

The Status of Women Office July 2001 – June 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
HIGHLIGHTS AND PRIORITIES	4
TERMS OF REFERENCE	5
OFFICE COMPLEMENT AND STAFFING	6
WORK OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN ADVISORY COUNCIL	7
OUTREACH.....	9
PROJECTS	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Mandate and Relationships

The mandate of the Status of Women Office is to address equity for women staff, faculty, and students on all three University of Toronto campuses. The Office reports to the President. The Officer is an active member of the Equity Issues Advisory Group (EIAG) and collaborates with individual Equity Officers on initiatives, as appropriate. The Office also works with an Advisory Council that serves as a forum for university community members interested in equity for women.

2. Policy Framework

There is no policy dealing specifically with equity for women, either at the university or from the government. However, the right to freedom from discrimination based on sex, marital status and family status, among other grounds, are clearly articulated in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the University's Statement on Human Rights. In addition, the University's Employment Equity Policy counts women as one of its four designated groups. However, it is the Employment Equity Advisor who is responsible for monitoring adherence to this policy.

3. Services Offered

The Office fulfils its mandate through advising, advocacy, education initiatives, and monitoring trends. The handling of cases brought forward by single individuals or small groups forms only a small portion of the work of the Office. The main focus of the Office is to initiate and take part in pro-active initiatives aimed at removing the systemic barriers women still experience at the university.

6. Meeting Our Objectives

The Status of Women Office articulated a number of priorities for 2001-02 and most were met. The visibility of the Office was increased through a number of initiatives, including holding more frequent meetings of the Advisory Council. However, establishing a concrete presence at UTM and UTSC remains a challenge that will be addressed in 2002-03 and stands a greater chance of success now that the Office has a regular Officer. The Office successfully executed two major projects, the pilot mentoring program for women and the petitions and appeals study, and collaborated with other offices on two half-day events to support women in academe, both of which received considerable positive feedback. The Officer also played an active role on a Flexible Work Arrangement working group and in the planning of an equity conference to be held in March 2003.

5. Key Issues in 2001-02

The Status of Women Office Advisory Council identified six key issues that set a portion of the

agenda for the Office. These ranged from developing a multifaith handbook for issues relating particularly to women and the intersection of their faiths with the institution; to tracking the representation of women in the Canada Research Chairs program and advocating for improvements; to addressing the economic situation of female faculty and staff who retired before pay equity adjustments were made; to contributing to a change in culture more inclusive of women and non-traditional users at the Strength and Conditioning Centre of the Athletic Centre; to advocating for more women's washrooms at OISE-UT; and to preparing for a transition from the very successful Take Our Daughters to Work event organised by the Status of Women Office to a Take Our Children to Work event organised by the University.

Areas of Improvement for 2002-03

The Status of Women Office will continue efforts to increase its profile on all three campuses. The 20th anniversary of the Office is coming up in 2004 and initiatives to mark this event will be in the planning stage throughout this year.

The Office would also like to develop an inventory of University of Toronto best practices in relation to women.

The mentoring program for women will be in its second year. It will benefit from the groundwork done in 2001-02 and lessons learned from feedback of the participants. It is funded by one-time-only contributions from various sources. The challenge in the upcoming year will be to decide whether to continue with this initiative and, if so, to find permanent funding and decide whether the responsibility for the program should remain with the Status of Women Office or not for 2003-04 and beyond.

HIGHLIGHTS AND PRIORITIES

Highlights of 2001-02

- Mentoring program for women run as pilot; partial funding for 2nd year secured
- Petitions and appeals study completed
- Two workshops supporting women in academe held
- Advisory Council set Status of Women agenda on six key issues:
 - Multifaith handbook
 - Gender equity in Canada Research Chairs appointments
 - Settlement of retired female faculty lawsuit
 - Equity at the Strength and Conditioning Centre of the Athletic Centre
 - Women's washrooms at OISE-UT
 - Take Our Daughters to Work 2003

Priorities for 2002-2003

The Status of Women Office believes that the following priorities encompass initiatives that will work toward greater gender equity for women students, faculty and staff:

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- Toronto (1984-2004)
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- affecting women staff, students and faculty.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Status of Women Office

The Status of Women Office was established in 1984. The mandate of the office is to address equity for women staff, faculty and students on all three University of Toronto campuses. Through its efforts in the last 18 years, discussion and action have taken place around practices such as hiring equity, faculty retention, advancement of women through the ranks, pay equity, equity of the student experience and allocation of equitable resources.

The Status of Women Officer

- Advises the President and other senior academic administrators
- Assists in the development of pertinent policies
- Offers individual advising and advocacy on issues of women's equity
- Assists in community development and education on equity on campus, through seminars, orientations, and discussions at the individual, committee, departmental and faculty levels
- Sponsors activities relevant to women
- Convenes and works with an advisory council

As Member of the Equity Issues Advisory Group

- The Status of Women Officer helps to provide an integrated response and framework for equitable practice to the President and the university community.

OFFICE COMPLEMENT, STAFFING CHANGES, AND CASEWORK

The Status of Women Officer

José Sigouin served as Interim Officer from July 1, 2001 to July 31, 2002 at 70% of full-time.

A search committee led by Professor Angela Hildyard, Vice-President, Human Resources, recommended to President Birgeneau the appointment of Connie Guberman as Status of Women Officer for a five-year term and at 80% of full-time. She has been teaching in the Women's Studies program at UTSC since 1987 and has a long history of working toward equity for women on campus and in the community.

Project Manager and Office Administrator

The Project Manager and Office Administrator, Barbara Mainguy, joined the Status of Women Office in July 1999 and has quickly become an invaluable asset. She now contributes 60% of full-time to the office.

Lisa Carmody, a former work-study student in the office, has contributed 40% of full-time to the office in 2001-02, most competently realising several projects either singly or in collaboration with Barbara.

Claudia Wittman worked as the Mentorship Project Co-ordinator on the basis of approximately 50% of full-time. She has brought several improvements to the design of the project and successfully managed to establish 50 partnerships under very challenging circumstances.

In 2001-02, the Office benefited from the involvement of three work-study students who were particularly useful with the mentoring project and in representing the office at the East and West campuses, as well as at OISE-UT. Liaison, guidance and supervision of these students were conducted by the Project Manager and by the Mentorship Co-ordinator. The Office will continue to take advantage of the work-study student program, especially as part of its strategy for the mentorship pilot project.

Office Management

A staffing needs assessment, updated job descriptions, and possible staff appointment of the office's casual staff member will be priorities for 2002-03.

Cases

A sharp decline in casework brought to the attention of the Status of Women Office by individuals was observed, as compared to 2000-01 numbers, although cases continued to involve all constituencies – faculty, staff and students. The causes for the decline in number are uncertain. It may point to some level of success with past and current initiatives, most particularly the creation of several equity offices or positions, and collaboration of these offices with registrarial staff and student counsellors. It may also point to a reduced visibility of the office with individuals during the tenure of an Interim Officer, and may suggest a need to use a variety of outreach strategies in the coming year.

WORK OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meetings and Membership

The number of meetings of the Status of Women Advisory Council was increased from two to six annually in 2001-02. The membership in the Council is ever increasing and now stands at 67, who speak from the points of view of students, staff and faculty. Typically 20-25 members attend any given meeting. The increased frequency of meetings has made it easier for members to bring forward issues for debate as they emerge, and to hold fuller discussions on proposed solutions. It has also provided a much-appreciated opportunity for informal networking and connections before and after meetings.

Issues Identified by Advisory Council and Outcomes

- **Religious Accommodations Guidelines:** in conjunction with the co-chair of the Campus Chaplains' Association, the Status of Women Office is drafting guidelines highlighting areas of student, faculty and staff life at the university that may require religious accommodations, with a particular focus on those affecting women. These guidelines will be posted on an informational website and their availability will be brought to the attention of all senior administrators, with a request that they facilitate wider distribution.
- **Canada Research Chairs:** coinciding with a national study commissioned by the granting councils, the Officer presented University of Toronto data showing that women have been appointed as SSHRC and NSERC Chairs in as good or better proportion as they are available in the university and national pools, but that they have been appointed as CIHR Chairs in lower proportions compared to the available pools, especially for Tier II, or junior Chairs. A further study, probing differences in appointment of assistant versus associate professors as Tier II Chairs, and possible differences between internal and external appointments, has been recommended and will be conducted in the Fall of 2002. As a result of the relative weightings given to each Council in the allocation of the Chairs, and using the assumption that Tier I Chairs are mostly recruited among full professors while Tier II Chairs are mostly recruited among associate and assistant professors, a percentage of women appointed as Canada Research Chairs proportional to the weighted national pool would be between 20% and 25%, while it was 20% at U of T at March 2002, and 15% nationally at May 2002. This issue has been raised repeatedly with the Presidents and the relevant Vice-Presidents, who have been giving direction to Deans and Department Chairs on this issue.
- **Retired women:** the Advisory Council is on record as being highly supportive of the University addressing the economic situation of female faculty and staff who retired before pay equity salary adjustments were awarded a decade ago. The Officer took every opportunity to relay the Council's position to the appropriate senior academic administrators. The lawsuit brought in 2001 by Ursula Franklin, Phyllis Grosskurth, Blanche Lemco van Ginkel and Cicely Watson on behalf of their peers ended in a mediated settlement in April 2002.

- **Women-Only Hours at the Strength and Conditioning Centre (SCC) of the Athletic Centre:** starting in the summer 2001, the SCC increased the number of women-only hours from three to seven weekly, at the rate of once a day. This increase resulted in a backlash from a few members who claimed reverse discrimination and threatened to bring a complaint to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The Ontario Human Rights Code contains provisions for restricting facilities to a given designated group to redress imbalances, and the University is confident it would win such a challenge. Nevertheless, this issue has led to a re-examination by the Athletic Centre of the accessibility of the SCC by diverse members of the university community, and the realisation that many barriers currently exist. A working group has been formed and includes representation from the Status of Women Office. Achievable short-term and long-term goals have already been identified.
- **OISE-UT Women's Washrooms:** an Advisory Council member described the inadequacy of washroom accommodations for women on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the OISE-UT building at 252 Bloor Street West. The Council supported efforts to improve the situation. At June 30th, 2002, the OISE-UT Building Manager had communicated that a work order had been issued for the conversion, on the second floor, of the larger men's washroom into a women's washroom, and vice-versa for the smaller women's washroom, even if not all the funding had been secured. The proposed conversion on the third floor has been postponed indefinitely due to lack of funds, more alternatives for women on that floor, and less student traffic on that floor compared to the second floor.
- **Take Our Daughters to Work:** the 2002 event was extremely successful with 350 daughters registered. Among those was a group of young women from Regent Park who were invited to take part in the day-long showcase of educational opportunities and work done by women in both traditional and non-traditional roles. Starting with 2003, Ms. Foundation, the instigators of this event, will shift its focus to Take Our Children to Work for the fourth Thursday in April. The University is well aware that many faculty and staff would welcome the chance to bring their sons as well, and is exploring mechanisms to do so. The Status of Women Office could continue to play a role in providing gender-specific activities for daughters, especially as relates to non-traditional career choices, and in passing on the many successful management strategies specifically developed for this event over the years.

OUTREACH

The Status of women Office pro-actively seeks opportunities to reach out to all members of the University community through a variety of initiatives, including orientation sessions, workshops, participation in committees, formal and informal opportunities to meet with and offer help to newcomers, provision of advice to units or individuals and preparation of position papers, as well as through its website. In keeping with its efforts to advance comprehensive gender equity, the overarching goal of the Office is to improve the university experience of a diverse spectrum of students, faculty and staff on and beyond campus and, as mandated by the 1999 office review, be seen to do so.

Outreach Events

During 2001-02, the Office frequently worked with other campus groups to help improve the quality of life on campus, including:

- Orientation of graduate students in the department of Political Science.
- Equity workshops for students in the Transitional Year Program, and teaching assistants.
- Club days and student services days on all three campuses.
- New faculty orientation session in the faculty of Arts & Science
- Workshop for new academic administrators in the faculty of Arts & Science
- Workshop for women graduate students considering a career in academe
- Workshop for women librarian and faculty
- Faculty recruitment workshop for senior academic administrators
- International Women's Day lecture
- December 6th Memorial Service
- Organisation of a new orientation for women in September 2002

UTSC and UTM Campuses

This past year, the Status of Women Officer was not able to spend time and work on campus-specific initiatives at UTSC and UTM quite as much as planned. At UTSC, and working jointly with the Family Care Officer, a compelling case was made for the need to provide support to students with family responsibilities ranging from responsibilities for children to responsibilities for siblings and parents. The initiative is still ongoing.

For 2002-03, the Officer will make fresh efforts to establish a more visible presence at the East and West campuses.

Participation in Governance and Initiatives Led by President or Vice-Presidents

- The Status of Women Officer regularly attends the meetings of Principals, Deans, Academic Directors and Chairs (PDAD&C), Governing Council and its Academic Board and University Affairs Board.
- The Officer is an active member of the Human Resources Management Board, and the Equity Issues Advisory Group (EIAG) where she assumed leading responsibilities for a number of initiatives in 2001-02 (discussions leading to recommendations deriving from the Arts & Science survey of faculty; organisation of the Physics gender workshop; liaison between EIAG and the faculty of Applied Sciences and Engineering; and inclusion of equity in the 2002 National Report).
- The Officer is a member of both the 2003 Equity Conference Planning Committee and the Dependent Care and Flexible Work Working Group.

(Outreach, Continued)

Participation on Gender Issues & Status of Women Committees, etc.

- Institute for Women Studies and Gender Studies Advisory Board
- USWA Women of Steel Committee and Eldercare sub-committee
- Women in Arts & Science Committee and discussions on actions deriving from the 2000 survey of faculty
- Athletic Centre Strength and Conditioning Centre Working Group
- Faculty of Medicine Gender Issues Committee
- Department of Physics Gender Issues Committee
- Liaison with Gender and Community Issues Committee in Applied Sciences and Engineering
- U of T table at the Legal Education and Action Fund Breakfast

Outreach to Individuals

- Individual meetings with new Deans
- Informal meetings with small groups of new women faculty

Coverage in the Media

- Mentorship program featured in a Varsity front-page article
- Report on workshop for graduate student women – Careers for Women in the Academy – featured in a Bulletin article
- Report on Take Our Daughters To Work 2002 posted on the U of T website
- Participation of the Officer in *Educating Ourselves* on CIUT-FM radio

WOW (Women On the Wire) Web Site

The Status of Women Office web site, www.library.utoronto.ca/wow, is an important tool enhancing the Office's profile. In addition to regular updates of the list of upcoming events for or about women, the site's links to other sites or studies of interest to women in a university setting were increased. A new section was added to enhance the sharing of information in the mentorship project. Lastly, building on the successful use of web technology for the 2001 Take Our Daughters to Work event, the WOW website was used for more events, and to administer a survey of women librarian and faculty as part of planning for the symposium organised for this group.

PROJECTS

In 2001-2002, two major projects were led by the Status of Women Office.

Mentoring Pilot Project

Starting in September 2001, the Status of Women Office co-ordinated a pilot mentorship program for 50 women students with 50 women mentors, all of which were faculty members, although staff and graduate students were also considered for this role. Most mentees reported very positive outcomes for the program and a second pilot year is planned, with partial funding secured. A full report of the initiative will be available by fall 2002. Recommendations for improvements of the programs will be discussed by the mentorship working group, prior to the start of the 2002-03 program.

Petitions and Appeals Study

The Petitions and Appeals study was initiated in 2000 by then Status of Women Officer Judith Globerman and the research was conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Research at the faculty of Social Work. The study examined 1999-2000 petition and appeal requests to the Arts and Science faculty at St. George, UTM, and UTSC. A random sample of 5% of the petition requests were considered, as well as all of the appeals that flowed from the unsuccessful petitions.

The study was jointly funded by the Offices of the Vice-Provost, Students, the Dean of Arts and Science and the Principals of UTM and UTSC. The college- or faculty-specific reports on the findings of the study were written by the Status of Women Project Manager, in consultation with the relevant jurisdictions. Each college or faculty will receive only the report covering its jurisdiction, although they will be encouraged to request copies from the other units and to consider harmonising some of their policies and practices as a way to improve the student experience.