

## **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN FORUM FEEDBACK**

The following information was gathered during the Women's Forum on January 28, 2003.

**Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Women in Classified and Unclassified Positions, Especially in Administrative Positions** – much was said about this topic. Basically, women feel like the University isn't doing enough to recruit and retain women and once we get them here we are woefully inadequate at getting them promoted, especially to administrative positions. This problem has been referred to over the years, by previous Commissions and work groups on campus. People want to know what progress, if any, has been made since the topic has been addressed for many years by numerous groups. Women students cite the lack of females as role models in administrative positions as an issue in their own professional development. What kind of accountability exists for administrators (department heads, e.g.) to ensure that they are taking all the steps necessary/possible to hire and promote women?

Concern was raised about how the current budget crisis will disproportionately affect women – last hired, first fired? Classified employees are especially vulnerable during this budget crisis as many of them currently receive salaries that place them below federal poverty guidelines. What steps might we take to minimize this impact, to ensure that women aren't disproportionately "hit" as resources continue to shrink?

**Advancement for Women of Color** – Concerns were expressed that advancement for Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian, and African American women is even more difficult than for other women, however, this is subtle and hard to prove. There is a concern that, because of the few numbers of women of color (both classified and unclassified), they are easy to ignore. What might we do to increase the status and comfort level of women of color at KSU in both classified and unclassified positions? What kind of accountability exists for administrators (department heads, e.g.) to ensure that they are taking all the steps necessary/possible to hire and promote women of color?

**Dual Career Issues** – These concerns are related to "trailing spouses" and the efforts made to find them gainful employment. Is enough being done? Another issue concerns the promotion and tenure process for dual career women and men. The speed at which the decision making process occurs is often quite rapid for dual career positions - for both the spouse and the University - and this can have negative consequences. For example, it can encourage a fast, unilateral top down negotiation process that may be resented later by faculty peers. Secondly, the match between the spouse's research area and the department may not be optimal – but a larger, more democratic search in a larger more appropriate department takes more time than the dual career process allows, in terms of securing position for the "lead" spouse. These issues affect tenure and promotion. How might we make this process more sensitive to ensure that decisions are based upon academic merit versus a vague notion of "fit" within a department? Once this "fit" is made how might we (through child care, e.g.) help these couples survive at KSU?

Wives of international students have few options in our community. They can take English classes but are unable to work or take other classes due to federal legislation that prohibits such.

### **Unclassified Staff Professional Development and Promotional Opportunities**

Highly educated and skilled “trailing spouses” often become “captive spouses” in dead end jobs with no promotional opportunities. Expanded responsibilities and the expertise developed over years of employment should be reflected in new position descriptions, titles and salary equity reviews. The creation of career paths from assistant to associate to senior might be a way to acknowledge increased skills, abilities, and knowledge.

**Parental Leave Policy-** Concerns were expressed about the lack of a clear policy for maternity leave for women employees. Similar to this issue is the “stopping the tenure clock” concern. Is this really working well for people, especially women? What kinds of subtle, negative consequences result from using this fairly new policy to deal with family issues that arise during the tenure process? How might we “shore it up” so that it is more helpful, less “risky” for those who use it?

**Violence/Sexual Harassment -** Students and faculty women are concerned about issues related to violence against women, the incidence on campus as well as the services to both help the victims and promote a safer, less violent culture among our students, faculty, and staff. Efforts through the Women’s Center, the Campaign for Non-Violence and Counseling Services at Lafene continue to address this issue. Numerous suggestions were made to augment these efforts, including more educational efforts to sensitize the community to the violence in our lives and how we can change it. The Safe Zone for gays, lesbians, bi-sexuals and transsexuals is still in operation but needs to be publicized as people seem to have forgotten its purpose, existence. What steps might we take on campus to promote equity, less devaluing of women? For example, students expressed feeling demeaned by the recruiting for Playboy on campus, the calendars, e.g. Might we impact this?

Concern was expressed about consequences for those who do perpetrate crimes against women on campus. Where does the woman go? What happens to her complaint? Concern was expressed that the Affirmative Action office has often been unhelpful. The University Ombudsman program was described as a safe place for a woman to present her concern. This program has representatives for both faculty and classified staff. Might we publicize this program and the steps a woman might take should she become the victim of a crime or harassment in the community?

**Athletics** – Concern exists about equity in athletics. Discussion centered on scholarships and issues related to purchasing women’s basketball tickets. Is the athletic program another arena that might make changes to improve the overall climate for women here at KSU?

## **NEXT STEPS**

In response to what was perceived as a desire for information about existing resources for women’s concerns on campus, the Commission on the Status of Women is establishing an informational “clearing house.” This will be our first step toward addressing the issues you

brought to our attention during the Women's Forum. This monthly communication, called **THE ROADMAP**, will help the university community become familiar with resources already available and will update information about these resources. The first **ROADMAP**, brought to you by the Commission on the Status of Women, will be sent to you via email in April.

Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is always welcome; please contact a member of the Commission if you have additional information, ideas, and concerns that you wish to share.

Members, Commission on the Status of Women

Unclassified Professionals Representatives:

Dawn Anderson, [dpeters@ksu.edu](mailto:dpeters@ksu.edu)

Anita Cortez, [cortez@ksu.edu](mailto:cortez@ksu.edu)

Scott Jones, [sjones1@ksu.edu](mailto:sjones1@ksu.edu)

Student Representatives:

Vy Bui, [vtb6666@ksu.edu](mailto:vtb6666@ksu.edu)

Nasarina Burnett, [neb6793@ksu.edu](mailto:neb6793@ksu.edu)

Natalie Rolfe, [nvr8888@ksu.edu](mailto:nvr8888@ksu.edu)

Classified Representatives:

Cheryl Grice, [cdgrice@ksu.edu](mailto:cdgrice@ksu.edu)

Linda Morse, [lbit@ksu.edu](mailto:lbit@ksu.edu)

Loleta Sump, [loletams@ksu.edu](mailto:loletams@ksu.edu)

Faculty Representatives:

Janice Dinkel, [dinkel@ksu.edu](mailto:dinkel@ksu.edu)

Don Hedrick, [hedrick@ksu.edu](mailto:hedrick@ksu.edu)

Angela Hubler, [ahubler@ksu.edu](mailto:ahubler@ksu.edu)

Ex Officio Representatives:

Susan Allen, Women's Center, [slallen@ksu.edu](mailto:slallen@ksu.edu)

Ruth Dyer, Assistant Provost, [rdyer@ksu.edu](mailto:rdyer@ksu.edu)

Suzanne Franks, Director, Women in Engineering and Science Program,  
> > [sefranks@ksu.edu](mailto:sefranks@ksu.edu)

Myra Gordon, Associate Provost, Diversity and Dual Career Development,  
> > [mygordon@ksu.edu](mailto:mygordon@ksu.edu)

Jackie Spears, Women's Studies, [jdspears@ksu.edu](mailto:jdspears@ksu.edu)

Susanna Valdovinos, Affirmative Action, [svaldovi@ksu.edu](mailto:svaldovi@ksu.edu)