



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director

**Iowa Commission on the Status of Women  
Meeting Minutes - June 11, 2014  
Room 320, Lucas Building, 321 E 12<sup>th</sup> St, Des Moines, IA**

**Commissioners present for all of the meeting:**

Tom Carnahan, Phyllis Peters, Beth Coonan, Sherill Whisenand, David Gudenkauf, Rachelle Hunt Russian (joined by phone)

**Commissioner absent:**

Aaron Sewell

**DHR/ICSW staff:**

Heidi Smith, Sanjita Pradhan, Natalie Hedberg (intern)

**Call to order**

Chairperson Phyllis Peters called the meeting to order at 9:38 am.

All commissioners introduced themselves.

New commissioner Sherill Whisenand said she has known about this commission for many years and was delighted when the Governor asked her to serve as a Commissioner.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Peters called for approval of the April 16 meeting minutes. Commissioner Carnahan made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Gudenkauf seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

Ayes 5. Nays: none, motion approved.

**DHR update provided by Heidi Smith**

Chair Peters mentioned to new Commissioner Whisenand that DHR Director Wong makes efforts to attend these meetings when she can. Today she has a conflict and Assistant Director Heidi Smith will provide an update. Chair Peters asked Smith if she could provide a budget update specific to the CAS division.

Smith reported that the division budget for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2014 was approved with a cut of \$74,000 as compared to the previous fiscal year. She explained that the Governor had requested a status quo budget, and the legislative decisions created the \$74,000 budget cut.

Smith described the impact of the budget change, stating that the division would need to reduce staff by one Full Time Employee (FTE); however, with one staff member shifting from the Office of Persons with Disabilities to the Dept. of Education, Smith, as division administrator, was able to make staffing adjustments without a staff lay-off.

Rachelle Hunt Russian joined the meeting by phone at 9:47 am. Chair Peters provided Rachelle an update on the conversation she missed.

Smith further explained that the adjustment in staffing does not mean that the division has not been affected by the reduction of state appropriations. She mentioned that while the positive news is that she does not have to lay off any staff, the bad news is that the division will not be able to provide all services as before.

She explained this with an example that the office may not be able to help the State with their ADA contracts anymore. Commissioner Coonan asked if there are any agencies in the community who can do this. Smith said it is being explored and a partnership creation will be part of the plan.

Smith provided the following updates.

- Program Planner Kristen Corey will return to work on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Division Administrator of CJJP, Paul Stageberg will retire in two weeks' time. The executive team is working on hiring to fill his position.
- The executive team is working on a strategic planning for the department; and is mid-way through the process.

Chair Peters asked if the staff was involved in that planning process. Heidi responded that the Director leads this process and staff is not widely involved.

Commissioners shared reactions to the budget process and appropriations reduction. Commissioner Carnahan requested that commissioners be updated during the time of budget presentation. He also asked that commissioners receive a list of the members in the Appropriations committee so commission can advocate for appropriate resources for the office and division. Tom asked Deputy Director Smith or appropriate DHR staff provide a four year history of budget and FTE changes to provide a better picture of the situation.

**Action item:** Smith will provide the requested information to the Commissioners. (note: the Appropriations Committee roster will show members from the 2014 General Assembly).

#### **Office report – Sanjita Pradhan, Executive Officer**

Pradhan reported that the main involvement of the office in recent weeks has been work on the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and some on the Gender Balance Project.

Pradhan provided a Hall of Fame planning document that shows a sequence of events, some that are completed and the ones that are coming up.

#### **Latina Leadership Initiative Presentation:**

Marcella Hermocillo (LLI board member) and Alba Perez, Executive officer, Office of Latino Affairs. Ms. Hermocillo provided an overview of the initiative and handed out a flyer about the program with detailed information. LLI is a newly-developed leadership development program for young Latina women. The curriculum addresses cultural barriers to help young Latinas navigate the non-Latino world. (Highlights of the presentation included in Addendum to these minutes)

LLI presenters asked Commissioners to provide any kind of support they can to the initiative – be a mentor, donate, identify funding opportunities, suggest other communities for program expansion.

Chair Peters commented that it was a great example of partnership between non-profit/community organizations and state resources.

Chair Peters also suggested that LLI should look into local community foundation dollars/funding as these are coming up as new funding opportunities in local communities.

Commission Gudenkauf suggested that LLI should seek some kind of partnership with schools since there are so many schools with a high enrollment of Latino students and it may cost the school and community a lot more when the students drop out.

### **Feedback on DHR Commissioner Orientation**

Chair Peters asked new commissioners to provide feedback on the orientation that was provided to them on May 9. She wanted new commissioners to share what was valuable from that orientation and if they thought there are any gaps where further information is needed for ICSW commissioner training. Commissioner Whisenand mentioned she was very pleased with the orientation. Following were some highlights of her comments on the orientation.

- Good location for meeting with ample parking
- Good communication from staff with notice to plan for the day
- Good room set-up that enabled interaction with peers and presenters
- Good presentation with ample room for Q&A
- Good information that was not too detailed, but had the information they needed. It wasn't too long or too short; appropriate in length
- It was interactive and the message was well delivered with visuals and handouts
- Good follow up from staff (Danielle) after the meeting on missing items/attachments
- Presentation from the Assistant Attorney General on legal matters was most informative and valuable
- Commissioner Rachelle Hunt Russian echoed the comments of Commissioner Whisenand, and agreed it was a useful orientation with good information

### **Friends Board Report:**

No member from Friends was able to attend this meeting.

Chair Peters gave a brief update. She mentioned that office staff (Sanjita) has spent some time with Friends board who meet monthly. Sanjita has also met with Hall of Fame committee to discuss and execute details on the event.

Chair Peters informed the Commission that the state office had a long track record of paying annual NACW membership dues, but did not allocate funds for dues in the NACW calendar-year budget. Instead, the Friends Board paid the membership dues. In addition, Friends board also will sponsor expenses for one board member and one staff person to attend the national conference coming up in July. Rachelle Hunt Russian from the Friends board and Kristen Corey from the office will be attending the National conference in July. Chair Peters emphasized that this is a good investment to keep abreast of what's happening in the national front, what other states are doing and a good learning opportunity.

Chair Peters mentioned we would hear national conference highlights from Rachelle and Kristen in our next meeting.

Commissioner Carnahan asked if ICSW had any thoughts to be a host for the Conference in future. Chair Peters commented that the previous staff person, Lori SchraderBacher, served on the NACW Executive Committee and mentioned the idea a couple times, but a bid was never prepared.

**Action item:** Commissioner Rachelle and staff Kristen will explore this idea at the conference and bring information back to the commission.

Commissioner Gudenkauf requested that all commissioners be informed about the improvements, action items in the Gender Balance project so they can continue to push things out in their districts.

### **Hall of Fame Committee Report:**

Commissioner Coonan commented that the overall selection process went fairly smoothly. She thought the materials provided were timely and appropriately delivered according to commissioner preference through drop box and flash drives.

Commissioner Coonan stated that the main comment received most frequently from the selection committee and other acquaintances is the belief that this award is not highly known and publicized. Therefore, for future we need to “put pen to paper” to create and implement a promotion plan and publicize the HOF in an elevated way.

Commissioner Coonan added that we need to do this for reasons (a) receiving more nominations to add to the selection pool, and (b) use this as an opportunity to highlight the work of the Commission.

Commissioner Peters reminded that the ‘Call for Nomination’ cards that was started last year were very useful to give out to all 300 plus attendees during the ceremony as a good reminder.

Commissioner Whisenand asked when the marketing for next year’s event starts. It was stated that the marketing for next year starts even during the event. Commissioner Coonan stated that the emcee of the ceremony should pull out the cards on stage and remind all attendees to look around the room and look at all the honorees and think who is missing and work on getting their application in.

### **Action item:**

1. It was agreed that the ‘call for nominations 2015 cards should be put inside the program and handed out widely during the ceremony and luncheon;
2. It was suggested that the LLI class of young Latina women and their sponsors be invited to attend and similar groups promoting women’s leadership.

HOF Event reminders that were announced or discussed:

- Event starts at 10:00 am, ends at approx. 11:30 am followed by a light reception at the atrium.
- Friends luncheon which is more cost recovery than fundraising starts at 12:30 at the Embassy suites.
- All commissioners are suggested to arrive by 9:15 am since there is always something to help with.
- Free parking ramp is available at the north side of the building at Grand Ave & and Pennsylvania Ave.
- Commissioners should help with ushering and escorting people with mobility issues to the elevator.
- First row should be reserved for ‘Accessible’ seating needs.

- Second row should be reserved for inductees.
- Other specific tasks for the commissioners will be communicated appropriately by the office staff ahead of time.

### **Approval of minutes from June 4<sup>th</sup> phone meeting for Hall of Fame Selection.**

Commissioner Coonan moved to approve the minutes, subject to a revision to remove Commissioner Aaron's name to being absent.

Commissioner Whisenand seconded the motion.  
Ayes: 5, nays: 0, motion carried.

Commissioner Hunt Russian asked chair Peters if all the inductees had been informed about their selection, and if new Commissioners will receive their name badges before the HOF event.

Chair Peters informed that she will soon complete the process of contacting honorees and their primary nominators; Deputy Director Smith informed board members that the office will pay for name badges for new commissioners, and they would be available by August 23.

### **General Discussion of Commission focus areas in new fiscal year, within the framework of ICSW charged to be a leader in advocacy for women and girls in Iowa**

Chair Peters informed the group that on April 16, commissioners stayed after the commission meeting to conduct a planning session. The general aim was to begin formulation of a "blueprint" that would articulate an area of focus, determine goals and brainstorm on action items.

Chair Peters handed out three documents she prepared as a somewhat informal (compiled) reference to show Code of Iowa language, structure of DHR and its Division of Advocacy & Community Services, which includes the Office on the Status of Women citizen Commissions. Those items are attached (three separate documents)

- **Attachment 1:** Information with Goals for the State of Iowa, Office of the Governor, ICSW Powers and duties, DHR divisions. (Excel doc)
- **Attachment 2:** DHR structure, mission, 2012 Policy Positions and role for Commission. (PDF doc)
- **Attachment 3:** ICSW list partial list of accomplishments. (Word doc)

Heidi Smith handed out a draft of the notes from the strategic plan completed on April 16 and solicited feedback from commissioners who were present in the meeting.

**Action item:** Commissioner Coonan mentioned the three commissioners (Coonan, Carnahan and Peters) who were in the selection committee will give their ideas in writing to chair Peters. Chair Peters will work with office staff to record and implement the plan in future.

**Action item:** All commissioners will review the planning notes and provide feedback/input to chair Peters.

Chair Peters reminded of the following things to keep in mind.

\* There are many issues that affect women and girls, like the issue at Toledo, issues with Latina women, STEM, violence etc. The commission cannot do all things for all people and there are many

organizations doing good work in some of these areas. Where are the gaps, where do we fit in? Where can we create the greatest impact to retain the luster that ICSW once had in the past?

Deputy Director Smith suggested that Rachelle and Kristen should ask similar questions about the impact of other women's commissions when they participate in the NACW conference.

Commissioner Gudenkauf asked a question on how the DHR board intersects/works/connects with ICSW. Smith said the DHR board is relatively new and had a big turnover recently, so it is challenging.

Commissioner Coonan will be representing ICSW at the DHR board level. Commissioner Coonan believes that the board has not been able to function the way that it is supposed to and she has a challenging task in front of her but she is willing to take the challenge and work on it. Commissioner Coonan commented that she went over some communication at the board level and found a good amount of emails/communications.

**Determine 2014-15 commission meeting dates:**

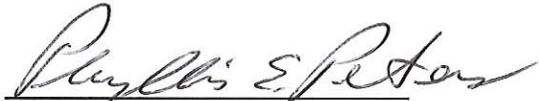
Chair Peters asked if Commissioners agree to meet on Aug 23 after the HOF luncheon. All commissioners unanimously agreed to hold a commission meeting on **August 23**.

The additional three dates were set for ICSW Commission meetings throughout 2014–2015: **Nov: 12, 2014, Feb: 11, 2015, May: 13, 2015**,

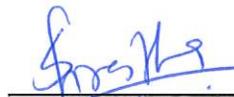
Commissioner Coonan left meeting at 11:54 am.

Commissioner Whisenand moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gudenkauf seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:05

Respectfully submitted:



Phyllis Peters, Chair



Sanjita Pradhan, Executive Officer

**ADDENDUM:** added informational notes – not affecting action items of Commission business.

Latina Leadership Initiative Presentation:

**Highlights of the program:**

- Program idea originated by Sonia Parras Konrad and the Social Action Committee at Plymouth Church in Des Moines. Sonia is an immigration Attorney from the Latino community who is involved in many non-profit and advocacy for the Latino community.
- The Office on Latino Affairs became involved because it coincided with the priorities set by the commission at their strategic planning in 12/12/12.
- Self-identity and the history of Latinos in Iowa is not something taught in school and this is a topic that is heavily addressed as part of the program. The added uniqueness of the program is also navigating Latino and mainstream cultures effectively and with lasting positive outcomes. It is also the purpose of the program to meet a need for Latinos and mainstream community for more diverse talented leaders to serve on boards, committees and councils. Specific program for Latina women that would help them with leadership development surfaced to the top.
- A cohort of 12 Latina women was selected to be in this program although it was initially planned for 15.

- The original projected budget was to have a class of 15 participants with a budget under \$100,000. It would be ideal to have a permanent budget that may accommodate more participants and retain the Executive Director who currently works for LLI on a part time basis.
- For the 2014-2015 class there is an application fee of \$25 and a program cost of \$300. LLI's website lists multiple options to assist participants so that program costs do not become a barrier to potential participants. <http://www.latinaleadershipinitiative.org/about/>
- Students meet two Saturdays a month from 10am to 4:00pm for ten classroom sessions starting in September with some other meetings related to their service project in between culminating with graduation in May. The topics covered in the program are:
  - Latina Women's Leadership
  - How migration has changed women's role in their families, communities and over generations
  - Financial Literacy & Entrepreneurship
  - Wellness – Self Care/Sustainability
  - Law, Civics and Advocacy (including Immigration, DACA, etc.)
  - Education and Careers (this includes STEM)

Attachment 1: Provided by Chair Peters  
ICSW meeting June 11, 14

**GOALS for the State of Iowa**

**Office of the Governor**

*Presented in Governor Branstad's January 14, 2011 inaugural address and communicated broadly as framework for Executive Branch*

- \* 25% Increase in Family Income
- \* 200,000 New Jobs for Iowans
- \* 15% Reduction in the Cost of Gov't.
- \* Education - elevate schools to 1st in the nation

**ICSW Powers and Duties**

**Iowa Code 216A.54**

*The Code of Iowa lists five (5) specific powers and duties for the Commission on the Status of Women; separately articulates what the office "shall do"*

- The Commission shall have the following powers and duties
1. Study the opportunities for and changing needs of the women and girls of this state.
  2. Serve as liaison between the office and the public, sharing information and gathering constituency input.
  3. Recommend to the board the adoption of rules pursuant to chapter 17A as it deems necessary for the commission and office.
  4. Recommend legislative and executive action to the governor and general assembly.
  5. Establish advisory committees, work groups, or other coalitions as appropriate.

**Iowa Department of Human Rights:** DHR is a state agency with a mission to ensure basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities for all by empowering underrepresented Iowans and eliminating economic, social and cultural barriers.

The DHR Director is appointed by the Governor. Dept has core functions and three (3) divisions:

- Division of Community Action Agencies
- Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP)
- Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS) [ 7 offices within CAS ]

**Commission planning session (April 16) --**

**general category areas for Commission's work / role / responsibilities**

- \* public policy / advocacy in policy areas that impact Iowa women & girls
- \* leadership - assigning Commission to work on X; be seen as leader on X
- \* education (awareness, communication)

**DHR executive team planning articulated three (3) goals for the Department's work (DHR Board strategic planning is a separate report)**

1. support the three branches of gov't.
2. create access and build capacities of state and other agencies
3. move individuals from where they are to the next level

Attachment 2: Provided by Chair Peters  
 ICSSW meeting June 11, 2014

Iowa Department  
 of Human Rights

DHR is a state agency with a mission to ensure basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities for all by empowering underrepresented Iowans and eliminating economic, social, and cultural barriers. DHR's core functions are the **administration of federal programs to help low income families**, **research and data analysis pertaining to juvenile and criminal justice issues**, and **advocacy and services to Iowans who have historically been marginalized**. Originally conceived in 1987 and reorganized in 2010, DHR serves as an umbrella for several agencies and offices that had previously operated independently.

Division of  
 Community Action  
 Agencies

focal point is fed. programs that assist low-income families - energy assistance, weatherization prog., block grants, etc. (note: Federal budget \$\$)

Division of Criminal  
 and Juvenile  
 Justice Planning

division name is self-explanatory; functions include data collection, collaboration

Division of  
 Community Advocacy  
 and Services (CAS)

- Office of Asian and Pacific Islanders
- Office for Deaf Services
- Office for Latino Affairs
- Office for Native Americans
- Office for Persons With Disabilities
- Office on Status of African Americans
- Office on the Status Women

Seven citizen commissioners — set policies and strategic direction for state advocacy for women and girls.

>> *Division on the Status of Women* became *Office on the Status of Women*, which "shall serve as the central permanent agency to advocate for women and girls" in 2010 as part of IA DHR reorganization  
 >> 1999-2008 — 3 FTEs; now "one staff" — filled via 2 half-time positions  
 >> ICSSW has a 40-year history; began as "Governor's Commissions" - Govs. Hughes and Ray; always bi-partisan support & non-partisan agenda

**Mission:** Through responsive advocacy, the ICSSW champions the success and wellbeing of women and girls in Iowa.  
**Vision:** Growing Iowa's opportunities so that every woman and girl can reach her full potential.

**2012 Policy Positions**

1. Promote policies that provide access to attain and maintain higher paying jobs for women.
2. Maintain funding for critical services for women, e.g. sexual assault or domestic violence victim services, child support recovery, work supports.
3. Support policy changes that enhance safety for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

**Road ahead / role for Commission:**

Look at the record of ICSSW accomplishments over past 4 decades. Challenge ahead - what can the Commission do to ensure that systems are in place to support and challenge women & girls to reach their full potential? Our goals can and should align to the Governor's goals -- when women and their families are positioned to be successful, we enhance Iowa's future. We have minimal state resources, but have other assets to use.



Iowa commission on the status of women

Attachment 3: Provided by Chair Peters  
June 10, 2014

[www.women.iowa.gov](http://www.women.iowa.gov)

**Mission:** Through responsive advocacy, the ICSW champions the success and wellbeing of women and girls in Iowa.

**Vision:** Growing Iowa's opportunities so that every woman and girl can reach her full potential.

A Partial List of Achievements of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (including initiatives for which ICSW was a partner or collaborator - not always the sole actor).

- Removal of gender preference in the Iowa Code
- Addition of women to the Iowa Constitution
- Requirement for gender balance on state boards and commissions (women were 14% of boards and commissions in 1974, now 49%)
- Requirement for locally appointed boards and commission by 2012 (was 18% of 4 selected economically focused boards in 2009)
- Major support for the Iowa Coalitions Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, including office space in early years and development of funding and network of centers
- Establishment in Code that women must have equal access/opportunity to credit
- Establishment that pregnant women are a protected class in the Civil Rights Code
- Expansion of definition of domestic violence in the Iowa Code; firearms prohibition for domestic abusers
- Removal from the Iowa Code of the exception for spouses under rape statute (1992!)
- Protection of funding for child support recovery, Legal Aid, victim services, child care assistance, etc.
- Establishment of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination
- Participation in the Comparable Worth Study and evaluated results (eliminating the disparities in state worker wages based on job. e.g., male custodian made \$10K more than female with a Masters in Social Work before); participation in Affirmative Action Task Force
- Participation in the Equality in the Courts Task Force (getting more women judges)
- Identification of gender wage disparities, women's overrepresentation in contingency jobs (low wage, no benefits, no advancement opportunities); introduction and passage of one of the US's most stringent wage discrimination bills
- Policy recommendations from participation on State Domestic Abuse Death Review Team
- Building awareness of policy issues related to single parents, low income family issues

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women was created in 1972. The Commission has a **40-year record of ADVOCACY and affecting POSITIVE CHANGE** to improve opportunities for Iowa women and girls. 40 years.... but there's still more to do. Join us, stay connected.

The Commission: [www.women.iowa.gov](http://www.women.iowa.gov) and its FRIENDS [www.friendsoficsw.org](http://www.friendsoficsw.org)