

- "April 1, 2011"

Posted by gavazzi.1

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*"Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance." (Kofi Annan)*

This week I had the distinct honor of introducing our campus to Hazel Morrow-Jones, Associate Provost for Women's Policy Initiatives and the Director of The Women's Place (TWP), and Jennifer Beard, Assistant Director of TWP. I must confess to having a soft spot in my heart for TWP, and it is one of the primary reasons for my being on the OSU Mansfield campus. The President's and Provost's Leadership Institute – an 18 month long leadership training that provided me with the principal knowledge base for taking on my past and present administrative positions – was founded in large part through the efforts of Dr. Deb Ballam, the original director of TWP. And it was Deb Ballam who had urged me most strongly to apply for the position of Dean and Director of this campus. So if you like what I have been doing these past 13 weeks, think happy thoughts about TWP. And if you think that my hiring was a colossal mistake, then blame Deb and not Hazel and Jennifer!

The mission of TWP, according to their founding document, is to serve "as a catalyst for institutional change" and "to expand opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in an inclusive, supportive, and safe university environment consistent with the goals of the Academic and Diversity Plans." While this sounds decidedly like a set of women's issues, they most emphatically are not. They are everyone's issues, and they extend way beyond the confines of our campus. That's why I used the words of Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the UN, at the beginning of this communication.

While the importance of gender equality for our university and our community is paramount, this in fact is not the only reason that I had invited these representatives of TWP to our campus today. Significantly, I believe that the initial work on cultural transformation here at OSU Mansfield – you may remember this as the "unfreezing activities" that were presented to our campus community a while back – can be sustained and elaborated on through activities being undertaken by TWP.

This comes at a most opportune time for our campus. In the midst of the budget issues that we will be facing in the weeks and months ahead, we also will be challenged to develop a renewed sense of exactly who we are as a regional campus community. As part of my office's response to this, I have asked Cathy Stimpert and Donna Hight to serve as our campus liaisons to TWP. I am confident that both of these senior staff members will faithfully and capably help shape and

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guide our campus connections to TWP. As well, I have invited members of the Mansfield Staff Advisory Committee (MSAC) – and I was pleased to have MSAC representatives Cindi Thompson and Rick Stewart on hand during the TWP presentation over the common hour this past Tuesday – to begin the process of figuring out how linkages to TWP also would benefit MSAC goals and aspirations.

I invite all of you to talk with Cathy, Cindi, Donna, Rick, and each other as we build and sustain these important connections with our TWP colleagues. In the meantime, please take the time to enjoy the weekend with family and friends!

Steve Gavazzi