

**Indiana Commission for Women  
Hoosier INsight  
IUPUI Listening Session Report  
Campus Center  
Wednesday, March 23, 2011  
12:00p.m. – 1:30p.m.**

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**Table of Contents**

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**Overview.....3**  
**Participants.....3**  
**Issues Identified.....4**  
**Top Three Issues & Discussion.....5**  
**Access to Reproductive Healthcare.....6**  
**Violence against Women.....8**  
**Early Childhood/Family Education.....10**  
**Conclusions.....12**

**Overview**

The Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) held their first university based listening session on the afternoon of March 23. The commission wanted to consciously reach out to younger women to include their voice in the project and felt that a session held on a college campus could help to facilitate their participation.

As a group, the participants identified (29) issues facing women in Indiana. By consensus, the group voted and determined that the top three issues facing women that should be addressed first were: pay equity, opportunities for leadership, and low cost/free family planning support. An in-depth discussion of these top three priorities was completed in small groups. Each group was asked to answer specific questions regarding their issue and to start developing a plan of action for addressing the issue in Indiana. The results of the discussions are detailed in later in this report.

**Participants**

The IUPUI listening session was sponsored by the IUPUI Office for Women (OFW) and the Women's Studies Program, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. The session was promoted in a variety of ways. The OFW sent out information on the various listservs on campus and the Women's Studies program also sent information out to faculty and students. In addition the presidents of many of the women-focused organizations were contacted and invited to attend with their membership. A total of 26 women attended the listening session.

**Issues Identified**

The participants of the listening session identified the issues that they believed were barriers to women's full participation in society. These issues were then voted on to determine the top three issues facing women in Indiana. Each woman was given 3 votes that she could use to help prioritize the issues. The numbers next to the issue represent the number of votes that issue received from the participants.

- Work/family balance – 5
- Gender parity – 1
- Acceptance of parental responsibilities (non-traditional for both men & women)
- Pay equity – 14
- Comprehensive sex education – 3
- Access to healthcare – 1
- Access to education & returning to school – 3
- Adequate income
- Access to financial resources for education and transition
- Resources for parents for children's education – 2
- Opportunities in leadership – 9
- Access to affordable, high quality child care – 7
- Emotional support to parents returning to school – 1
- More awareness of mental health issues – 2
- Gender analysis of public policy
- Overcoming "superwoman syndrome" – 3
- Support for women veterans – 5
- Lack of female leadership in government
- Awareness of gender stereotypes
- Low cost/free family planning support – 8
- Legal advocacy/support for transitions (ex. Divorce, etc.) – 3
- Emotional support for nontraditional partners
- Raise awareness of LGBT issues – 4
- Domestic violence
- Support of women entrepreneurs – 2
- Access to support/resources for low-income women – 1
- Health coverage discrimination – 3
- Ability of women to pursue nontraditional roles
- Lack of transportation – 1

### **Top Three Issues & Discussion**

The top three issues that were identified by the participants were: 1) Pay equity, 2) Opportunities for leadership, and 3) low cost/free family planning support. Once these issues were identified, the participants broke up into small groups of 8-9 people to further discuss the components of each issue. Participants were asked to consider a series of questions regarding these issues in order to start developing a plan of action for how we should work to overcome these challenges in Indiana. The questions were divided into five categories and are listed below.

#### **Frame It**

1. What are the critical components of this issue?
2. What should be addressed first?

#### **What's in Place Now?**

3. Are there any existing programs in place to help solve this issue?
4. Are there any agencies or organizations who currently deal with this issue?

#### **Who should be involved?**

5. Who are the people/organizations that should be involved in this issue?
6. Who should be responsible for strategizing ideas and implementing solutions for this issue?

#### **Community/State Actions**

7. How can the community work on solving this issue?
8. Is this an issue that should be addressed statewide? How?

#### **Next Steps**

9. What resources are needed to work on this issue?
10. What are the next steps that should be taken to address this issue?

## **Pay Equity**

Pay Equity was identified as the top priority issue by the participants of this listening session. There were fourteen votes for this issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

### *Frame It*

The participants identified the following critical components within this issue:

- Economic climate (as an excuse)
- Parent role (societal norms)
- It's okay to negotiate and be aggressive!
- Effective career planning
  - Start early
- Stereotyping
  - Field of interest for women
  - Roles within a company

### *What's In Place Now?*

The participants identified the following programs/organizations that currently exist to help improve pay equity.

- Advocacy
  - Indiana Commission for Women
  - IUPUI Office for Women
- Women specific mentoring
- Companies that provide balanced expectations for parents (FMLA)
- Women's studies courses

### *Who Should Be Involved?*

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help improve pay equity.

- Human resources
- Policy makers
- Management at all levels
- WOMEN & MEN!
- Early education – start young
- Community organizations
- Women in leadership
  - Serve as role models
- Career placement counselors
  - National Career Development Association (NCDA)

*Community/State Action*

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the issues surrounding pay equity.

- Town hall meetings
- Actual involvement – don't just say it/think it – do it!
- More workshops and forums
  - To build confidence
  - To build awareness
- Be politically involved

*Next Steps*

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Public Services announcements about gender bias
- Town halls
- Identify key advocates and constituents
- Empower and educate women to demand more
  - Workshops
  - Mentoring
  - Web sites
  - High school level education for career planning
  - College level education for career planning
- Education on salary expectations in ALL career areas

## **Opportunities for Leadership**

Opportunities for leadership was identified as second priority issue by the participants of the IUPUI listening session. This issue received nine votes. The discussion of this topic is below.

### *Frame It*

The participants of this discussion identified the following challenges in opportunities for leadership.

- Women are discouraged from pursuing success
- Why are women discouraged?
- Lack of preparation, lack of support
- Expectations for women are high
- Standards are higher for women vs. men
- Women have other responsibilities other than work
- Ivy league study shows women choose lower positions for leadership
- Women are intimidated
- Lack of willingness to have a visible leadership role
- Lack of risk taking
- Lack of supportive mentors
- Sensitivity of “being ignored”
- Men usually give power to people similar to them

### *What’s In Place Now?*

The participants identified the following programs that help address the issue of lack of opportunities for leadership.

- Indiana Commission for Women
- Mentoring, leadership could improve
- National Association of Business Women
- Professional organizations
- IUPUI Office for Women
- Youth organizations for girls (Girls Inc.)
- IUPUI Office of Student Involvement – do a great job with involvement
- Different student organizations (to promote success)
- National women’s leadership centers

### *Who Should Be Involved?*

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that they believe should be involved in helping to address opportunities for leadership.

- The governor (invite wives)
- Lt. Governor
- People of power
- POWER – women’s caucus
- School
- Girl’s organizations (Girl Scouts, etc.)
- Educators
- School boards that influence leadership development (for girls and women)

- Early influencers – especially parents
- Male leaders

#### *Community/State Action*

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address opportunities for leadership.

- Change image of women in the media
- Challenge stereotypes
- Changing the internal unconscious bias
- Educating employers
- State supporting leadership training
- Women's expo
- University women's training

#### *Next Steps*

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Establish accountability measures for employers (disseminate current models that work – ex. New York City, Association Committee on Women)
- Planning committee (need financial resources)
  - Young women leaders
  - Community leaders
  - Plan encouraging programs for women
  - Stakeholders
  - Influential people
- Government can help spotlight women leaders
- Increase availability of leadership development opportunities
- Work on raising the next generation of women leaders

### **Low Cost/Free Family Planning Support**

Low cost/free family planning support was identified as one of the top priority issues for women in Indiana during this session. The issue received eight votes. The discussion of the topic is below.

#### *Frame It*

The participants of this discussion identified the following challenges within the issue of low cost/free family planning support.

- Access to family planning
  - Contraceptives
  - Education
  - Routine care
  - Parenting classes
- Identifying resources/spreading knowledge of current resources
- Maintain funding to current resources (ex. Planned Parenthood) and/or identify new funding sources
- Early education – starting in schools
- Building cultural awareness of sexual issues working within current culture
- Access to birth control affords educational and vocational choices later on
- With girls under 18, also educating parents
- Potential for insurance companies to help address the cost of birth control

#### *What's In Place Now?*

The participants identified the following programs and organizations that are currently working to address low cost/free family planning support.

- Planned Parenthood (they are threatened)
- Hoosier Healthwise – for pregnant/single moms
- WIC
- IN Health Department
  - Limited services (parenting classes)
- Sex education programs
  - Weak – limited educational resource
  - Most are abstinence only
  - Parents can opt out
- Ruth Lilly Educational Center
  - Comprehensive Sex Education
- Promising Futures – for teen moms
- In Michigan, the health department offers sex education/birth control/preventive visits at a very low cost.

#### *Who Should Be Involved?*

The participants identified the following organizations and people that they believe should be involved in helping to address low cost/free family planning support.

- State government
- Health department

- State superintendent
- School systems
- Parents
- Planned Parenthood
- Doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals
- Any nonprofit involved in family planning
- Pharmacies
- The media
- Men
- The legal system (increased paternal accountability)
- Researchers (women's issues/women's health)
- Community leaders – those with connections to minority groups

#### *Community/State Action*

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address low cost/free family planning support.

- Engage in/share research/educate the wider community about the benefits of access to family planning
- Culture change efforts
- Try to bring in people from both sides of the liberal/conservative spectrum
- Funding for education/outreach/public service efforts
- Include/work with religious organizations

#### *Next Steps*

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Find data on the value of access to family planning and fund research on this topic
- Vote against and express disapproval of defunding of Planned Parenthood
- Create directory/website listing of family planning services available in their area
- Provide education to kids in schools
- Identify barriers to under-implementation
- Revamp sex education – more comprehensive
- Identify disparities along income/racial/other lines
- Research current teen mother to gather information about antecedents of situation
- Identification of “at risk” youth (low income, children of teen parents, etc.)
- Explore income limits and include middle income women as well for prorated services

**Conclusions**

There are many barriers that create challenges to women in Indiana. The Hoosier INsight: Women's Issues Listening Sessions project is the first step in starting the conversations to help to address the inequalities that women still face in our state. The results of this session and the other sessions that will be held around the state will contribute to a report that will help to identify the top 3-5 issues that present major challenges to women in Indiana. These discussions are the beginning of a process to help move women in Indiana forward by engaging Indiana residents in public deliberation.

The Hoosier INsight project will help ICW continue to voice the needs, concerns, challenges, and viewpoints of women in Indiana. By better understanding the specific needs and desires of women, the commission will be able to better identify the ways in which they can help to remove barriers that hinder their participation in all areas of society. A larger de-briefing event will occur once the results of the listening sessions, as well as the supplemental online women's issue survey, are compiled and will help promote the outcomes of the project. This will help to raise awareness for the issues and to aid in the development of a statewide action plan to deal with the top priority issues across the state.