

EDITORIAL

Aside from the occasional squabble over opening doors, you don't hear that much on campus about women's rights anymore.

Oh sure, there aren't that many women in the professional faculties and on the academic staff—but heck—that's getting better. You can't expect things to change overnight, after all.

Yes, it's easy to forget about a lot of issues in the cosy confines of the 1970's campus. But if you stop to think, the extent of our apathy here at the U of A is alarming.

For example, a *Gateway* survey revealed that the majority of male students (and some female students) couldn't think of any way in which the women's movement had affected them personally.

It's surprising indeed that a movement which has been around so long and which has been responsible for some very profound changes in our society, could have had such a small effect on the individual members of our university community. Or perhaps people here just don't remember what things used to be like.

And although the movement *has* made progress, we'll never be able to make *more* progress unless we're aware of the issues and have a familiarity with the areas that still have to be improved.

Women are still treated as second-class citizens in many respects.

Despite legislation to the contrary, women are still being denied equal opportunities for employment and are often passed over for promotions. Despite the existence of means to control the function of their own bodies, women are still being denied access to contraceptives and abortions. Despite the sexual revolution of the sixties, the double-standard still exists. But worst of all, despite all the gains of the women's movement, women are still be considered by some to be inferior to men.

It is often forgotten in our frenetic quest for high marks and jobs that the university is supposed to be at the forefront of intellectual development.

Since intellectual pursuits should consider all aspects of life, the issue of women's equality is a worthwhile undertaking for any institute of higher learning.

But unfortunately it is an issue which is sadly neglected here.

As students, it is our responsibility to separate ourselves from the preconceptions society has instilled in us.

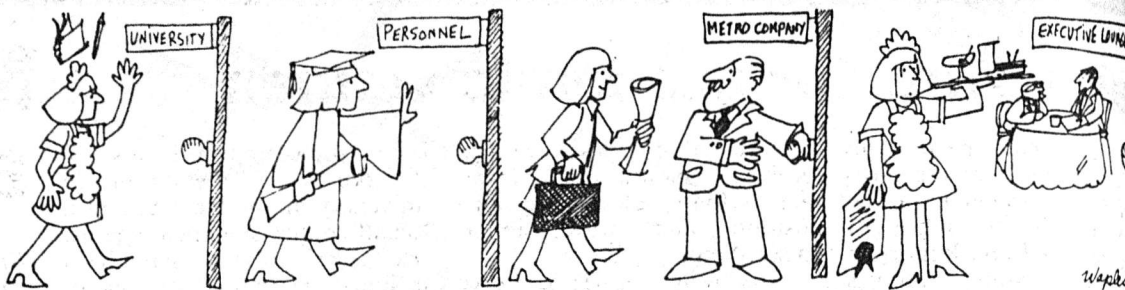
It is not enough that a university educate individuals in the facts and figures of a particular field of study. A university must also foster the development of an analytical and critical skills in academic areas *and* in social areas.

Women are equal to men and deserve equal treatment. Especially here at the university, we should try to escape our individual concerns and consider this issue with the sobriety it deserves. If we do, perhaps we will then be able to achieve a more egalitarian society.

Portia Priegert

"Man is defined as a human being and woman is defined as female. Whenever she tries to behave as a human being she is accused of trying to emulate the male.

Simone de Beauvoir
The Second Sex



University scene

What's happening?

FACULTY	% WOMEN	
	1978-79	1973-74
Agriculture and Forestry	28.4	16.1
Arts	52.6	50.4
Business Administration and Commerce	28.9	12.8
Dentistry	13.8	6.8
Dental Hygiene	100.0	100.0
Education	71.9	63.6
Engineering	5.4	1.5
Home Economics	99.7	100.0
Law	27.7	15.9
Medicine	25.5	19.1
Medical Laboratory Science	86.5	92.9
Nursing	99.0	99.0
Physical Education and Recreation	51.8	46.5
Pharmacy	67.1	60.6
Rehabilitation Medicine	92.3	91.8
Saint-Jean Science	72.3	57.2
Science	33.5	24.6
Graduate Studies and Research	32.7	24.9
Total Full-Time Students	45.4	40.6

More women

The level of female enrollment at the U of A has increased over the past academic year. This is part of a gradual, but steady trend which has occurred since the early 1970's, reports Research Project Director for the U of A.

This trend is especially pronounced at the graduate level. As well, an increasing number of females are entering into the male dominated professional faculties such as Agriculture and Forestry, Business Administration and Commerce, Law, Medicine and Science. Dentistry and Engineering are showing the slowest increases of all the male dominated faculties.

The faculties of Home Economics, Nursing, Dental Hygiene and Rehabilitation Medicine remain female enclaves. Even within the faculty of Arts, more males specialize in Economics, History, Philosophy and Political Science. More females enroll in English, Romance Languages, Psychology and Sociology.

Female enrollments have increased for all age levels and more married women are seeking university degrees, especially on a part-time basis.

Two trends can explain the increased proportion of women at the U of A. Not only has the number of females increased over the last few years, but the number of males has decreased.

Better marks

Once women make the decision to come to university, their academic performance is superior to that of their male counterparts, says Research Project Director Nim Mehra in a 1978 report on the Senate Task Force on Women.

In 1976, for instance, female first-year undergraduates had an average grade-point of 5.9 as compared to an average of 5.7 for males. Data available since 1971 shows that females have shown a consistently higher grade point average than males.

As well, fewer women tend to drop out of undergraduate

programs. The report to the Senate concluded that "females are as capable of bearing the strains and stresses of academic demands as males." This could be due to the fact that women also exhibit higher matriculation marks than do males. (54.9% of women finishing high school in 1975 were eligible for university whereas only 45.1% of males were eligible.)

But although more women are eligible for university, fewer of them actually enroll. Mehra says there is a need for more counselling at the high school level to encourage capable women to enter university.

BREAD AND ROSES

History of International Woman's Day

On March 8, 1908, New York's Lower East Side resounded with the song of women garment workers as they marched through the streets demanding the vote and an end to sweatshop conditions.

As we go marching, marching, in the beauty of the day, a million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts grey are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses. For the people hear us singing: Bread and Roses! Bread and Roses!

At the same time, suffragettes around the world were involved in the constitutional fight for the right to vote. Uniting a broad range of women within their ranks, they welcomed everyone from middle-class feminists like Emeline Pankhurst in England to U.S. socialists. The women held meetings, walked picket lines, organized marches and made newspaper headlines.

Out of these struggles International Women's Day was

born. In 1910, at the international women's conference in Switzerland, Clara Zetkin proposed that March 8 be consecrated as a day of protest for universal women's suffrage. The very next year, working people commemorated the day.

World War I put a stop to such events until 1917. Then in March, women textile workers took to the streets in Russia demanding bread. Ninety-thousand workers had joined them by the end of the day: The revolution had begun.

The massive worker upsurges in the 1930's stimulated the women's rights movement to new activity, building solidarity between women and giving prominence to their struggle.

World War II and the quiescence of the '50s severely dampened these mobilizations. But the '60s heralded a revitalized and growing women's movement.

The United States was the first country in which the

radicalization of women appeared. It was announced by the formation of thousands of women's liberation groups.

By 1970, demonstrations commemorating the 50th anniversary of the victorious conclusion of the American women's suffrage struggle drew tens of thousands of women.

The women's liberation movement has grown quickly around the world. March 8, 1978 saw 8,000 people demonstrate in Canada, 10,000 in Barcelona, 8,000 in Madrid.

Conceived by women activists at the beginning of the century and born of the struggle of working women, International Women's Day has attained widespread recognition from a broad spectrum of people around the world.

Its celebration signifies determination on the part of women to fight for equal rights and offers an inspiring demonstration of female solidarity.



This is a special supplement compiled by the Gateway staff to mark International Women's Day. While we hadn't planned it that way, the accompanying Gateway is virtually a men-only effort. Comparisons should be avoided. Anyway, thanks to all the women and women's organizations who contributed information to the supplement; special thanks to all the friends who didn't discourage us.

Reader comment will be welcomed — should we do it again?

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