

Gains slow for academic women

There have been "no dramatic changes" in the position of women academics at the University of Alberta since the 1975 release of the Senate Task Force Report on the Status of Women, reports Jean Lauber, Associate vice-president (academic). However, she adds that advances have been made and she blames the poor economic situation and high unemployment for the lack of progress. The Task Force Report is primarily with academic non-academic female staff, its major conclusion was "women are discriminated on the basis of sex" at the University of Alberta. The Task Force made fifty recommendations to rectify this situation. Concrete action has been taken on only a few, says Lauber. One result was the salary adjustments made to 51 female staff members. The increases, which ranged from \$500 to \$2,000 per year, were granted after a study

revealed that these women received significantly lower salaries than males in the same position and with similar backgrounds. As well, the Task Force recommended that the Senate undertake a study of women students at the university. Lauber reports that she is "quite satisfied" with the study, which was released last year (see story this issue). Lauber also says there have

been "some improvements" in the female representation on university committees. As well, a "small" policy statement against sex discrimination has been included in administrative handbooks. On the whole, these changes have not had a large effect as Lauber says who would like to see. "But these are not hiring times" she adds, "and changes are taking place slowly on the national scale as well".



Jean Lauber

Medical school a woman's view

Riva Berezowski is a 2nd year female med student.

There is no 'typical' life for a female medical student. However, there are common experiences shared by all med students, some of which are specific to the women. I offer these comments from my perspective: near the end of second year.

At the very beginning, before making the choice to study medicine, women face an important question. Is it possible to combine marriage, parenthood and medicine and do a decent job of each?

Many of us were asked this at our interviews, so apparently

it is an important consideration. Fortunately we are encouraged by the fact that our older female colleagues have faced this problem and have managed to cope.

Of course this isn't a dilemma unique to female doctors — which brings up the question of whether or not we see ourselves as part of the women's movement. Interestingly, this is not a topic that is frequently broached.

We all agree that we are vastly more fortunate than our mothers, though not everyone equates this greater opportunity with advances made by the women's movement. Although the women's movement may see us as role models, few of us see

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"Women of genius commonly have masculine faces, figures and manners. In transplanting brains to alien soil, God leaves a little of the original earth clinging to the roots."

Ambrose Bierce

BEFORE YOU VOTE READ THIS!

Election issues for Alta. women

In conjunction with the provincial election, the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) devised a series of questions on women's issues. The Gateway reprints these questions here, courtesy of ASWAC. These are questions women should ask political candidates in their riding. ASWAC also sent their questions on women's issues to the leaders of the four major political parties in Alberta. This chart summarizes their responses to the questions.

WOMEN AND GOVERNMENT

Question: Do you know that six out of the other nine provinces have either a Cabinet Minister or a Citizens' Advisory Council responsible for the status of women in their respective provinces?

Why has Alberta not provided a Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in this province?

What will you do to provide a Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in Alberta?

Question: Women make up less than 5% of the members on significant provincial government boards and commissions. Why are there so few women on these boards and commissions?

What do you intend to do about increasing the proportion of women in these positions?

BATTERED WOMEN

Question: Do you know that in the province of Alberta there are only three shelters for battered women, that they can accommodate a total of only 74 women and children, and that 55 women are turned away every month from one of these shelters because there is no room?

What will you do to increase the number of shelters for women in crisis?

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Question: Affirmative action is the active initiation and support by organizations of programs to hire, promote, and train women and minority groups. Do you believe in affirmative action programs for women?

If so, what action will you take to see their implementation both in the public and private sectors? If not, why not?

Question: Do you know that female single parents

make up 41% of the total number of persons supported by welfare in Alberta and that these women are not eligible to attend university to acquire training in order to better their career opportunities?

What will you do to make training more accessible to those who need it most?

DAYCARE

Question: Do you know that more than one half (51.2%, 1977) of the women in this province work outside the home, and that the number of women in Alberta's labour force is increasing by 28,000 per year?

Do you know that for a large and growing number of these working women there is no room for their children in present daycare centres, and yet the provincial government in 1978 chose not to allocate any new money to build additional daycare centres?

What will you do to increase the number of public daycare centres in Alberta?

MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY

Question: The Matrimonial Property Bill which became law in Alberta on January 1, 1979, leaves the division between spouses of matrimonial property to the discretion of the judiciary.

Would you favour a division of matrimonial property which allows for spouses to control their separate property during marriage and share equally in all assets accumulated since marriage if the relationship is dissolved (deferred sharing)?

If so, what steps will you take to include deferred sharing in Alberta matrimonial property law? If not, why not?

QUESTIONS	LIBERAL	NDP	SOCIAL CREDIT	CONSERVATIVE
What will you do to provide a minister responsible for the status of Women?	Provide a minister and a citizen's advisory council responsible for the status of women.	Would establish a special advisory council on the status of women.	Would establish a ministry and a women's Secretariat to carry out related activities.	Stand on their record.
Battered women: what would you do to increase the number of shelters for women in crisis?	Quadruple government funding. More public education.	Support ongoing funding; expand spaces available in urban centres and provide service in smaller centres. Emphasize preventative social services, and provide rape crisis centres.	Short-term: monitor situation regarding crisis-related accommodation and provide shelter. Long-term: reduce needs through more realistic preventative social service funding.	Deny women and children in need are refused assistance.
Do you believe in affirmative action programs for women?	Believes in affirmative action, especially in the government sector. Set quotas in some areas.	More job training and job opportunities for women employed by government. Education campaigns in both public and private sectors. Believe in equal pay for equal value; therefore, strengthen Human Rights Commission. Social assistance for women to attend universities. Day care centres at all post-secondary institutions.	Believe in affirmative action: assisting women to better qualifications. Would eliminate sex-based quotas (formal and informal) at all Alberta educational institutions; advertise to encourage women to enter non-traditional fields; establish employment alternatives like job-sharing and flex-time to women who desire to enter work-force. Also improve student loan program; acknowledge day-care costs as legitimate student loan expenses.	Affirmative action ('reverse discrimination') is prohibited under the Individual Rights Protection Act. Women are not currently denied the right to attend universities or continuing educational institutions.
What will you do to increase the number of public daycare centres in Alberta?	Increase aid given to child (basically a "FUNDING FOLLOWS THE CHILD" policy). Also build more new day care centres.	Principle of universal accessibility. Would introduce capital funds, promote day care at place of employment. Would also make subsidized day care more available, and implement less onerous fee schedules.	Daycare should be provided by private, community, co-operative and government-sponsored institutions. Would increase government subsidies for day care.	The day care program has been restructured; there is now increased access to subsidization and funding on the principle of "subsidy follows the child".
Regarding the Matrimonial Property Act, what kind of division do you favour?	Deferred sharing.	Deferred sharing.	Deferred sharing.	Judicial discretion with guidelines.