2011-2012 MEMBERSHIP

Chairs
Ruth Varner, research associate professor, Complex Systems Research Center
Lori Wright, public information officer, UNH Media Relations

General Membership
Lauren Banker, Undergrad Student
Nadine Berenguier, Assoc Prof Languages Literatures & Cultures
Michelle Bronner, Sr. Associate AD Compliance/SWA
Tricia Hanley, Associate Director/Director of Training, Counseling Center
Peg Kirkpatrick, Asst to the Dean
Emily Klein, Graduate Student
Cynthia Nizzari McClain, Educational Program Coordinator
Chelsea Parent, Undergrad
Joelle Ruby Ryan, Lecturer, Women's Studies
Annie-Eliza Stevens, Undergrad Student
Claire Treat, Graduate Student
Kerryellen Vroman, Assoc Professor Occupational Therapy

Ex-Officio Members
Amy Culp, Direct Services Coordinator, SHARPP
Sylvia Foster, Educational Program Coordinator, President's Commission's Office
Kimberly Persson, Project Director, NH Institute for Health Policy and Practice
Donna Marie Sorrentino, Director, Affirmative Action and Equity Office
Janice Pierson, Senior Program Assistant, President's Commission's Office

WOMEN’S COMMISSION MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the UNH President’s Commission on the Status of Women is to create equal educational and employment opportunities for UNH women promoting an environment free of sexism and discrimination through policy, advocacy and education in which our learning community engages its diversity of experiences to generate inclusive excellence in employment, curriculum, classrooms and programming. The commission achieves its goals by: creating policies that improve the state of women and ensure an environment of equal education and employment opportunities for women at UNH; recommending policies related to the status of women to the UNH president, to other university administrators, and to UNH administrative and governance groups; collaborating and developing alliances with existing organizations and structures within the university community for the purpose of promoting an environment free of sexism and discrimination; informing the university community of the status of women on UNH campus by collecting and disseminating data, initiating and supporting educational and outreach programs, and preparing and disseminating informational publications; providing informational and educational programs and materials to help women on the UNH campus develop their skills, continue their education, and increase their networking opportunities.
2011-2012 Commission Advocacy Efforts and Initiatives

COMMITTEE WORK

Membership Committee

The election of new members and commission leaders was delayed this year due to the work being completed by the President’s Commission Review Committee during spring semester. Peg Kirkpatrick and Nadine Berenguier extended their membership participation until December. Rebecca Gruber and Sherry Christie decided to step down from the commission. New members Kerryellen Vroman, Michele Bronner, Cynthia Nizzari-McClain, Tricia Hanley, and Annie Aliza Stevens began their work with the commission starting in January 2012.

Publications and Publicity Committee

Work continued on updating the WC web site resource pages, and in April new pages were added with photos and text describing the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the commission.

The WC Facebook page continues to grow in the numbers of faculty, staff and students who have “friended” and “liked” the page.

In March, the commission was asked to take down the page as a result of an editorial that appeared in the Manchester Union Leader. The op-ed piece objected to the use of UNH Facebook pages to provide posts that stated NH democratic candidate’s positions on women’s issues (specifically abortion and birth control). The editorial went on to say that Facebook pages should be restricted to reporting only on news/events taking place on campus and not on issues being played out in national media outlets.

The Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Inclusive Excellence sent a memo to the Associate Vice President for Communications stating that commissions have elected to use Facebook to 1) communicate to their constituent groups about programs and initiatives; 2) to inform the campus community and constituents about issues that impact the lives of their specific groups and, 3) to provide thought-provoking information that would encourage respective dialogue.

After meetings with administrators from the Office of the President, the Vice Provost, and staff members from University Commissions, the Facebook page was permitted to go live again with the understanding that postings on Facebook pages would not be construed as being university-related or president’s office positions/stands on issues. WC members were reminded that as a “President’s” commission all Facebook postings become an entity of the institution and must adhere to high standards and protocol. A guideline statement will also appear on the page:

The content of this page does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the administration of the University of New Hampshire. Also, the appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsements on behalf of the University of New Hampshire. The site is monitored periodically Monday through Friday during regular business hours. While this is an open forum, we ask that you post in a manner that demonstrates respect for other members of the community.
Violence Against Women Committee (VAWC)

Members agreed to disband this committee since the commission has created an ex-officio status position from SHARPP. The representative from this office will continue to report to the commission on matters of sexual assault and any other areas of concern from their office.

At the same time, this committee had initiated the draft of the Consensual Amorous Relationship Policy, and this commission is interested in pursuing this policy for approval by UNH administrators. Donna Marie Sorrentino has taken the lead in funneling the policy draft through the various channels needed for policy approval. She has been able to present the policy draft to the Operating Staff and PAT Councils, the Office of the Provost, Human Resources, UNH General Counsel and AAUP. After modest changes to the wording of the policy, the faculty AAUP approved passage of the policy as a sidebar item added to their recent faculty negotiations completed in June.

Programming Committee

This committee continued its work on two separate projects: 1) production of the educational video and 2) the initiation of a College to Career social get-togethers with students and members of this commission.

With regard to the video, the members of this committee worked with WildActs Social Change Theatre Troupe to begin filming scenes from their list of storyboard ideas garnered from the student survey data collected in 2011. The video will be short enough that it could serve as a teaching aid for Women’s Studies and other first-year and sophomore classes. The actors will not attempt to solve the problems/issues, but will offer unresolved scenarios as discussion starters on selected topics. There will also be a presenter’s guide that will provide talking points and ideas for suggested wrap ups – including how to be a bystander, ally, advocate, and/or otherwise change harmful social systems.

Members of this committee also held discussions with staff from the University’s Advising and Career Planning Office to discuss ideas for starting up the College to Career social gatherings. The program would be open to undergraduate as well as graduate students and the aim of the program is to provide additional resources to students for post graduation “life in the real world” preparation. The informal setting will be used to discuss various issues that affect women at work (pay equity, benefits, etc.).

Awards and Celebration Committee

On March 21, 2012 the WC held its annual Award’s Celebration Luncheon. This year was of particular significance because it marked 40 years of advocacy work for the commission. The committee drafted the theme of “The Personal is Still Political” and featured a panel discussion with representatives from various organizations and agencies including Elizabeth Tentarelli, Co-President of the League of Women Voters in New Hampshire; Linda Griebisch, Executive Director of the Joan G. Lovering Health Center; and Marianne Jones, Executive Director of the Women’s Fund of New Hampshire. The discussion was moderated by former WC member Prof. Vanessa Druskat, and the event included remarks by former members Jane Stapleton and Kate Hanson. Close to 100 people
were in attendance, and this year’s award recipients were: Eric Kulberg, Lynn Mooney, Maggie Wells, Kelly Whittier, and the Women’s Studies Program.

WORKING GROUP INITIATIVES

Work Life Balance:

Child Care – Although Peg Kirkpatrick and Nadine Berenguier completed their commission membership in December, they will continue to monitor the issue of the need for a campus child care facility. To date, Doug Bencks, Director of Campus Planning has indicated that a child care facility has been incorporated into the construction design for graduate student housing, however there has been disagreement between Campus Planning and Graduate Student Senate on the location for the new housing. Graduate students would prefer a location that is part of the core campus whereas Campus Planning has indicated their interest in building the housing near the Leawood Orchards area.

Workplace Flexibility - This committee has grown in numbers and staff from several campus offices and organizations are now collaborating on issues of workplace flexibility. The committee has been focused on the need for UNH to recognize and adjust to the reality that employees face increased challenges of balancing personal and professional demands during their career at UNH. As a result of this committee’s meeting last fall with Dick Cannon, Vice President of Finance and Administration, a Flexible Work Arrangements Task Force was created to develop policies and guidelines to support flexible work arrangements. There will be 3 subgroups - Needs Assessment, Policy Issues, and Writing - to work on this initiative, and a WC member will be part of each subgroup.

Upon the recommendation of the WC, the Needs Assessment group submitted the Sloan Survey to a cross section of faculty and staff in spring 2011. As a result, in September 2011 UNH was recognized as a recipient of the 2011 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace flexibility.

Workplace Bullying Awareness:

During the fall WC meetings, members elected to return this issue to the OS and PAT Councils as they felt this issue was a broad-based campus issue and that the councils would have better momentum with passing a workplace bullying policy. However, during the April WC meeting since neither council had made the progress that the WC had hoped for, the WC reaffirmed its commitment to this issue. The WC will not devote its time to writing a policy draft but will focus instead on writing up a position statement that will include a listing of what we would want to see in the policy and the reasons why a policy is needed.

Additional Goals for the upcoming year

During their May meeting, the commission co-chair asked that this commission support the need to address increasing tuition rates and student loan debt. Women now make up the majority of undergrad and graduate students, and UNH has the highest student debt load in the country, so clearly this is becoming unsustainable for women. The commission will review the following ideas:
a) While we can't endorse or lobby one candidate over another, we can provide information on candidate positions and inspire all women to become aware of the issues and encourage them to vote.

b) We can do research on scholarships available to women as well as opportunities for paid internships.

c) We can use our Facebook page to put together an educational theme/campaign and provide different points of view as well as suggestions on how women can use their power and exercise their rights.

d) We can also remain cognizant of any news/updates regarding financial cuts to the Women's Studies program.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The WC co-chairs participated in meetings as members of the newly formed University Council on Inclusive Excellence and Equity. This Council was formed as the result of the Commission Review process conducted in 2010-11 and is charged with supporting the university’s strategic plan and the theme of “inclusive excellence”. Our representation on this Council provides an opportunity for this commission to have more regularized communication with co-chairs from the other presidential commissions, unit VP/administrators, Faculty Senate, and Human Resources. Council members will also have the opportunity to meet with the President and members of the President’s Cabinet.

This past year, the Council has been working on defining its mission statement and purpose as well as setting up its operating procedures. Each commission was asked to submit a short list of projects and/or initiatives that they would like the Council to address and this commission submitted the following items:

1. The need to establish a policy to address workplace bullying.

2. Advocate for a first-year college experience program series to build civility, health, safety and community to include an understanding of the value of diverse experiences.