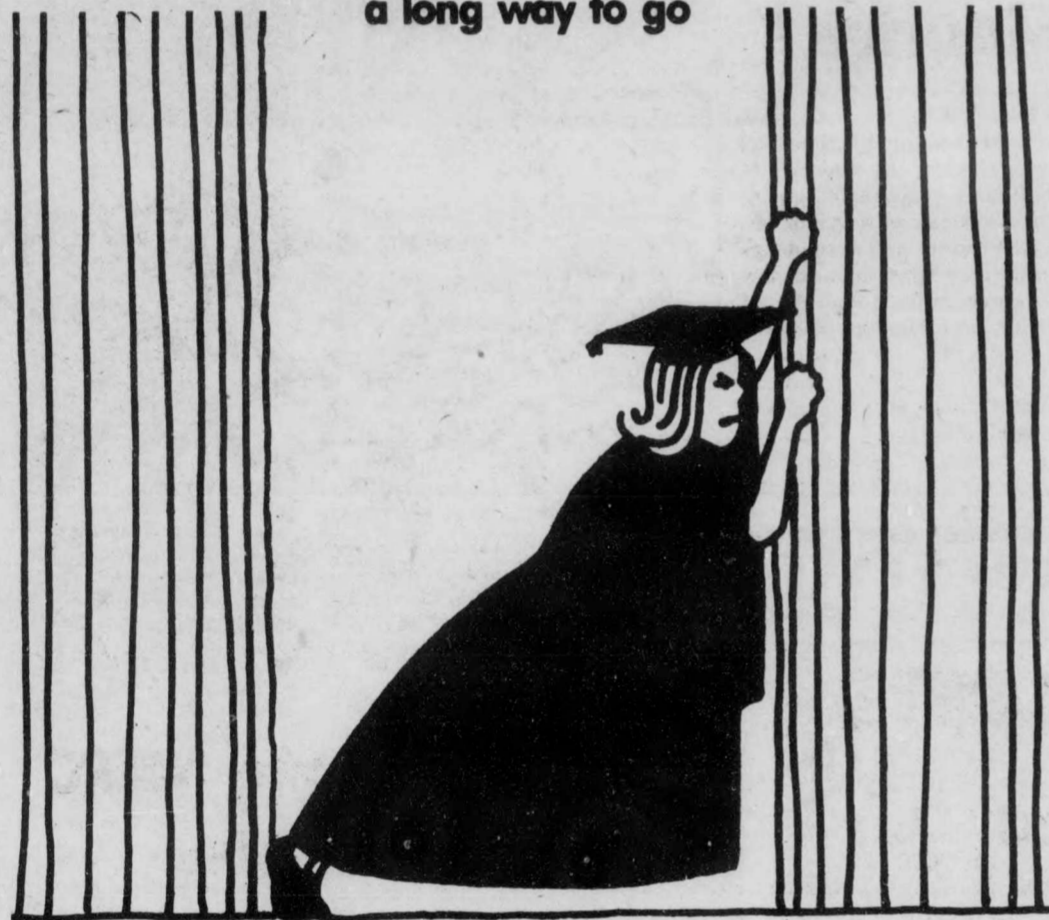


## Women Academics

a long way to go



WE HAVE HEARD A LOT OF TALK about women and education over the past decade, but we have seen only minor improvements in the 70's. In 1978 only 14 per cent of the full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities were women, a one per cent increase from the previous decade.

CHRISTINE TAUSIG of the Association of Universities and Colleges, writing for Canadian University Press, explores the problems of women academics at Canada's institutes of higher learning.

"YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY," the cigarette advertisement tells women, but at universities women still have a long way to go.

Despite the surge of interest in the status of women during the early 1970s, there are still relatively few women academics and they will earn substantially less than men, according to a report prepared by Carleton University sociology professor Monica Boyd for the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) status of women committee.

The report is drawn from Statistics Canada data on full-time teaching staff between 1972-73 and 1977-78 (the most recent figures available). The report shows that university inquiries, committees on the status of women and task force reports have not produced any marked improvements for university women.

"Although many of us would like to think that things have changed, the report shows that this just isn't so", Dr. Boyd comments.

Women represented only 14 per cent of the full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities during 1977-78. This is only a small increase over the 1960s and early part of the 1970s, when women made up 13 per cent of the staff. During the 1970s more women

than men entered the university teaching field, but the increase has not been significant enough to produce any marked changes. Dr. Boyd's report shows that between 1972-73 and 1975-76, the number of male teachers increased by 14 per cent to 22,584 while the number of female teachers increased by 25 per cent to 4,186. However, as the report points out, "because female faculty have always been fewer in number than their male counterparts, such increases did not substantially alter the percentage of academic positions held by women".

Women also continue to be concentrated in the lower academic ranks. Most women remain at the assistant professor or lecturer rank while men move on to become full or associate professors. In 1977-78 about two-thirds of the male faculty were full or associate professors compared to slightly more than one-third of the women.

The lack of women in the higher ranks may partly be explained by the fact that men are more likely to hold doctorates than women. In 1975-76, 62 per cent of the male faculty held PhD degrees compared to 34.5 per cent of the females.

However, even when this lack of doctorates is taken into account, women are still absent from the higher faculty ranks. Nearly one-

third of the men holding doctorates in 1975-76 were full professors compared to only one-seventh of the women.

When comparisons can be made, the report shows that women continue to earn less than men with the same qualifications.

In 1972-73 men who had earned their doctorates between five to nine years ago earned a median salary of \$17,050. Women with the same qualifications earned \$15,625. Three years later, the salary of men with a doctorate earned five to nine years ago had jumped to \$22,400. Women earned only \$20,900.

In 1975-76 men who were full professors earned a median salary of \$31,450 while women earned \$29,050.

Men teaching mathematics or physical sciences earned \$23,400 in 1975-76. Women earned only \$19,150.

At all ranks, in all fields, whatever the age or highest degree earned or years since the degree was awarded, the report reveals that women always earn substantially less than men.

However, women faculty members are not only concerned about obvious inequities. Female academics say that they also worry about the "climate of discrimina-

tion" against women at universities.

Margaret Gillet, professor of education at McGill University, found evidence of this climate at a recent faculty meeting.

"One of the faculty stood up and said, 'I don't know how many of you read a new publication called *City Woman*'. As soon as he said that he was interrupted by an outburst of laughter", she recalls.

Laughter, said Dr. Gillet, is one of the weapons used to keep women in their place. The astonished laughter at the faculty meeting was meant to show that women are not to be taken seriously, she explains.

Female academics say that they must adjust in order to deal with people's attitudes.

"Women have to learn how to be political", explains Norma Bowen, professor of psychology at the University of Guelph. "I used to raise the issue of why women weren't on certain committees all the time. People used to say, 'Oh well, it's Bowen again talking about women's issues'."

Dr. Bowen says that she has learned to be selective. "You tend to lose your impact if you talk about women's issues all the time. You are identified as being only concerned with women and not broader university issues... People turn off their ears when you start to talk."

Women also remain clustered in the traditionally female teaching fields of education, fine arts, humanities and nursing. The report points out that women are "conspicuously absent" in the fields of engineering, applied and physical sciences and mathematics.

In 1972-73, for example, 16 per cent of all male faculty could be found teaching mathematics or physical sciences compared to 4 per cent of the women. By 1975-76 the number of women teaching in these fields had dropped -- only 3.5 per cent of all female faculty taught mathematics or physical sciences.

The salary gap between men and women -- reported to have been closing in the last years -- has in fact been widening.

In 1972-73 the median salary of male teachers was \$3,250 higher than that of female teachers. By 1977-78 the difference between male and female salaries was even more substantial. The median salary of male faculty in 1977-78 was about \$5,000 higher than the median salary of female faculty.

"Some women at universities are earning more than men", notes Dr. Boyd. "But the statistics show that the vast majority earn less."

The salary differences between men and women can be difficult to document.

For instance, no salary statistics are included in the report for women with doctorates earned more than 30 years ago since there are less than 10 such women teaching at Canadian universities. Because of Statistics Canada rules, these figures may not be revealed because the individual women could then be too easily identified.

In addition, inequities in salary between men and women are difficult to trace as they can often be blamed on "merit increases".

"Because of the demands of the

wife and mother roles, women may not be as likely as men to publish", the report points out. This lack of publication may result in a lower salary for female faculty.

Differences in median salaries between men and women may also partly be explained by the fact that women remain in the lower faculty ranks. "Salaries at lower ranks are less than those received at the higher ranks," says the report, "and if proportionately more women than men are in the lower ranks, then women will have lower median or mean salaries compared to men".

Therefore, in addition to comparing median salaries for all faculty, a more valid comparison can be made between men and women with similar degrees, rank and fields of teaching. However, as Dr. Boyd points out: "You very quickly run out of women to compare."

However, women say that some progress has been made and certain inequities are beginning to disappear. They point to the introduction of women's studies programs, improvements in fringe benefits and maternity leave rules.

At the University of Alberta, for instance, there has been slow but definite progress, says Jean Lauber, academic vice-president. After a study of salaries was completed at the university, approximately one-quarter of the female teaching staff received a salary increase.

But Dr. Lauber is not surprised at the results of the Monica Boyd report. "The report paints a picture that universities should not be proud of", she comments.

Dr. Boyd sees several alternative scenarios if the warnings in her report are not heeded.

The tighter financial situation expected in the future could result in universities hiring even more men than women if "old boy networks" continue to exist. The members of the predominantly male faculty would recommend male students and colleagues for promotion or available positions.

Alternatively, universities might respond to the financial crunch by "thinning the upper ranks" and hiring more sessional lecturers, who tend to be female.

Universities could also be seen as a less attractive place for men to work if financial conditions deteriorate further. As men leave the universities their places might be filled by women, the report suggests.

Dr. Boyd hopes that none of these alternatives will come into effect. Instead, she hopes that her report will produce responses at universities.

"The report provides universities can compare how they stand against other universities. It's important that universities look at the situation again."

Dr. Boyd suggests that this repeated scrutiny may serve to revive the interest in women's issues on campuses and may help to reduce the differences between male and female faculty.

However, it may take a long time for all inequities to disappear, emphasizes Dr. Gillet.

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