<http://www.cwru.edu/menu/president/resource.htm>

Duke University

Faculty Women's Network

<http://www.cs.duke.edu/~carla/FWN/>

Duke Women's Initiative

http://www.duke.edu/womens_initiative/

2004 Status of Women Report

http://www.duke.edu/womens_initiative/report_report.htm

Emory University

President's Commission on the Status of Women—Reports

<http://www.pcs.w.emory.edu/reports.html>

Harvard University

Task Forces on Women

<http://www.womenstaskforces.harvard.edu/>

Task Force Reports

<http://www.womenstaskforces.harvard.edu/reports.php>

Indiana University-Purdue University

Office for Professional Development – Office for Women

<http://www.opd.iupui.edu/ofw/index.htm>

Commission Reports

<http://www.opd.iupui.edu/ofw/reports.html>

Michigan State University

Women's Resource Center

<http://www.msu.edu/~wrc/>

Status of Women Project at MSU

<http://www.msu.edu/%7Ewrc/statusofwomen/>

Task Force Reports

<http://www.msu.edu/%7Ewrc/statusofwomen/reports/index.htm>

Princeton University

(General women's center—under construction)

<http://www.princeton.edu/~womenctr/mission.html>

Princeton University Office of Communications--Reports

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/reports/>

Rutgers University

The Institute for Women's Leadership

<http://iwl.rutgers.edu/>

Stanford University

University Women: A Project of the Provost's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women Faculty at Stanford University

<http://universitywomen.stanford.edu/>

University Women—Reports

(Includes both links to Stanford reports and those at many other institutions. Admirably thorough.)

<http://universitywomen.stanford.edu/reports.html>

University of California, Berkeley

Office for Faculty Equity

<http://facultyequity.chance.berkeley.edu/index.html>

Office for Faculty Equity—Reports

<http://facultyequity.chance.berkeley.edu/research/research.html>

University of California, Irvine

Office of Academic Personnel—Equity Studies

<http://www.ap.uci.edu/Equity/studies/index.html>

University of California, Los Angeles

Faculty Diversity Web: Gender Equity

(includes many links to non-UCLA sites of interest)

<http://faculty.diversity.ucla.edu/index.html>

Faculty Diversity Web: Gender Equity

http://www.faculty.diversity.ucla.edu/gender_equity/gender_equity.html

Faculty Diversity Web: Gender Equity—Reports

http://www.faculty.diversity.ucla.edu/gender_equity/reports.html

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women—Reports

<http://www.oc.uiuc.edu/csw/>

University of Iowa

Gender Equity Task Force

<http://www.uiowa.edu/president/reports/task-forces/gender-equity/charge.htm>

University of Michigan Ann Arbor

Center for the Education of Women (Faculty and Staff Pages)

<http://www.umich.edu/~cew/faculty-staff/index.htm>

Mentoring for women faculty

http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/facment_group.html#women

Center for the Education of Women—Research Reports

<http://www.umich.edu/~cew/research/resreps.htm>

Office of the Provost—Reports

<http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/>

University of Minnesota

Office of University Women

<http://www1.umn.edu/women/about.html>

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Faculty Governance—Reports

<http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/reports.shtml>

UNC Status of Women Committee—Reports

<http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/direct/D2004CSW.htm>

University of Pennsylvania

Association of Women Faculty and Administrators

<http://www.upenn.edu/affirm-action/awfa/>

University of Pennsylvania Almanac—Archives

(To find reports, search for the term “gender equity” in the archives.)

<http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/issues/archive.html>

University of Virginia

Reports from the President’s Commission on Diversity and Equity

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvadiversity/>

Office of the President—Women’s Leadership Council—Reports

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvacommittees/presidentialcommittees/wlc/reports.html>

University of Wisconsin Madison

Office of the Provost—Women Faculty and Staff Issues

(Provides a comprehensive list of UW Madison women faculty sites)

<http://www.wisc.edu/provost/women.html>

Women Faculty Mentoring Program

<http://www.provost.wisc.edu/women/mentor.html>

Office of the Provost—Policies, Reports and Memos

<http://www.provost.wisc.edu/memos/>

Yale University

Women Faculty Forum

<http://www.yale.edu/wff/>

Yale reports and links

http://www.yale.edu/wff/links.html#P0_0

Additional Reports and Resources

Stanford University

In addition to reports on the status of women faculty at Stanford itself (as well as many other institutions of higher learning), the Stanford University University Women site has assembled an admirable list of links to non-university reports on the status of women in academia. Highly recommended.

<http://universitywomen.stanford.edu/reports.html>

DiversityWeb

www.diversityweb.com

American Association of University Women

www.aauw.org

Appendix B: Contact Information

Additional interview contacts are available. Please contact Kathleen Carmichael for recommendations.

Columbia University

Marsha L. Wagner, University Ombuds Office
Morningside Campus 212 854-1234
Health Sciences Campus 212 304-7026
Fax: 212 854-6046
wagner@columbia.edu
www.columbia.edu/cu/ombuds

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Cynthia A. Hudgins, Senior Project Administrator
NSF ADVANCE Project at the University of Michigan
204 South State Street
2158 Lane Hall
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1290
734-647-9359
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www.umich.edu/~advproj

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Wayne Blair
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134 E. Franklin Street
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Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5146
T - 919-843-8204
F - 919-843-8219
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Laurie L. Mesibov
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4616 Knapp-Sanders Bldg
CB#3330
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5146
T – 919-966-4253
mesibov@iogmail.iog.unc.edu

Stanford University

David Rasch
University Ombuds
Building 310, Main Quad
Stanford, CA 94305-2100
Tel: 650-723-3682
Fax: 650-723-1791
rasch@stanford.edu
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/ocr/ombuds/>

University and College Ombuds Association

Thomas Sebok
Organization Web site contact
sebok@colorado.edu

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Linda Greene (DO NOT CALL—No longer in ombuds office. Please call Kathleen Carmichael for other potential interviewees)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
125 Bascom Hall
Phone: (608) 262-5246
green@mail.bascom.wisc.edu

Appendix C: Ombuds Office Q & A

Q & As are largely based on interviews with Marsha Wagner, Ombudsperson for Columbia University; Wayne Blair and Laurie Mesibov, Ombudspersons for the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill; David Rasch, Ombudsperson for Stanford University; and Laura Greene, former Ombudsperson for Women Faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Please see also Marsha Wagner's 1998 paper, "The Ombudsman's Roles in Changing the Conflict Resolution Systems in Institutions of Higher Education."**

The specific source for each response has typically not been identified in the interests of preserving confidentiality. Interviewees have indicated that they would be willing to field additional OWF questions, which may include questions about appropriate ombuds office responses to different situations.

1) *What are the precedents for establishing a University ombuds office?*

- **Major universities with ombuds offices include six of the eight Ivies, six of the Big Ten and many other institutions of note**, including the University of Chicago, Stanford, MIT, CalTech, and multiple UC institutions. Brown University's Faculty Executive Committee is conducting research on establishing such an office, making Dartmouth the sole holdout among Ivy League institutions. Big Ten holdouts include Penn State, Indiana-Bloomington (home to the Indiana Conflict Resolution Institute, oddly enough), Purdue, and, of course, Northwestern.

2) *The University already has a Sexual Harassment Office and Counseling Services. What do we need an Ombuds Office for?*

Confidential services provided by an ombuds office can speak to cases that are beyond the purview of a sexual harassment office or counseling services. Examples of situations for which ombuds services can be helpful include the following:**

- **A senior administrator or member of the faculty has been misappropriating funds.** A junior person (graduate student, faculty, or staff) is concerned that he/she may be implicated in this person's actions, but fears repercussions should he/she report the matter. The junior person can seek confidential advice regarding appropriate action from the University ombuds office, rather than covertly discussing the matter with colleagues, poisoning department morale, and endangering his/her standing. The University also benefits from having advance notice of possible malfeasance among certain departments and can take steps to avoid negative publicity.
- **A woman faculty member of a search committee witnesses inappropriately discriminatory comments and/or actions** regarding job candidates by her colleagues on the search committee. She is unwilling to report the matter directly for fear that it will jeopardize her standing in her department, but feels that

* Included in CD furnished with report.

** Examples drawn from interviews. Some details may have been altered to preserve confidentiality.

something must be done. She can report the matter to the University ombuds office, which may find ways to remedy the situation that do not identify or involve the faculty member who reported the issue. This can help prevent the public escalation of discord in the department.

- **An IT services management hire needs to be made for a prestigious school in the University.** The search has come down to two candidates. One has superior technical skills, but less impressive “people” skills. The other candidate is less accomplished technically, but has an excellent record for building morale among staff. Senior administration can consult with the University ombuds to help determine which candidate would fill a more critical need, and which skills might be better supplemented by a “deputy.”
- **A member of the faculty is discovered by his/her colleagues to have falsified research data.** It is determined by the University that this person’s employment should be terminated. The faculty member in question is devastated, insists that his/her actions have been “misunderstood,” and lacks an exit strategy. The ombuds office can speak confidentially with the terminated faculty member to help ease the transition and provide non-partisan advice about the person’s options going forward. This can help prevent the terminated faculty member from attempting to take retaliatory action against colleagues and/or the University.
- **A dispute arises between an academic department and a specialty support department,** resulting in decreased levels of service to faculty as well as high levels of tension among work-study students and general support staff, who feel pressured to “take sides.” An ombuds office can act as mediator, helping to craft a solution to the problem that addresses the needs of multiple stakeholders and is acceptable and beneficial to all parties.

3) *An ombuds office is an unnecessary administrative expense, and the University doesn’t need any more of those.*

- **The ombuds office is small and pays for itself:** A single ombudsperson can handle an annual caseload of approximately 350-400 cases per year. If that ombudsperson’s efforts avert one lawsuit, the ombudsperson’s salary will usually be covered (per interviews with personnel at Columbia, Stanford and Chapel Hill). A typical office includes one full-time ombudsperson and one part-time ombudsperson for the entire University.
- **The ombuds office helps avert costly litigation:** As noted above, it is agreed that if an ombuds office averts one lawsuit per year, the cost of the ombudsperson’s salary is typically covered. But it is clear that lawsuit costs can run into the millions, even excluding the “soft” costs of negative publicity.

- **The ombuds office can be a key part of an effective University workplace quality initiative that also serves as a cost-containment strategy:** UNC-Chapel Hill ombuds personnel report that their ombuds office was created in part to offer staff workplace quality compensation, when university budget constraints required a freeze on staff salaries. They have reported an immediate and positive effect on University staff morale and anticipate reduced rates of staff turnover.
- **The ombuds office expedites the management of internal institutional conflicts, improving student, staff and faculty productivity and thus saving the University unnecessary “down time.”** The more quickly complainants’ concerns can be settled, the more quickly all parties involved can return to productive labor that benefits the University and themselves.
- **The ombuds office may help University development efforts:** An ombudsperson’s assistance may help a distressed, confused or simply inexperienced student “cut through red tape” in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution to a problem. Student complainants given the opportunity to communicate with and receive a personalized response from an established university office are more likely to retain positive feelings about the University and to be generous alumni as a result.

4) *Won’t the ombuds office undermine the functions of University Human Resources departments and University legal counsel and encourage students, faculty and staff to ignore regular channels?*

- **The ombuds office supplements the functions of existing administrative units**—it does NOT replace them. The ombudsperson advises complainants on options available to them through regular channels. David Rasch, ombudsperson for Stanford University estimates that 80 percent of his caseload consists of such advisory work.
- **The ombuds office is non-partisan.** The ombuds office will never “take the part” of a complainant against a University employee or department. Its function is to provide impartial advisory and mediation services and to compile reports of aggregate data for senior administrative use. An ombudsperson may “coach” the complainant on strategies for resolving a concern in a non-confrontational manner or suggest that the complainant consider different time horizons for the resolution of his or her complaint. Such coaching is to the benefit of all parties involved—including the University.
- **The ombuds office can offer Human Resources staff and highly placed administrators much-needed opportunities** to discuss situations and concerns in a confidential environment. Highly placed administrators are in no way exempt from such issues as may arise in the rest of the University community. The confidential nature of the ombuds office makes it a safe place to discuss and receive professional, non-partisan feedback on highly sensitive issues.

5) *Won't establishing an ombuds office encourage people to bring forward more complaints than they do now, thus generating negative publicity?*

- **The ombuds office helps avert negative publicity by keeping complainants from “going public”:** The ombuds office encourages members of the University community to handle disputes and grievances internally.
- **The establishment of an ombuds office sends a positive message to the University community and the community at large.** It indicates that the University 1) cares about having channels for communication available to all members of the community; 2) that it promotes an atmosphere in which constructive criticism is tolerated and even welcomed; and 3) that it is responsive to the members of its community.
- **The ombuds office can save senior University officials from public embarrassment and having to spend valuable time and resources on grievances of limited significance.** Persons intent on taking their grievances “to the top” can be directed to the ombuds’ office, allowing highly placed senior officials to avoid time-consuming and potentially embarrassing confrontations.

6) *Would the University have to establish a separate ombudsperson and office for each major University group—students, faculty and staff?*

- **It is not necessary, and is probably inadvisable, to establish separate ombuds offices.** While not all ombuds offices serve all members of their respective university communities, Marsha Wagner of Columbia University argues convincingly that the establishment of separate offices does not represent a “best practice” and runs the risk of turning the ombuds office into an advocate for its select population. Since an ombudsperson must act as a non-partisan mediator, it is to his or her advantage to have regular dealings with personnel from every group in the University. The medical school may be an exception to this rule, since such schools may have distinct cultures and an ombudsperson may benefit from specialized knowledge of that community of faculty, students and staff.

7) *What if the ombuds office records or the ombudsperson is subpoenaed?*

- **The ombuds office should keep no written or electronic records that include information that identifies the complainant.** It is not to be regarded as “an office of record” for legal purposes. Illinois law on this matter should be investigated.
- **Laws regarding the confidentiality of ombuds offices vary from state to state, but are trending towards recognizing ombuds office confidentiality.** The California Institute of Technology won a significant case that set precedent for the protection of ombuds office confidentiality in that state. It is, however, important

that the University retain independent counsel for its ombuds office, investigate pertinent legislation and consult with other institutions that have established ombuds offices.

8) *How does the establishment of a University ombuds office fit with OWF objectives?*

- **OWF traditionally has supported measures that benefit the University community at large.** Examples include the Women’s Center, family-friendly leave and tenure-clock policies are available to all tenured and tenure-track faculty (men and women), and a comprehensive sexual harassment policy and procedure that led Harvard University in its 2005 “Report of the Task Force on Women Faculty” to cite Northwestern as a “best practice” institution.
- **Ombuds offices offer recourse and counsel to especially vulnerable populations which have historically included women faculty and graduate students.** Linda Greene, former Ombudsperson for Women Faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison reports that their ombuds office was first established as a result of actions taken by the Committee on Women in the University.