

# University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Ten-Year Plan to Address Women's Issues

## Introduction

### ***Background***

In September 1998, UW System President Kathryn Lyall formed a 29-person ad hoc Committee to study the status of women on campuses throughout the System. President Lyall asked Betsy Draine, Associate Vice Chancellor, UW Madison, and Vicki Lord Larson (UW Oshkosh Provost from 1994-2000) to co-chair that Committee. Between October 1998 and October 1999, the Committee gathered information from several sources: statistical data through the Office of Policy Analysis and Research, a mail survey to a sample of University constituents, focus groups at each UW institution, and a poll of Chancellors to identify best practices. The UW System Report on the Status of Women was the culmination of the Committee's yearlong effort.

### ***Major Areas***

The Committee's findings provided broad direction for individual campus efforts within five major areas:

1. Educational Opportunities for Women Students
2. Hiring, Promotion and Retention of Women Faculty, Academic Staff, and Classified Staff
3. The Learning and Working Environment
4. Balancing Work and Personal Life
5. Organizational Structure

### ***The Process***

As required by the UW System plan, the Provost's Office appointed a Task Force on Women's Issues to develop the University's ten-year plan to address women's issues on the UW Oshkosh campus. The Task Force was composed of faculty, academic staff, classified staff, and students. In response to the UW System mandate, the Task Force identified goals, objectives, and initiatives around the five major areas. The charge to the Task Force was to:

- Review (individually) the UW System Status of Women Report (Summer, 2000)
- Develop a ten-year Plan (goals, objectives, and initiatives) for each of the five major areas (September-November, 2000)
- Disseminate the Ten-year Plan to governance groups for feedback (November-December, 2000)
- Revise and submit the Ten-year Plan to the Provost's Office (January, 2001)
- Provide an initial overview to the implementation committee (to be formed in Spring, 2001)

The Task Force met in September to receive its charge, to form five subgroups to establish goals, objectives and initiatives around each of the major areas, and to identify a process for completing its work to meet the UW System time line. Subgroups, formed based on interests of the Task Force members, met during October and provided their preliminary drafts to the full Task Force at its November 14-15 meetings. Members provided input on format and content. A draft of an integrated Plan was prepared and shared with Chancellor Wells and Acting Provost Mocker. The Plan was shared with governance groups in February 2001.

***Relationship of the Ten-Year Plan to University Mission and Goals***

Several direct and indirect connections exist to the University's 1998 planning efforts. First, Goal C - Human Resource Development strives to enhance professional development, employee empowerment, and individual wellness of all University personnel. Second, Goal D - Diversity emphasizes the need to heighten sensitivity to gender issues. Third, Goal E - Campus Community encourages a strong sense of a caring and supportive community. Finally, Goal F - Student Support promotes a strong educational, cultural, and social supportive environment for students.

***Executive Summary of Recommended Actions***

The UW Oshkosh Task Force on Women's Issues developed several goals, objectives, and initiatives around five major areas identified in the UW System Report on the Status of Women. The following table summarizes and integrates the more detailed information that is provided in the next section (see "Recommended Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives").

Table 1. Integrative Summary of Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives Across Five Major Areas to Address Women's Issues

| <b>GOAL, OBJECTIVE, OR INITIATIVE</b>                       | <b>SPECIFIC TOPIC(S)</b>  | <b>INVOLVEMENT</b>                       |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Creating a supportive Climate</b>                        | Open-mindedness, Respect, Acceptance of Diversity and Alternative Lifestyles, Removing Discriminatory Policies and Procedures, Shared Community | Administration, Faculty, Staff, Students |
| <b>Learning/Working Environment and Balancing Work/Life</b> | Programs, Policies, and Procedures--Review Existing to Establish Current Practices; Recommend Changes Based on this Plan                        | Implementation Committee                 |
| <b>Training</b>   | Power, Communication, Individual Differences, Resilience, Conflict Resolution, Critical Incident Management                                     | General Campus Community                 |
| <b>Training</b>   | Leadership, Stress Management   | Women Students, Faculty, and Staff       |
| <b>Training</b>   | Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policies/Procedures  | Decision Making Individuals and Groups   |

# University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Ten-Year Plan to Address Women's Issues

## Summary of Recommended Goals, Objectives and Initiatives

### ***Overview***

The goals, objectives, and initiatives identified below provide guidance for the collection of baseline data, determination of University strengths and weaknesses, and creation of near-term and long-term plans. As such, the goals, objectives and initiatives assume neither deficiencies nor strengths of the University's existing units, plans, and programs.

The following five areas have been ordered to reflect the sequence in which they should be undertaken and progress from general to specific. For example, while several activities may occur simultaneously, creation of an Implementation Committee must occur before other broad and specific issues can be addressed. The Implementation Committee will coordinate an appropriate timeline based upon resources and logical sequencing of activities. UW System dollars for multi-year support to achieve any of the following goals should be pursued as the Implementation Committee proceeds with planning. (These activities are assumed to be continual, ongoing endeavors to be undertaken as soon as possible, except where noted below\*.)

Responsibilities for fostering a positive campus climate permeate all levels in the University. The Chancellor, Provost and College Deans set the tone for the entire campus by providing the leadership that builds a sense of shared community for students, faculty, and staff. Administration has the responsibility to establish/implement equitable policies and to make inclusive statements/endorse initiatives for women; people of color; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals. University faculty and staff have the responsibility to encourage activities and initiatives that develop open-mindedness, respect and acceptance of diversity and alternative styles of life. Students have the responsibility to foster a sense of shared community among students in academic and non-academic (Residential Hall) settings.

### ***Organizational Structure: Implementation Committee***

Creation of a standing Implementation Committee (hereinafter referred to as "Committee") is a key component of the Plan. Immediate formation of the Committee is necessary to ensure appropriate leadership and coordination of the processes of investigation, advisement, and review of University programs to accomplish the goals, objectives, and initiatives of the Plan. The Committee would be composed of appointed and voluntary representatives (i.e., faculty, academic staff, classified staff, students, community representatives) and reports directly to the Chancellor.

In fulfilling the Charge, the Committee will ensure that:

1. The Plan's goals, objectives, and initiatives are infused into the existing University structure.
2. A learning and working environment characterized by open-mindedness, respect, and acceptance of diversity and alternative styles of life replace any vestiges of a University culture that includes policies, procedures and processes that have the potential to discriminate against women.
3. The Chancellor sets the tone by which administrators, supervisors, and department chairs are held accountable for building a sense of shared community for women students, faculty, and staff.
4. Programs and forums are provided to accomplish the goals, objectives, and initiatives of the Plan, in conjunction with existing offices, programs, and committees:
  - a. Affirmative Action office
  - b. College and Department personnel committees
  - c. Counseling Center (student services)
  - d. Employee Assistance Program (faculty and staff services)
  - e. Facilities planning
  - f. Health place
  - g. Residence halls
  - h. Science outreach
  - i. Student Health Center
  - j. Women and Science program
  - k. Women's studies program
5. Ideas are welcomed and suggestions are routed to those who have the resources and capacity to develop new programs.
6. Funds (e.g., state and federal governments, UW System, surrounding community) to support programs are solicited and obtained.
7. Planned programs for women students, faculty, and staff are reviewed, monitored, and evaluated.
8. Administration and governance groups are kept informed of the development, monitoring and evaluation of programs for women students, faculty and staff.

The Chair of the Committee would:

- Serve as a liaison with UW System Administration
- Serve as a member of the UW System Committee on the Status of Women
- Develop a UW Oshkosh advocacy program for supporting individuals who are faced with family/personal and learning/working environment issues.

## ***Learning and Working Environment***

The learning and working environment should be more welcoming to women, especially women of color and women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. The goal is to reduce the sense of isolation, marginalization, and disempowerment experienced by women students, faculty, and staff. Such a learning and working environment fosters equality, cultivates and supports the unique contributions of all women, and actively seeks diverse views and women's initiatives.

1. Provide Workshops, Forums, Training
  - a. Develop Workshops, forums and/or training for administrators, supervisors, directors, and faculty designed to improve the learning and working environment for women, women of color specifically and LGBT people. Topics would include: Power, Communication, Difference, Resilience, Conflict Resolution
  - b. Infuse awareness and sensitivity training in academic and non-academic gatherings involving students, faculty and staff to improve the learning and working environment for women.
  - c. Develop leadership training and retraining opportunities for women students, faculty, and staff
    - i. Faculty and staff: Orientation, SAFE, EAP, mentoring programs, faculty colleges, Women in Science, WWHEL, Faculty Development Program, and UTLG Grants
    - ii. Students: Curriculum Infusion Counseling Center and Residence Hall Programs.
2. Strengthen the University System for Response to (and Reporting of) Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Violence
  - a. Provide a system that is viewed by students, faculty and staff view as respectful, responsive, fair and effective. Review the campus system for reporting and responding to discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence. \*To be implemented by year 2
  - b. Increase training for supervisors, faculty and staff about the Sexual Harassment Resource Group. Train supervisors about discrimination, early signs of discrimination, the need and responsibility to report discrimination, avenues for reporting discrimination, and University Policy. \*To be implemented by year 2
3. Provide a System for Supporting Women Facing Learning/Work Environment Issues
  - a. Recruit volunteers to serve as advocates/ombuds for women on campus (refer to responsibilities of the Implementation Committee Chair, in **Organizational Structure: Implementation Committee**, above). \*To be implemented by year 2
  - b. Establish a University Women's Center and ensure it has the funding, space, and staff to provide resources to meet student, faculty, and staff needs
  - c. Encourage wellness activities for women students, faculty, and staff with consideration for women facilities during remodeling activities.

#### 4. Ensure Safety and Security.

- a. Initiatives should be supported by the Chancellor, Provost and College Deans that set a standard for a safe and healthy campus. Example: The walk for safety, self-defense classes
- b. Review the Workplace Violence Policy to ensure its comprehensiveness; Support its wider publicity among faculty and staff. \*To be implemented by year 2
- c. Continue training, recruiting and readiness of Critical Incident Stress Management Team to provide a supportive environment in the event a tragedy occurs
- d. Review and address deficiencies in lighting, safety of parking areas, emergency communication, and night patrol
- e. Intensify efforts and programs to discourage alcohol and drug abuse among students, faculty and staff, and to stop perpetrators of violence and sexual assault. Examples: Campus for Acquaintance Rape Awareness (CARE) Program, Healthy Choices, Dean of Students, EAP, escort services, Workplace Violence Policy

### **Balancing Work and Personal Life**

The University environment should recognize the importance of balancing work and personal lives. Research has shown that work demands lead to family conflict. Family conflict, in turn, results in lower quality of work. The university recognizes that students and employees have lives outside of the workplace that affect their performance in the university setting. By assuring that students and employees can appropriately address children/family as well as personal needs, workplace performance will be enhanced. Provide university structure/processes and training to individuals to handle stress associated with balancing work and personal life.

#### 1. Identify and Meet Needs for Childcare Services/Access, Adult Caregivers, and Balancing Work and Life Issues for Students, Staff and Faculty.

- a. Develop, administer, analyze and interpret a survey to assess:
  - needs and access issues for childcare by students, faculty, and staff (collaborate with on-campus facility)
  - the extent of the adult caregiver role for students, faculty, and staff (to include support services needed, accessibility, flexibility of work schedule to accommodate, stress management)
  - the blurring of work and personal life (e.g., due to technology)
  - current and potential need for alternative work schedules (e.g., flex-time, job sharing) among faculty and staff

b. Develop a comprehensive plan to address issues identified in this survey, including

- financial support of child or adult care for those in need, expanding budget and staff of campus facility as needed, and/or establishing a network with community agencies
- write applications for state and federal grants, seek donations, and evaluate other funding sources
- offer orientation sessions, panel discussions and seminars featuring people who are effective at balancing child/adult care issue and career/life
- develop support groups among students, faculty, and/or staff

c. Foster a flexible workplace environment to meet the needs of faculty and staff

- assign each College the responsibility for developing a plan that would allow individuals the opportunity to accomplish their job responsibilities while still meeting family responsibilities
- ensure equitable implementation of family leave policies, including access to, as well as, attitudes towards use of family leave policies
- establish classroom policies to recognize missed class days due to student and faculty child/children's illnesses

2. Provide for Domestic Partner Benefits among Faculty and Staff - Establish policies in support of domestic partner benefits

## ***Hiring, Promotion, and Retention of Women***

Administrators and supervisors play a critical role in establishing and therefore changing the "personality" of the University. Initiatives are required to change the culture to promote policies and practices that do not discriminate against women.

### 1. Culture

- a. Develop Required Administrator Training and Increased Administrator Accountability
  - > Develop required training sessions for department chairs and all supervisors on topics including leadership development of those they supervise on: departmental climate, writing position announcements, the hiring process, conducting effective performance reviews, conveying clear job expectations, providing feedback, and ensuring that women are involved in all formal and informal decision-making processes
  - > Hold supervisors accountable for the retention and promotion of women by including retention/promotion of women in supervisors' job descriptions and yearly performance evaluation
  
- b. Increase Administrator, Supervisor, and Campus-wide Awareness of Issues Related to Women
  - > Develop, implement, and use results of an "exit interview" process for all women who leave UW Oshkosh, in order to guide supervisor training
  - > Develop, implement, and use a "retention survey" to gauge the campus climate for women; disseminate results to campus community
  - > Provide department chairs with data on the current distribution of advising and committee workload for both male and female faculty
  - > Provide department chairs with data on the various obstacles women face in achieving tenure, including gender bias on teaching evaluations and in review processes
  - > Implement evaluations of administrators by employees, i.e. 360 feedback
  
- c. Increase Opportunities for Women to Move into Administrative Roles.
  - > Be proactive in identifying potential women leaders within the University.
  - > Develop incentives for women to assume leadership roles
  - > Develop a UW Oshkosh Leadership Training Program including leadership internships and/or job shadowing for

- aspiring women leaders at the faculty, classified staff, and academic staff levels
- > Publicize the UW System Summer Leadership Institute and encourage Department Chairs and Deans to send nominations of potential women leaders to the Chancellor

2. Increase the Pool of Women Applicants for Open Positions, Especially in Fields where Women are underrepresented.

- a. Require departments to work with the University Affirmative Action Director early in the hiring process to increase the number of women in the pool of applicants
- b. Provide workshops for College Deans, Department Chairs, Unit Directors/Supervisors on salary equity for starting salaries for women.
- c. Develop spousal job networks (include Internet site, work with chambers of commerce and other post-secondary institutions in the Fox Valley region)
- d. Develop a "UW Oshkosh Information for Prospective Employees" web page, including links to campus and system initiatives, information about family friendly policies, and links to the spousal job network
- e. Offer an incentive program for the hiring of women in target areas by developing a temporary partial salary support for such hires from a fund managed by the Provost
- f. Update stated institutional policies (i.e. benefits, climate component, job share, extended leaves, etc.) Make these policies more visible to all members of the UW Oshkosh community
- g. Establish tuition reimbursement for spouse and children of employees

3. Improve the Campus Climate and Working Conditions to Increase the Retention of Women (also see "Learning and Working Environment")

- a. Develop and implement a multi-year mentoring program independent of the Colleges and overseen by the Affirmative Action Office (broadly focused, as well as specifically focused on non-traditional fields for women)
- b. Promote tuition reimbursement to provide for increased professional development opportunities for all employees
- c. Equate (across gender) the distribution of advising, committee, and teaching workload (including class preparations and teaching schedules)

- d. Study deeply ingrained processes that can be discriminatory toward women and/or represent obstacles to tenure for women. Consider implementation of written, individualized tenure plans for all faculty
- e. Review and revise the Student Opinion Survey to a form shown to be gender equitable
- f. Increase opportunities for classified staff to move into academic staff positions
- g. Provide greater opportunity for classified staff to participate in the campus community by involvement in committees and programs
- h. Review and revise the current evaluation system for academic staff so that it is more helpful in growing and developing employees
- i. Consider teaching academic staff as applicants for tenure-track positions
- j. Improve the orientation to the university for academic and classified staff
- k. Develop and implement awards and recognition for classified and academic staff (e.g., senior lecturer status, multi-year contracts). Identify obstacles to using these types of awards
- l. Establish a minimum "living wage" for academic staff; ensure salary equity across men's and women's wages
- m. Develop programs to help classified staff grow and develop new skills
- n. Develop career paths and professional development opportunities for academic staff, classified staff, and part-time employees

#### 4. Obtain UW System Support for Long-term Issues

- a. Work with the UW System on a better process for promotion and reclassification of classified staff positions
- b. Review and equate salary, promotion, title, and evaluation with men in equal positions for classified and academic staff
- c. Promote changes in UW System civil service structure so that classified staff can be compensated in relation to performance, and so that career ladders for classified staff can be created

## ***Expand Educational Opportunities for Women Students***

The University currently supports its own Science Outreach Program and hosts the UW System Women and Science Program. The University Women and Science Ad Hoc Committee serves as a liaison between students and faculty members by supporting a floor devoted to women majoring in math and science at the undergraduate level. In addition the Women's Studies minor is the oldest in the state. While scholarships are available for women, they are limited.

### 1. Increase the Number of Women in Non-traditional Fields

- a. Recruit faculty/staff to serve as role models in sciences and computer sciences
- b. Regularly review parity among men and women athletics, facilities, and encouragement toward participation in athletics

### 2. Increase the Number of Women Seeking Advanced Educational Opportunities

- a. Develop scholarship programs for low-income women to promote educational opportunities as an alternative to welfare
- b. Replicate active outreach efforts to women students
- c. Offer workshops to introduce women faculty, staff and students to changing technology (i.e., encourage instructors to require computer based assignments and hands on training sessions)
- d. Increase the search for new funding sources for merit based financial scholarships available to all students (including international)
- e. Drawing on models developed by the technical colleges, develop pre-college programs for nontraditional adult women including women of color who are potential students
- f. Publicize on-campus events (e.g., weekly e-mail notices on University homepage).

### 3. Encourage Growth of the Women's Studies Program

- a. Develop a Women's Studies Major.
- b. Increase Program funding to pay for release time and/or develop formal joint appointments for faculty to teach women's studies courses.