

**New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education**

Annual Retreat Minutes

July 23, 2009

Janice Levin Building, Rutgers University

Piscataway, New Jersey

9:00-1:30

Attendees: *Eileen Appelbaum (CWW), Marie Barry (NJ DOE), Angela Bethea (Commission on Higher Education), Terri Boyer (CWW), Laurel Brennan (NJ AFL-CIO), Mary Ellen Clark (WIRED Bio-1), Suzanne Eng (CWW), Judy Formalarie (SETC), Mary Gatta (CWW), Grace Hamilton (Division on Women), Dianne E. Hartshorn (The Hartshorn Group), Linda Houser (CWW/GPC), Alice Hunnicutt (SETC Member), Paul Jurmo (Union County College), Andrea Karsian (Fort Lee, NJ, SETC Member), RoseMarie Korbela (Port Authority), Janice Kovach (Division on Women), Pat Leahey (Ocean City WIB), Vince Matthews (Governor's Office), Dianne Mills-McKay (GPC Chair), Maureen Murphy (SETC), Sarah Pallone (Long Branch, NJ), Henry Plotkin (Highland Park, NJ), Grace Protos (US DOL), Pat Roos (CWW), Yustina Saleh (NJ LWD), Donna Scalia (US DOL), Diane Schonyers (NJ DOE), Tapas Sen (SETC Member), Caitlin Sweany (Sen. Joseph Vitale), Virginia Treacy (JNESO), Tahesha Way (Freeholder, Passaic County), Karen White (CWW), Robin Widing (SETC Acting Executive Director), Robert Wise (Hunterdon Medical Center), and Pam Yuen (Congressman Frank Pallone)*

SETC Acting Executive Director Robin Widing opened the meeting with a welcome to all and explained the importance of this strategic planning session. As a result of the recession, there is a significant shift now occurring in our economy with more emphasis on technical and higher level skills. It will be important to identify the effects these changes will have on gender parity. She also noted the challenge facing the SETC and the State of New Jersey with an anticipated 40,000 unemployment insurance recipients exhausting their benefits as of August of this year (500,000 nationally).

GPC Chair Dianne Mills McKay presented the agenda for the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves. She then introduced presentations by Yustina Saleh and Eileen Appelbaum to provide context for the work of the retreat.

Women in the Economy: Current Challenges and Future Opportunities: Yustina Saleh of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development provided an overview of the economic climate in the state and the impact of the recession on women in the economy. She presented comparisons of men's and women's employment data from prior to the recession (2007) to current data (through June 2009), but cautioned that trends in the data are not valid indicators or predictors of future conditions and that they must be interpreted with care. For example, though unemployment rates for women have risen less than those for men (both nationally and in New Jersey), this does not necessarily indicate improvement in women's employment prospects. One alternative

interpretation is that women are entering the workforce or increasing work hours to offset partners' employment losses or reductions.

For industry comparisons, women are least represented in construction, transportation, and manufacturing, and are over-represented only in education and health services. Importantly, the latter categories (i.e., education and health) have been the only two to add jobs during the recession. In specific occupations, women are underrepresented in science and engineering, and overrepresented in healthcare, personal care, education, and administrative support.

Preparing New Jersey Women for Middle Class Jobs: Eileen Appelbaum, Director of the Center for Women and Work, shared findings and reflections from a report issued this week by the President's Council of Economic Advisors. The Council projects the largest net job growth (with 2 million or more jobs per year) in construction (roads, bridges, utility systems, and retrofitting of buildings) and in medical services and dentists (home health, outpatient care, medical and diagnostic labs). It also projects growth (with 250,000 to 500,000 jobs per year) in the following industries: air transport; miscellaneous business services; nursing homes; wholesale trade; physicians' offices; education, social services, and nonprofit organizations; restaurants and bars; and private hospitals.

To promote broader opportunities for women, Appelbaum suggested focusing on training for nontraditional careers (e.g., air transport mechanics, construction, environmental engineering); training in traditional jobs in health care; and capitalizing on funding available through the current ARRA. She noted that, nationally as well as locally, the greatest disparities in income and other indicators of economic well-being are no longer between men and women generally, but rather between "mothers (i.e., caregivers) and others." Even with the increase in the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, a full-time worker, working a minimum wage job for 52 weeks a year, would earn just under \$15,000 annually.

Group discussion followed about a recommendation to promote programs that will upgrade skills and build career lattices and ladders in health care jobs, as well as other occupational areas. Several attendees noted the effectiveness of clinical health care coordinator positions, both in reducing health care costs and creating well-paying jobs. Henry Plotkin suggested that there be some consideration of legislation designed to convert New Jersey hospitals to more efficient and coordinated systems.

There was also some discussion of workplace policies and workplace culture. Robert Wise noted that what the Council should be looking to create is not just jobs but an ideal business culture capable of supporting jobs in which both women and men, with or without caregiving responsibilities, will be able to succeed. Eileen Appelbaum noted that, in the next few weeks, she will be traveling to present a compilation of research showing that family leave policies are effective in reducing employee turnover.

Break and Additional Introductions: After a brief break, Sarah Pallone discussed her new role in the Environmental Protection Agency and connections between this role and her continued work with the GPC. Dianne Mills-McKay introduced Linda Houser who will be working with the Gender Parity Council on priority projects determined in part through the retreat.

Update on Nursing and Healthcare: Virginia Treacy, Executive Director of JNESO, provided an update on the state of nursing and healthcare in New Jersey. She noted that, over the past seven and a half years, 19 New Jersey hospitals have closed. While there is a serious need for more nurses in the state, a shortage of nursing faculty paired with necessary limits on teacher/student ratios in nursing classes has led to a capping of enrollments in nursing education. Nursing faculty is not well paid, and is comprised largely of women. As hospitals have closed and nurses have been in short supply, workload has increased and nurses' work schedules have lost much of their flexibility.

Group discussion followed highlighting goals of expanding nursing faculty and finding ways to prioritize high-demand jobs within one-stop systems. Robin Widing noted that the U.S. Department of Labor has issued an RFP for health care industry grants. She will have the RFP be distributed to retreat attendees.

Bob Wise discussed his hospital's program of using a coordinator/patient navigator program and the training that can be created for it. He said that while there may be an initial investment, it is important to remember that costs can go down as quality goes up. He stated that while hospitals do not usually do research and development (as they cannot get reimbursed for it), they must work at putting research into practice in every day work. He has participated in several studies and would be glad to work on healthcare projects with the Council.

Update on K-12 Education: Marie Barry from the New Jersey Department of Education discussed efforts by the department and through the Nontraditional Career Resource Center to expose all students to career planning early on and to increase interest in pursuing nontraditional careers. She noted that career awareness has been woven into younger grades throughout the state. Barry also reported on a pilot project, The Personalized Student Learning Plan, to have students develop personalized career learning plans that can grow with them as they move from grade to grade. The two year pilot will start in September 2009 with 15 schools and their students in grade 6 and 9.

Group discussion followed noting the importance of addressing (1) parent and cultural issues in presenting nontraditional careers, (2) the devaluation of career and technical schools, and (3) a lack of awareness among some teachers of what careers are possible and/or in high demand. The group discussed an idea for developing and potentially requiring teacher training that incorporates current labor market information.

One concern raised was the disconnect between what is projected to be an increasing demand for STEM jobs (especially in “green” areas) and the level of preparedness of many of New Jersey entry-level workers. This led to a discussion of raising skill and certification levels through online training programs, such as those highlighted in 2004-05 research by Mary Gatta. Eileen Appelbaum and Mary Gatta discussed this research, as well as a newly developed website for adult training being beta tested in various states. Gatta’s research suggests that online training is an accessible and effective way for single mothers to complete training, earn certificates, and achieve wage increases.

Where are Women in the Workforce Development System: Mary Gatta from the Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations and the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University presented a proposal for a new research study posing the following research questions:

- How have workforce development policy and programs conceptualized single working poor mothers and addressed their employment and training needs?
- What are women’s experiences in using workforce services?
- How can job training policy be crafted with a gender lens to provide real opportunities for single mothers to access job training and education?

Gatta highlighted findings from a 2003 *Wider Opportunities for Women* study suggesting that there is a large data gap on the specific experiences of women in the workforce development system. She plans to go forward with preliminary data collection (focus groups and administrative data) and then to seek additional funding for broadening the study.

Findings and Recommendations from the Women in Science and Technology Summits: Judy Formalarie from the State Employment and Training Commission presented a series of findings culled over three years of Women in Science and Technology Summits convened by the GPC. She noted that much of the discussion today reflects priorities identified through these summits. Recommendations were shared in the following areas:

- Utilize retraining and reemployment efforts, specializing in emerging occupations.
- Market career pathways in science in P-12 education.
- Market career pathways in science in higher education.
- Improve workplace climate and work-life balance.
- Improve mentoring practices.
- Use multi-media to promote STEM careers.

Women in Law Report-Distribution: Terri Boyer presented key findings from the final report, “Legal Talent at the Crossroads: Why New Jersey Women Leave Their Law

Firms and Why They Choose to Stay.” She noted that women lawyers reported leaving jobs to pursue more flexible but also more challenging work environments. The report has received substantial media attention, both in New Jersey and nationally. The group discussed expanding questions and issues raised in the report to other occupational areas, essentially posing the question: How do we create workplace environments to attract the “best women”?

The meeting concluded with remarks from Robin Widing and a networking lunch.

**New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education
Annual Retreat Minutes ~ Planning Session
July 23, 2009**

Janice Levin Building, Rutgers University
Piscataway, New Jersey
1:30 – 3:00

Attendees: Eileen Appelbaum (CWW), Marie Barry (NJ DOE), Laurel Brennan (NJ AFL-CIO), Mary Ellen Clark (WIRED Bio-1), Suzanne Eng (CWW), Judy Formalarie (SETC), Mary Gatta (CWW), Grace Hamilton (Division on Women), Dianne E. Hartshorn (The Hartshorn Group), Linda Houser (GPC), Alice Hunnicutt (SETC Member), Andrea Karsian (Fort Lee, NJ, SETC Member), RoseMarie Korbelak (Port Authority), Pat Leahey (Ocean City WIB), Dianne Mills-McKay (GPC Chair), Maureen Murphy (SETC), Sarah Pallone (Long Branch, NJ), Henry Plotkin (Highland Park, NJ), Pat Roos (CWW), Donna Scalia (US DOL), Robin Widing (SETC Acting Executive Director), and Pam Yuen (Congressman Frank Pallone)

Opening: The Chair opened the meeting for members of the Gender Parity Council, and others interested in continuing the discussion, to begin planning directions for the Council and a project agenda for the next one to two years.

Women in the Workforce

Henry Plotkin suggested that a key and immediate question is...what is the impact on women and men as a result of the funding from the federal economic stimulus package? One way to begin to answer this question is through the research proposed by Mary Gatta, who will send her proposal for all to look at as a template. Some of the quantitative data may be available through the One-Stop Operating System, but interviews and focus groups with women in the system and with case managers would provide valuable data not collected in other states. Robin Widing suggested convening a task force that would deliberate and recommend what critical issues we need to know and what issues require study. We may want to get 20 employers from recommendations from the WIBs and examine them for information as part of the study to look at job creation. Volunteers included Mary Gatta, Grace Hamilton, Linda Houser, Pat Leahey, and Henry Plotkin. The task force has been asked to present recommendations for next steps by mid-August.

Nursing and Apprenticeship Programs

The next issue to be discussed was the need for apprenticeships and other programs to establish career lattices and ladders in nursing and other fields. Pat Leahey reported on a successful certified nursing assistant (CNA) apprenticeship program that trained CNAs in an area of specialization to facilitate career movement. She agreed to send her information to the SETC.

There was also a lively discussion on the effort to give those in low-level healthcare more training so that they can handle more job responsibilities, earn more money, and move up the career ladder in this fashion. It was also noted that by giving lower-level occupations more skill, it allowed those in nursing to do more direct patient nursing care.

Education

Concerns were raised regarding the needs in the area of education. Mary Ellen Clark (WIRED – Bio 1) noted that she has been working with placing unemployed science professionals into math and science teaching jobs through alternate routes. There was also a discussion on ways to make the transition easier for soldiers who were medics so they could be trained to be nurses.

Diane Hartshorn indicated that women are losing management and upper level jobs. The group discussed the need for more information on actual availability of jobs in particular areas, especially STEM and nursing. Given changes in the nursing field, especially information reported earlier by Virginia Treacy, how are nursing resources currently allocated and how can the workforce system best help women to acquire needed skills, certification, and expertise?

There was some discussion of available and “in process” resources for creating a public relations campaign to connect students and teachers to STEM careers. Mary Ellen Clark reported on the beginning availability of a series of interviews with diverse individuals about their careers. These are available via You Tube. It was suggested that these be made available through the NCRC website.

A short discussion was held regarding professional development for teachers and if the type of training could be mandated, rather than just the number of hours. The committee was interested in having better prepared teachers in their subject and in regards to current industry needs.

Green Initiatives

Discussion focused on five energy-related SGAs (Solicitation for Grant Applications) recently issued by the federal government and how women can be attracted to ‘green jobs’. Robin Widing will see that information on the SGAs is sent to the group. There were reports of several changes, initiatives, and grants of interest in this area – including a Los Angeles initiative for retrofitting government buildings and the establishment of a New Jersey labor union for weatherization (Local 55). However, it was mentioned that there is a concern as unemployment is very high in laborers’ jobs.

Women in Law Project Next Steps

Potential next steps for the Women in Law project include developing and offering trainings to specific member organizations this year and expanding the research to other occupational arenas, such as Bio-Pharma or the healthcare industry in two years.

Adjournment: Dianne Mills McKay adjourned the meeting at 3 p.m.

Next meeting of the Council will be held the Labor Education Center. A date was not set.