

Dear Chancellor Gearhart,

I am pleased to report to you that the women's commission had a very active and successful year. I want to begin by thanking you again for your continued efforts to provide a welcoming and inclusive workplace. The incredible child care center and the new maternity policy are clear evidence of your commitment, and both of these initiatives have already helped a number of our colleagues. It makes me proud to be a member of this campus community under your leadership.

Let me begin with a summary of year's activities, and then I will address concerns and future agenda items.

Through our sponsored events we have both increased our exposure across campus and reached out to provide services and information that we identified from last year to be in demand. In the fall semester we hosted an information event in which the new maternity leave policy was discussed. The feedback we received is that participants were not only happy to learn about the leave policy, but also were pleased to learn more about the commission and to have a forum in which to ask questions and seek solutions for ongoing challenges. During that event many questions were raised about other issues of concern, but two in particular stood out. First, the need for more affordable child care was reiterated, and you assured the group that this is a priority the university is working to address. The other point of conversation involved more general concerns about women acquiring a skill set for success. This conversation was so animated that it revealed a significant need for a mentoring event.

In response to that need, the commission hosted a round table lunchtime discussion session focusing on three topics: leadership, communication and work life balance. Women who exemplify expertise in each area were identified and invited to lead a table, and participants were invited to join whichever discussion they chose. While the attendance was not as great as we would have liked, the feedback from those who attended was tremendous. It was so clear that this type of discussion is something that women in all positions on campus feel to be of value that we have instituted a standing "First Friday Connections" informal lunch meeting in the union the first Friday of every month. The challenge to the commission next year is to spread the word to make the most of this opportunity to connect and share ideas.

The commission's website has also been reviewed and changes are continuously instituted to alert the campus community about ongoing efforts and the outcomes of those efforts. We still need to make sure that a greater awareness about this resource is generated.

Finally, the commission hosted a safety event in which general safety tips and techniques were shared by UAPD Director Stephen Gahagans and Captain Kathryn Huddler. The feedback was so positive even though the attendance was not great that there is a plan to host another of these sessions at the start of the fall semester.

In addition to our events, the commission discussed issues that remain at the top of our priority list to address. As mentioned above, it is important to continue focusing on the need for affordable childcare. Further, we also know that you and the Provost are working hard to extend those benefits to classified staff, and it is our understanding that significant progress has been made. We want to reiterate our gratitude that you feel your work is not complete until that benefit is provided to everyone on our

campus. We also plan to expand the discussion around campus safety. In addition to hosting another event, the commission plans to explore this issue in more detail to see if there are any opportunities for improving safety on campus.

Finally, we want to re-start the conversation regarding pay equity. This has been an issue we have kept in the conversation but have not made a priority because it is clearly difficult to address. The obvious lack of resources is recognized as is the challenge in measuring comparable performance within jobs as well as comparable worth across job categories. However, despite the challenges, it is the commission's intention to begin a serious conversation about this issue and see if we can facilitate in overcoming some of these difficulties.

In closing, I want to thank you for your support of this commission. I served on the steering committee to investigate the need for the commission and have completed my three year term as chair. I am thankful for the opportunity to have worked with you, the Provost and a wonderful group of women who are committed to the women contributing every day to the successes of the University of Arkansas. While I am sorry to leave this group, Kathryn Huddler has agreed to serve as the next chair, and I am excited to see the continued work of this terrific group and to offer my services if I can be of help in the future.

Thanks again,
Amy