

Annual Report
July 2003 – June 2004
Status of Women Office

Connie Guberman
Status of Women Officer
November 2004

Executive Summary

The Status of Women Office was established in 1984. The mandate of the Office is to address inequities experienced by women at the University of Toronto and to promote policy development in areas of particular relevance to women. The Status of Women Office addresses issues of gender equity for women students, staff and faculty at all three University of Toronto campuses.

The roles and responsibilities of the Status of Women Office are broad. They include improving the status of women at the University of Toronto in pursuit of the goal of full gender equity by being involved in the development of policies and practices, providing advice, identifying and highlighting key issues, offering expertise, and generally being “an effective catalyst for change.”

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 issues inextricably. To further this understanding, the Office has partnered with other equity-focused offices to conduct educational and outreach initiatives, focus groups, and presentations.

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

Priorities for 2003-2004

- Host and coordinate events related to the celebration of the 120th anniversary of women being admitted as students to the U of T (also the 20th anniversary of the Status of Women Office)
- Establish greater links with others both inside and outside the University who work on issues of gender equity at the institutional level
- Continue to extend outreach to the UTM and UTSC campuses by establishing local Status of Women Advisory Councils
- Continue to balance initiatives for women students, staff and faculty
- Work in partnership with those Offices and units involved in implementing the objectives and strategies identified in the White Paper which address gender equity
- Provide advice and support to more faculties and units working toward gender equity
- Compile a profile of women staff, students and faculty at the University

To achieve the objectives and to address the above priorities, the Status of Women Office conducted many activities and initiatives including: Organizing 20 days of celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Status of Women Office and the 120th anniversary of the admission of women as students; expanding the Mentoring Program, establishing greater links with those inside and outside the University working on gender equity (including providing advice to more faculties and units about achieving gender equity); facilitation of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Accessibility Plan, holding discussions with women student, staff and faculty, establishing Advisory Councils at UTSC and UTM.

Goals and Priorities for 2004-2005:

- Continue to establish links with others external to the University who work on women's issues at the institutional level
- Continue to strengthen the links between gender issues and other equity issues and initiatives within the University
- Continue to extend outreach to the UTM and UTSC campuses
- Collect data about women students, staff and faculty in order to provide an annual 'profile' of the status of women

Background

The Status of Women Office was established in 1984. The mandate of the Office is to address inequities experienced by women at the University of Toronto and to promote policy development in areas of particular relevance to women. The Status of Women Office addresses issues of gender equity for women students, staff and faculty at all three University of Toronto campuses.

Office Complement

Connie Guberman was appointed to a five year term as Status of Women Officer, effective August 1, 2002. She holds the position 80% full-time. The position of Status of Women Office Coordinator was established and filled at 100% full-time in March, 2003.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Status of Women Office

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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.”

Objectives of the Status of Women Office

1. To participate in the development of policies and practices which contribute to the goals of improving the status of women and attaining full gender equity at the University of Toronto
2. To organize and sponsor activities relevant to women at the University
3. To advise the President and 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

Context of Initiatives

All of the activities listed in this report have multi-purposes and impacts. Some act as a means to increase the visibility of women's issues in general, some enhance the experience of individual women and women collectively at the University and others are educational in their intent. They all provide an opportunity for the Office to collect anecdotal information on the priorities and concerns of diverse women at the University.

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 issues 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, Health and Well-Being Programs and Services, and the SAC V-P Equity.

The Status of Women Advisory Council

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

In 2003-2004, the Advisory Council met three times on the St. George campus, and twice on each of the UTM and UTSC campuses.

Goals and Priorities for 2003-2004

- Host and coordinate events related to the celebration of the 120th anniversary of women being admitted as students to the U of T (also the 20th anniversary of the Status of Women Office)
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- Continue to extend outreach to the UTM and UTSC campuses by establishing local Status of Women Advisory Councils
- Continue to balance initiatives for women students, staff and faculty
- Work in partnership with those Offices and units involved in implementing the objectives and strategies identified in the White Paper which address gender equity
- Provide advice and support to more faculties and units working toward gender equity

Activities 2003-2004

To achieve the objectives and to address the above priorities, the Status of Women Office conducted the following activities and initiatives in relation to the following five areas of responsibility:

1. Organizing and sponsoring activities relevant to women at the University:

The Status of Women Office has organized, hosted, participated in and sponsored projects and events for women students, staff and faculty across the three campuses. Some events are held annually, some are held in response to an identified need, concern or gap. The events are a way of increasing the visibility of women's issues in general and of the Status of Women office in particular, and they enhance the experience of individual women and women collectively at the University.

- Clearly the most significant activity of the past year was planning and organizing the celebrations for “**Challenge & Change: 120 Years of Great Women at the University of Toronto**” and the 20th anniversary of the Status of Women Office. Almost 120 events were held over the twenty days between February 23-March 13. Events were held across all three campuses and ranged in their appeal and focus. While academic and administrative units across campuses were encouraged to organize events, the Status of Women Office took the lead and/or partnered with others to organize several key events.

Events were well attended. For example, over 200 students attended the panel discussion, ‘Outstanding Canadian Women’, over 150 Professional and Managerial women attended the ‘Early Visions’ breakfast with guest Mary Anne Chambers hosted by the Vice-President of Human Resources and Equity, over 200 people attended the ‘Women in Management’ breakfast, 38 women staff participated in the Heath and Well-Being Heart Clinic, the University College cabaret performed to a sold out house, and Hart House events were also well attended.

- The Status of Women Office co-ordinated the third year of its **Mentoring Program** for women students who identified as isolated or marginalized. Forty-eight student-faculty mentoring relationships were facilitated.
- Once again the Office organized the memorial for December 6, the **National Day of Remembrance and Action**. Over 150 people attended the ceremony on the St. George campus.

2. Continuing to improve the status of women at the University of Toronto in pursuit of the goal of full gender equity by being involved in the development of policies and practices that will contribute to this goal, provide advice, and generally work to be an effective catalyst for change:

By developing and participating in initiatives and by working in partnership with others throughout the University, the Status of Women Office, has been, in effect, a catalyst for change. The initiatives identified below have an educational component to them and/or are events at which the Officer made a presentation.

- Partnering with other equity and equity-focused offices to offer women-focused events for women students, staff and faculty. These include:
 - Hosting a discussion with women students with disabilities at UTM and UTSC to identify needs and recommend directions for change.
 - Co-hosting a “Women’s Safety Tour” of the St. George campus with the Community Safety Office
 - Offering 16 days of events as part of the international campaign, “16 Days of Activism Against Violence” in partnership with the Assault Counsellor/Educator and the Community Safety Office.
 - Working with the Family Care Office to establish a registry for women faculty mothers and mothers-to-be to mentor others
 - Hosting two focus groups with women staff with the Manager, Health and Well-Being Programs and Services.
- Organizing and hosting (in conjunction with others) the first “Symposium for New Women Graduate Students”
- Introducing the forum for women graduate students on “Preparing for an Academic Career”
- Moderating a panel at the student organized conference, “Breaking Down Barriers”
- Presenting a session, “Understanding Equity at the University of Toronto” for Staff Development ‘s ‘PEP Understanding the University”
- Providing keynote remarks at the “inaugural gala” of W.I.L.L. (Women in Life Learning), Trinity College
- Presenting to Business Officers in the Faculty of Medicine
- Providing advice to the Chair, Gender Issues Committee, Department of Physics
- Providing training on gender issues to Residence Advisors and Orientation leaders at UTSC
- Organizing and hosting a meeting of representatives of gender issues committees from faculties and departments across the University in order to share issues, concerns and strategies.
- Meeting with the Status of Women Committee, UTFA,
- Working on the revision of the ‘Services to Disabled Person’s Policy’ as part of the ODA Accessibility Plan
- Speaking at the “Hate is Not a Joke” forum sponsored by Student Affairs

- Addressing individual ‘cases’ brought forward by thirteen women at the university. These cases were about multifaceted issues which could not simply be referred to other offices on campus

3. Advising the President and other senior administrators on issues and concerns relating to the status of women at the University:

The Status of Women Officer sees it as her role and responsibility to reach out to the diverse university community of students, staff and faculty in a range of ways in order to establish relationships with broad constituencies and become more thoroughly aware of key issues affecting women. This information is then analyzed and brought to the attention of senior administrators as appropriate. The advice to senior administrators happens in a range of formats including individual meetings, written responses to policy documents and proposals, facilitating/moderating discussions.

The following are some of the activities which address the advisory role of the Office.

- Facilitating discussions at the retreats for new academic administrators.
- Hosting discussions with women staff and incorporating feedback in a response to the Provost and the Draft White Paper.
- Hosting discussions about equity issues and incorporating feedback in a response to the Provost and the Draft White Paper
- Co-hosting (with Vice President of Human Resources and Equity) two meetings with new women faculty
- Participating in meetings with Principal and Vice-President, UTSC, to discuss equity issues and initiatives specific to that campus.
- Providing reflections on the draft employment equity report and the equity review.
- Co-hosting (with the Director, Faculty Renewal), “Influencing the Agenda: Women Faculty and Academic Leadership”. Two hundred women faculty attended.
- Taking a leadership role in facilitating the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) Accessibility Plan and working with many senior administrators in doing so.
- Presenting to the Search Committee for the Dean, Faculty of Music.
- Participating on the Dean’s Task Force On Transparency and Governance

4. Initiating and assisting research into the status of women at the University:

- The Status of Women Office has continued to develop its ‘library’ of resources related to gender equity on university campuses. Access to these resources is via the Status of Women website.

- A new lecture series has been established in partnership with the Vice-President Research and Associate Provost entitled, “Women Changing the World: Outstanding Women Scholars at the University of Toronto”. Professor Freda Miller delivered the first lecture, ‘The Biology of Hope: The Promise of Adult Stem Cell Research’.
- A symposium was held in partnership with Women’s Studies at UTM for scholars across disciplines with an interest in gender issues to hear about each others work.
- The Status of Women Office has begun to collect data about women student, staff and faculty at the University to create a profile of women.
- The Status of Women Office co-sponsored and co-hosted “Claiming Disability: A Symposium on Disability Scholarship”.

5. Representing the University both internally and externally in women’s activities:

- The Status of Women Officer sits on a number of Boards and Committees. These include: The Human Resources Management Board, the Institute for Women’s Studies and Gender Studies, the Women’s Safety Network, the Positive Space Committee, the ODA Accessibility Planning Committee, and the EIAG. She is a member of the Employment and Educational Equity Committee, Council of Ontario Universities.

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