

**Committee on Women's Concerns**  
**2013/2014 Annual Report**  
**March 18, 2015 ( postponed to April 15, 2015 )**

*There shall be a Committee on Women's Concerns which shall focus on the development, oversight, and monitoring of the many issues at Syracuse University which are central to the climate for women faculty members, administrators, staff members, and students. In particular, but not exclusively, the committee will concern itself with issues of curriculum, pay equity, affirmative action, sexual harassment, climate and advancement of women*  
[Faculty Senate Bylaws, Section 20]

**Summary of activities in 2013/14**

1. Submitted the Committee's Self-Study Report on February 7, 2014 to the Chair, Senate Agenda Committee

The Committee prepared this report in response to the Agenda Committee's request that each committee review its charge and recent activities (see Appendix A for the Committee's *Self-Study Report*)

- a. Committee members reviewed the current charge for the committee, and proposed a few minor changes.
- b. Reviewed the committee status, considering the status of the Women's Concerns committee within the broader Senate community.
- c. Reviewed committee activities from FY 2009/2010 through FY 2012/2013 to determine "how they mesh with the charge and the work of the Senate as a whole." A review of the committee's annual reports during that three-year period indicated that activities not only meshed well with the committee's specific charge, but also with the overall work of the Senate. In general, our activities fell, primarily, within two aspects of the committee's charge—"climate and advancement of women" and "sexual harassment."
- d. Looking forward, the committee stated that activities in the near future would focus on the following two broad areas in our charge in need of more attention—investigating areas of concern that may impact the climate for women on campus and enhancing the committee's outreach to the women of our Syracuse University community.

As noted in the "Looking Forward" section of our *Self-Study* (Appendix A), the Committee is "investigating areas of concern that may impact the climate for women on campus," and "will continue to monitor the impact of Title IX implementation at Syracuse University on the campus climate regarding sexual harassment and support of students impacted by sexual violence." As part of this monitoring effort, the Committee will begin to speak with other institutions about their Title IX policies and sexual assault procedures.

2. Presented a motion at the February 12, 2014 meeting of the University Senate to form an Ad Hoc Committee on Family-Friendly and Work-Life Balance Concerns

The Senate passed the committee's motion with a unanimous vote. (See Appendix B).

3. Represented (via committee representatives) on the University's Child Care Advisory Committee and the Child Care Working Group.

The *Child Care Advisory Group* was established November 2012 in response to a recommendation included in previous chancellor Cantor's *Report on Sustainable Benefits* issued in January 2010. To date, the committee has discussed opportunities and initiatives 1) to expand access to child care

supported by campus and 2) to reduce some of the financial burden on families, which led to the implementation of a pilot child care subsidy for faculty and staff last year (which continued this year), and a new pilot grant for graduate students in Spring 2014.

The *Child Care Working Group* was established in September 2014, and engaged *Linda Mills Consulting* (<http://www.millsconsultinggroup.com/>) to help the group identify the best options for the university to augment (but not replace) the two on-campus centers currently in place. “The goal of engaging the consultant, and establishing a working group, is to refine our understanding of the variety of child care needs experienced by Syracuse University faculty, staff and students, and to provide a set of recommendations specifically regarding how the University can work with local organizations to ensure those needs can be met.”

4. Sent a statement of concern on 06/12/2014 to University Senators and Senate Committee Chairs about the closing of the University’s Advocacy Center on June 4, 2014.  
As a Senate committee, we were concerned that the Chancellor’s decision was made without consultation with the larger University community, including the University Senate and University Senate committees such as ours, which directly address women’s concerns. This was not/and is not a simple change, and is one with many consequences for our University community and our students. (See Appendix C)
5. Represented (informally) by a faculty committee member on the Chancellor’s Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Advocacy (09/05/2014-12/17/2015)  
Although the Women’s Concerns Committee did not have a formal representative on the Chancellor’s *Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Advocacy*, one faculty member of the Committee, who served as a university faculty member representative on the Workgroup, also served as an informal representative for the Committee.
6. Continued to work on a draft proposal to establish an Ombuds Office at Syracuse University  
A co-chair met with members of the newly-reconstituted Senate Committee on Services to Faculty and Staff to share the initial draft of the proposal, gather suggestions, and discuss how the two committees can work together to forward this initiative.

The Committee based its initial proposal on information gathered during the summer of 2013, during which time members reviewed the more than 300 colleges and universities listed in the *Ombuds Blog* “Directory of Colleges and Universities Ombuds Office”<sup>1</sup> as having some kind of Ombuds Office. Of these institutions, the committee selected for closer review the 20 U.S. colleges and universities institutions that had established their Ombuds offices according to the following criterion—that the Ombuds office was available to all members of the University community, including undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty. As a result, the committee selected the following institutions for closer review (those with an asterisk have not responded):

Arizona State University	Stanford University
* Auburn University	*Stony Brook University
Binghamton University	University of California-Los Angeles
Columbia University	University of Cincinnati
Cornell University	University of Kansas

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ombuds Blog: News and Information For and About Organizational Ombuds*, <http://ombuds-blog.blogspot.com/>.

Harvard University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Oregon State University  
\*Princeton University  
Rochester Institute of Technology

University of Maryland  
\*University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
Washington State University

Status:

By mid-December, 2014, the Committee had talked with Ombuds, or received written responses to our questions, from 16 of the 20 institutions, and is now compiling notes from these conversations.

Next steps:

- Feb. 2015                      Establish a small working group, comprised of members drawn from the Women’s Concerns Committee, Services to Faculty and Staff Committee, and the Graduate Student Organization. This group will draft a revised proposal, informed by recent conversations with Ombuds representatives across the country, additional research, and conversations with members of our Syracuse University community, including the University’s Office of General Counsel, Title IX Officer, Director of the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration, and other key individuals and groups concerned with the protection and well-being of our university community members.
- March-July 2015              Complete the *Proposal to Establish an Ombuds Program at Syracuse University*
- Oct. 2015                      Submit and present the *Proposal to Establish an Ombuds Program at Syracuse University* to the University Senate for discussion and potential endorsement.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Brown and Marty Hanson (co-chairs)

On behalf of the members of the Senate Committee on Women’s Concerns

**APPENDIX**

**TO:** D. Bruce Carter  
Chair, Senate Agenda Committee  
**FROM:** Lori Brown and Marty Hanson  
Co-Chairs, Senate Committee on Women's Concerns  
**SUBJECT:** Women's Concerns Committee Self-Study Report  
**DATE:** 02/07/2014

On behalf of the Senate Committee on Women's Concerns, we are pleased to submit the following self-study report in response to the Senate Agenda Committee's request that each committee review its charge and recent activities.

#### Current charge for committee

There shall be a Committee on Women's Concerns which shall focus on the development, oversight, and monitoring of the many issues at Syracuse University which are central to the climate for women faculty members, administrators, staff members, and students. In particular, but not exclusively, the committee will concern itself with issues of curriculum, pay equity, affirmative action, sexual harassment, climate and advancement of women. [Faculty Senate Bylaws, Section 20]

#### Review of committee charge

Committee members have reviewed the charge and propose a few minor editorial changes, with the revised charge to read as follows:

There shall be a Committee on Women's Concerns which shall focus on the development, oversight, and monitoring of the many issues at Syracuse University which are central to the climate for women faculty members, staff members, students (graduate and undergraduate), and university administrators. In particular, but not exclusively, the committee will concern itself with issues of affirmative action, climate and the advancement of women, curriculum, pay equity, and sexual harassment. [Faculty Senate Bylaws, Section 20]

#### Review of committee status

Committee members considered the status of the Women's Concerns committee within the broader Senate community, and remain convinced that there is a need for a separate committee that centers on issues of concern to the women of Syracuse University. In particular, we feel that the committee has been of primary value to the Senate in particular, and to the broader university community in general, as it continues to provide an important voice on campus. For example, Women's Concerns has been one of the few committees solicited for feedback concerning recent University initiatives (e.g. the *Task Force on Sustainable Benefits*, the *Senate Task Force on Complaint Procedure for Allegations of Inappropriate Conduct by Faculty Members*). However, we want our campus community to understand that the committee's central focus on women does not intend to be exclusionary. Rather, the spirit of the committee has traditionally promoted, and continues to promote, the understanding that a "women's concern" is, potentially, an issue of concern for many, if not all, members of our University community.

#### Review of committee activities: FY 2009/2010-FY 2012/2013

A review of the committee's annual reports over the past three years indicates that activities have not only meshed well with the committee's specific charge, but also with the overall work of the Senate. In general,

committee activities during the past three years fall, primarily, within two aspects of its charge—“climate and advancement of women” and sexual harassment.

1. Concerning issues of “climate and advancement of women”

a) Issues concerning dependent care

- 1) During FY 2009/2010, the Committee became more attentive to dependent care issues when members began to review the 1,100 open-ended comments included in the committee’s 2008 faculty/staff *Survey for a Potential SU Women’s Center*. While the overall faculty/staff survey response rate of 22% was low, we felt the data gathered was still valuable and could be informative—particularly the qualitative information gathered by the survey’s open-ended comments. Of the six survey questions that offered open-ended questions, three contained comments about dependent care. These three open-ended questions contained a total of 627 comments, with 32 related to dependent care. Perhaps most striking is that 63% of these 32 dependent care related comments were made by female faculty, including this poignant cry for the university’s help:

*...Our attention is on our families and children. Help us provide in that arena in a concrete fashion and we will be freed to pursue our professional goals and aspirations without the crush of daily concerns about child care (snow day, vacation, sick day) the various array of middle-aged pressures. (We take care of everyone else, no one takes care of us.) Help facilitate the care of our children and dying/decaying parents, and we can have the time and energy to attend to our passionate academic interests.*

As a result of this review, coupled with additional anecdotal information received in past years, it became clear to the committee that the University needs to provide better family support services so that:

- Our faculty can accomplish the substantial level of research and teaching required by Syracuse University
- Our staff can successfully carry out the substantial level of support services required by Syracuse University
- Our students can successfully carry out their substantial load of academic responsibilities required by Syracuse University

- 2) In Spring 2010, the Senate Agenda Committee chair contacted the Women’s Concerns committee

about the upcoming transfer of the university’s Early Education and Child Care Center (EECCC) from the Division of Student Affairs to the College of Human Ecology. Consequently, during FY 2010/2011, committee members heard from, and met with, university faculty and staff parents particularly concerned about the transfer. And, in December 2011, the committee’s co-chairs met with the chancellor, as advocates for the parents of children enrolled in EECCC, about the future of child care at Syracuse University, and presented the parents’ concerns and ideas they had offered as the transfer moved forward. As part of its 2010/2011 annual report presented to the University Senate in 02/2012, the committee included the following statement for the Senate to consider:

*Parents and other members of the University community need to know and be part of what the future of child care will be at Syracuse University. How do we ensure that faculty and*

*staff will have a voice in child care developments on campus, thereby collectively determining the future of child care at Syracuse University?*

- 3) In summer 2010, one of the committee's members was appointed to the university's newly-created *Dependent Care Task Force*, which was created in response to the "create a new child care initiative" recommendation included in the Chancellor's January 2010 *Report on Sustainable Benefits*. The task force soon broadened its scope to include child and other dependent care.

2. Concerning issues of "sexual harassment"

- a. The committee prepared a statement, entitled *Women's Concerns Committee of the University Senate Statement on Sexual Abuse and our Community*, in response to information that came to light in Fall 2012 about allegations of sexual abuse by Associate Head Basketball Coach Bernie Fine. The statement (supported by the Senate Committee on Athletic Policy) called for opening up a dialogue with Syracuse community members about addressing sexual abuse, and was presented for endorsement by the University Senate at its 12/07/2011 meeting. The University Senate endorsed the statement.
- b. Following the 12/7/2011 University Senate endorsement of the committee's statement on sexual abuse, the committee collaborated with the Dean of Hendricks Chapel and the Director of the university's Advocacy Center to organize a panel discussion, entitled *A Community Conversation on Sexual Abuse*, facilitated by Senior Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs, Thomas Wolfe, to initiate a community dialogue about addressing and preventing sexual abuse. Held at Hendricks Chapel on February 7, 2012, panelists from the Syracuse community included the executive director of the McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Center; the clinical director at Vera House; the detective and sergeant with the Syracuse Police Department's Abused Persons Unit; an adult survivor of child sexual abuse; and the director of Sexual Abuse Services and Family Transition Services at Elmcrest Children's Center, and panelists from the SU community included the director of SU's Advocacy Center, and two Advocacy Center's student volunteers.

3. Other issues with which the committee has been involved in the past three years

- a. Issues concerning benefits changes and enhancements  
During Fall 2009/early spring 2010, a member of the Committee served on the campus-wide *Working Group on Sustainable Benefits*, developed to provide input and consultation to help University leaders in their efforts to develop a proposal.
- b. Issues concerning the *Syracuse University Staff Complaint Process*  
Since the launch of the revised *Staff Complaint Process* in January 2003, the committee has taken on an unofficial oversight role for this process. The revised *Staff Complaint Process* was jointly developed by the Senate's Services to Faculty and Staff and Women's Concerns committees. The committee's general concern about this process relates to the inferred oversight role vested in a declining Senate Committee on Services to Faculty and Staff. As noted below, one of several responsibilities of the Staff Complaint Coordinator is to:

Develop and maintain a record system that tracks all inquiries regarding the Staff Complaint Process, all complaints, including the final disposition of complaints as well as progress in the implementation of decisions reached. The Coordinator will submit an annual utilization

report to the Senate Committee on Services to Faculty and Staff. (Appendix I Definitions of Roles and Operating Guidelines of the Staff Complaint Process, Staff Complaint Coordinator, no. 11.

The Women's Concerns Committee continues to have great interest and energy in how this crucial process has been working—its use by employees, what issues/concerns there may be about this process, etc., and hopes that the Agenda Committee will reconstitute the Services to Faculty and Staff Committee soon so that it can continue to carry out its important Senate oversight role for the University's *Staff Complaint Process*.

### Looking forward

As we look forward, the committee intends to focus in the near future on the following two broad areas in need of attention—investigating areas of concern that may impact the climate for women on campus and enhancing the committee's outreach to the women of our Syracuse University community:

- Investigating areas of concern that may impact the climate for women on campus

In the near future, the committee:

- Will continue to monitor the impact of Title IX implementation at Syracuse University on the campus climate regarding sexual harassment and support of student impacted by sexual violence.
- Urges the Agenda Committee to consider folding into the Services to Faculty and Staff committee's charge (if the committee continues to exist) the broad issue of work/life balance—or, consider establishing a new senate committee that is concerned with work/life balance issues, including child care, elder care, and other issues that can adversely affect members of our campus community. During the past several years, the Women's Concerns committee has been receiving the traffic that the Services to Faculty and Staff committee would normally receive, including work/life balance issues, and we feel that work/life balance is such an important issue that it deserves a higher priority within the University Senate organization.
- Will prepare a proposal for establishing an ombuds program at Syracuse University, the major catalyst for which is the increased frequency of times the committee has been approached in the past few years as a "safe space" by members of our university community (faculty, staff, parents of students) to talk about issues of grave concern to them. In response, committee members have listened and carefully suggested possible avenues, as appropriate, for resolving certain concerns. But, the committee believes that a campus-wide ombuds program would be a far more appropriate and effective venue for hearing and acting on concerns expressed by community members who feel that there is no safe place to go to talk about their concerns. At this time, more than 300 colleges and universities have established ombuds program at their respective campuses.
- Will investigate current course offerings to determine to what degree women's concerns are included, since Committee members are aware that there have been curricular gaps (some ongoing) involving the lack of "women's voices" in a variety of courses across campus.
- Continues to urge the creation of an ad hoc committee focused on non-faculty sexual harassment and misconduct, similar to that of the *Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Harassment and Faculty Misconduct* that focuses on the University's non-faculty employees. Since the majority of

employees at Syracuse University are non-faculty employees, the Women's Concerns Committee feels strongly that such a committee be constituted and hopes that the Agenda Committee will consider and act on this suggestion.

- Enhancing the committees outreach to the women of our Syracuse University community

In the near future, the committee:

- Will complete the development of a comprehensive website to serve, essentially, as a virtual women's center, that provides a clearinghouse of information relating to women's concerns.
- Will identify and investigate issues that have come to the committee's attention concerning SU's maternity leave policy.



## APPENDIX B

### Senate Committee on Women's Concerns Motion to Form an *Ad Hoc Committee on Family-Friendly and Work-Life Balance Concerns* February 12, 2014

#### Motion

The Senate Committee on Women's Concerns moves that the University Senate create an *Ad Hoc Committee on Family-Friendly and Work-Life Balance Concerns* to investigate, act on, and make policy recommendations about issues and concerns expressed by the University community members associated with family-friendly and work-life balance initiatives.

#### Rationale

In its description of employee benefits, Syracuse University states, "SU is a progressive, family-friendly employer, providing employees with a benefit program responsive both to the diversity of its community and to the many life changes individuals experience during their employment." <http://humanresources.syr.edu/benefits/>.

The Women's Concerns Committee commends and supports the University for its efforts, past and present, to build a reputation for being a family-friendly employer. However, in the past few years, the Committee has been approached by various university community members (e.g., faculty, staff, graduate students) who have expressed their concerns about the lack, or uneven implementation, of policies and procedures associated with some of the University's family-friendly and work-place balance initiatives. Concerns expressed include:

- The lack of adequate and affordable child care for faculty, staff, and graduate students
- Uneven implementation of maternity/parental leave policies and procedures across the university community
- Issues and concerns surrounding faculty, staff, and students who are primary caregivers, including the need to broaden the University's definition of 'family'

The creation of this *Ad Hoc Committee on Family-Friendly and Work-Life Balance Concerns* will allow for appropriate attention to be placed on addressing these and other issues concerned with work-life balance that impact a significant number of our community members.

Submitted on behalf of the Senate Committee on Women's Concerns,

Lori Brown (co-chair) and  
Marty Hanson (co-chair)

## Appendix C

### Women's Concerns Committee Statement of Concern (06/12/2014) About the Closing of the Advocacy Center

Dear University Senators and Senate Committee Chairs,

As members of the Women's Concerns Committee of the University Senate, we write to express our concern about the Chancellor's announcement on May 30, 2014 that "the services of the Advocacy Center will be integrated and aligned with the Counseling Center, Office of Student Assistance, and Office of Health Promotion. . . . Under the new structure, the Counseling Center will serve as the primary entry point for students who have been impacted by sexual violence and who need access to confidential and privileged services." As you may or may not be aware, the doors of the Advocacy Center officially closed on June 4, 2014. Additional information about, and responses to, the Chancellor's decision are posted below our signature line.

As a Senate committee, we are concerned that the Chancellor's decision was made without consultation with the larger University community, including the University Senate and University Senate committees such as ours, which directly address women's concerns. This is not a simple change, and is one with many consequences for our University community and our students.

The Advocacy Center (formerly known as The R.A.P.E. Center) provided sexual assault resources and support to our students. While we understand the decision to close the Advocacy Center is meant to ensure compliance with Title IX and to create a single entry point for services and support for sexual assault survivors, we are concerned about what the loss of the Advocacy Center means for the survivor community. When the Advocacy Center was founded in 1990 as the *Rape: Advocacy, Prevention and Education (R.A.P.E.)* Center, no comparable center existed on a college campus in the United States.

Now, with the closing of our long-standing Advocacy Center, a powerful identity and community has been lost. The strength of the Center was that it combined advocacy services, prevention, and education into one space, the result of which was the creation of a community of empowered bystanders that welcomed survivors and allies. Being a part of such a community strengthens and empowers any individual, and begins the process of changing culture. And, the prevention and education programs offered by The Advocacy Center were so effective because of their direct association with the advocacy services offered. For more on the history of the Advocacy Center, see <http://advocacycenter.syr.edu/resources-information/history.html>.

The realignment of advocacy services means that survivors will no longer have access to the most knowledgeable and experienced victims' advocates on campus in the same way as before. The Counseling Center, while a valuable resource, presents very real barriers to reporting for a variety of reasons, including its physical location and the space itself, as well as negative associations due to cultural and social norms. The choice of what resources to access should ultimately be in the hands of the survivors—we need to allow them to have power and control over their own processes.

Recently, a group of Syracuse University students put together a petition to reinstate the Advocacy Center on change.org. Their petition asks the following, and it has been signed by over 5,000 faculty, staff, students, and alumni:

*We respectfully ask that you [the Chancellor] reinstate The Advocacy Center and allow it to provide confidential sexual assault support services and education at Syracuse University for students. As students, faculty, alumni, and friends of Syracuse, we ask that you reconsider your decision. This change in the campus community will negatively impact students. This center provides counseling, education, support, and critical resources to students that make our campus safer for all of our community. We cannot place it within another office on campus and assume its purpose will be the same.*

We are also aware of a petition circulating in the Maxwell School to reinstate the Center and a letter calling for the same being circulated among Syracuse University faculty. Clearly, many faculty members feel the decision to close the Advocacy Center was not made in consultation with the constituencies most affected by sexual assault—our undergraduate and graduate students—or with faculty and staff or with the University Senate. Indeed, announcing the decision after Commencement when most faculty and students are away from campus demonstrates a lack of openness and willingness to engage in rigorous public debate over the best course of action. Thus, this decision lacks the kind of input and transparency that our University community would expect to see.

We call for the University Senate along with Chancellor Syverud to undertake a dialogue about what this change will mean for sexual assault survivors. We also ask Chancellor Syverud to consider all the perspectives and multiple views surrounding this topic, including those contained in the April 2014 U. S. Dept. of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) *Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence*, Section E3: “Confidentiality and a School’s Obligation to Respond to Sexual Violence” <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/>. We call for this public dialogue to unfold this summer and fall among interested parties and invite the Chancellor to join this conversation. Shared governance is at the heart of what it means to be a university community, and we look forward to an opportunity for discussion and debate on this crucial issue of supporting sexual assault survivors.

Sincerely,

Members of the Women’s Concerns Committee of the University Senate:

Lori Brown (co-chair)	Judith Meighan
Carol Fadda-Conrey	Eileen Schell
Martha Hanson (co-chair)	Margaret S. Thompson

The links below provide additional information about, and responses to, the decision to close the Advocacy Center:

- Chancellor Syverud’s Announcement about the closing of the Advocacy Center <http://syr.edu/news/5-30-14-ChancellorMemo.pdf>
- The University’s *Fact Sheet* about the closing of the Advocacy Center <http://news.syr.edu/fact-sheet-realignment-of-university-support-services-for-students-impacted-by-sexual-violence-32765/>
- The Syracuse University students’ petition to reinstate the Advocacy Center <http://www.change.org/petitions/syracuse-university-reinstatement-of-the-advocacy-center-to-provide-confidential-sexual-assault-support-services-at-syracuse-university>