

Task Force on Women in Sports

Date: May 10, 2022

Time: 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Location: Lansing Community College (Downtown Campus), Arts & Science Building, Room 1304, 419 N Washington Square, Lansing MI 48933

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson/Secretary Benson at 12:40 pm.

| Task Force Attendance | Present | Absent |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Jocelyn Benson (Chair) | X | |
| Penny Allen-Cook | X | |
| Ketra Armstrong, Ph.D.* | X | |
| Kathy Beauregard | | X |
| Keri Becker | X | |
| Lorin Cartwright | X | |
| Carolyn Cassin | X | |
| Ramona Cox, Ph.D. | X | |
| Cali Crawford | X | |
| Joanne Gerstner | X | |
| Jennifer Granger* | X | |
| Mike Guswiler | X | |
| Carol Hutchins | | X |
| Samantha Mullet* | X | |
| Erika Swilley | | X |
| Michele Lewis Watts (Director) | X | |

*Attended via video conference.

Task Force Advisory Members attending in person: Dan Gould, Ph.D., Meg Seng, Mark Uyl

Richard Lapchick, Ph.D., Suzy Merchant, Heather Mitts Feeley, Patti Phillips, and Scott Pioli attended via video conference.

Guests: Sarah Axelson, Sarah Dehring, Jenna Schroeder

II. Approval of March Meeting Minutes

Dr. Watts provided an overview of the March 8, 2002, meeting minutes. A quorum was present. The previously developed five recommendations were discussed. The members unanimously approved amending the five recommendations to three. (Moved: Keri Becker, Seconded: Penny Allen Cook.) Guest remarks were provided by Dr. Philomena Mantella during the break. The members favored making an announcement at the Mackinac Policy Conference and a full announcement of the report in late June closer

to the anniversary of Title IX (which is June 23). The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 pm.

The March Meeting Minutes were approved (Moved: Mike Guswiler, Seconded: Joanne Gerstner).

III. Meeting Overview & Objectives

Secretary Benson recognized Dr. Gould on his retirement from Michigan State.

1. Discuss the Report and Executive Summary; Approve going forward to final design and release of the report.
2. Discuss plans for announcements of the report.

IV. Recommendations Discussion

Members provided their comments on the executive summary and the report draft. Recommendation 1 should highlight the need for accountability as part of modernizing and expanding upon Title IX. Mark Uyl noted that the state government's role could be included as a tactic within that Recommendation, but "government oversight" would likely be a turnoff for many.

For Recommendation 2, the members agreed that "pathways" is a better term to use than pipeline to be more expansive and consistent with previous research reports. Secretary Benson suggested adding "leadership" to the recommendation. Dr. Armstrong highlighted the role of universities for training as a tactic within this recommendation, and Scott Pioli added that the focus needs to be on careers and actions. Additional ideas were discussed to promote careers in sports and more emphasis on National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Dr. Ramona Cox noted that girls of color and urban communities often need additional resources to be included in such events.

Secretary Benson asked if there was a state-level group that convenes women leaders on a regular basis. Dr. Watts mentioned Women in Sports and Events (WISE) which is a chapter-based professional organization, but there was consensus that there wasn't a group executing locally. Dr. Gould mentioned a mentoring model for coaches and administrators that could be replicated, and Sarah Dehring added that the MIAA conference convenes their women leaders and staff annually.

For Recommendation 3, it was suggested to add stronger language to support bringing a professional women's team to Michigan. There was some discussion about Detroit and Grand Rapids as cities for professional women's soccer.

Dr. Gould stated that recreational leagues, as compared to travel sports, are increasing in importance. He added that defining success, such as playing sports for life, is an important element to highlight. Two other changes that were mentioned were including

support, examples and potential impact for each recommendation and stating “who” could/should be involved in each recommendation. Carolyn Cassin indicated that equity is not mentioned enough in the report. Dr. Armstrong noted that the impact of intersectional identities, building off the research data, needs to be highlighted.

Carolyn Cassin suggested adding more information on the benefits of sports for women and Keri Becker recommended including the benefits of equity to the report. Dr. Gould noted that supporting women’s leadership development contributes to the power of a diverse workforce as another benefit that can be expounded upon.

The Task Force approved finalizing the report based on the suggested changes and reviewing a final draft via email. (Moved: Penny Allen Cook, Seconded: Carolyn Cassin)

V. Report Announcement

A press conference has been approved by the Detroit Regional Chamber to be held at the Mackinac Policy Conference on the morning of Wednesday, June 1 at the Grand Hotel, time TBD. Two celebrity athletes, Mia Hamm and Elana Meyers Taylor, will participate in the press conference. Secretary Benson will find out if the Governor will participate. Task Force and Advisory Board members are invited to attend. The executive summary will be available to the press. Additional details will be provided as they are finalized.

Joanne Gerstner asked about preparing Mia and Elana for Michigan political media and possible participation from Michigan athletes. Secretary Benson added that there will be an opportunity for more participation at the second press conference. It was added that men athletes could also be invited to show support.

A larger event targeting sports and other media will take place later in June closer to the date of the anniversary of Title IX in the Lansing or Detroit area to release the full report.

VI. Next Steps

Carolyn Cassin provided an overview of the goals to find funding to implement the recommendations. Carolyn, Jennifer Granger and Dr. Watts met to discuss strategies to secure funding from foundations, individual donors, professional sports teams and the general public. Initial steps would also include raising awareness and interest. The goal would be \$100,000 a year for three years to provide program grants, convene, conduct research, and monitor progress. If Task Members have ideas for potential donors, please provide names to Carolyn or Dr. Watts.

Secretary Benson provided an overview of the license plate program that could be implemented to support a girls and women in sports fund that could be administered by Michigan Women Forward, as a charitable organization is required. As legislation is needed to create a specialty plate, Secretary Benson mentioned that State Representative Mari Manoogian is willing to put that legislation forth.

The Task Force is dissolved as of June per Executive Order. Secretary Benson thanked all members for their participation as this is the final meeting.

VII. Public Comment – No members of the public requested to comment.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm (Motion: Joanne Gerstner, Seconded by Lorin Cartwright)