

COSOW (Committee on the Status of Women) Report to Faculty Council

March 2021

Committee Membership

Co-Chairs:

- Misha Becker (Linguistics)
- Elizabeth Dickinson (Business)

Members:

- Karen Booth (Women & Gender Studies)
- Ana Felix (Medicine)
- Ayesha Hashim (Education)
- Valerie Lewis (Health Policy and Management)
- Kenya McNeal-Trice (Medicine)
- Brent Wissick (Music)

Non-voting Members:

- Stephanie Forman (Employee Forum Rep, Public Health)
- Maria Ramirez Perez, GPSF representative (Public Health)
- Gloria Thomas (Carolina Women’s Center Director)

Committee Charge

“The Committee addresses ongoing concerns of women faculty members, identifies obstacles to achievement and maintenance of equality in the representation and status of women on the faculty, and proposes steps for overcoming these obstacles.” (Faculty Code, 4-22)

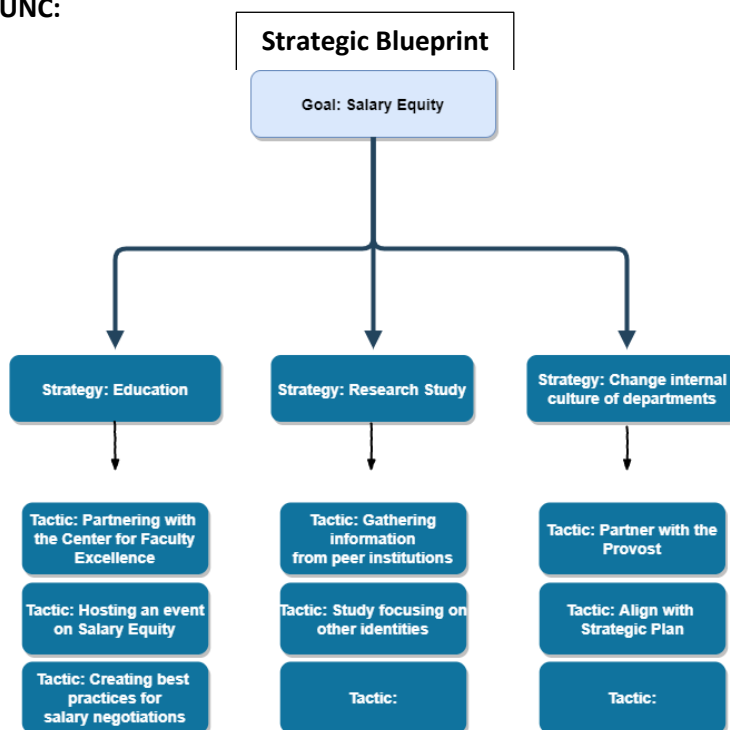
Report of Activities for 2020-21

1. Update: COSOW’s Study of Gender and Salary at UNC:

In 2019, COSOW conducted the study, “Re-analysis of Gender Pay Inequity at UNC-CH.” Following this study the committee’s biggest effort has been to identify clear goals, and specific strategies and tactics to achieve those goals.

As the chart to the right shows, we hope to provide a wide-spread educational strategy to help educate administration, departmental chairs, and faculty members on the various mechanisms at play that influence how faculty are paid.

Meetings with the Provost in 2018 and 2019 had been productive. But, efforts to make real progress were waylaid by the pandemic. At a follow-up meeting in November 2020, committee co-chairs discussed a new salary



analysis draft provided by Lynn Williford of the UNC Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), which indicated marginal improvements in female faculty salaries. It was unclear what led to those small gains, and it was clear that no additional funding would be made available to assist department chairs in rectifying existing pay discrepancies. We have not yet received the final study by the OIRA office.

As another example, the Provost and we have suggested that, to help change internal culture, new faculty lines should be linked to progress in pay equity, such as withholding new lines if no progress has been made or inequities have not been corrected. As of yet, we are unable to assess what funds for faculty lines have been restricted/withheld.

We continue to gather data from other institutions and monitor salary inequity at UNC. For example, over the summer, Misha Becker gathered information from the [Athena Swan Charter](#).

2. **Other Topics:** In addition to salary equity, COSOW has addressed and discussed the following topics:
 - A. **Caregiving:** An issue that has been brought to the fore by the pandemic is the disproportionate impact that caregiving duties have had on women’s ability to work and make progress in their research and careers. While these duties have historically fallen to women (and impeded their progress compared to men), school and daycare closures, combined with increased family illness due to Covid-19, have exacerbated the negative impact during an already enormously stressful time. Two COSOW members, Gloria Thomas and Misha Becker, have joined the Caregiving Work Group convened by the Chair of the Faculty, to study currently available options for caregiving support at UNC and at other institutions, and to identify what additional support is needed for faculty, staff, and student caregivers at UNC. This remains a critical issue as we continue to deal with the pandemic and its many challenges.
 - B. **Exit Interviews:** In March we invited Adele Mayfield from Employee and Management Relations to speak to us about what UNC is currently doing to survey faculty and staff who leave about why they are leaving. We brainstormed with Adele about how to increase participation in the exit interview process (currently only 14% of employees who leave complete the survey, and virtually no faculty), and the reasons for low participation (distrust of HR).

3. **Provost Meeting (November 2020):**

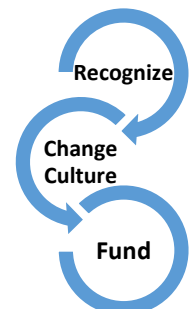
As mentioned above, following up our brainstorming meetings with Provost Blouin in 2019-20, Misha Becker and Elizabeth Dickinson again met with Provost Blouin to address inequity issues faced by UNC women faculty (and also faculty of color). As before, we focused on three components: recognize, change culture, and fund.

No progress has been made since this time last year.

What follows below is a recap of the work COSOW has done thus far.

A. RECOGNIZE the Issue by Adding to UNC’s Strategic Plan: Achieving faculty salary equity across gender and racial/ethnic groups is integral to several new strategic plan initiatives:

1. **Build community together:** In Kevin Guskiewicz’s words, “make diversity real; don’t wait to make changes.” If we’re to build community together, we need to recognize the inherent benefits of diversity (to the university and to its constituencies). Saying we’ll treat all university community members fairly is a necessary first step.



2. **Promote career development:** Promote female faculty at the same pace as male faculty; provide equitable mentoring and opportunities and resources for all faculty (regardless of gender, race, ethnic, etc).
3. **Renew democracy:** A democratic institution succeeds when there is equity. When it fails, there isn't.
4. **Serve to benefit society:** We can be a beacon and trend setter within the UNC system, universities, and larger society about what equity looks like and how it's done.
5. **Optimize operations:** Community members are more productive and more likely to work for the betterment of the community when they are compensated and promoted fairly. Also, the current system of faculty retention is extremely sub-optimal.

➔ **Takeaway: Recognition** by the administration that salary equity is a necessary ingredient in making the strategic plan successful is key to fostering cultural change.

B. CHANGE CULTURE via Education: Lack of Knowledge & Understanding: Many advocate for faculty diversity and salary equity. But, the fact that women faculty at UNC are still paid less than men at all ranks, and the fact that women are still promoted at a slower pace than men, shows that not everyone is on board or understands the complexity.

We're All a Part of the Problem: Life-long beliefs and assumptions about people affect how we think and decide. Every administrator who weighs in on faculty salaries, from the Chancellor to department chairs, should be encouraged to participate in a carefully planned educational program to help us understand how we are all a part of the problem and how to address it. General ideas:

1. First, **educate any administrators** who are involved in faculty salaries and/or retention, including the provost, dean of the college, all divisional SADs and SADs otherwise involved in finance and allocation of resources to faculty.
2. Second, administrators can help **get the chairs on board**, having participated themselves.
3. **Use UNC faculty with relevant expertise** in critical gender theory, intersectionality, etc. to help inform the workshops. There's so much knowledge among the faculty. Having the workshops be driven in part by the College's own faculty will help make it more palatable.
4. **Pilot** the education
5. Online and mandatory: diversity literature says online and mandatory training are largely problematic.

➔ **Takeaway: Culture Change via Education:** We all have gender biases that affect how we make recruiting, hiring, mentoring, advancement (etc.) decisions. A cultural shift via education needs to happen in order to pave the way for concrete change at step 3.

C. FUND: Dedicate Funding to Erase Existing Salary Inequities

1. We need more information on which departments/units are problematic [Lynn Williford will have more data soon].
2. Guidelines for deans/chairs on best practices, how to implement changes given funds.
3. Make this a part of chairs' annual report?
4. UNC needs to develop a clear policy on faculty retentions (related to step 2 above, in cultural change)
5. Someone needs to be appointed to lead educational workshops (e.g. course release for a relevant faculty person?). For example, can we fund an inexpensive graduate student research assistantship (such as an Economics or Statistics Student) to assist Lynn Williford's research efforts?
6. Source of funds:
 - a. BOG/Legislature

- b. Faculty view administrator salaries as excessively high. Disparity between administrator and faculty salaries creates low faculty morale and distrust. Administrators could forego raises and/or take a small salary cut and divert that money to erasing gender/racial salary inequity (Ex: James Moeser, UNC-CH Chancellor, 2000-2008).

➔ **Takeaway: Funding:** *is needed to address these issues. Budgets are tight, but funding to correct current gaps is necessary. How can we create innovative solutions so that we can be the kind of institution that we say we are (and want to be)?*

Other Considerations: Being a “trend setter” | Transparency | Clear guidelines | Accountability | Positive media attention | Retention & counter offer issues | Family-friendly policies & practices | Tenure clock extensions | Family leave requests | Mentoring | What are other institutions doing?