

Women earn 65% of what men earn

Market creates inequity problems

by Linda Atchison

Equal pay for work of equal value (pay equity) was the topic of a public forum hosted by the Women's Program of the Faculty of Extension Tuesday.

Frances Adams and Julie Anne LeGras of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) began by stating that women working full-time in Alberta earn an average of 65% of what men earn.

The speakers hold the reason for the wage gap is that women's work has traditionally been, and continues to be, undervalued.

They believe adopting pay equity legislation would be an effective way to counteract sex discrimination in the wage setting process.

"In Canada we know that the greatest single indicator of a person's income is gender," said Adams.

Pay equity allows for comparisons between men and women in quite different jobs as long as they work in the same enterprise or for

the same employer. That is, comparisons would only be made within the same workplace and value to those employers, rather than to society at large, would be assessed.

Four factors would be considered in measuring the value of a job: the amount of skill it takes, the amount of mental or physical effort needed, the amount of responsibility involved, and the burden the worker faces because of working conditions.

LeGras stressed pay equity is not the same as equal opportunity, which she feels is an "empty phrase" which has long been the slogan of various governments. It implies that corrective actions on the part of the government are not needed since everyone has equal opportunities.

"It ignores the fact that there are still barriers to women as well as to other identifiable groups," LeGras said, "not everyone starts out equally."

Opponents often argue that pay

equity will interfere with natural market forces, imposing a conscious system on a neutral, spontaneous one.

LeGras counters that market forces are not natural, but are predetermined by economic policy.

"Market forces encourage wage discrimination rather than take it away," said LeGras.

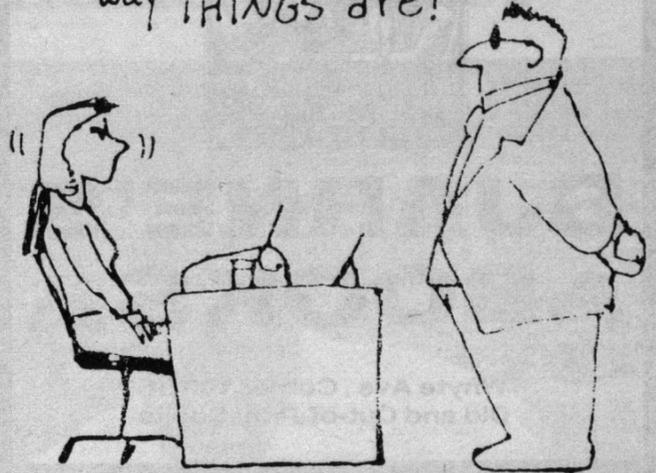
The speakers acknowledged pay equity is difficult to implement in tough economic times, particularly when the political climate is conservative.

One member of the audience questioned whether pay equity should be an issue in a time of economic restraint.

ASWAC's goal is to see mandatory pay equity legislation passed in the provincial legislature for both public and private sector workers.

Pay equity has been in place for the federal government itself and for employers under federal jurisdiction since 1977, and is applied provincially in Quebec and Manitoba.

...and of COURSE YOU GET paid less than THE MEN ON STAFF. THAT'S the way THINGS are!



New book printed

by John Watson

Just in time for Christmas, St. Joseph's College has printed a full-colour book in commemoration of the College's newly installed stained-glass windows.

Father Wallace Platt, President of the College, wrote the text for the book.

"Explaining them and giving some commentary on the windows," was the purpose of the book according to Platt.

Colours of Faith, in its first printing of one thousand copies, is currently available through the campus bookstore and at the College. Eatons and Audrey's Bookstore also retail the book.

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was not usually until the next calendar year. On this issue, however, they "made an exception for current students coming in" and the policy was made retroactive.

Said Cooper, "Students who wrote and failed the exam (but are exempt) don't have to re-write."

When asked why students were not informed, prior to writing August and September exams, of possible changes to the policy, both Afanasiff and Cooper said that if the motion had not gone through, people who had to pass the exam before the policy changed and did not even write because of the possibility of a change would have blamed the university for misinforming them.

Cooper said, "It would be like promising before the baby's born".

Concerning the letters informing students of their exemptions, Afanasiff said that they "tried to get the letters out" before last weekend's exams so students would know that they did not have to write.

Adds Cooper, "It is a huge bureaucratic organization" and that if students did not receive their letters before last weekend it was just "bad timing" on the part of the university.

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