

REPORT OF THE AD HOC TASK FORCE ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Introduction

This Task Force was appointed by the Provost to “develop an Annual Action Plan to assist more women at Georgia State University to be prepared for senior positions in academic administration.” We were further instructed that the Action Plan “should indicate the responsible committees/persons to implement the plan.” Since the Task Force includes people from all sectors of the University - administrative and academic - we have read the charge to include all these areas and have conducted discussions about advancement in both fields. Our report is divided into the following sections: (1) Leadership; (2) Discussion; (3) Recommendations; (4) Implementation.

Leadership

The role of leadership in advancing women in administrative roles at Georgia State University is decisive. In order to increase the number of women in administrative positions at Georgia State University, the President and the Provost must act upon their commitment to this goal. A strong public statement of this commitment is important and to be effective it must be reinforced by action, by the dedication of resources - - money and time - - to the effort. These are the important resources at any university and must accompany the words for them to have any meaning.

Without the leadership of the President and Provost, none of the goals of this initiative can be achieved. The commitment by the President and Provost must be continual, and must involve holding accountable leaders at the vice presidential, dean and department head levels.

Discussion

This section highlights the issues that provide the context for the recommendations, which follow; these include recruitment, mentoring and climate. With respect to recruiting more women into senior administrative positions, we are not mentoring a sufficient number of our junior and middle level women to make them viable candidates for senior positions. Also, we are not recruiting women effectively, and are not being imaginative enough in the way we are looking at candidates. The definition of administrative positions, both in terms of specific duties and of how they are situated within the existing administrative structure, may not be perceived as desirable by qualified women candidates. In presenting our Report, we are aware that others in the University are also addressing these issues. For example, the work of the InGEAR Project (Integrating Gender Equity and Reform) should prove especially helpful on all these issues.

In addressing recruitment, the Task Force assumes that hiring authorities come to their task with good will but may be unaware of the different networks and strategies required to assure an adequate pool containing women candidates. We believe that education of the relevant search committees and hiring authorities about recruitment techniques is important.

Position announcements may inadvertently list requirements that have a disparate impact on women. An example of this is the requirement for the successful candidate to have experience on certain committees, which have traditionally lacked female representation, not because women are uninterested in the work of the committees but rather because for historical or other reasons they are not considered for membership. Thus, these types of criteria restrict the advancement of women. Therefore, we urge that when an administrative position becomes available, careful thought be given to the criteria listed so that they do not have a disparate impact on women. The Glass Ceiling Commission, appointed by President Bush to examine this problem in the corporate world suggested the following in its 1995 Report:

Traditional prerequisites and qualifications for senior management and board of director positions focus too narrowly on conventional sources and experiences. The commission recommends that organizations expand their vision and seek candidates from non-customary sources, backgrounds and experiences, and that the executive recruiting industry work with businesses to explore ways to expand the universe of qualified candidates.

With respect to the recruitment process itself, it is important to make sure at the outset that the procedures used to develop a pool of candidates are as inclusive as possible. We are aware that the University has procedures in place to ensure widespread advertising, but it may be important to explore informal networks to which women candidates may be more responsive. The hiring authority must make clear at the outset of a search that the process must be designed to develop a pool of candidates that is as inclusive as possible, assuring that women are given every opportunity to apply for the job. Training should be provided for search committees to assist them in designing the process. The hiring authority should also make clear that the search will not be closed until he or she is assured that the process leading to the preparation of the list of candidates for final selection was as inclusive as possible. In order to ensure that this happens some corporate chief executive officers and university presidents have gone to the extent of returning any list that contains only white men for further search work. Unless the hiring authority makes clear that the final decision will not be made until he or she is convinced that the development of the pool was as inclusive as possible, hiring sources will be too limited.

We believe it is very important for both recruitment and retention that the culture in the various departments, areas and colleges at Georgia State University provide comfortable environments and structures in which women are able to grow and prosper as administrators. A survey instrument on cultural climate issues, acceptable to both the Provost's Office and the Senate Committee on Cultural Diversity, should be developed and administered as soon as possible. The results should be reported to the Senate Committee on Cultural Diversity; with follow-up recommendations incorporated in future University Action Plans.

With respect to putting more women in positions to be able to undertake senior administrative roles, we believe that there are two initiatives, which should be undertaken. These will be described more fully below but need mention here. The first is training - providing opportunities for potential women administrators to

be exposed to the training for administrators that is available nationwide, as well as developing our own campus-based training program. The second is mentoring. It is important for department chairs and others who supervise women who could be candidates for higher office to understand the important role of mentoring, of exposing these women to various administrative career options and more importantly, significant skills, like handling budgets or filling positions. It is important that more experienced academics or administrators consciously guide junior women in their career paths.

Women faculty and administrators bear a special burden of heavy committee and advising assignments. These are sometimes called “the cultural tax” imposed on women faculty members and staff. These assignments involve such women in activities, which do not enhance their careers as such, but rather engage them in much heavier committee work and student advising than their male counterparts. Many times women need additional information about types of assignments that are valuable as they strive to meet their career goals. Therefore, we recommend that workload policies be examined both to assure that valuable experiences for women are included and to determine whether those workload policies have a disparate impact on women.

When there are senior women, their colleagues must be aware of the special burdens they bear, especially when they perform their vital roles as mentors and role models. Again, this should be done with caution and care, with workload adjustments to ensure that the individuals thus mentored are encouraged and enabled to meet the other duties and expectations placed on them. Never should it be done as a way to transfer administrative burdens from an administrator to the one who is allegedly being mentored.

At the University we have a structure, which provides a limited number of administrative positions as compared to that of other similar institutions. We do not argue that the University’s current administrative structure should be abandoned, but rather that in the continual review of these structures, the possible disparate impact of such structural changes on the career paths of women be considered.

Many of the initiatives recommended in this Report are gender neutral. Although women may have been more aware of the need for the recommended reforms, they are healthy, “family friendly” policies that are being considered nationally. The recommendations that follow suggest ways to address the concerns raised in this Section. We would suggest that in implementing these recommendations, the work of the InGEAR Project be considered.

Recommendations

The Recommendations section is organized as follows:

- A. Recruitment
- B. Career Development, including mentoring, education, and training
- C. University Policies, including workload and leave policies
- D. Data Collection and Reporting

A. Recruitment

1. Effective training should be conducted for hiring officials and search committees. Such training should include information about recruitment techniques, position description development, and alternative networks which would help to assure that the pool of candidates is as diverse as possible. This training should also include effective ways to recruit executive level women and techniques of evaluation that help to ensure inclusiveness.
2. University leaders should have the opportunity for training to broaden their understanding of the skills and experience developed in the non-traditional career ladders that women frequently utilize; many times women have found it necessary to use these paths when there is a lack of opportunity to utilize the more traditional paths.
3. Current recruitment forms such as the Interview Checklist, should be expanded to include an assessment of an individual's participation in training programs such as those described below, as well as "non traditional" experiences that research shows are often a normal, important and beneficial part of many successful females' professional development.
4. Exit interviews with female department chairs, associate deans, deans, directors, assistant vice presidents and vice presidents should be offered as they leave Georgia State University. These interviews should be offered by the appropriate dean or vice president. The Office of Affirmative Action should also be alerted to such departures and should then offer an exit interview with the exiting women. Similarly, a woman who is offered a position, but declines such an offer, should be given the opportunity to discuss her decision with the hiring official. Such information would assist the University in becoming alert to possible climate issues. This information should be compiled in order that long-range planning and short-term intervention can be implemented to address any serious issues, which are raised.
5. The Task Force recognizes that there are positive values that attract women to Georgia State University. The University should capture this information in a survey. This information would aid managers as they ponder effective ways to attract women to positions within their departments.

B. Career Development, including mentoring, education and training

6. Any inequities in the distribution of support for research or other professional activities that may be relevant in the administrative area among women and men who are at the middle level of their careers, or whatever level is appropriate to start preparing them for administrative positions, should be addressed immediately. The extra burden of committee work and advising which often falls on women, discussed above, must be taken into account when released time or support for research is made available.
7. The University should provide an internal workshop organized around administrative themes for ten to twenty junior to mid-level persons from both the academic side and the administrative side. This internal seminar could be led by a different person each month and include such topics as student affairs, budgets, academic freedom and tenure. In addition it would be helpful to provide programs for potential senior administrators on topics such as “Setting appropriate boundaries in the workplace,” “Managing the dual career family,” “Time management for personal and career balance,” “Thriving in a commuter marriage,” and “Working with search firms.”
8. It is important that the University participate in various national endeavors including, but not limited to, the American Council on Education Fellowship in Academic Administration, Bryn Mawr’s Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration and training programs like that at Harvard, which occur in the summer. These will not only provide substantive skills for prospective leaders but will also introduce our talented members to new networks and other organizations.
9. A commitment to women who want to continue their education should be seen as an investment. We have received reports of women administrators at Georgia State University who express the desire to obtain higher level degrees and training but are not supported in their requests to do so. Financial commitments and flexibility in work schedules would demonstrate such commitment.
10. In the administrative areas, career opportunity ladders should be developed that would afford women the opportunity to gain experience that is required for the next higher level position. Perhaps an incremental “step system” would accommodate this endeavor.
11. An internal mentoring program modeled after the Research Office Mentoring Program should be developed and validated by the President and Provost. Mentors should be identified and provided with resources to be successful at this function; such resources would include training in Effective Mentoring. In addition to mentoring junior people, both academic and administrative, there should be one-to-one mentoring for two senior women each year, with released time and resources to learn key administrative functions in the University System of Georgia. Male and female mentors should be identified for this initiative.
12. A larger supply of women who hold senior rank is a prerequisite to recruiting women into academic

administration. Georgia State University should reward and encourage senior faculty and administrators to mentor faculty in different, but related, disciplines that may have very few senior members. There is particular concern about faculty in disciplines and administrative areas that are predominantly female, (>75%) or those in fields in which women are chronically under-represented. For example, female-dominated faculty areas tend to have fewer senior faculty at the rank of Professor or Research Professor, they tend to have a greater percentage of part-time and non-tenure track faculty, and the disciplines tend to be struggling nationally with establishing scholarship that is accepted through traditional methods of academic scrutiny. Interdisciplinary mentoring is critical to overcoming barriers in these fields.

C. University Policies

13. The Senate Policy on Limitation on Tenure-Eligible Service should be expanded to cover all aspects of the Family and Medical Leave Act. This would permit faculty the option of stopping their tenure clock to care for sick parents or other family emergencies.
14. Senior leadership of the University should be conscious that the demands of upward mobility affect family life. The rigors of achieving senior faculty or administrative status combined with the stress of acquiring additional skills to ensure upward mobility can deter potential administrators with families. Examples of ameliorative measures include: (a) examine the timing of events that require administrative presence outside of the week-day, to see if the objectives of the event can be successfully achieved during the work week; (b) offer child care during University events that occur outside the work week; (c) continue to invite and welcome family members of administrators to University functions.
15. The President and Provost's commitment to the advancement of women at Georgia State University should be demonstrated by incorporating in their annual assessment of each manager's performance (deans, department heads, etc.) his or her success in recruiting, retaining and promoting women. This assessment should be reflected in the University's reward system. As was noted recently:

"We can alter the rewards within institutions so that those who staff the gateways are motivated to recognize and support female and male leaders equally." Virginia Valian, Professor, Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center.

D. Data Collection and Reporting

16. The Provost should assure that there is an annual report providing data about the advancement of women at Georgia State University. At a minimum, the Office of Institutional Research in conjunction with the Affirmative Action Office should track in each college and administrative division (1) the percentages of women at the chair, director, dean, and vice presidential levels, (2)

the percentages of women hired into the University, along with the percentages not interviewed and/or not hired for each position (3) the percentages of women promoted, (4) the percentages of women receiving internal research awards and professional leaves, and (5) the percentages of women in the Senate and in Senate leadership positions. It was suggested that with respect to item (2), the use of an adverse impact analysis be explored. All of the data should indicate minority status as well. The results should be appended annually to the Action Plan of the University Strategic Plan, similar to the current reporting of internal grants by unit.

17. A survey instrument on cultural climate issues, acceptable to both the Provost's Office and the Senate Committee on Cultural Diversity should be developed and administered as soon as possible.

Implementation

It is important that responsibility for implementation of the Recommendations made in this Report be placed at as high a level as possible. In this University, that is the President and Provost, who should assume responsibility for its implementation. We recommend that at the end of the coming academic year, the President and Provost make a report to this Task Force on the progress made on these initiatives. In the spirit of a continual effort, annual reports should follow, and the Task Force should update its recommendations each year, if necessary, based on the reported progress.

May 1999

Ad Hoc Task Force on the Advancement of Women

Marjorie Fine Knowles, Professor of Law, Chair
Ellen Adams, Comptroller, GSU Foundation
Lauren Adamson, Associate Dean, Arts & Sciences
Evelyn Babey, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services
Linda Bell, Director, Women's Studies Institute
Yezdi Bhada, Associate Provost for Academic Services
Roberta K. Byrum, Comptroller
Sandra Carnet, Director, University Relations & Creative Services
Paula Dressel, Professor, Department of Sociology
Irene Duhaime, Carl R. Zwerner Professor, Management
Linda Nelson, Director, Affirmative Action
Phyllis Ruscella, Associate University Librarian for Public Service
Robert Sattelmeyer, Chair, Department of English
Karen Schultz, Associate Dean, Education
Paula Stephan, Associate Dean, School of Policy Studies
Eloise Stiglitz, Director, Counseling Center
Maria Valeri-Gold, Associate Professor, Academic Foundations
Carol Winkler, Chair, Department of Communication
Bea Yorker, Professor, School of Nursing