

## **Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education 2009 Update**

### **Mission/Goals/Objectives**

The Council was created in 1999 in the SETC to address issues of gender parity. The legislation provides funding of \$95,000 annually for this Council. The SETC has funded the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University to carry out the day-to-day operations of the Council.

The duties of the Council include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of State programs designed to provide gender equity in labor, education, and training;
- Making recommendations to the State Departments regarding the needs, priorities, program and policies related to access and equity;
- Reviewing current and proposed legislation and regulations pertaining to gender equity issues;
- Developing policies to promote linkages among individuals, schools, organizations, and public agencies providing gender equity services and programs;
- Educating and providing information to the public on issues of gender equity by issuing reports and holding events such as conferences;
- Annually assessing the implementation and recommendations of the original taskforce reports;
- Submitting an annual report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the SETC.

### **Key Activities of the Past Two Years**

#### *Women in Law Research Project*

This project sought to research women lawyers to find out if/why they drop out of the profession, change employers, or do not break through the 'glass ceiling'.

- Over 520 women responded to an online survey;
- Focus groups and in person individual interviews were held to discuss issues;
- Report has been written and should be made public Spring 2009;
- A guidebook for employers was written and distributed Summer 2009;
- There was a huge amount of media coverage of the report including national and state legal journals, human resource and diversity magazines, state and national newspapers, law schools and law school libraries, and a televised segment on NJN's "Due Process" television show;

- As there was no State funding for the year 2007, this project was funded through the efforts of the Council and by NJ law firms and supported by the Law Journal and several organizations within the legal profession.

#### *Science and Technology Subcommittee*

A subcommittee was formed to address this specific industry sector. It has become very successful with over 25 members.

- For the past 3 years, a conference/summit was held regarding women in STEM occupations and they have been very well attended by approximately 200 women from k-12 education, community and four year colleges, medicine, research, pharmaceutical industries, and state government and legislature.
- Reports of findings from the first two annual summits have been written and distributed, as well as put on the Internet. The 2009 summit's report is currently being written.

#### *State Forum*

The Council has chosen to use meetings as an educational forum on topics of interest to the goals of the Council. Topics discussed over the past two years include:

- Women-Owned Business Certification
- Research entitled "Low-Wage Jobs in High-Growth NJ Industries"
- The working poor and possible programs and policies to address their workforce needs
- Women's Business Symposia
- Prison Re-entry
- Women's global exchange
- Nontraditional Career Resource Center including their summer programs at Rutgers for teens, Women Rebuild New York, "Could This Be Your Life?" website, and Title IX compliance
- The closing of New Jersey's hospitals and the effects on job loss to women
- Displaced Homemakers
- Online training for workforce development particularly targeted at women heads of household currently on welfare
- Teacher certification and professional development requirements

#### *Staffing*

For 2009-2010, a post doctoral associate was hired to work full-time to staff the Council. Linda Houser will work through The Center for Women and Work, from where mentoring and additional administrative support will also be provided.

## **Emerging Key Issues and Challenges**

### *New Jersey Legislation*

The GPC is being asked to help craft new legislation that works on the Equal Pay Act and Gender Equity Issues.

- Senator Loretta Weinberg attended our 2008 GPC meeting and Council members provided her with input.

### *Research*

As our Women in Law project was so successful, we had planned to do a similar project in the Finance Industry Sector.

- Due to the downturn of the economy, we may look for another area to research.

New research is being examined during the Fall of 2009 on the plight of women in the current economic downturn.

### *WIRED Involvement*

Strengthening our partnership with the Bio-1 WIRED Project.

- A presentation was given to the Council by Bio-1 and they have co-sponsored our Science and Technology Summits.
- The Executive Director sits on the Science and Technology Subcommittee.
- Will work to collaborate on a web portal for Women in Science and Technology in 2009.

### *Emerging Issues*

Issues that have been discussed in the past have included Family Leave Insurance and Paid Sick Days. It is the Council's wish to have influence over the impending regulations to insure that women's best interest are taken into account.

## **Membership**

The council is legislated to consist of 17 members: six appointed by the Division on Women, six appointed by the SETC, and five ex officio who are appointed by the Commissioners of Community Affairs, Education, Human Services, Labor and Workforce Development, and the Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education.

- Membership on the GPC has been stagnant and not kept current. As of December 2008, all membership has been updated and a total of 6 new members have been added this year

### **Gender Parity Members**

Dianne Mills-McKay, Chair  
Hainesport, NJ

Christine Amalfe  
Gibbons Law

Eileen Appelbaum  
Center for Women and Work

Marie Barry  
NJ Department of Education

Angela Bethea  
Commission on Higher Education

Laurel Brennan  
AFL-CIO

Marilyn Davis  
NJ Department of Labor

Dianne Hartshorn  
The Hartshorn Group

Andrea Karsian \*  
SETC Commission Member

RoseMarie Korbela  
The Port Authority of NY and NJ

Janice Kovach  
NJ Division on Women

Sarah Pallone  
Long Branch, NJ

Henry Plotkin  
Highland Park, NJ

Kimberly Rogers-McLean  
Department of Human Services

Cristina Rojas  
Supreme Consultants

Sondra Sen  
Sherisen International Inc.

Virginia Treacy  
JNESO District 1

Robert Wise  
Hunterdon Medical Center