

## **Women's Caucus Executive Board Meeting**

December 8, 2020 (2:30-4:30)

Zoom

**Attendance:** Zainab Shah, Meaghan Davidson, Kelsey Cummings, Libbey Bowen, Lauren Bailes, Tywanda Cuffy, Barbara Ley, Megan Wenner, Sherry Mendez

**Excused:** Barbara Settles, Diane Goldsmith, Leah Dodd, Naomi Nash, Jennifer Semrau, Elaine Warrick

**December Meeting Agenda:** Approved

**November Board Meeting Minutes:** Approved

### **Co-chair updates**

*Social:* We will host a social in January on a Thursday from 4-5. Meaghan Davidson will send the invite out soon.

*Fall General Meeting recap:* Megan Wenner was happy with how the meeting went. One of the main topics discussed in her small group related to the recent budget cuts and their disparate impact on faculty versus staff. Tywanda Cuffy also liked the small group format; she said that participants in her group appreciated the personalization and having the opportunity to share. Libbey Bowen stated that her group had a good session and could have talked longer. One point that her group members discussed was the need for a university-wide work-from-home policy given the COVID-19 situation. Kelsey Cummings and Sherry Mendez stated that they like having OEI staff at the meeting, as they brought up a range of issues and reminded meeting participants to think about issues from an intersectional perspective.

Megan Wenner suggested we devote more time at the next General Meeting to small group discussions, as they seemed productive and went by fast. Meaghan Davidson received an email from a participant who really liked the small group format. Meaghan suggested that we host a public event that involves all of the caucuses and focuses on university issues from an intersectional perspective. She said that she already reached out to the other caucus chairs about this idea, and they think it sounds great. She will follow-up with them about the potential event.

Sherry Mendez said that some folks in her groups were concerned about the extra-year policy in terms of who gets it and what impact it will have. Libbey Bowen said that the extra-year policy

related to a one-year extension for faculty on the tenure clock. She said that the university is encouraging all faculty to put a statement in their file about this extension so that there are no gender differences. The statement is enforced at the department level. Relatedly, Meaghan Davidson noted that her group talked about how decentralized the COVID policies have been, and that different departments and offices handle COVID-related work issues in different ways.

Meaghan Davidson also asked whether we should share any of these notes from the meeting. People liked that idea. Barbara Ley mentioned that they could serve as one source of COVID-related data, with the upcoming survey being another source of data. Megan Wenner also noted that according to Adam Foley, we need to go through IRB if we use our data for public purposes.

Following up on the potential use of our data and notes for public purposes, Barbara Ley asked whether the university administration ever seeks out the Women's Caucus for feedback or consultation regarding gender-related policy development. Kelsey Cummings said that caucus chairs were asked to meet about the proposed multicultural center, but that generally speaking, caucuses are not generally seen as go-to groups for policy and decision-making. Tywanda Cuffey did mention one example of the university reaching out to the African Heritage Caucus after several prominent African-American faculty members left the university. Libbey Bowen asked whether we want to set a goal of having the president meet with the caucuses several times a year so that our voices are part of the university's decision-making process. Sherry Mendez asked about the possibility of working with Fatimah Conley to try to get "teeth" back for the caucuses. Kelsey Cummings thinks Adam Foley would be an advocate for whatever is possible, and that had already developed a path for putting proposals together for the president. Thus, contacting him might be a good first step.

Meaghan Davidson said that she will spearhead a statement from the Women's Caucus (and possibly other caucuses) about wanting our "teeth" back, and then present it to Fatimah Conley. Given the impact that COVID-19 is having on women, Libbey Bowen said that this was a great time to do this.

**Annual Report:** Kelsey will follow-up with Allison Walters to obtain the newest institutional HR data, as it should be ready by next week. She suggested that at the January Board meeting, we can discuss who will help put together the annual report. Leah Dodd offered to develop strong visual representations of the data. Tywanda Cuffey suggested that the report take an intersectional approach to the data so that we can make employment comparisons between women of color and white women.

***Policy Subcommittee/COVID-19 Survey:*** We discussed what our next steps with the survey should be. Barbara Ley mentioned that the policy subcommittee thought the survey should focus on a broader array of issues and not just childcare. We also discussed how the survey data could help support the push for a university ombudsman. Meaghan Davidson mentioned the possibility of other caucuses getting involved with the survey or at least helping to distribute it. Sherry Mendez agreed with reaching out to other caucuses, as she wants the survey to include the employees who are most impacted by COVID, and the caucuses may know how to reach marginalized groups on campus. Relatedly, Libbey Bowen suggested that we ask the other caucuses to come up with some questions that they would like to see on the survey.

Meaghan Davidson asked how we can ensure that every faculty/staff member gets the survey. We discussed the possibility of distributing it via the university-wide listserv. We could also take a snow-balling approach via groups across campus. Megan Wenner and Meaghan Davidson will contact Fatimah Conley, Adam Foley, and the other caucus chairs about the survey. Barbara Ley will share the survey with all Women's Caucus Board members. She will also set up a Google doc to start brainstorming new survey topics. Zainab Shah said that she would help come up with topics, too. Libbey Bowen suggested that we add some questions regarding topics that the university wants to know more about.

Libbey Bowen, Lauren Bailes, and Megan Wenner said that they would work with Barbara Ley to revise and broaden the survey. We also discussed the possibility of going through IRB beforehand.

***Communication sub-committee:*** Meaghan Davidson stated that Leah Dodd will follow-up with us regarding the Communication subcommittee's work.

**Next Board Meeting:**

TBA