



## **Commission for Women Annual Report**

*2007–2008*  
Deborah Oakes, Chair

PENNSTATE



---

COMMISSION *for* WOMEN

# COMMISSION *for* WOMEN

## **Mission**

The Commission for Women (CFW) serves as an advisory group to the President on the status of women at Penn State, advocates for women's concerns, and recommends solutions.

Specifically, the commission:

- ◆ examines and makes recommendations about issues that affect women employees and students: workplace and classroom climate, recruitment, advancement, mentoring, retention, professional development, maternity and child/elder-care policies, recognition, salary equity, and intercollegiate athletics;
- ◆ collaborates with units, colleges, campuses, and organizations in support of gender-equity initiatives;
- ◆ recognizes and celebrates contributions and achievements of women at Penn State.

## **2007–2008 Initiatives and Activities**

This year, the commission focused on marketing and collaboration to increase the leverage of its goals and objectives and accomplish its mission. By partnering with other Penn State experts and units, commission leaders reached larger audiences and more effectively advocated for policies that matter to women at the University. In so doing, members also increased the University's awareness of the commission, promoted its mission, and encouraged faculty, staff, and students to join collective efforts to enhance the working and learning environment for women.

Specifically, the commission collaborated with the Smeal College of Business to present to the University "It's Not a Glass Ceiling, It's a Sticky Floor," by Washington, D.C.-based leadership-development coach Rebecca Shambaugh; continued to support the annual Technical Service Women's Workshop; co-sponsored the Penn State Hershey Women's Leadership Summit; and coordinated and funded transportation for University employees and students attending the annual Pennsylvania Governor's Conference for Women.

Throughout the 2007–08 academic year, commission representatives met with a cross section of leaders to discuss the status, structure, and vision of CFW, as well as potential collaboration opportunities. These discussions included:

- Deb Ballam, associate provost for women's policy initiatives, The Ohio State University
- W. Terrell Jones, vice provost, Educational Equity
- James Thomas, dean, Smeal College of Business
- Louise Sandmeyer, executive director, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment
- Billie Willits, associate vice president, Office of Human Resources
- Dawn Blasko, chair, University Faculty Senate
- Eileen Trauth, associate dean for diversity, outreach, and international engagement, College of Information Sciences and Technology
- Peggy Lorah, director, Center for Women Students
- Sally Kalin, associate dean, University Libraries
- Lisa Davis, appointed member, Pennsylvania Commission for Women; director, Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health
- Pat Gardner, director, executive education, Smeal College of Business
- Gus Colangelo, associate dean, undergraduate programs, Smeal College of Business

## **Ad hoc Issues Committees**

During the commission's September 12 open house, guests learned about CFW's mission and goals and were invited to join members at the annual fall retreat on October 3, 2007. Retreat attendees engaged in a facilitated discussion led by Louise Sandmeyer, executive director of the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment, and developed a list of prioritized gender-based issues of concern. From this list, CFW's executive committee approved the study of three areas of interest—wage equity, child care, and maternity leave—and subsequently launched an ad-hoc issues committee to consider each topic's relevant historical data, current policies, expert opinion, CIC benchmarks, and focus-group experiences.

## **Report on the Status of Women at Penn State**

The commission's landmark publication, *Report on the Status of Women at Penn State*, was researched and compiled during the 2007–08 academic year. It was also reviewed by the University Budget Office and is scheduled for publication during fall 2008. The report is a collection of gender-based data tables comparing 1997 and 2007 leadership, salary, race/ethnicity, and student-profile information. This publication is intended to encourage healthy discussion across the University and stimulate further research on equity matters. Future reports will be produced and distributed on a routine basis.

## **Presentations/Professional Development**

The commission offered the following formal presentations during its monthly general meetings, which were open to all members of the Penn State community:

### **“Penn State Annual Safety Report”**

October 23, 2007

Steve Shelow

Director of Police Services

### **“Child Care at Penn State”**

November 15, 2007

Barbara Schaefer

Associate Professor of Education

Co-president, Nittany Area Families for Children

### **“National Report on Child Care Quality”**

December 11, 2007

Richard Fiene

Director of Capital Area Health and Human Development Institute

Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies

Penn State Harrisburg

### **“Parity for Women Faculty”**

January 29, 2008

Dianne Creagh

Assistant Professor of History

Penn State York

### **“Policies on Maternity Leave/Child Care”**

February 26, 2008

Linda Pierce

Manager of Policy Development and Quality of Work/Life

### **“Women Who Communicate Important Messages”**

March 26, 2008

Nichola Gutgold

Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

Penn State Lehigh Valley

### **“Leadership”**

April 29, 2008

Major General Jessica L. Wright

Adjutant General, Pennsylvania National Guard

(addressed members at Penn State Harrisburg)

## **Spring Awards Luncheon**

The second annual spring awards luncheon was held on Friday, April 11, 2008. More than 550 guests attended, and the commission recognized the following awardees:

### *Rosemary Schraer Mentoring Award*

- Deborah Kerstetter, associate professor of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management

### *Achieving Women Awards*

- Chloe Abraczinskas (undergraduate student)
- Beth Alford-Sullivan (staff exempt)
- Mary Anne Enama (technical service)
- Nina Fedoroff (faculty)
- Rosemary Frank (nonexempt staff)
- Nicole Reed (graduate student)
- Louise E. Sandmeyer (administrative)

## **Committee Reports**

### **Assessment Committee**

*Co-chairs: Auden Thomas and Alicia Knoedler*

The Assessment Committee continued to identify reports, surveys, and data regarding women students, faculty, and staff members. Based on a model presenting this type of data at The Ohio State University (OSU) and gleaned process and historical perspectives from OSU’s associate provost for women’s policy initiatives, committee members dedicated an exhaustive year to the research and development of the *Report on the Status of Women at Penn State*, currently in the final stages of production.

The Assessment Committee also provided consultation to committees seeking data relevant to their studies, specifically seeking a proposal from the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg to coordinate and moderate a series of focus groups for the ad-hoc issues committees. Qualitative data gathered will assist the committees in their review of maternity leave policies, child care, and wage equity at Penn State.

## **Marketing Committee**

*Chair: Melissa Wilson*

To promote the purpose, vision, and accomplishments of the commission and increase awareness of its work, the Marketing Committee developed an online calendar of events, which is linked to the CFW Web site and invites postings from all campuses; updated the commission liaison contact list; designed, printed, and distributed CFW bookmarks and stall stories articles; updated the commission's tri-fold publicity display; replenished CFW's supply of promotional items (pens, memo pads, mugs, etc.); assembled and distributed promotional items to campuses; initiated a news release for University and community publication; surveyed annual retreat participants and assessed responses to questions regarding awareness of CFW and success of the retreat; and drafted congratulatory letters throughout the year to women at Penn State in recognition of special awards and accomplishments.

## **Mentoring Program Committee**

*Co-chairs: Laurie Schoonhoven and Diane Weller*

Eleven mentor/protégé pairs participated in this year's program, which consisted of individual activities planned by each pair, as well as monthly coordinated events related to professional networking, leadership, Penn State history, and careers. Participants assessed their experiences via opening, mid-year, and end-of-year surveys. Co-chairs Laurie Schoonhoven and Diane Weller led a special session of the annual CFW Campus Liaison brunch to encourage and share ideas about campus mentoring programs and possible virtual mentoring at Penn State. The year's closing ceremony included guest speaker Georgia Abbey, executive director of Leadership Centre County. Roundtable discussions at year's end evaluated the program's effectiveness and included valuable input from Robin Anderson and Jeanie Andrews, both of whom are past chairs of the CFW, and who were instrumental in founding the original CFW mentoring program.

## **Campus Liaison Committee**

*Chair: Alice Royer*

Every year, the commission promotes improved communication and collaboration through its proactive Campus Liaison program. This year, efforts at the various campuses culminated in several significant events: (1) An annual grant program offered by the commission supported campus activities and initiatives reflecting the mission of the Commission for Women; (2) The second annual Campus Liaison brunch meeting was held on April 11, 2008, when approximately sixty-five representatives from nine campuses gathered to review and share best practices and discuss opportunities for mentoring programs at all campuses; and (3) an all-campus liaison meeting and luncheon was hosted by Penn State Harrisburg. Each of these events illustrates how the commission helps to showcase achievements of Penn State women and recognizes the need to support campus activities.

## **Ad-Hoc Issues Committees** (established December 2007)

### **Wage Equity**

*Co-chairs: Cathy Dufour and Nikki Massaro Kauffman*

The Wage Equity Committee began to review salary policies and processes to ensure that equitable opportunities exist for women. Specifically, committee members studied the new broad banding system, prepared methodology to gather data on employment fields that have been broad banded to date, and developed a plan to conduct relevant focus groups in fall 2008. Given Penn State's recent introduction of the broad banding program and the number of employees who express confusion about it, committee goals also include offering an online educational

component to include strategies on negotiation, working with work-unit managers to re-evaluating positions, etc.

### Maternity Leave

*Chair: Stephanie Springgay*

The Maternity Leave Committee aimed to gather information on maternity leave policies and practices at every employee and student level at the University. While there are existing maternity leave policies at Penn State, they are not equally practiced across the University and across employee levels. To date, the committee has collected and documented existing written policies on maternity leave at Penn State and is in the process of collecting similar policy information from other institutions. Future plans include partnering with the Center for Survey Research to organize, recruit, and moderate focus groups in order to gather qualitative data on employee experiences, challenges, and concerns about leave. Resulting analysis will assist the commission in documenting best practices, understanding the practice of leave in relation to written policies, and making recommendations for improvement.

### Child Care

*Chair: Alice Royer*

The Child Care Committee initiated a review of existing child care availability, accessibility, and affordability at Penn State. Current research and results of Penn State's 2005 needs assessment point to the importance of effective child care with regard to employee work-life and recruitment and retention, which, in turn, are reflections of the overall wellness of Penn State families. The committee's initial review of child care at the University focused on learning of those campuses that offer child care and which do not. Future goals include studying pertinent policies, benchmarking programs of other CIC institutions, and assessing satisfaction/comments from focus-group participants. Committee members will continue to coordinate efforts with the Maternity Leave Committee and make periodic reports.

#### **This publication is available in alternative media on request.**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed. OVP 09-2