

Women's Caucus Annual Retreat
September 9, 2020 (9:30AM to 11:30AM)
Zoom

Present: Barbara Ley, Barbara Settles, Jennifer Semrau, Naomi Nash, Zainab Shah, Lauren Bailes, Sherry Mendez, Megan Wenner, Kelsey Cummings, Diane Goldsmith, Leah Dodd, Libbey Brown, Meaghan Davidson

Not Present/Excused: Elaine Warrick, Tywanda Cuffy,

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Adoption of June Minutes: Approved

Review of Processes

Megan Wenner asked all members to read the Board's by-laws and get back to her and Meaghan Davidson over the few weeks with feedback.

Subcommittees: We discussed the current Board's three subcommittees--Community Outreach, Communications, and Policy.

Childcare policy issues: As part of the subcommittee discussion, we went through the pros and cons of creating a fourth subcommittee that would focus solely on childcare issues, versus continuing to house the Board's childcare policy work within the broader Policy subcommittee. This topic came up when Barbara Ley and Diane Goldsmith discussed the draft of the childcare survey that they wrote this summer and the next steps needed to finalize it. We agreed to start off by keeping the board's childcare work within the Policy subcommittee and then decide later if it needs to become its own subcommittee. Libbey Brown also suggested that our childcare work address other university policies that have an impact on childcare. Finally, Barbara Settles brought up the issues of family care (people caring for elders as well as children) and a possible child care center. She also suggested that we talk to Martha Buell from the Senate about the latter issue.

Board members signed up for the following subcommittees:

- *Community Outreach:* Megan Wenner, Naomi Nash, Jennifer Semrau, Libbey Brown
- *Communications:* Diane Goldsmith, Leah Dodd, Meaghan Davidson, Tywanda Cuffy

- *Policy*: Barbara Settles, Barbara Ley, Lauren Bailes, Sherry Mendez, Zainab Shah, Kelsey Cummings, Diane Goldsmith (childcare policy),

Women Caucus Projects

Megan Wenner and Meaghan Davidson touched on a number of projects that the Women's Caucus spearheads, including the annual Torch Award and the Annual Report. We also discussed a number of other possible projects:

Reviving the Fireside Chat

Barbara Settles brought up the possibility of holding the Fireside Chat virtually, and we all agreed that this would be a good idea. We discussed the possibility of sticking with our previous line-up (if the speakers can still do it). People also mentioned the need to think about the Fireside Chat through the lens of the current COVID situation and racial justice struggles and racial unrest over the past six months—does the current line-up of speakers make sense or do we want to replace any of them? Some people suggested making the Fireside chat an annual or bi-annual event. Tywanda Cuffy, Kelsey Cummings, and Diane Goldsmith offered to help. Diane Goldsmith also suggested we reach out directly to Artika Casini, and to other people via the next general meeting (as that is how we recruited some people to help out with the event last year).

Cultivating partnerships

Meghan Davidson suggested that we continue to focus on strategies for partnering with other caucuses and groups (e.g., WIT, ADVANCE) across campus. How do we support each other and build these relationships from intersectional and women's leadership standpoints.

Inequity issues facing faculty and staff

- Naomi suggested that we track the impact of COVID-related budget cuts (e.g., furloughs, pay cuts) on female faculty and staff. Women on campus, especially female staff members, face a disproportionate risk. Kelsey asked how we can continue to be supportive of faculty and staff and keep on top of these issues.
- Diane suggested that OEI draft letters to department supervisors that state how staff members should be allowed to join the caucus or attend caucus meetings without pushback. She explained how she got pushback from her former department, and was told to use her vacation time to attend caucus meetings. Kelsey Cummings noted that Darcell Griffith in Human Resources had drafted letters for this purpose in the past, and that Adam Foley may be a good contact for this now.

- Lauren Bailes noted how the number of submitted publications by female faculty across the country has been decreasing due to COVID. She suggested that the caucus do round-ups of UD female faculty doing research during COVID. We could then use this internal collection of data to provide context for tenure cases, promotion cases etc., and to develop campus policy initiatives. Relatedly , Jennifer Semrau noted that we should track grant application trends by UD female faculty during COVID. Diane Goldsmith also volunteered to help with this effort.
- Megan Wenner brought up the possibility of starting a Women's Caucus Twitter account to highlight work done by UD faculty and staff. Diane Goldsmith is willing to set it up. Leah Dodd stated that she will find out what permissions are needed to do so. Someone also wondered about starting a Caucus Tiktok.
- Sherry Mendez pointed out the lack of women of color/black women in this group and other campus groups, as she sees the same few black women participating in lots of groups across campus. She asked how our caucus could uplift the work of women of color on campus. Diane Goldsmith suggested that we reach out to WIT, as they have worked on these issues.
- Megan Wenner asked if the Women's Caucus should sign and support WIT's Diversity and Inclusion Action Letter. Meeting participants said yes. We also discussed how we can sign onto such letters as a group and as individuals. However, Meaghan Davidson noted that we need to respect people's decisions when they decide not to sign onto something as an individual.

Other possible projects that we touched on:

- Meaghan Davidson asked if we should create some messaging around voting and the upcoming elections.
- Should we hold a virtual or in-person Happy Hour for Women's Caucus Board Members?

Update from Co-Chairs

Adam Foley plans to hold a meeting with all of the caucuses to discuss caucus budget issues. Megan and Meaghan will update us on this caucus meeting at our next Executive Board meeting.

Other Upcoming To-Dos

- The co-chairs will get the Board's shared calendar up and running.
- Meaghan Davidson will send out a Doodle Poll to set up our meeting schedule.
- At the next meeting we will formalize who will serve as Board's secretary and discuss the possibility of reviving the Board's former Treasurer position.

Next Board Meeting

TBA