

The Company We Keep:

**Recommendations to Enhance the
Recruitment and Retention of Women
Faculty**



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

A Report to the Provost

**Presented By
The University Committee
on Women Faculty and Students**

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Executive Summary

During the 2007-2008 academic year Associate Provost Donald Pope-Davis charged the University Committee on Women Faculty and Students to recommend ways to improve the recruitment and retention of women faculty. The Committee decided to issue two reports: one to the President that offered recommendations for large-scale projects and another to the Provost that focused on more specific academic issues. This report presents the Committee's recommendations to the Provost in areas we identified as crucial to the recruitment and retention of women faculty.

First, the Committee found that there is not enough information to understand why women faculty decide to leave Notre Dame. We recommend that the University make more systematic efforts to collect annual statistics on tenure and promotion rates and on attrition and retention rates. We ask that the University analyze this data annually and make its findings available to faculty and administrators, and that the University carry out longitudinal studies as well to enable trend analyses. We recommend that the University expand and improve the use of exit interviews as a source of information and that it carry out a "wellness survey" of the faculty to gauge attitudes. Broader and more systematic data collection would provide a deeper understanding of the factors affecting the retention of women faculty and a useful starting point for further discussions.

Notre Dame excels at recruiting women faculty. This provides us with a competitive advantage on which to build for the future. Through discussions with deans and chairs, the Committee developed a list of "best practices" for recruiting women that we request be shared in the deans' and chairs' workshops being organized by the Provost's Office. These include using a "talent scout" model of year-round recruiting and practicing creative hiring strategies such as pre-hires, position upgrades, interdepartmental searches, and searches targeting areas in which many women work. The Committee also recommends educating search committees about ways to address gender during the hiring process. Following the recommendation of the Leadership Council to which Notre Dame belongs, we urge that the Provost charge colleges with developing strategic plans to monitor and track their recruitment of women and hold them accountable for meeting these goals.

Third, the Committee looked in depth at factors affecting the retention of women faculty, since Notre Dame lags its peers in this area. Members identified crucial topics of concern such as mentoring, tenure and promotion, salary and equity, service expectations and quality of life. Most colleges do not have formal, on-going mentoring programs for faculty, so the Committee asks the Provost to encourage them by collecting information about strategies that have succeeded and sharing these ideas in deans' and chairs' workshops. The Committee also outlines specific requests for various stages of the tenure and promotion process that we hope will enhance the transparency, clarity and consistency of these procedures. Written annual reviews, accessible CAP documents, and timely communication about tenure and promotion would help both faculty and administrators. Differences in salary and resources also motivate many women faculty to look for jobs elsewhere. The Committee requests that the Provost conduct a market study of salaries at AAU privates to ensure that Notre Dame remains competitive in its compensation practices. To help maintain equity, chairs and deans might be provided with guidelines or frameworks for making salary adjustments and for making decisions in retention cases as well. Keeping track of broader patterns within and between colleges will also help bring inequities to light.

Finally, the Committee discussed the increasing service expectations for women faculty and concluded that, while the University needs the service women provide, it does not always recognize or reward these contributions. We ask that the Provost's office explore ways to compensate senior faculty for extraordinary service through, for example, one semester leaves and that it expect candidates for promotion to full to have performed significant, high-quality service in addition to outstanding research and teaching. The Committee also identified two issues relating to quality of life on campus--meeting times and parking--which, though perhaps less serious, have a strong impact on faculty productivity and contentment. We also ask that the University clarify its policy on part-time and full-time options for women on the tenure-track.

The Committee welcomes this opportunity to share its findings with the Provost's Office and stands ready to assist the Provost in implementing these recommendations.

**Membership of the Committee on Women Faculty and Students
2007-2008**

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I. Data Collection and Dissemination

Most universities annually gather data on hiring trends and the percentage of female faculty by rank and report them to appropriate parties. The Office of Institutional Equity performs this function at Notre Dame. We urge the Provost to ensure that each college and department participates in its work. In addition, we urge the Provost to expand and improve the collection and analysis of data through the following strategies, so that we can gain a better understanding of the situation of female faculty at Notre Dame and why women choose to leave.

Ia. Systematic and regular collection and dissemination

Systematically collect annual statistics by gender, race, and rank on: tenure and promotion rates, attrition rates, retention rates, responses to retention offers, and the numbers of offers extended to women candidates but declined.

Add longitudinal studies of faculty retention, by tracking faculty in cohorts over longer periods of time, to reveal broader patterns of retention.

Require departments and colleges to provide this data annually.

Analyze the data for trends and patterns and make these findings available to deans, chairs, and other administrators, where appropriate, in an annual “state of affairs” report. In some aggregate form, data should also be available to faculty, perhaps on a password-protected website. This serves the goals of transparency and accountability and enhances communication about gender issues within the University.

Retain as much historical data as possible, given changing computer systems, to enable longitudinal comparisons and trend analyses.

Benchmark with other institutions to ensure that Notre Dame remains competitive with its peers.

Ib. Exit interviews

It is difficult to know why women decide to leave Notre Dame for other positions. Exit interviews provide one way of analyzing the motivations behind this decision. While there has been some effort to conduct exit interviews either in person or online, these efforts seem to be sporadic. The information they reveal has not been stored or analyzed for broader trends over time. Faculty express doubts that the information they provide will be used. We ask that the Provost's Office:

Explore ways to encourage departing faculty to complete an exit interview or online survey. Perhaps the new Assistant Provost for Women Faculty could be available for in-person exit interviews at the Provost's level.

Require that colleges make available to faculty who are leaving the University various options for completing an exit survey, such as by talking with someone in their college, the Provost's Office or the OIE, and/or by completing an online survey.

Reinstate a detailed online survey instrument at the institutional level. Include questions on the survey that both collect numerical data for comparison and allow for more open-ended and detailed expression of the faculty member's thoughts and experiences.

Analyze the data to learn specific reasons why faculty choose to leave (salary, promotion, desire to work with graduate students, "better" school or more desirable location, spousal placement, attitude towards Notre Dame's Catholic mission, etc.) in order to uncover broader trends and patterns and determine which ones Notre Dame can address.

Disseminate this information annually, in aggregate form, to deans, department chairs, and search committees, where appropriate, as well as to the UCWFS, and store the data for longitudinal comparisons.

Ic. "Wellness" survey of faculty

The recent "ND Voice" survey yielded useful information about staff concerns and perspectives. We ask that the Provost's Office and the OIE work with the UCWFS to carry out a similar survey for faculty, designed to gauge attitudes about research support, experience of and desire for mentoring, the social and intellectual climate at Notre Dame, unmet child care needs, and other issues. Such a survey would provide a snapshot of faculty concerns and a useful starting point for further discussions.

II. Recruitment

Though Notre Dame lags its peers in the number of senior women faculty, the University has done well in recruiting at the assistant professor level. Committee members gleaned the following list of “best practices” through discussions with department chairs and deans who have worked hard to identify and hire outstanding women. We ask that these practices be shared in the Provost’s planned training workshops with deans and department chairs.

IIa. Year-round Recruiting: A “talent scout” model

Efforts to recruit female faculty should not be limited to the few months when individual job searches take place. Departments that have succeeded in expanding their applicant pools recommend a “talent scout” model of recruiting in which faculty members actively seek out colleagues year round. They recommend the following strategies:

Using professional directories, databases, and contacts with senior faculty at peer institutions to identify potential candidates.

Networking with graduate students and junior colleagues at conferences to create awareness of and build interest in Notre Dame.

Building long-term links to professional caucuses, national organizations, interest groups and networks in which female scholars participate.

Working with existing initiatives within Notre Dame that support visiting scholar programs, guest lecture series, and conferences.

Develop visiting scholars and dissertation scholars-in-residence programs in each college to bring outstanding women to campus for longer periods of time.

IIb. Creative hiring strategies

Deans and department chairs have found the following methods helpful for increasing the number of women scholars available to departments:

Pre-hires to replace faculty who may be retiring in a few years.

Position upgrades: increasing the rank of a position if a department searching for a junior line identifies an outstanding senior woman.

Interdepartmental searches: cooperative searches undertaken by two or more departments to identify an outstanding woman candidate who may be housed in any of the participating departments.

Searches with parameters: searches targeting research areas, such as feminist thought, in which many female faculty work.

Iic. Educating search committees

Search committees are the leading representatives of a department during the hiring process, yet there is no systematic effort to educate search committees about the value of diversity and ways to address gender issues during the hiring process. The OIE has compiled a useful handbook of information about diversity/gender issues and recruitment. We ask that search committees be required to use it, and that the Provost's Office and the OIE offer training sessions for search committees, or at a minimum, search committee chairs, to help them develop creative ways to attract competitive applicant pools.

Iid. Information packets

Some departments have in the past given information packets to visiting job candidates. These packets could be used to highlight exciting developments that will improve campus life, such as the new Research Park, the Notre Dame Avenue Housing Program, and the stores, apartments and restaurants of the Eddy Street Development. Including brochures about cultural events and lecture series on campus will demonstrate the vitality of intellectual life at Notre Dame. We recommend that departments consider providing this material to their job candidates to enhance the attractiveness of living in South Bend.

Iie. More robust data collection during searches.

This could include asking departments to track the number of female candidates at each stage of the search process. Departments with a low percentage of women faculty could be asked to explain why top female candidates were not offered jobs.

Iif. Monitor hiring process and results

The Leadership Council recommends that universities that want to improve diversity must charge colleges and departments to develop a strategic plan with specific goals and then monitor execution and results. We ask that an associate dean or other administrator within each college work with the OIE or the Provost's office to analyze hiring trends and report results within the college.

III. Retention

The Committee identified the following areas that its members, other colleagues, and administrators to whom we spoke believe are crucial for retention. They are: mentoring, the tenure and promotion process, salary and equity issues, service expectations, and quality of life issues.

IIIa. Mentoring

Formal mentoring programs. The University has launched several initiatives in this area, with mixed results. Though Arts and Letters has instituted a formal mentoring program for all junior faculty, other colleges do not at this time have on-going programs. The Committee recommends asking faculty and chairs what has worked and what hasn't in a "wellness" survey; compiling a list of best practices; and disseminating these ideas to deans and department chairs. The Committee found that mentoring may be ongoing or occasional, within or across departments and colleges, and need not be gender-specific. We ask that the Provost's Office encourage mentoring programs in each college and provide resources if necessary for cross-college initiatives. We ask that deans and chairs be held accountable for mentoring and that the University recognize the value of mentoring with a service award.

Mentoring within departments. The Committee identified several practices that faculty have found helpful. In some departments, junior faculty present their work to colleagues for constructive discussion. Senior colleagues can help them by recommending journals and identifying outside grant possibilities. Some departments and colleges increase summer research funds for junior faculty, especially pre-renewal, and exert every effort to protect them from excessive service. We ask that these ideas be shared in the deans' and chairs' workshops.

Mentoring for Associate Professors. Most mentoring efforts focus on junior faculty who are still developing research projects and becoming acclimated to the University. We have found, however, that there is a need for senior faculty to mentor associate professors as they retool research agendas after tenure and try to balance increased requests for service with teaching and publishing. The panels offered in Arts and Letters about promotion to full professor present an excellent opportunity for full professors to offer advice to associates. We ask that colleges explore additional ways to mentor associate professors. One possibility would be the institution of formal, periodic reviews of associate professors that would serve to update them on expectations for promotion to full.

IIIb. Tenure and promotion issues

The Academic Articles are being revised to make the procedures for tenure and promotion more transparent. The PAC requires departments to submit their CAP documents along with candidates' packets to ensure that decisions on tenure and promotion reflect disciplinary standards. Some colleges (Arts and Letters and Business) hold bi-annual workshops to help faculty understand the tenure process and the requirements for promotion. The Committee supports these efforts to enhance the transparency, clarity and consistency of these processes and has identified other steps that would increase the retention of female faculty and support the professional development of all faculty.

Consistent, written annual reviews. Annual reviews provide an opportunity for clear and consistent communication between faculty and chairs. Annual reviews should assess candidates' performance in research, teaching, and service and their progress in meeting expectations for tenure and promotion. The annual evaluation process should ideally result in a written document, and written annual reviews should be required in the case of all junior faculty. This is not currently the case in many departments.

Providing chairs with guidelines for annual review discussions. Some chairs have developed a list of possible discussion topics and ideas about the format of annual reviews that have circulated among their colleagues as "best practices." We ask the Provost to encourage chairs to share ideas for structuring faculty reviews that will promote consistency between departments while at the same time respecting their diverse cultures.

Accessible CAP documents. CAP documents should be readily available to faculty on password-protected college and/or department websites. We were astonished to learn that many faculty are afraid to ask for their own departmental CAP documents.

Consistent standards. Currently service is valorized in annual reviews but plays a lesser role in standards for promotion. It would be helpful to align information presented during a faculty member's annual performance review with standards for promotion and tenure, particularly in regard to the role of service at the rank of Associate Professor.

Regular information workshops for chairs and deans on the tenure and promotion process, PAC procedures, and changing criteria for evaluating research, teaching, and service, so that they can communicate this information in a timely fashion to faculty.

Clear and timely communication about tenure and promotion processes. Currently faculty do not know how their case for tenure or promotion is faring until the PAC reaches its decision in the spring. It would be helpful if chairs could inform faculty of the status of their case when it moves out of the Dean's office to the PAC, so that the candidate could make appropriate plans. This practice might stop some faculty from going on the job market "just in case" and thereby improve retention.

IIIc. Salary and Equity Issues

Faculty salaries are private and sensitive matters, yet perceived or actual disparities among them can increase anxiety and tension within departments. Treating faculty equitably does not mean treating them alike, however, as departments recognize that faculty vary in their level of research, teaching, service and commitment and should be rewarded accordingly. The Academic Council established a University Salary Equity Review Committee in November 2003 to carry out an annual qualitative analysis of T&R faculty salaries. In order to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of faculty, the Committee asks that the Provost ensure that this analysis is in fact carried out each year, and in addition, ask departments and colleges to:

Regularly review faculty resources such as start-up packages, merit raises, allocation of office and lab space, access to teaching assistants, and discretionary funds for equity and balance. Guidelines should also be provided to chairs on how to allocate these resources equitably.

Conduct routine reviews of salary across departments every two years to look for issues of race and gender equity, as is federally mandated. The Committee supports efforts underway to conduct a market study of salaries at AAU privates. This information should be shared across colleges, with data broken down by gender and race, on a timely basis.

Provide guidelines for salary adjustments, not to constrain deans and chairs, but to equip them with dimensions or frameworks for making these decisions and to develop awareness of how these decisions affect faculty over time. The University of Wisconsin, for example, indicates four reasons for salary adjustments with justifications and full descriptions for each reason: promotion, change in responsibilities, equity considerations, and market factors. Being able to point to specific factors in salary decisions may enhance the sense that faculty are being treated equitably.

Respond promptly and differentially in retention cases. Not all retention cases merit a counter-offer, and publicizing the fact that counter-offers are not automatic may cut down on faculty trying to “play the system” for a raise. However, chairs and deans should be asked to respond promptly in all retention cases. The practice of making late and grudging counter-offers weakens faculty morale and may encourage faculty to accept outside offers.

Track responses to retention cases using a three-year moving average to create precedents for deans and chairs, smooth out differences among chairs, and bring inequities to light.

III.d. Social and Intellectual Climate

Women faculty report that South Bend offers limited opportunities for professional women to develop social contacts and a sense of community outside the University. Initiatives within Notre Dame have helped to alleviate this sense of isolation, however. The Colleges of Science and Engineering have sponsored lunches for female faculty, for example, and Arts and Letters is developing a new program for networking and mentoring of female faculty and graduate students. The Committee urges the creation of the following avenues of communication:

Financial support for networking and community-building initiatives. The Committee encourages the Provost's Office to offer financial support for networking initiatives proposed within and across colleges to create positive and supportive venues in which female faculty can collaborate, socialize, and share mutual interests and concerns. The Committee greatly appreciates the support provided by William Mapother for female faculty to have lunch with the Provost and wonders if other alumni might want to support networking opportunities for faculty on campus and in the wider South Bend community. Some initiatives might be restricted to women, whereas others might be non-gender-specific.

A University-wide website that highlights people, projects, and services pertinent to female faculty. The site could serve as a one-stop information resource for current faculty and potential hires and highlight the work and accomplishments of women at Notre Dame. It could also include links to offices pertaining to women's issues on campus, such as Lifeworks, and highlight programs and research on gender issues at the University. The College of Arts and Letters is developing such a site for its faculty. We believe that expanding the idea to the University as a whole would enhance faculty unity and communication and present the University more favorably to others.

Chicago Shuttle Bus. The Committee requests that the Provost's Office support and contribute to efforts underway to establish a daily shuttle to Chicago, for the sake of affordability, convenience, and environmental stewardship. Such a shuttle would not only benefit those faculty who commute from Chicago, but would also encourage more educational and research travel on the part of Notre Dame students and faculty for the purpose of visiting city libraries, museums, and cultural events or attending lectures at the University of Chicago.

IIIe. Service Expectations

Many departments recognize the importance of protecting junior faculty from too much service so they can concentrate on their teaching and build their research profiles. Associate professors often find, however, that once they earn tenure, demands for department, college and university service increase significantly. This is especially true for tenured women, who are often eager to serve on major committees and are sought after for administrative positions. Yet the smaller percentage of women faculty at senior levels means that women are often unduly “taxed” with committee service for the sake of equal gender representation. Many faculty have expressed the feeling that, although the University needs the service they provide, these contributions are not recognized or rewarded. There is a disconnect between the day-to-day responsibilities of faculty members and the work that is taken into account during tenure and promotion decisions. The Committee asks that the Provost:

Consider ways to compensate senior faculty for extraordinary service, such as with special one-semester leaves. This may be done, for example, through a system that weighs committees according to their demands on time and according to the level of responsibility and involvement of the faculty member.

Expect candidates for promotion to have performed significant, high-quality service in addition to outstanding teaching and research.

IIIf. Clarify Part-Time and Full-Time Appointment Options

Current University policy allows for regular faculty to hold part-time appointments under some circumstances, but procedures for doing so are mysterious to many faculty and so they rarely pursue this option. Yet limited-term transfers to part-time status offer a way to balance the demands of work and child rearing, especially in the crucial early-childhood years. This option thus may improve faculty retention in the long run.

The Committee requests that the University articulate more fully the process and acceptable criteria for requesting transfers between part-time and full-time status. We suggest that the University make explicit that the care of children or ailing family members is an “appropriate reason” for requesting a transfer to part-time status.

Furthermore, we recommend that a member of the regular faculty who has sought part-time status for an “appropriate reason,” as the policy provides, should be presumptively able to convert back to full-time status when his or her situation changes. To the extent that the policy suggests that such a transfer may be denied, or at least difficult to achieve, we recommend that the policy be clarified.

IIIg. Quality of Life Issues

Though these last issues may seem less important than questions of equity and salary, the Committee found in its discussions that these two areas spark intense discussion among faculty. We request that the Provost's office, when possible:

Encourage reasonable meeting times. Some departments schedule meetings for late evening hours that pose a hardship for families. Both faculty and graduate students ask that the University encourage departments to schedule meetings between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. and avoid late evening hours.

Consider the effect of parking on productivity. It has become more and more difficult to find parking on campus. Faculty complained vociferously about the time it took to find places within reasonable walking distance of their offices. While the scarcity of convenient on-campus parking may seem like a small thing, it has significant impact on both our quality of life and productivity. The issue is particularly acute for parents who often have to leave campus during the day to pick up children from school or take them to doctor's appointments. We ask that the University take into consideration the impact on faculty time and energy when designing parking systems and reconsider its plans to close more lots. We urge the University to replace some of the space lost to new construction by building multilevel or underground parking garages reasonably close to the buildings in which faculty work.

IV. Conclusions

The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students took seriously its charge to make recommendations to improve the recruitment and retention of women faculty. It requires considerable effort and resources to hire new faculty, and if they leave, departments must start all over again. Losing women faculty thus wastes time and energy and can create a morale problem among other women. Women faculty want to know that there is a place for them at Notre Dame, that their work is valued, and that there are senior women who can mentor them and serve as role models. Retaining women faculty is crucial, then, for the University's future success.

The recommendations outlined here represent the thoughts and reflections of the Committee and its discussions with other faculty and administrators. They are designed to address the need for more information about why women leave Notre Dame and how women are faring in relation to male faculty at the University. Without adequate data it is hard to identify the specific reasons that motivate women to leave or to evaluate the equity issues that affect them. We ask, first and foremost, for a comprehensive study of tenure and promotion rates and attrition and retention rates in order to gauge accurately how women progress in their time at the University. The report also identifies specific areas that can be addressed in workshops for deans and chairs, including mentoring, the equitable distribution of resources, the tenure and promotion process, and service expectations. Finally, the report outlines strategies that have succeeded in convincing women to join the faculty at Notre Dame. We hope that they may be shared as well with our colleagues.

The University Committee on Women Faculty and Students has worked for many years to improve the position of women at Notre Dame. The men and women who served this year join their colleagues from the past in their efforts to enhance women's lives at this university. We look forward to working with the Provost's Office to advance towards this goal together.