

# Are UNB's female engineers discriminated against?

By MURRATTE GRAVES

"Godiva was a lady..." so the song goes though I sometimes have my doubts.

The question is are females in engineering looked upon as Godivas or are they actually accepted by their male classmates as engineers. I have been asked many times why I chose engineering for a career and whether or not I am being discriminated against. It is my intention to clear the air on why we are in engineering and how our male counterparts feel.

Why do females enter careers that are basically a "man's world", such as engineering, forestry, and law?

Personally speaking when I'm asked this question I can't give a definite answer. I'm here because

I'm here and when I finish I'll hopefully be on my way to becoming a good mechanical engineer which is what I want to do. I think that's really no different than wanting to be a good nurse or teacher.

In asking some professors, and other students how they feel towards females in engineering I got various replies. Though very few of them were negative towards us, the reasoning was varied. In some cases, it was a short reply of "Great", "There should be more", "They're great to look at", "If they can stand the pressure", etc. Some gave no opinion because they never really thought about it. I did manage to stimulate some thought on the subject, though all of the replies cannot be printed, there are certain points that stand out.

For instance, — "It's hard to say anything about female engineers without the thought of sex crossing my mind. This is part of the male engineer's mentality. It is true that the only things an engineer thinks about is his work and getting laid and not necessarily in that order."

"A girl who takes engineering

should be there for the same reason that we men are there for — to get a BSc in Engineering." However, are all men there for that reason?

"It is apparent in some cases that females come to an engineering school for no apparent reason (certainly not to study). This leads one to speculate on the motive and the result of this is usually not favourable."

"If anyone — male or female has the ambition to train and practice engineering they should do so. I see no reason why women are not capable."

The opinion of most of the professors is best expressed in a letter I received from Professor K. E. Machin, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering: "I have no hesitation in stating that I am completely in favour of 'marriages' of this sort. It may be too much to expect that large numbers of the fairer sex will seek admission to what has traditionally been a man's world but values and opportunities change and I would hope that much of the suspicion and even resentment may disappear in the course of time.

There is no biological reason why Engineering should not be equally fascinating to young ladies as it is to young gentlemen."

To ignore the negative response would be in error because there were some not so favorable replies. But these people did not appear to have any solid reason for their statements.

"The main problem facing girls in engineering is getting information about it and jobs afterwards."

This is in some ways true. Unless a girl is in direct contact in some way with engineering she never really takes time to think of it as a career.

As far as jobs are concerned, it is in some cases tough. Most private companies think females are too much of a security risk. The government usually shows no preference. In fact most female engineers will probably work for the government to start off.

The exception is the armed forces. They won't even consider

an application for a female engineer.

Some men seem to think that unless we are exceptional, we will not get any higher than an average engineer, job wise. "A man with credentials equal to yours will probably be chosen, because in the eyes of the employer, he would be a more secure risk."

It is true that some types of engineering jobs are not suitable for girls. It is not that they could not handle the situation rather it is not yet socially acceptable for a lady to assume such a role.

An engineer has been defined as a person who harnesses the force of

nature for the benefit of "mankind" (not to mention womankind!). To this end he or she is involved with the design, construction and operation of devices in the widest sense of the word; for example electronic devices, highway bridges, oil refineries, gas turbine engines etc. etc. Whether the engineers involved in the above stage be men or women is immaterial.

This article will have served its purpose if it convinces some young women to enter the undergraduate engineering courses, and that a worthwhile career lies ahead for them.

## Engineering faculty switch to four year program now under study

By LEE FRASER

The Faculty of Engineering at UNB is currently involved in a study of the feasibility of introducing a four year program instead of the present five.

There are several rumors around most of which originated with a Gleaner article stating that the program was definitely going to be introduced. Engineering Dean Jaeger pointed out that this was not true and that the program was still being studied by the various Dept. committees. It will then go to the faculty council who will make their recommendations to the University Senate.

At the present time many other engineering schools already have a four year program, or are themselves considering one.

Jaeger went on to say that a four year program could be laid out in such a way as to allow a student to leave for a term to work or travel and return and pick up where he left off. The possibility of using intersession in such a program is also being considered.

The program would be similar to what is presently being used in other faculties. It would be possible to finish in less than four years. There would be no minimum but there would be some reasonable maximum.

The question naturally arises as to where the cuts will be made and will the engineering degree suffer. Jaeger says that at present there are extra courses not required by the Canadian Accreditation Board in the five year program and that they can take advantage of changes in the High School curriculum. The degree will not suffer.

The whole idea, stressed Jaeger, is to provide more flexibility and to introduce self pacing education in terms of money as well as ability.

While this is very encouraging the unofficial view of some faculty members is that the change is being considered for the wrong reason and that is to bolster dropping enrollment. It was also pointed out that an Engineer is a professional and as such usually has to spend more time in school.

The students, who for the most part are unaware of any thought of change feel that the plan, while good in most respects, will simply force them into graduate school in order to reach the level of competence required in their speciality.

Some word should be expected later this term.

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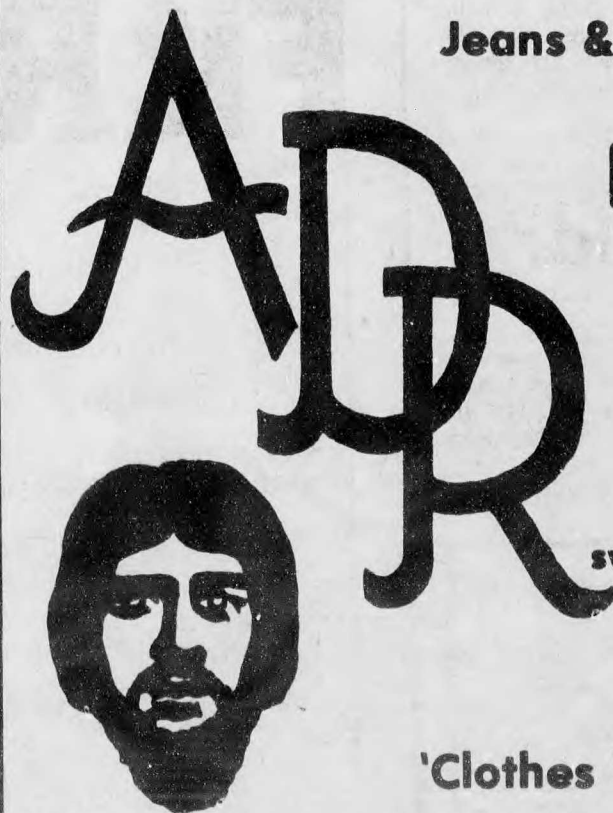
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