

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

April 2024

Committee Membership

Co-chairs: Brent Wissick, Milada Vachudova (on-leave Fall 2023)

Members:

Ana Felix (Medicine)

Emily Kounlavong (Graduate Student Rep)*

Kenya-McNeal Trice (Medicine)

Arlene Medder (Employee Forum Rep)*

Allison Metz (Social Work)

Milada Vachudova (Political Science)

Megan Winget (SILS)

Brent Wissick (Music)

Claudia Yaghoobi (Asian/Middle Eastern)

*non-voting member

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 those obstacles

Report of Activities

COSOW held meetings (via Zoom) on September 11, October 9, November 13, December 4 and April 8. Co-chairs Wissick and Vachudova also met in January 2024 to discuss the transition in leadership, as well as topics and goals that have been considered. The committee continued to press the Chancellor's Office throughout the Fall Term 2023 for news about the appointment of a new director of the Carolina Women's Center, and was pleased to finally hear about the appointment of Shauna Harris in December. COSOW is meeting with both Shauna Harris and the assistant director Shelley Gist Kennedy on April 29, 2024 and is looking forward to working closely with them during the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond.

Salary Equity continues to be a concern of the committee, and Misha Becker of the Salary Equity Task Force attended the October meeting to report on their work. This committee looks forward to hearing about the planned Salary/Promotion/Tenure Study to be conducted by Lynn Williford's office. The committee is concerned about ongoing inequities in salaries and also resources in other forms inside units and among faculty across the university.

The recent university policy of only allowing incoming foreign graduate students to obtain F visas is also a concern of the committee. This means that UNC will no longer allow graduate students who are not US citizens to obtain a J visa. Without a J visa, the spouse of a graduate student is not allowed to work. The committee is concerned that this disadvantages married students and spouses, who are more likely to be women. It also may lead to family separation. And there is no question that it undermines Carolina's goals of being a premier global university. COSOW has asked to meet with the vice provost for global affairs, and is also researching what is customary across other R1 universities.

In November, Joy Renner made a request for the Committee on University Government to review the charge of the committee in the Faculty Code. The committee confirmed that charge and it is listed above. The committee feels a continuing affinity with the charge and work of the Fixed Term Faculty Committee, since so many women fall into this category, and wishes to re-establish strong ties with that group. There were no actions taken this year, but COSOW plans to continue its important work in the coming year.