

## **From the UTHSCSA WFA Archives: Twenty-Five Years and Still Making History!**

The Women's Faculty Association (WFA) of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) was established in 1982 by 33 women faculty from the Medical School, the Graduate School, the Dental School and Executive Administration. Using the constitution of the UT Medical Branch WFA, the UTHSCSA WFA founders developed their own WFA Bylaws and elected Executive Committee officers with the goal "to support and encourage the professional development of female faculty by fostering interaction among them and cooperation with women's organizations at the UTHSCSA and other academic institutions, and in the community." The WFA objectives were delineated (paraphrased here): 'to sponsor educational and social activities, provide mentoring, enhance communication with the administration regarding issues, including the recruitment, retention and advancement of women faculty; develop policy relevant to the WFA goal, conduct campus programs, and promote community liaison.' The initial WFA activities consisted of starting a 'First Friday' networking lunch in the Dental School cafeteria each month and developing a Professional Development program to enhance promotion and tenure preparation.

In 1985, the WFA voted to expand its membership to encompass all five UTHSCSA schools. Within ten years, membership grew to include over 50% of UTHSCSA women faculty as well as leaders in executive administration. Over the 25 years of its existence, the WFA has been responsible for many activities specific to women faculty and many other efforts benefiting the entire campus and greater San Antonio community. These activities have included sponsoring campus presentations by local and national speakers on topics such as Grant Writing, Interdisciplinary Research, Dependent Care, Professional Development, Stress Management, and Life Balance; founding an annual Leadership Award program (1989) to recognize outstanding UTHSCSA graduating women students; establishing a Distinguished (Women) Speaker Series inviting state and national women leaders to our campus; organizing a campus-wide CV review team; presenting campus Promotion and Tenure Seminars (to standing-room only attendance); establishing a Mentorship Program for women faculty; providing child care information and materials for UTHSCSA Human Resources' new employee packets/orientations, judging annual Alamo Area Regional Science Fairs and sponsoring WFA Awards for the top high school and middle school female scientists. For many years, the WFA sponsored children's game booths at the campus Fiesta event, Fiesta de Tejas, and served as an important liaison with UTHSCSA executive leadership and with key community groups, including Leadership San Antonio, Leadership Texas, the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame, the American Association of University Women (faculty) local chapter, and a variety of other women's health and leadership-related groups. Other activities included a liaison role with the Association of American Medical Colleges' Women in Medicine program activities, organizing annual Briscoe Library displays for Women's History Month (March), conducting (1993) a campus salary equity study and an on-campus-childcare opinion poll, as well as serving as a strong campus advocate group for these and other issues important to women professionals. The large and multidisciplinary WFA

membership stayed connected with the organization and each other through these many activities, monthly meetings, a quarterly newsletter, and very popular Holiday and spring luncheons. These connections 'opened many doors' toward career success.

In recent years, WFA membership, activities and visibility subsided as meetings became increasingly difficult to schedule in an attempt to accommodate dissimilar school schedules and the greater number of faculty located away from the main UTHSCSA campus. Nonetheless, the Leadership Awards, the Science Fair judging and awards, and annual professional development programs remained key WFA activities throughout this time period. Once again beginning in the year 2000, the WFA was among the coalition of campus groups that joined forces to orchestrate the campus-wide Promotion and Tenure Workshops, and has since been among those assisting the Vice President of Academic Administration to establish these programs as annual events.

This year, 2007, is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year for the UTHSCSA WFA, bringing the excitement of renewed 'health' to this great organization! Energetic leadership has again translated into a membership surge and exuberant new ideas, a WFA Bylaws update, Website development and inauguration, greater participation in the Leadership and Science Fair Awards programs, rejuvenated Career Development Committee activities, and enlivened monthly meetings featuring mentorship and professional development presentations. The UTHSCSA WFA has played an important campus leadership role throughout its long and interesting history, and its continued commitment to the success of UTHSCSA women in health science careers has insured its integral role in the future!

Get involved and don't forget to list your WFA leadership activities on your CV!

*"The history of all times, and of today especially, teaches that.....women will be forgotten if they forget to think about themselves." Louise Otto-Peters, 1849*

*"In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman." Margaret Hilda Roberts Thatcher*