

**Annual Report**  
**July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005**  
**Status of Women Office**

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Status of Women Officer  
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## **Responsibilities and Mandate of the Status of Women Officer**

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The mandate and responsibilities of the Officer are far-reaching, as follows:

1. To pursue the goal of full gender equity for women students, staff and faculty by participating in the development of policies and practices, identifying and highlighting key issues, offering expertise and generally being “an effective catalyst for change”.
2. To organize and sponsor activities relevant to women at the University.
3. To advise the President, Vice-President Human Resources and Equity, other senior administrators on issues and concerns relating to the status of women at the University.
4. To represent the University both internally and externally in women’s activities, and to work collaboratively with others involved in women’s issues.

As described in the Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the Status of Women, 1999, “The Office should function as a highly visible and effective coordinating fulcrum, reaching out to the community to identify needs and bringing them onto the agendas of those best equipped to address them”.

The Status of Women Officer reports to the President and the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity.

## **The Status of Women Advisory Council**

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The Status of Women Officer is advised by a Status of Women Advisory Council on each of the three campuses. The Councils raise new issues, foster inter-constituency alliances, act as a sounding board for the Office’s input into relevant University debates and initiatives, and identifies priorities. There are approximately forty-five members on the three Councils representing students, staff and faculty. Some members attend as individuals and others are representatives of campus groups and offices.

In 2004-2005, the Advisory Council met four times on the St. George campus, twice at UTSC and once at UTM.

## **Working in Partnership for Gender Equity**

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The goal of ‘full gender equity’ is one which is long term and to be effective must be approached on a variety of levels, using a range of strategies and approaches. These approaches are necessarily proactive and reactive depending on the particular issue and circumstance. Some initiatives of the Status of Women Office focus on addressing the

individual needs of women students, staff and faculty in the short term; other initiatives focus on the needs of the collectivity of women and may involve policy or program responses in the longer term. Changes toward ‘full gender equity’ affect the entire University community and the most effective change happens when needs and concerns are addressed in partnership.

The Status of Women Office considers it a priority to assist in developing the understanding across the University that equity for women cannot be addressed effectively in isolation from other equity issues. The issues of gender equity intersect with all other equity concerns inextricably.

To further this understanding, the Office has partnered with other equity-focused offices to conduct educational and outreach initiatives, focus groups, and presentations. Partners include: The Community Safety Office, Accessibility Services, Family Care Office, First Nations House, Assault Counselor/Educator, LGBTQ, Faculty Renewal, Quality of Work Life Advisor, the Sexual Harassment Office, and the Race Relations and Anti-Racism Office (renamed the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office, 2005), and the SAC V-P Equity.

The Status of Women Office has also worked with a number of other units and offices across campuses to ensure that a broad range of issues affecting women are being heard and addressed. These include: SAC V-P Equity, SCSU, GSU, UTFA (Status of Women Committee), UTFA (Librarians), Women’s Centre (UTM), Student Affairs, Hart House, Office of the Registrar, Human Resources and Staff Development.

Over the past year, the Office has also worked with a range of academic divisions to identify critical issues, respond to concerns, provide direction/advice, and to celebrate successes. These include: the Faculties of Arts and Science, Engineering, Nursing, and Physical Education and Health, the Department of Biochemistry, the Centre for Research in Women’s Health, the Institute for Women’s Studies and Gender Studies, and Women’s Studies (UTSC).

Throughout the past year the Officer consulted with many in senior administration to identify key emerging issues related to women, to offer recommendations for action, and to respond to questions. The Officer met with the Interim President, the Vice President and Provost, Vice President Human Resources and Equity, Vice Provost Students, the Vice Provost Academic, Vice Provost Space and Facilities Planning, Vice President Business Affairs, Vice President and Principal UTSC, Assistant Vice President Alumni and Development and a number of Deans, Principals and Academic Directors.

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### **Highlights of Initiatives and Activities, 2004-2005**

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#### **Impact:**

All of the initiatives and activities listed in this report have multi-purposes and impacts. From feedback gathered from women about our activities, we know that they serve to

meet a range of needs and address varied concerns that women hold. These impacts include: women reported feeling less isolated and more ‘connected’ because of the opportunities created for them to feel part of the larger whole of the University; women said they felt more informed and more adequately equipped to navigate the complex University systems after receiving the information/advice that we provided to them; and women said that because the Office addressed the intersection of gender with other equity realities in their lives, they felt validated.

**Initiatives:** The following is a list of selected initiatives that highlight the breadth of activities of the Status of Women Office in working toward full gender equity:

- **Students:** The Status of Women Office co-ordinated the fourth year of its **Mentoring Program** for women students who identify as isolated or marginalized. This year the Program partnered with four equity offices to assist with outreach to students. Twenty-five students were mentored by women faculty across disciplines. The Program is co-sponsored by the Women and Gender Studies Institute. The Program is funded by the Vice-Provost, Students.
- **Graduate Students:** Co-organized two symposia specifically for women graduate students: The Symposium for New Women Graduate Students, October 20, 2004, and Planning a Career in Academia, March 3, 2005. Approximately 200 women students attended the two events.
- **Students, UTM and UTSC:** Developed and distributed two booklets, “**Frequently Asked Questions by Women Students at UTSC**”, and “**Frequently Asked Questions by Women Students at UTM**” – a compilation of 15 questions and answers identifying resources available to address women’s needs and concerns on each campus. An event was held on each campus in conjunction with local offices to launch the booklet. Approximately 800 were distributed on each campus.
- **Faculty:** Co hosted two gatherings for new women faculty to welcome them to the University; organized four focus groups to speak to women faculty at all stages of their careers to explore the challenges they experience; met with diverse women faculty to discuss aspects of women and leadership; spoke with newly tenured women faculty about their experiences of the tenure process in order to identify any needs and concerns.
- **The Officer established two new ongoing committees:** ‘The Women and Awards Committee’ to explore nominating more women for university and community awards, and a committee to redefine ‘excellence’ to capture the broad nuances of its implications.
- **Provided advice, consultation, and follow-up** to 14 women faculty, students and staff about multifaceted issues affecting them because of their gender.

- The Office organized the memorial for the **National Day of Remembrance and Action**, December 6, on the St. George campus. Approximately 200 people attended.
- The Office, in conjunction with the Community Safety Office, the Assault Counsellor/Educator and other, coordinated the University-wide, “**16 Days of Action Against Gender Violence**”, November 25-December 10. This was part of an international campaign coinciding with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, World Aids Day, International Day of Disable Persons, the National Day of Remembrance and Action, and International Human Rights Day.
- The Status of Women Officer coordinated the preparation of the University’s Ontarians’s with Disability Act Accessibility Plans 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 (until May 2005). This role included facilitating the development and passage of the Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities.

### **Committees and Boards (Internal and External to the University)**

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The Status of Women Officer sits on a number of internal Boards and Committees. These include: The Human Resources Management Board, the Institute for Women’s Studies and Gender Studies (newly named the Women and Gender Studies Institute), the Women’s Safety Network, the Positive Space Committee, the National Scholars Review Panel, the ODA Accessibility Planning Committee, and the EIAG. Externally, she is a member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, Council of Ontario Universities, the City of Toronto’s Status of Women and Gender Equity Working Group and the Ontario Universities Employment and Educational Equity Network (OUEEN).

### **Goals and Priorities for 2005-2006**

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- The Office will continue to function as a ‘catalyst for change’ across the University and to do so within the context of the priorities of the academic plan;
- Continue to compile a ‘profile’ of the status of women students, staff and faculty based research conducted by various units and divisions across the University;
- Develop new materials for distribution about the Office;
- Continue to monitor and revise the Mentoring Program to effectively meet the needs of diverse women students;
- Continue to explore the possibility of co-sponsoring a research symposium on violence against girls and girl/girl violence with the City of Toronto;
- Continue to explore meanings of ‘excellence’ as they impact on women across the University.