

Annual Report 2007-08
WSU Work Life Advisory Committee (WLAC)

Following is the membership list:

Faculty (3)

Matt Bumpus
Jim Lindstrom-Spokane
Vacant

Tri-Cities (1)

Stephanie Bauman

Vancouver (1)

Angie Currie

Spokane (1)

Patti Petersen

Civil Service Staff (3)

Peggy Collier
Teri Ockwell
Merlinda Sain-Vancouver

Administrative/Professional (3)

Becky Morton
Julie Nelson-Tri-Cities
Barry Seward

Student (3)--at least one graduate student

Jamie Gaber--Undergraduate Student
Jane Lotz-Drlik--Graduate Student
Laura Hutchinson--Graduate Student

Ex-Officio

Theresa Elliot-Cheslek, HRS
Elissa Keim, APAC Liaison
Laura Kinslow, Recorder
Zami Wilson, HRS Liaison

In October we celebrated our 2nd Work Life month with offerings of about a dozen seminars on wellness issues (stretching, cardio and strength training), on cooking and backpacking and on career development. It was better attended than the first year efforts so we will continue to grow and develop this event. Be watching for October 2008 event.

We completed a peer comparison of other institutions in late fall looking at such issues as child care reimbursement and subsidies, maternity and paternity leave, tuition remission for spouses/dependents, retirement programs, staff/civil service unions, and peer mentoring/career development. While we generated the data we were unable to do anything further with this information during the spring semester due to scheduling conflict of committee members leading this effort.

We had several guest speakers this year including Viji Murali, IT Director, Lisa Gehring, Benefit Services, Megan Undeberg, Department of Pharmacotherapy, David Schmidt, HRS Training and Development and Brad Stewart, Recreation Center.

Becky Morton, Committee Chair presented to the Administrative Professional Council (APAC) and Commission on Status of Women (CSW) concerning work life issues. She met several other times during the year with the leadership of both these groups. Many work/life issues are common among these three groups.

While the committee got a good start this year we didn't make as much progress on work life issues as we had planned due in part to our members' busy schedules but also we lost our Work Life employee at Human Resource Service (Tracy Oshiro) and one of our main central supporters in the HRS Director (Steve Desoer). Becky is on the search committee for the Associate Vice President for Human Resource Services (previous HRS director) and will be communicating with WLAC and CSW throughout this search. We are hopeful with this position filled this coming fall that we will once again have the ability to move forward on some important issues facing the University.

Those issues continue to be maternity/paternity leave issues for graduate students, civil service group, mentoring of employees, exit interviews, and eldercare issues (a rising concern). The committee is not actively pursuing child care issues as President Floyd has a task force on this issue but we follow this issue closely and support the positive efforts being made. We are looking into other issues such as chemical use on grounds both around Washington State University housing as well as the general campus, and why Idaho and Oregon state income tax issues taxes can't be taken directly of employee paychecks.

We reviewed maternity leave policies for graduate students developed by Commission on Status of Women. While these are in draft at this stage we hope to assist in moving forward on this issue.

Wellness over the past two years continues to be a strong emphasis on campus and WL has been privileged to partner with the Recreation Center through Brad Stewart and others to increase awareness of this important issue. We had several great seminars on wellness during WL month in October.

Human Resource Services was instrumental in bring up our new Work Life website and they continue to maintain it for the committee. We appreciate the service of HRS employees such as Zami Wilson who was our liaison with their office, Theresa Elliot-Cheslek long time work life supporter and David Sargent who assisted with getting our membership application done electronically. Thanks go to all those at HRS that assist the committee that we haven't recognized.

I might note we had a very successful membership drive and continue to have representation from all urban campuses and Pullman, extension, all employees (faculty, a/p, civil service staff) and students (graduate and undergraduate). We have worked to shore up our urban campuses to try and have two people at each campus on the committee to share the load.

Thanks go to members completing their terms Matt Bumpus, Stephanie Bauman, Julie Nelson, Merlinda Sain, Angie Currie and Laura Hutchinson. Nine new members will join the group in the fall. New members are Katherine Lovrich, Karen Weathermon, Cherish Tijerina, Melissa Ray, Dori Roberts, Lorraine McConnell, Christian Busnardo, Brad Liebrecht and Vida Jones.

There continue to be many work/life issues facing Washington State University employees and students and we have a good group that will be able to move forward positively.

Submitted by:
Becky Morton
Chair, Work Life Advisory Committee