Annual Report

2015-2016

Status of Women Review Committee (SWRC)

Brandon University

1. **Committee members:**

(a) Bea Jolly Board of Governors

(b) Sharon Hooper Deans and Directors

(c) Alexis Braun BUFA

(d) Dr. Jonathan Allan Arts

(e) Dr. Cathryn Smith Education

(f) Karen Batson Health Studies

(g) David Playfair in first term;Music

 then unfilled.

(h) Dr. Rachel Herron Science

(i) Joan Garbutt Library/Student Services

(j) Dr. Marion Terry Invited

(l) Kathleen Nichol Science (Chair)

1. **The mandate of the SWRC** is defined in Article 30 of the CA. The current SWRC has chosen to address this by promoting professional development in teaching and research;

by promoting a healthy climate through mentoring and education; by collecting data on hires, and the awarding of promotions, tenure, leaves and research grants; and by gathering feedback from female faculty on their working conditions.

1. **The committee held ten meetings** between April 13, 2015 and April 12, 2016. These allowed us to organize several workshops and events to celebrate women’s achievements. We organized the two workshops on Applying for Tenure, Promotion and Reclassification, as we’ve done for several years. In response to faculty interest in having days and quiet places designed for writing up research, as indicated at the spring 2015 REBU conference, we organized eight writing days on campus – with Betty Braaksma welcoming us to use the Convergys Room, in the Library. We were delighted to organize the second annual Celebration of Research, by Women at BU, on October 30th, 2015, in honour of Women’s History Month. Two new faculty members, who are also members of the SWRC, organized Peer Mentoring outings, to allow new faculty members to connect and share successes and challenges, in a relaxed atmosphere. Board of Governors member, Bea Jolly, was nominated for and awarded the YWCA Lifetime Achievement Woman of Distinction Award in March 2016. We had the pleasure of featuring sixteen exceptional female students, on the BU webpage and at a reception on March 10th, in honour of International Women’s Day. A series of workshops was organized for the Women’s Research Network. A year-end lunch to celebrate our year and to network was organized.

As well, throughout the year we discussed and, where possible, addressed several concerns, noted in item #6 following.

1. **Workshops and events organized:**

**(a) Preparing your Dossier for Promotion, Tenure or Reclassification workshop, May 8th, 2015:**

Six successful applicants presented their tips; ten faculty members attended, and one who could not attend was forwarded notes.

**(b) Workshop on Applying for Tenure, Promotion and Reclassification, September 18th,** **2015:** The BUFA president and a past chair of the university Tenure committee and the University Promotion committee presented their tips to the eleven attendees. Six recent recipients of promotion, tenure or reclassification brought their dossiers and shared tips with individuals. Three others received notes from the session.

**(c) Women’s Research Network (WRN) Writing days:** Eight monthly writing days were offered – in the Convergys Room of the Library, from September to April this past year. In second term the SWRC opened these to all faculty, male and female. As the attendance continued to be low, the SWRC did an on-line survey of female faculty this Spring, using Google Forms, to garner feedback. This has yet to be viewed.

**(d) Women’s History Month second annual celebration, October 30, 2015, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m., Gathering Space in the Library:** About a dozen people attended the celebration, including Dr. Steve Robinson, as acting VP Academic, and Len Evans, former member of the Legislature for Brandon East, and current BOG member. David Playfair interviewed Bea Jolly, as one who has served the Brandon community for almost five decades, as a teacher and a volunteer in many capacities. David’s questions elicited anecdotes illustrating her variety of strengths, and her exceptionally long and productive volunteer contributions to local families, teens, seniors, students, guides, and others in Brandon, and in her previous life in England. Following this, an organic mix of research interests were shared by six BU researchers– Velvet Maud (sessional instructor and Masters in Education student), Dr. Corinne Mason for her publications in Gender and LBGQ Equity, Alysha Sloane on her PhD thesis in psychoanalysis in educational administration, Dr. Rachel Herron on her PhD thesis on Alzheimer services and experiences in small communities in Ontario, Dr. Marion Terry on the Graduate Student Journal in Education published at BU, and Dr. Cathryn Smith on her PhD work on educational leadership.

 This was the second annual such celebration – a great opportunity to present and share BU faculty research interests.

**(e) Women’s Research Network (WRN) workshops: A series of four workshops was offered through the year:**

i) **“Procrastination – Why we do it and How not to!”:** Katie Gross led this practical workshop, on November 27th over the noon hour. Six attended this session, one over Skype. Katie gave information on procrastination and led us through exercises to think of our own gremlins. Considerable discussion ensued. It was a worthwhile session and sharing opportunity.

ii) **“Assertive Presence in the Classroom**”, led by David Playfair and Gordon Portman on January 29th: Five attended. This was a very good, instructive, and practical session guiding members in ways to be the confident and open instructors they wish to be in their classrooms. Questions were addressed with instructive exercises. It was well done.

iii) **“Creating Your Online Presence”,** led by Jonathan Allan, February 26: Seven attended. Jonathan spoke of Academia.edu – an academic “Facebook” that allows you to post your papers, interests, presentations, and upcoming academic production on your own web page, and receive notifications of academic publications/presentations of interest to you. Out of the session came a suggestion for a new session focusing on “dealing with publicity and the media”, with Diane Novak of the CTLT, Emily Holland and Jonathan Allan with recent experience, and Communications Officers Rob Henderson and Grant Hamilton presenting.

iv) **“The Dirty Art of Self-Promotion – finding your inner egotistical persona”.** Seven accepted the invitation to attend this session. They were asked to bring their own bio, as written for their research profile or a conference presentation, to share and receive feedback. The feedback received was useful.

**(f) Peer Mentoring for new faculty:** Dr. Cathryn Smith and Dr. Rachel Herron organized two peer mentoring meetings for female BUFA members hired in the last five years. They met at The Double Decker, on Thursday, January 14th, 2016 and on Tuesday, February 9th, 2016. Seven attended the first meeting with several more expressing interest but unable to come, and nine attended the second, with all of those being new, except for Cathryn and Rachel, indicating there was considerable interest. These were valued as opportunities to share successes and challenges of being a new faculty member, and a new employee at BU, in a relaxing setting. SWRC provided seed money for their first meeting.

**(g) International Women’s Day, March 8, 2016:** For the fifteenth year, the SWRCchose to celebrate International Women’s Day by featuring outstanding female students at BU. Sixteen students were nominated by their professors and featured in a display on the BU homepage. Fifteen of these were able to attend to be honoured on March 10th at a reception in the Gathering Space in the Library. Roughly ninety people were in attendance to laud these students’ accomplishments. Dr Fearon presented a certificate of merit to each student.

**(h) End of term celebration Lunch, April 12th, 2016:** With food catered by Blue Hills Bakery, nine faculty members rejuvenated through excellent discussion initiated by each sharing one good thing/accomplishment of this past year. This was Dutch treat – every one paid for her own meal.

1. **Workshops and Events planned:**

**(a) The Spring Workshop on Preparing your Dossier for Promotion, Tenure and Reclassification, May 11th, 2016:** Seven recent recipients of tenure, or promotion, or IA reclassification shared tips on preparing dossiers. Then the attendees (fifteen) asked questions and perused the dossiers for advice/guidance to help them prepare theirs.

**(a) Workshop on Applying for Tenure, Promotion or Reclassification:** is tentatively set for Friday, September 16, 2016, in the afternoon.

**(b) Women’s History Month honouring of accomplishments of BU faculty of the female variety:** to be organized for some time in October.

**6. Concerns raised throughout the year:**

**(a) Diversity Officer –** SWRC has watched the hiring process for a Diversity Officer with interest, because we understand that for CRC chair applications, an equity /diversity officer is necessary to vet applications for inclusivity. This affects our members. Sharon has served in this capacity, in the meantime. We are pleased to hear that this position has been filled, with Lisa Park being recently hired as Diversity and Human Rights Advisor at BU.

**(b) The Women’s Collective** – In September 2015 SWRC members heard that the BUSU Women’s Collective might not be able to run for the coming year. SWRC wondered if it might offer assistance. Rachel Wu, BUSU Women’s Director, and Suz McFadden, BUSU Office and Services Manager, were invited to our October SWRC meeting. We learned that the Women’s Collective provides many services to students, but were struggling due to a gulf left when the outgoing executive of the collective graduated last year. The Collective would need more volunteers and input in order to run. An AGM would need to be called to raise awareness. Jonathan offered Gender and Women’s Studies classes as one way to get the word out, with Dr. Mason as the contact for this. In the meantime, Suz McFadden still gives out information and supplies, as asked. They plan to hire someone, with tuition rebate money, to run the Collective. This person will train student volunteers for: peer support, to update city resources information, provide referrals to city resources, to give rebates for Plan B contraceptives, to provide pregnancy tests, Diva cups, lubes, condoms, tampons, and such; and to find and share information on city resources.

As of January 2016 the Women’s Collective had been re-launched. They, along with the Gender and Women’s Study Club and Student Services, organized an event-filled Sexual Health Week, February 8th – 12th on campus.

**(c) Course Evaluations –** Kristen Hardy, a sessional instructor in Arts, drew our attention to research about student course evaluations – about concerns about issues with their ability to measure teaching effectiveness. Generally, women, minorities and sessional instructors are evaluated differently than males – lower than males – for the same type of teaching behaviour. If teaching evaluations by students are used for tenure and promotion decisions, this raises serious concerns. The SWRC referred the concern to Dr. Steve Robinson, Acting Vice President Academic and Provost, with suggestions that a campus-wide committee be struck to examine the issues and make recommendations on how to address them, and then to report back to the VP. The suggestion was made that the CTLT, the SWRC, some survey-knowledgable researchers, faculty members, and students be on the committee that is struck. No response has been received, as yet.

**(d) BU’s behavioral contract for those reporting sexual or physical abuse –** Unfortunately BU hit the papers for its behavioral contract for those reporting sexual or physical abuse, limiting their freedom to speak of the allegations. Some interpreted that to be BU’s way of protecting its own image, which we understand is not the case. In a letter, SWRC weighed in, just noting that persons who have experienced sexual or physical abuse deserve the right to and need to talk about these, with a qualified person. This aimed to reinforce what Student Services at BU did in supporting the woman reporting the abuse. This was a difficult situation, and was not portrayed accurately in the media.

**7. The financial report for the SWRC for the 2015-2016 year is attached.**

**Financial Report for the Status of Women Review Committee, 2015-2016:**



Kathleen Nichol, for

The Status of Women Review Committee

May 30, 2016