August 10, 2009

Dr. Carmen Menoni, Co-Chair
Dr. Paola Malpezzi Price, Co-Chair
Commission on Women and Gender Equity
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523

To the Commission on Women and Gender Equity:

This letter is an acknowledgment that we have received and reviewed the Commission’s annual report and recommendations for the 2008-09 year. In accepting this report, we are also renewing the charge to the Commission for the 2009-10 academic year, asking that you engage this fall with the Task Force on Diversity chaired by Vice President Blanche Hughes.

We also want to respond briefly to each point offered in your annual report. Your recommendations have already served as the basis for discussions with the vice presidents and others, and we encourage you to meet with leadership involved in each of these issues for a more detailed discussion on what is being done in each area:

- **Recommendation for a Parental Leave Policy.** The Office of the Provost and Human Resources are working on developing such a policy and would be pleased to meet with the Commission to discuss its status. Please confirm whether the Commission has received the requested endorsements from Faculty Council, the CSU Benefits Committee, and the Administrative Professional Council on this item.

- **Recommendations to Improve Working Conditions for Non-Tenure Track Faculty.** This continues to be an issue of great importance to the institution, and as you noted, we have taken an important step toward improving the working climate for these colleagues through the formation of the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Task Force. The Provost will share your recommendation with the Task Force as it formulates its agenda for the coming year. Please confirm whether the Commission has received the requested endorsement from Faculty Council on this item.

- **Recommendation for Periodic Assessment of the Campus Climate for Women.** This recommendation encompasses a number of specific suggestions, which we have reviewed and discussed. In keeping with one of your suggestions, we are in the process of implementing a new online sexual-harassment training program through the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity that will be mandatory for all employees beginning this year. Please confirm whether the Commission has received the requested endorsements from Faculty Council, the Benefits Committee, and Administrative Professional Council on this item.

- **Recommendation for Salary Assessment.** This is an area that has been monitored more closely by the Office of the Provost and individual colleges than your recommendation implies. We recommend that you invite Provost Miranda to meet with the Commission to discuss how CSU monitors salary equity issues. Please confirm whether the Commission has received the requested endorsements from Faculty Council, the Benefits Committee and the Administrative Professional Council on this item.

- **Recommendation for Establishing of an Ombuds Program.** An ombuds program has been established this summer as part of the Human Resources Group within the Division of
Administrative Services. Lanai Greenhalgh, who has previously served as coordinator of the Employee Assistance Program, will now serve in the ombudsperson role. We recommend that the Commission invite Ms. Greenhalgh and VP Gorell to provide an update on this office and its new responsibilities.

- **Recommendation to Provide Greater Support for the Office of Women’s Programs and Studies.** We echo your confidence in the good work done by this office and the importance of its leadership and contributions to our campus community. Given the significant funding challenges facing the University in the current budget climate, however, we do not expect that there will be immediate action in support of this recommendation—but we should nonetheless keep it on the table as a budgetary concern.

- **Statement on Process for Receiving Feedback from CSU President.** We apologize for the delay in responding to your recommendations—a delay that highlights the significance of this particular item. It makes sense for the President to meet with the Commission on at least an annual basis, but we welcome you to contact either of us any time outside of that meeting with questions, comments, or ideas. We also encourage you to work more closely with the administration as a whole and to extend invitations to any member of the President’s Cabinet to meet with the Commission at any time to address areas of mutual interest and concern.

- **Statement of Support on Domestic Partner Benefits.** We remain committed to providing domestic partner benefits to our faculty and administrative professionals—a policy that has been endorsed and approved by our Board of Governors. While we join you in hoping to see this benefit extended to state-classified employees, as you know, that is a decision that must be made at the state level.

Thank you for your thoughtful and dedicated work throughout the year and for forwarding this series of recommendations for consideration. Since our meeting this spring, we have charged a task force to examine the overall structure for diversity at Colorado State University and to offer recommendations as to how we might better monitor, assess, and achieve success in institutional diversity efforts. The Commission on Women and Gender Equity has a seat on this task force, and we ask you to give serious consideration as to how gender equity and the status of women ought to be overseen within the University’s organizational structure. We both hope that the Commission will become an integral part of whatever emerges from these discussions, and your participation in this process as a Commission would be highly valued and sincerely appreciated.

Again, thank you for your work on behalf of our entire campus community, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Commission in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tony Frank  
President

Dr. Rick Miranda  
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President

C: Senior VP for Administrative Services Tom Gorell