

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR



WACFPO

FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONS

Annual Report

2006 - 2007

Submitted by Melissa Congleton, Chairperson
August 2007

2006-2007 WACFPO Annual Report Overview

Enhancing Computer Access and Training for Labor Staff Members

Our focus in the 2005-2006 year was the inclusion of labor women, the inclusion of their input on the job, on this committee and throughout the University. This continued in the 2006-2007 year. WACFPO's recommendation to enhance computer access and training was done through the Boldness by Design computer access and training task force. Robyn Daugherty was the WACFPO representative for this group. The group set forth a concrete plan for ensuring computer access and training for every labor employee campus wide. This was approved by Vice President Fred Poston on July 30, 2007.

Proposal Two

Proposal two passed which outlawed affirmative action and banned discrimination or preferential treatment of groups and/or individuals based on race or sex for state employment, university admissions, and public contracting.

This impacted WACFPO's recruiting, interviewing and bylaws. In addition to our usual targeted recruiting we expanded recruiting to the *MSU News Bulletin* and *Source* publications. Interview questions for prospective members were changed to ensure they would lead to the selection of members based on knowledge and interest in the committee and its purpose. Perhaps the largest impact this proposal had to WACFPO is that men could not be excluded for membership on the committee based on gender alone.

Bylaws Changes

In the review of the bylaws that occurs every four years, two changes were made.

The first change was to make the bylaws concurrent with proposal two. This included using gender neutral pronouns. In addition, wording that focused on representation of membership based on race, age, interest, and experiential factors was removed.

The second change was a clarification. This change made it so members appointed to fill a partial term but greater than one year would be eligible for one additional two year term. The prior language was unclear.

Education

The committee had a crime statistics presentation as well as a presentation on the 2020 plan. In addition, an in-service was held at one of the women's basketball games.

The June retreat featured Dawn Hecker, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, speaking about effectively recognizing and dealing with change.

Members also attended the program “MicroInequalities: The Power of Small” by Stephen Young dealing with communication issues.

Looking Ahead

WACFPO looks forward to continuing the annual forum. The forum this year was the largest ever with over 325 participants registered. In addition, the resource fair was also expanded. Based on input from previous years we expanded the question and answer part of the forum and received positive feedback on this change. Additionally, the committee would like to enhance the participation of all employee groups at the forum as some groups are underrepresented.

One issue to address in the future includes representing WACFPO on the Boldness by Design objective of transitioning to a more inclusive work environment. This objective has been set based on input from WACFPO. This committee has yet to start its work.

Additionally the committee would benefit from a record keeping system so that WACFPO’s work can be tracked over time. Currently there is no real record keeping system in place. This will ensure a better transfer of information to the committee leadership from year to year.

WACFPO's Diversity Committee Report

Committee Members: Pam Weil-Chair, Brenda Brown, Edita Herbstova, Mary McGill, and Cherie Shorman.

The WACFPO Diversity and Pluralism committee has spent the past year in discussion and self education. Our focus has been the impact of proposition two, international cultural understanding, domestic cultural understanding and manifestations of 'inclusion' in institutional processes and practices.

We have had a number of discussions regarding international cultures. These conversations focused on culture in contrast to personality, the awareness of each person's uniqueness, '...they may be from the same county but are as different from one another as Americans are..'. Getting to know different people through committee work and casual conversation is a useful tool in expanding cultural understanding.

There was much discussion regarding the committee member's perceptions of proposal two. As a 'Women's' committee there was concern expressed about the impact of proposal two on WACFPO as a whole and the Diversity and Pluralism committee specifically. It was determined that we would wait for the University to determine its direction before any action would be taken on our part. Once we received input from the WACFPO Chair regarding the University's direction there were further discussions on the changes to our website, interview questions and our committee's goals and our committee work in general.

Our goal of a University wide culture of inclusion is in line with the University's proposition two options. This is demonstrated by WACFPO's recommendation last year for technology outreach to labor staff. This outreach recommendation is an example of a rank based, non-gender, non-race focused inclusion plan. In addition it addressed communication, which is the corner stone of inclusion.

A culture of inclusion, by definition precludes a strict top down management style. It includes respect of all members of the University community regardless of positions. A powerful and institutionally advantageous illustration of this is the practice of including all levels of staff in decision-making processes.

WACFPO Diversity and Pluralism committee recommendations for the future:

- develop an understanding in the staff of international and domestic cultural differences and similarities
- foster an understanding of the institutional advantages of the inclusion of all members of the University community in decision making
- demonstrate the value of respect for all members of the University community without regard to 'rank' or 'class'
- recommendation of inclusion practices based on the uniqueness of each individual
- increase participation in WACFPO of disabled and international staff

WACFPO's Training, Professional Development and Communications Committee Report

Committee Members: Angela Matlock-Chair, Michelle Artibee, Jill Cruth, Lynne Devereaux, Beth Rhodes.

Annual Spring Forum

The Training, Professional Development & Communications Committee primary responsibility was to strategically plan and organize a successful annual Spring Forum held on March 26, 2007. To ensure a successful and relevant annual Forum, a view of internal resources and skills set was conducted to determine how each member of the Committee as well as the general WACFPO membership could contribute as some tasks formerly performed by external support staff was reassigned to the Committee. The following efforts were made to expand participation & inclusion and enhance the experience:

- "Save the Date" Postcards mailed off-campus to Labor employees
- "Thank You" notes and evaluation forms for the Resource Fair Participants
- Press releases expanded to include the MSU Human Resources "Source", Physical Plant Newsletter, CTU Newsletter, MSU Bulletin, Women's Resource "Women, Words, & Wisdom"
- Forum schedule adjusted to provide additional time for the Q & A session with VP Dr. Fred Poston and Provost Kim Wilcox

The 2007 Spring Forum received very positive feedback from the evaluation forms with 92% of attendees reporting that the Resource Fair was useful, 55% cited the Q & A session as the favorite part of the Forum and 46% gave the Forum above average rate. The Committee will revise the 2008 evaluation form to use as a tool to track participation of the various employee and minority groups.

Communications

All brochures, printed materials and website language have been updated to reflect MSU's core values of quality, inclusiveness and connectivity.

Website updates, formatting and written communications are being performed by the Committee members. Scanning and saving documents to a CD for Committee historical purposes is in progress.

In Service

Members of WACFPO attended the MSU Women's basketball game in January hosted by Assistant VP for Finance and Operation Kathy Lindahl. Other diverse types of In Service activities will be explored.

Future Aim

The Training, Professional Development and Communications Sub Committee will continue to work with the other WACFPO Sub Committees to promote dialogue of concerns/issues at the annual Spring Forum, facilitate, and sponsor activities that enable support staff to be actively engaged with the university and share their expertise with others to improve and enhance the quality of work life.

Submitted by Angela Matlock

WACFPO's Benefits/Work Climate, Health/Safety Committee Report

Committee Members: Vicki Curley-Chair, Robyn Daugherty, Molly Dean, Nancy Genco, Lisa Reed.

The committee identified its tasks and focus areas at the August 2006 meeting. Since the committee last year did so much to get flexible work schedules in the University more visibility, the committee wanted to focus on health and safety issues. Health issues were addressed by meeting with Health4U director, Nancy Allen. She shared with us the new computer program the University is looking to possibly purchase for all faculty, staff and retirees' use, called Healthwise. Our committee previewed the software package and the accompanying book and then opened it up for all of WACFPO to preview. Our feedback to Health4U was that it was very informative and user friendly. Finding ways to inform University faculty and staff about health promotion and illness prevention may help in the long run to cut University healthcare costs.

We met with Officer Penny Fischer, from DPS, to discuss the University's emergency preparedness and disaster plan. She explained in detail what is being done and what training programs are in place. WACFPO members are encouraged to get involved in this training and we are encouraged to ask others to get involved. More money is needed to be allocated to this endeavor, so that more training can take place and more staff can be hired to help with this endeavor. Our committee supports a continued push to help develop this program and training. We cannot be too prepared.

The fall safety drive around in October identified many safety issues and lighting issues. See the report of October 19, 2006.

The spring walk around was done before night fall and lighting issues were not addressed. There were very few other issues identified. See report of April 26, 2007.

Submitted by Vicki Curley