

## 2019/20 Report to the President

*The purpose of the President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) is to review the roles, needs and opportunities of women, including students, faculty and staff at Kansas State University, and to make recommendations to the university president for change as appropriate.*

The following provides PCSW's accomplishments for the past year and presents issues the Commission felt should be brought to the President's attention.

### **Accomplishments and Recommendations**

**Fair Compensation/Pay Equity:** The PCSW initiated a detailed investigation of gender representation and equity among students, faculty and staff at Kansas State University. The end goal is to submit a university-wide report that will include analysis and recommendations for future policy development. The PCSW will partner with Human Capital Services (Jenny Dowell, Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness Manager) and the Office of Institutional Research (Bin Ning, Associate Provost) to collect gender-breakdown faculty and staff salary data, as well as student data on degree program enrollment and graduation rates over the past 5 years. It is anticipated to complete the report by the end of fiscal year 2022.

**Sexual Violence Policy/Climate Survey:** As noted in last year's report, and after lengthy discussion and review, the PCSW has identified many gaps and room for improvement in the university's sexual violence policy, PPM 3010. The PCSW recommends that the university create a task force to review the sexual violence policy and make updates and edits as necessary based on best practices as recommended by the Department of Health and Human Services. A member of the PCSW should be included on the task force. Additionally, faculty and staff should be provided a sexual and relationship violence prevention training annually. Our proposal for a Sexual Violence Climate Survey is appended for your review (See **Attachments**).

**SafeBar Alliance:** In 2019, the PCSW discussed the potential establishment of the SafeBar Alliance in the Manhattan community. SafeBar is a bystander intervention training focused on preventing potentially harmful and dangerous situations related to sexual violence and assault in and around bars. It not only prioritizes the safety of bar staff and patrons, but also strengthens relationships within the community. SafeBar first originated in Lawrence, Kansas, and has meanwhile been established in many Kansas communities.

This past year, SafeBar began its foundation in Aggieville. With the help of the Lawrence SafeBar and the Kansas State University Student Governing Association, SafeBar has communicated with bar staff about the legitimacy and influence of the SafeBar program, has raised funds for manuals and certificates, and has trained facilitators while also spreading necessary information about the program. Social media pages and a website for the Manhattan SafeBar are in development. The SafeBar Alliance website for Lawrence can be found here:

<http://stacarecenter.org/safebar>

While the work this year has been behind the scenes, the Student Governing Association is ready to move forward in 2020 with bar staff trainings. The PCSW has been an important advocate in the process, in addition to the CARE office and many faculty, staff, and students of the K-State family.

**Professional Development Fund:** The purpose of this fund is to support K-State full-time University Support Staff and Unclassified (non-faculty) Professionals pursuing professional development opportunities by providing limited funding. This year we had 21 applicants with awards presented to 10 of those individuals in the fall due to worldwide cancellations of travel and events for the spring and fall of 2020. Some of the proposed events may still occur and are pending. Although last year it was recommended to move this fund to another entity, the logistics of this move proved to be insurmountable due to time constraints of the fall award.

**Changes to PCSW:** In order to maintain continuity within our group from year to year, we recommend once again appointing a Chair from the previous year's membership. Unfortunately, our previous chair departed from the university last fall. Debra Wilcox has volunteered to remain in this role as chair for another year pending your approval. We will seek a volunteer to assist in her duties and continue to recommend that the previous Chair stay on the commission as Ex officio to assist the new Chair, thus easing the transition process.

**New working groups:** The PCSW has formed new workgroups, which have begun work on various issues and as such do not have recommendations as yet.

**Inclusive Safe Spaces:** With the knowledge that Trans students have found restroom door signs torn down sending a message of unwelcome on campus, the PCSW has formed a workgroup to investigate and propose solutions. While many conversations have been held with K-State Facilities, attempts to solve this issue have yet to be finalized.

**Mental Health:** A new workgroup was formed this year to identify and assess mental health struggles that impact the experiences of Kansas State University women and the resources available to them. Mental health-centered initiatives and programs currently on campus include the JED Campus Initiative, Counseling Services, Wildcat Wellness Coalition, and the Black Voice Community Support Group. Our new workgroup seeks to address gaps in the awareness of available mental health programs and faculty/staff focused wellness initiatives. The group will explore the current state of, and opportunities to expand, university mental health initiatives that address faculty/staff mental well-being, facilitate conversations, and provide accessible resources for all individuals on campus regardless of status. The workgroup also plans to review how to better support the Office of Student Life Student of Concern reporting process for students and families. In 2020-21, the workgroup expects to share their assessment and propose recommendations to the full commission for consideration.

## **Emerging issues affecting the status of women:**

**Title IX rule changes:** The Commission shares concerns that the recently issued rule rolls back protection of student survivors of sexual harassment and assault, and imposes undue burdens on our institutions and students at this extraordinary moment, and endorses the [official statement of the American Association of University Women](#) (**Appendix I**).

University colleagues led by our Office of Institutional Equity recently convened to interpret and address compliance with the Title IX rule changes. We are acutely concerned that, despite repeated requests, the CARE office and the PCSW have been excluded from the work group. Instead, we received assurance that there will be meaningful opportunities for additional stakeholders to provide feedback on discretionary policy aspects beyond compliance. As invested stakeholders, we intend to fully participate, and urgently encourage university-wide participation, in such opportunities. How Kansas State interprets and executes Title IX regulations directly affects the status of all women at this university.

**Student loan debt:** Another issue affecting the status of women, at our institution and in higher education generally, is student loan debt. According to a detailed analysis (**Appendix II**), women hold two-thirds of student loan debt in the United States, and bear a growing economic burden compared to male peers. Student debt has negative implications for degree completion, economic mobility, and personal and community quality of life, and this report demonstrates women are disproportionately affected, warranting gender-based analysis and solutions.

**Economic impacts of COVID-19:** The PCSW is also concerned with specific impacts on women with the onset of the COVID19-related financial crisis. The recent emergency furloughs (429 total as of June 19, 2020) affect many units comprised primarily of women employees, anywhere from 70-100% (**Appendix III**). Also linked to the pandemic crisis, nationwide anecdotal data suggest that women faculty, for a range of reasons relating to their caregiver roles, are experiencing adverse affects on academic productivity<sup>1-3</sup>. University employees who are also caregivers face extraordinary challenges under the current crisis. The PCSW stands in support of recommendations to address and alleviate caregiver-related labor inequities. See **Attachments** for a detailed document provided by colleagues from the English Department, which provides guidance and additionally compares resources available at peer institutions. Related to the student loan debt problem described above, the financial crisis has exacerbated the disproportionate affects on women<sup>4</sup>. The PCSW raises these gender-related impacts to inform and help guide formation of university policy and practices. Guiding principles that primarily address faculty but may be applied more broadly to all members of the academic community can be found in a recent publication from ASPIRE, the National Alliance for Inclusive and Diverse STEM Faculty<sup>5</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The PCSW will continue to examine issues that are important to women on the campuses, to review other issues or concerns, and recommend possible solutions to those issues. The PCSW appreciates the support of President Myers and the administration regarding our recommendations thus far.

Thank you for taking the time to review this report. We will continue to work on the behalf of women at Kansas State University.

## **2019-2020 President's Commission on the Status of Women (8075)**

Debra Wilcox, University Support Staff Representative, Chair

Stephanie Bannister, Unclassified Professional Representative  
Angela Buzard, Unclassified Professional Representative  
Tracey Hurt, University Support Staff  
Kathrin Schrick, Faculty Representative  
Merta Scott-Hall, Kansas State Polytechnic Representative

Esther Swilley, Faculty Representative  
Kristin Tobias, Faculty Representative  
Barb Wells, University Support Staff Representative  
RJ Youngblood, Unclassified Professionals Representative

Cheyenne Brunner, Student Representative  
Durga Jambunathan, Student Representative  
Kristen Schau, Student Representative

Ex officio:

Wendy Barnes, Past Chair, *No Longer Employed by KSU*  
Christie Launius, Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies  
Colleen Rittmann, Office of Student Life  
Bryan Samuel, CDIO  
Sara Thurston, International Programs  
Mary Tolar, Leadership Studies  
Clara Valadares Kientz, CARE

**Appendix I** – AAUW Statement on Rollback of Title IX Protections – May 6, 2020, American Association of University Women – <https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/press-releases/aauw-statement-on-rolling-back-title-ix-protections/>

**Appendix II** – Deeper in Debt (2017) AAUW, American Association of University Women – <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/03/DeeperinDebt-nsa.pdf>

**Appendix III** – Table 1. Emergency Furloughs Announced by Kansas State University in Response to the COVID19 Pandemic of Spring/Summer 2020. The percentage of employees of a specific gender over 70% are indicated in red. Data are current as of June 19, 2020. Note that overall ~58% of the full-time staff at Kansas State University in 2018 were female<sup>6</sup>.

Announcement Date	Unit	Males	Females	Total	% Males	% Females
May 2, 2020	K-State Student Union	24	20	44	54.5	45.5
	Department of Housing & Dining	107	92	199	53.8	46.2
	Recreational Services - Peters	12	8	20	60.0	40.0
	Center for Child Development	0	37	37	0	100.0
May 15, 2020	Lafene Student Health Center	13	35	48	27.1	72.9
	College of Health and Human Services	4	16	20	20.0	80.0
	College of Veterinary Medicine	8	10	18	45.0	55.0
June 3, 2020	Parking Services	11	9	20	55.0	45.0
	International Student Support Services	0	5	5	0	100.0
	Enrollment Management	0	3	3	0	100.0
June 16, 2020	Education Abroad	2	5	7	28.6	71.4
	Information Technology Services	5	3	8	62.5	37.5
	<b>Totals</b>	186	243	429	43.4	56.6

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Pettitt, E. (2020). Being a Woman in Academe has its Challenges. A Global Pandemic? Not Helping. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. (May 26) [https://www.chronicle.com/article/Being-a-Woman-in-Academe-Has/248852?cid=wcontentgrid\\_hp\\_4](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Being-a-Woman-in-Academe-Has/248852?cid=wcontentgrid_hp_4)
- <sup>2</sup> Kitchener, C. (2020). Women academics seem to be submitting fewer papers during coronavirus. ‘Never seen anything like it’ says one editor. *The Lily*. April 26. <https://www.thelily.com/women-academics-seem-to-be-submitting-fewer-papers-during-coronavirus-never-seen-anything-like-it-says-one-editor/>
- <sup>3</sup> Zimmer, K. (2020). Gender Gap in Research Output Widens During Pandemic. *The Scientist*. June 25. <https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/gender-gap-in-research-output-widens-during-pandemic-67665>
- <sup>4</sup> Zimmer, K. (2020). Gender Gap in Research Output Widens During Pandemic. *The Scientist*. June 25. <https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/gender-gap-in-research-output-widens-during-pandemic-67665>
- <sup>5</sup> Gonzalez, L.D., and Griffin, K.A. (2020) Supporting Faculty During and After COVID-19: Don’t let go of equity. Washington, DC: Aspire Alliance. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WQrIG6LsR04jGASfF6Z8WVxl4RIRpsMj/view>
- <sup>6</sup> Staff Diversity and Demographics 2010-2018. Full-Time Staff by Gender, and Race/Ethnicity. Office of Institutional Research, Kansas State University, HRIS (November 1, 2019). <https://www.k-state.edu/pa/data/diversity/index.html>

## Attachments

Executive Summary and Proposal for Sexual Violence Climate Survey

Support for Caregivers During COVID-19