

Panel promotes women's causes

By Lori Demo

It started as an ad hoc committee of the UNL Human Rights Committee. Now it has grown into an independent commission.

And, according to a brochure mailed to faculty, staff and freshmen entering UNL this fall, its interests are in institutional programs for women, research data concerning the status of women at UNL and cooperation with the NU equal opportunities coordinator.

It is the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women, an outgrowth of the Women's Rights Committee which served the UNL campus from spring 1970 until autumn 1972. At that time, UNL Chancellor James Zumberge, acting on a recommendation from the committee, established it under its current name.

Its chairwoman is Jayne Anderson, who also is coordinator of sororities, fraternities and cooperatives and is the UNL administration's representative to the commission.

The commission also includes a male and a female representative from the College of Arts and Sciences and two UNL clerical representatives, as well as a representative from the library, East Campus, ASUN, Teachers College, the graduate school and the service worker force.

"We leave it up to the members to resign when they think they don't have enough time to devote to the commission," Anderson said.

"We receive recommendations from all over the campus when we do have an open spot. Then we talk to the people and give our recommendations to Chancellor Zumberge for him to make the final decision."

She said, because the commission is planted in higher education, it has a strong interest in affirmative action towards its goals.

"Some people get impatient because they think what we are doing is not going fast enough," she said. "But when they see we are at least working toward a goal, they are a little more satisfied."

Because of the large community the commission serves, its membership is divided into subcommittees so each can focus on a particular interest, Anderson said.

This year the subcommittees include an equal employment subcommittee to examine salaries, promotions and tenure; a student affairs subcommittee to study women students' attitudes toward the role of women and their career plans; and an education and programs subcommittee that sponsors speakers and arranges a variety of discussions sessions.

"The student affairs subcommittee is concerned not totally, but specifically, with women," Anderson said.

She said it is involved particularly in a discussion the commission is sponsoring today as part of Women's Week, coordinated by the Alumni Assoc.

"We are hoping this week will provide us with a feed-in from all areas of the institution to help us talk about the priorities and directions for the commission next year," Anderson said. "We are going to tape it (the discussion) so that we will have student views documented."

In the past, the commission and its ad hoc predecessor have concerned themselves with the low number of women accepted into the UNL Law College, the lack of women in the UNL band and equalized salaries for women.

Anderson said UNL currently is seeing an outgrowth of the work done by the parent committee.

"We can see it (the UNL Women's Rights Committees) encouraged the Law College to look at women more, because it has a larger women enrollment," she said. "At one time we were concerned with putting women into the band. We have seen this happen."

She said that the commission was not responsible directly for these changes but they helped reinforce other groups' efforts.

One commission interest that has not shown outgrowth is its encouragement of Day Care for students and faculty. "But at least we went on record as supporting it," she said.

Although the commission has no official financial support, it does get assistance when needed from Zumberge, Anderson said.

It also makes a yearly report to Zumberge about its activities.

"I don't think the commission has been particularly visible so far," Anderson said. "But I think you will find it becoming more visible."

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