

Women's Caucus Executive Board Meeting

October 22, 2021

10AM to 12PM

Zoom

In Attendance: Meaghan Davidson, Zainab Shah, Naomi Nash, Barbara Settles, Barbara Ley, Lauren Bailes, Jennifer Biddle, Jennifer Semrau, Megan Wenner, Tywanda Cuffy, Libbey Bowen

Excused: Amy Stengle, Kelsey Cummings, Leah Dodd

October Board Meeting Agenda Approved

September Board Meeting Minutes Approved

Co-Chair Updates

- Meaghan Davidson: Zainab Shah has both Torch Awards (2020 and 2021). The caucus is also all set for the Award Ceremony at the Courtyard.
- Meaghan Davidson: The COVID survey was shared with Ryan Shuler and Beth Finkle from Employee Health and Wellbeing. They will be attending today's meeting for a discussion about the report and next steps.
- Barbara Settle also asked whether we want to discuss the recent campus assault situation.

COVID Survey Discussion with Employee Health and Wellbeing

Ryan Shuler and Beth Finkle:

- The survey data was not surprising but that seeing it in research form was startling and powerful. In particular, their experience was that employees felt supported by their team—but NOT by the institution itself—when it comes to family issues, women's issues, and LGBTQ+ issues.
- Next step relates to how we use the survey data for next steps (actions items, initiatives, etc.). And how can we work to centralize these next steps via the university/administration as a whole (e.g., not just specific departments or offices).

Jennifer Biddle: Matt Kinservik put together a working group to examine the Coach survey that was administered by ADVANCE. The data showed that some employees felt supported by some departments on campus, but that there was no standardization across campus. The Coach working group is also discussing how the survey data can inform next steps.

Ryan Shuler suggests that we give the administration very clear and concrete next steps. It may also be useful to collectively analyze the various campus data (looking for

common themes and broad needs) and then use this collective data to put together an ask.

Barbara Settles believes that the administration is trying to “love” its employees but doesn’t know how. We need to tell the administration how to “love” people on campus.

Beth Finkle and Ryan Shuler stated that we need two pieces: the data itself and presentations to leadership. We also need behind-the-scenes efforts to “rally the troops.” For example, during George Floyd, faculty of color felt that they couldn’t speak up about what they needed even though Employee Wellness was putting events together to support them. We need to support women and marginalized groups when it comes to advocating for themselves.

Barbara Ley asked how do we help people feel safe advocating for themselves given the structural racism, sexism, and other forms of systemic oppression on campus? Jennifer Biddle suggested that the ombudsman position may be one way to help create this safety. Beth Fink and Ryan Shuler state that they try to address these safety needs from an organizational standpoint. Do we need to partner with HR on performance appraisal trainings, management trainings? Maybe the Women's Caucus could lead a workshop that serves as a safe space?

Libbey Bowen and Beth Finkle both agree that we need to go beyond gathering data and move to action. We have enough data, we need to focus on making actions happen.

KEY NEXT STEP: Identifying the action plan. We have to be ready with data and an action plan before the decision-making by university administration actually happens.

- Beth Finkle: what is the ask that we want the administration to approve, and how do we get the administration to understand the potential impact of the ask?
- Lauren Bailes: We also need to provide a timeline. We need to determine who specifically at the higher level we are targeting. Who will be our advocates higher up?
- Beth Finkle suggests several higher-ups who may be great advocates or allies (e.g., Michael Vaughn, Jared Offerman). The motivation is there, we just need to come in to fill in the puzzle pieces.
- Meaghan Davidsons suggested that we identify three action steps.
- Libbey Bowen suggested that we should include current events in the timeline as part of our ask. We need to show how recent events are part of why we need what we need.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP: THE NEED FOR AN OMBUDSPERSON

- Jennifer Semrau: We don't have a great system for complaints. People complain and nothing happens. We need a better system.
- Ryan Shuler: It is a good time to act swiftly. **WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY NOW.**

- Libbey Bowen: There are many types of complaints that don't have a good place to go. Same with student complaints. No policy for a place for complaints to go.
- Jennifer Semrau: CHS has tried to institute a reporting mechanism to report DEI complaints. They keep changing the system.
- Barbara Ley: that doesn't give people confidence to speak up when they can't even have a working system for complaints.
- Jennifer Biddle recommends we read the URGE document regarding complaints.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP: CHILDCARE AND FAMILY WORK POLICIES

- Beth Finkle thinks child care and family work policies are key issues related to our survey, as retention issues are bad, so many new parents on campus, and UD can't afford to lose more people.

OTHER STRATEGIES FOR OUR ASKS

- Tywanda Cuffy: We need to get some partners behind the action steps. Maybe the upcoming Consortium meeting will be a good place to raise action steps and form these working partnerships so that we can push action steps together.
- Libbey Bowen: We should consider broadening our asks and connecting with students. The administration is disconnected from everybody. Maybe we should hold a workshop in which each group presents the results of their studies survey to see how we are all on the same page. Each group/person gets ten minutes to talk. Also make sure to connect to student concerns.
- Tywanda Cuffy suggests that the workshop should be made public. Engage the media.
- Meaghan Davidson started a table of possible action steps/asks. It is located in our Shared Google Drive.

Other Updates and Next Steps

Meaghan Davidson provided several other updates:

- Leah Dodd will send a reminder for the General Meeting and Courtyard Social and Torch Award Event by October 28th or so. We should all RSVP both events, and forward the RSVP invite to our colleagues.
- So far, there have been eight RSVPs for the UD Women's Consortium Meeting on Wednesday 10/28. She will send an email to remind people to RSVP.
- Leah Dodd is done updating to the website, and will work with Barbara Ley to upload the past Board Meeting minutes.

Next Meeting

December 3, 2021

10:00AM to 12:00PM

Zoom