

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR



FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONS

## **Annual Report**

**2003-2004**

Submitted by Sharri A. Margraves  
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The committee is to be commended for their diligence and willingness to take on additional tasks and provide the feedback necessary to advance pertinent causes. WACFPO can be proud of its collective work this past year and I am proud of the dedication and contributions of the committee as a whole, with special gratitude to Penny Fischer, Lori Strom, Ruth Daoust, Letitia Fowler, Doris Soliz-Hill and Kirti Singh. The full support provided by Dr. Poston and Kathy Lindahl is recognized and appreciated by the committee. Kris Hynes is to be commended for her extraordinary support of WACFPO initiatives.

### **FOCUS AREAS 2003-04**

The committee focused on three key areas this past year: *Structural Basics* to realign overall committee leadership; *Charting a Course for the Future* to develop a foundation for future action; and, *On-going Initiatives* to maintain our link with previous actions.

#### **Structural Basics**

The committee successfully completed the following:

- Revised the Bylaws
- Evaluated membership appointments
- Re-established foundational protocol and mission of WACFPO
- Improved public awareness through communications programs
- Designed WACFPO logo
- Re-designed web site
- Developed web-based registration for the annual VP Forum
- Expanded Resource Fair participation
- Increased participation of VP Forum-Resource Fair

#### **Charting a Course for the Future**

The committee began gathering information for the purpose of determining a course of action for future WACFPO initiatives.

- **Conversations with Kathy**
  - Three focus groups of women from across the university support areas yielded both a positive snapshot of work-life on campus as well as an awareness of areas requiring further study.
  - Information collected was provided to the Status of Women Committee to further their project.
  - Members, past and present, are on the Status of Women Committee steering committee
- **Ex Officio Support**
  - Met with all ex officios individually for the purpose of learning support functions within the organization and to obtain advice on key issues from their perspective.
  - Further follow through with Paulette Granberry-Russell on issues related to women of color regarding career advancement and the status of women from her perspective.

## On-going Initiatives

- **Equity Study**
  - Initial study results revealed no pattern of discrimination in pay based on gender or race. Gathering and analyzing data continues.
  - As a result of the study, all employees were invited to update their credentials.
  - This is recognized as a long-term and on-going study.
  
- **Mentoring**
  - The M.E.N.T.O.R.S. initiative completed its first year, and while it is impossible to report long term results, early indications from the participants, provided by D. Hecker, are generally positive:
    - Participants felt supported by the unit
    - Unit coordination is valued by the participants
    - Pairing process has been overwhelmingly positive
    - Benefits to the mentees include the opportunity to receive advice and share ideas with a more experienced person
    - The more time spent with mentor, the more positive satisfaction of the experience
    - Finding time to meet was a big challenge
    - Formal conversation guides need to be evaluated and refined
    - Follow-up and increased awareness will be continued
  - One current and two former WACFPO members remain on the design/pilot committee with HR (Zieleniewski, Fischer, Margraves)
  
- **Safety Issues**
  - Completed fall drive-around and spring walk-around; cooperation was positive and results achieved.
  - Anne Stahl from DPPS provided information regarding safety on campus and on-going measures being taken.
  
- **WACFPO Development**
  - Continued in-service initiative: Toured MSU Women's Basketball Operations: front office, training, support.
  - WACFPO Mentoring: paired new members with returning members to foster knowledge of mission and role of advisory committee.

- **Compassionate Leave**

- HR investigated potential impact at MSU on individual and institutional level and concluded the issue must be raised through collective bargaining associations, however, it is recommended from WACFPO that the VP formally encourage unit supervisors to seek additional information and creative strategies, in conjunction with HR, for those employees in critical situations.

## 2004-2005 FOCUS AREAS

In addition to the on-going initiatives of each sub-committee, the following two areas have been preliminarily identified for further study:

### **Career Advancement and Professional Development**

Based on the results of our “Conversations with Kathy” and questions raised at the forum over the years, career advancement and professional development remains a widespread area of concern for both staff and administrators—even in times of budgetary reductions and institutional changes. WACFPO will examine these topics further. Initial ideas include a “Career Summit”— to bring together staff as well as those responsible for hiring—for open dialogue and an exchange of ideas.

Anticipated outcomes could include:

- Staff to have an understanding of necessary preparation for jobs
- Hiring managers to understand the value of selecting staff for potential and the importance of hiring for the organization rather than their comfort level
- Opportunity for HR and AACM to showcase resources
- Possibility of an internal networking/job-fair between candidates and hiring supervisors
- Set a benchmark date from which we can measure change across the university

Further study is needed. These topic areas remain a constant over time and will continue to be impacted by shifting responsibilities and attrition.

### **Improving communication regarding Benefits**

Marketing and outreach of benefit programs, guidelines and responsibilities for both staff and supervision is needed. WACFPO can advise HR on perceptions and assist with strategizing more effective communication in this important area.