In Spring 2010 the Colorado State University President’s Commission on Women and Gender Equity (CWGE) conducted an informal survey of campus community members, regarding the climate for academic achievement and work on the Fort Collins Campus. Drawing on the structure of a survey conducted in 1996, we attempted to discover if circumstances had improved and what significant concerns should be addressed by the Commission in the coming year(s). Many of the survey questions in 2010 were asked in a manner similar to the 1996 survey. By doing this, a comparison between the two time periods regarding the campus climate and the perceptions of staff members may be established.

From the survey results we saw that the percentage of people who selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied for each survey item declined from 1996 to 2010. Particularly notable was the significant decline in the number of students indicating some level of dissatisfaction in relation to concern for their personal safety and their access to safety resources.

While many items on the survey saw a decline in the level of dissatisfaction of 20% or more, there were three notable exceptions: employee satisfaction with the fairness of salary allocations, opportunities for advancement, and freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation. More specifically, the top lingering issues for staff were support for balancing family, work and school commitments, and the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries or giving raises. As did staff, faculty remain concerned with the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries or giving raises, and faculty also consider access to childcare an ongoing and important issue.

The Commission’s members are pleased over the increased satisfaction noticed in the survey results, although we are aware of the limits of these results due to the relatively few numbers of participating students, faculty and staff, and the unofficial setup of the survey itself.

Given, however, the general increased level of satisfaction compared to the 1996 survey, we should pay special attention to the issues that elicited remarkable rates of dissatisfaction in the 2010 survey. Therefore we recommend that Central Administration:

- investigate the reasons, real or perceived, for the belief in unfair outcomes in salary allocations or raises when women are concerned, including the processes for salary allocation or raises, on the part of a substantial number of staff and faculty members;

- communicate to the Commission and the CSU community the progress and/or process for the implementation of the recommendations in the reports of the two recent committees on Work/Life balance;

- conduct a more formal survey that would reveal the scope of the concern expressed by several staff members, in the 2010 survey, on their lack of freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation. Commission members find this issue quite troubling.

- establish a regulated schedule to ensure that campus climate surveys take place at minimum every three years. Although overarching campus climate assessments are essential it is suggested to continue administering surveys that address the concerns of targeted groups on campus.