

and shouted "who the hell do you think you are anyway?" With the veins throbbing visibly on his forehead, he loudly insisted that she didn't know what she was talking about, because the secretaries in the Department were flattered when he referred to them as "girls."

"Masculine terms are always used here. I hate having to sign university forms on the line labelled 'Chairman,'" complained one respondent. "I always stroke it out."

Another noted that after she complained about being referred to as a "chairman," the minutes taken at meetings in which she chaired referred to her as the "chair." However, everyone else, male and female, continued to be referred to as a "chairman." "It singled me out as a crank," she said, "without resulting in any change in the Department's attitude. It's a constant irritant. If those men were always referred to as women, they would be furious."

It was reported that, among a group of senior administrators, a common phrase was, "we've got to keep the big boys happy." When one of the few women privy to these discussions finally called them on this, one of them responded: "And what about the big girls?" Yet there was no recognition that this language might be exclusionary and no effort to change.

Tokenism

One woman told us that she was identified as a strong feminist, from a Department that has always had a strong representation of women. Yet she expressed concern that she was often treated as a "single-issue person," as if her sole concern was women and the position she took on any issue must reflect her feminist commitments, no matter what her record of activism in other areas. Added to this was a tendency on the part of those with whom she dealt to assume that they knew already what she would say. Worse still, she added that they seemed to feel that when they'd heard her out they had "heard from the women." "I am assumed to represent, and to be indistinguishable from, other feminists or women taken as a block," she said.

Another described essentially the same experience, with particular reference to selection committees. She had been involved in a number of such committees (including departmental appointment committees, and search committees for Chairs and Deans) and routinely found that she was "expected, as the token woman, to ask certain questions, as if the consideration of women candidates (and strategies for recruiting them) was my only concern, and as if only I, as a woman, could have any concern for these issues." In one context where the external assessments of the unit in question had specified the lack of women as an issue to be addressed by the new selection

committee, she said that she "waited and waited to see if *anyone* else would raise the question 'what do we do about this problem, how do we recruit women?' " When it was clear that no one else would take responsibility for these issues, she finally raised the question herself.

One respondent went on to describe the standard defensive response to such questions:

The chair went on at great length about how the failure of [our Department] to attract and retain women is all the fault of the women. "Women are so tied to their spouses they won't come to Western," or their emotional ties take over and they won't stay. "Women are emotional and unreliable." Men, of course, have no such conflicts! In the end, they convince themselves they're pure, merely acting out of consideration for all concerned. "We can't hire their husbands, so why bother hiring women."

Devaluation and Trivialization

It is commonplace, in the literature on women's experiences in academia and other professional contexts, for women to find their personal lives scrutinized much more closely than those of their male colleagues. Often this very effectively trivializes the women's achievements by attributing them to the support or capabilities of men with whom they are alleged to be "involved." Although many women reported this, one respondent summed it up best: "Whenever we get anywhere it's assumed we're sleeping with someone who has the power to hand it to us on a silver platter. The idea that we might have made it on our own merits never seems to cross their minds, no matter how baroque a story they have to tell."

One woman described the circumstances of her appointment to a tenure-track position after having taught in her Department for several years both as a sessional and on a probationary appointment. A colleague who contested her appointment couched his objections in blatantly sexist terms, intimating that her position in the Department was entirely due to her "relationship" with a senior member of the Department. She observed that, in addition to these insinuations being completely without basis, the senior male faculty member with whom she had been linked routinely functioned as a mentor for junior men. In fact, given his prominence in the field, his support of them was usually treated as an important indication of their competence and promise.

A long-time member of another Faculty related how, after winning tenure, she faced public comments from colleagues to the effect that the only reason she got tenure was because she must have slept with [the faculty member who had been Chair at the time she was hired]. The bizarre twist here was that the individual cited as responsible for her ultimate success had not been particularly helpful in pursuing her case.

A highly successful member of one Faculty who sustained a commuting relationship with her husband was told by her Dean at a dinner party that he thought it outrageous for a woman to live apart from her husband. The same administrator had the audacity to say to the husband of another faculty member who had transferred jobs to come to London: "What kind of man follows his wife around?"

Isolation

The experience of exclusion—of being "shut out"—is ubiquitous for women faculty. One who had had a successful administrative and political career outside the Department said that the "chilliness" of the climate within her Department really only became apparent to her when she became actively involved in other settings outside the Department and, indeed, the University. She was out of the Department off and on for most of a decade, seconded to an external appointment, and in that period encountered a collegiality "unparalleled" by anything she experienced at Western.

My external colleagues were not just inoffensive, but in fact deeply sensitive to women's issues and consistently supportive. This included men as much as women. In retrospect, it was an enormous relief. I didn't have to "excuse" being female. I never had to establish my authority as Chair of a committee or council meeting, and I never encountered surprise that a woman might be a competent Chair and Director.

She noted that the contrast was most startling when she returned to the Department. "The tacit agreement to steer clear of me was even stronger but underwritten by an odd deference. Evidently success, even success that reflected well on the Department, wasn't grounds for admission to the boys' club."

Another respondent described her experience as generally very good. She was appointed by a unanimous vote, and was strongly and effectively supported through the tenure process. But despite this she was struck by how little effort members of the Department made to welcome her when she came, or to make her feel comfortable—a part of the Department—since she'd been at the University.

One small but pretty clear indication: in the first semester I was here I was invited to dinner by just one of my colleagues, and in the subsequent three and a half years, before I came up for tenure, only three others ever asked me over for a meal, or a visit, or any kind of social contact outside official departmental functions.

Furthermore, she noted that generally those who extended a welcome were not the members of the Department working in areas close to her own. She explained,

At first I thought perhaps the Department just wasn't a very social place. Good fences make good neighbours or something like that. But just a couple of years ago we brought in a young man on a sessional appointment, without any prospects of a permanent appointment, and he was treated really well. He was taken out to lunch and dinner by all the members of the Department working in his area (which overlaps with mine) and by lots of others as well. One of my colleagues who wanted to hire him more permanently made a big point of telling me what a great guy he was. How his wife and family really liked him and loved having him as a house guest. I couldn't believe it. I had never, not ever, been invited to his house in the four years I'd been in the Department.

This respondent continued:

I don't particularly need or want to be best friends with my colleagues, but as a new person in town, no friends to speak of, and as someone with whom they would be dealing for at least the next four or five years if not longer, I would have thought they might make some effort at least to get to know me. Clearly they know what's appropriate. They were really welcoming to the male sessional. As I've gotten to know women in other departments I hear a lot about this kind of treatment and it can be really debilitating. In my case it wasn't undermining professionally, largely because I already had a large network established before I came. I wasn't dependent on my colleagues. But I often wonder what it would have been like if I'd been drawn into the life of the Department.

Underscoring the career implications of this type of treatment, she noted: "I know I don't function as effectively on committees as I could simply because I don't have the sort of ongoing informal interaction with my colleagues that would keep me really up to date and informed."

Some of this behaviour may be motivated by the attitudes a predominantly male faculty still holds with respect to women. They cannot seem to see them as colleagues, as peers. Instead they are often seen as potential sexual partners. One respondent put it this way: "The male faculty here are 'very married.' Single women seem to be perceived of as a threat. When you come, you feel very isolated. You rarely get asked to socialize." As we shall see later, this attitude of aloofness does not protect women faculty from sexual harassment at the hands of their colleagues. It merely impedes other forms of social interaction.

Some of the women faculty respond to the "isolation treatment" they get from male colleagues by striking up friendships with the few women teaching at the University. They described themselves as drawn more deeply into the community of women academics at the University than into that of their own department or faculty. Others fear even this type of attachment because of the stigma that may be involved. One woman admitted: "When I came, I didn't join the caucus of women, because I didn't want to be identi-

fied that way. Knowing what the grapevine had said about this not being a supportive environment for women, I decided not to be politically active."

"At Least We Know She's Straight"

Female faculty who teach in the field of Women's Studies reported an intrusive institutional pre-occupation with their sexual orientation. One respondent noted that when she included academic materials on homosexuality and lesbianism in her courses, the students complained to the Chair that she was "gay." She was very shaken by the situation:

I hadn't noticed that people were assigning things I talked about to me. I spoke of enforced heterosexuality, and they drew assumptions. It was amazingly upsetting. I don't have biases against people who are gay, but to be labelled something you're not. . . . My work concerns women, and all sorts of assumptions are made by colleagues and students about my sexuality. I find it very disturbing, because it has nothing to do with my ability to research, teach, and be a colleague. I guess I get labelled because I speak out on women's issues, I share an apartment with a woman, and I don't have a male partner.

Homophobic incidents such as this have serious repercussions for academic work. Many women are intimidated by the pervasive scrutiny of their sexuality, and some find themselves deterred from teaching or doing research in areas that are commonly viewed as challenging to heterosexual or male-dominant stereotypes. The implications for academic innovation are staggering.

One woman pointed out that scrutinizing the sexual orientation of a potential recruit was not uncommon in her field. She had been attending a reception at an academic conference when one of her senior colleagues (and former Dean) came over to speak to her. He told her that he wanted to talk to her because another Canadian university was thinking about making a job offer to one of their female colleagues. He suggested she talk to the Dean of the other university. "I want you to talk to him. He's heard she's a lesbian and wants to talk to you about that."

Our respondent was shocked:

I told him I couldn't believe he said that. He was surprised at my attitude. I just couldn't believe that a former Dean, with an international reputation, who had been in a position to recommend candidates I don't know how many times, would have thought this an appropriate question. I repeated that it was irrelevant, and he reported this other Dean as having said, "we've got a couple of these [lesbians] on our faculty and they're raising problems. I just couldn't get myself into a position of hiring another." As near as I could find out, the discussion continued elsewhere, questions were asked of other faculty members, and the candidate did not get the job.

Some efforts were made to bring to the attention of another woman in this Faculty that she was suspected of being a lesbian at just the time she was applying for an administrative position. This seemed odd, given that the Dean had made it clear on other occasions that he had "checked her out before he hired her." The woman describing these machinations said that, "it used to be said of XX, 'at least we know she's straight because she's married and has kids.'"

Safety and Sexual Harassment

A number of faculty women we spoke to complained about the insecurity they feel on campus, especially at night or on holidays, despite the fact that many said they have no choice but to be on campus after hours. Those who can frequently avoid campus, as in the case of one respondent, who said: "I don't work nights anymore, which I used to at [another large Ontario university]. I feel that the grounds at Western are simply unsafe for women at night. To get to my car, I would have to walk through two heavily bushed areas, with almost no lighting." Others reported anxiety about the regular appearance of "flashers" inside locked office and classroom buildings on weekends, and about the extremely sexist chants they have to listen to during University orientation week and homecoming celebrations. Both are ongoing problems.

Other respondents reported extreme discomfort in the face of what they described as unwelcome sexual attention and physical molestation by male colleagues. Behaviour frequently cited included unwanted touching, male faculty members draping their arms around women faculty, hugging, "bum patting," and patting the stomachs of pregnant women. One woman even described being bodily lifted up by the shoulders and moved by one of the men on her Faculty who wanted to pass her in the hall.

Another woman described how she found herself singled out for a kind of sexually oriented attention by one of her male colleagues. He regularly put his arm around her and made sexual remarks in the presence of others. One respondent reported: "Within three years of my arriving, a surprising number of male faculty propositioned me, some of whom were married at the time. This all occurred in an environment where other male faculty members tended to hug the women faculty and slap them on the bum. I refused to allow this; all the other women are gone now."

Other respondents noted an unending barrage of sexual jokes, sexual commentary, and sexist humour. One woman said she would never forget sitting in the department lounge on one of her first visits to the University, and hearing some of her colleagues-to-be discussing "the shape of X's ass" (X was a female colleague). The comments ran the gamut from "how good it

was looking" to "what she might be doing with it." She says she hasn't heard anything this explicitly sexist since but suspects her colleagues have just become more circumspect.

In other contexts such sexism persists unabated. Sexist jokes are routinely told not only in private, but in departmental meetings and quite public contexts. Often part of the fun seems to be to see how faculty women will respond. One respondent described the patience, tact, and time that she had to spend responding to this type of adolescent behaviour. "It takes so much energy to always be on your toes, always having a snappy come-back. When I put energy into that I can't put energy into teaching and research," she sighed.

Women from five other faculties reported essentially similar experiences, describing the pervasive assumption on the part of their male colleagues that anyone who takes offence at their jokes must be antisocial or have some kind of "personal" problem. All had been ridiculed or feared ridicule for reacting negatively. "You just can't take a joke..." was the standard response of their male colleagues. They described how this put women in a no-win situation. One outlined her three strategies for coping: ignoring it (which doesn't stop it), joking back (which was considered offensive by male faculty members, ironically enough), or assertiveness (which was criticized because it suggested that one was "too sensitive" or "didn't like men"). One result of this was that women felt displaced from lounges and coffee rooms, thus missing opportunities for academic debate and discussion.

VII. The Faculty of Tomorrow: Women Graduate Students at Western

There is widespread interest in increasing the number of women graduate students and ensuring their full integration into university life. It is hoped that upon graduation these women will swell the ranks of Canadian faculties, alleviating some of the gross gender disparities that continue to exist. Yet the chilly climate that exists often spills over to students, tainting their experience at the University.

One particular Department, described by four of our respondents as cold, inhumane, and completely lacking in compassion, has had a deleterious effect on the self-esteem and confidence of both faculty members and graduate students. One of the interviewees said that when she was a graduate student in the Department she felt "totally demoralized... a failure... I forget, even now, that I used to be seen as a powerful person. I lost my sense of personal power and self worth in the four years I was there."

She went on to say that as a student she'd felt that she couldn't write, couldn't do research, and that she was stupid — so there was no point in pursuing an academic career. Soon she couldn't remember why she went on to do a PhD in the first place. After she graduated she reported that the only reason she applied for an academic job was because she was invited to do so. She was amazed that anybody thought she could do it. (She now holds a tenure-track position elsewhere in the University and is doing well in both teaching and research.) She described her time in the Department as "the most devastating experience in my entire life."

A comparable but even stronger statement was made by another woman who said that she would never recommend that any woman go into that Department — either as a graduate student or as a faculty member. In fact faculty members from at least three other departments said they feel it is their duty to advise prospective graduate students who want to come to the University to work with them about the unpleasant climate they are likely to encounter.

Another respondent said that in her Department graduate students endured such a negative climate that she had to reassure them constantly. There was no question in her mind that some of her students had definitely suffered in the grades they had received from other professors in the Department because of being her students. When her students asked questions challenging traditional views in other courses, the professors got very upset. One had walked out of class. Another asked a student to leave his office because she was "wasting his time." Other students in the Department had remarked on the tension created in the classroom because of faculty members' unwillingness to entertain critical questions, whether they arose from feminist or other approaches. Because she was associated with these non-traditional views, this respondent felt blamed for any student interventions that reflected them. On another occasion, a student who wanted to take one of her courses was refused permission to do so. Our respondent heard subsequently from a third party that the student's supervisor had said that she would have to choose between taking that course and having him continue to act as her supervisor.

All in all the chilly climate experienced by women faculty is just the tip of the iceberg. One tenured woman observed that she was amazed at the amount of trivializing discrimination visited upon women graduate students. They make "especially vulnerable targets" for male professors who cannot come to grips with the equality of women inside the University.

VIII. Conclusions

Clearly the environmental issues described in the AAC reports of 1982, 1984, and 1986 are a reality at Western in 1989. What happens to women who have these experiences? Not surprisingly, many of us are angered. But, in addition, the result for many women is anxiety, self-doubt, and a loss of confidence. For example, one of the respondents described herself as demoralized and weary, a second-class citizen in her own Department. She noted that without the external recognition she receives (she has achieved national prominence as a scholar), she would lose her self-esteem completely.

Others muster extraordinary courage and determine to succeed against all odds. At the end of one interview, one woman who had described persistent and profoundly undermining harassment concluded:

I have had a real conversion in the last few weeks. I have decided to set the terms on which I stay and go. I think there is no point in staying silent. I want to stay, to stick in here and make it, but I want to do so on my terms. I want to let the students and the faculty know that the equality of women is the wave of the future, that they have to accept me as an equal. I have decided to make sure I have a positive impact on this place, with new women faculty, to make sure they are less isolated than I was. If I can accomplish that, it will be worth sticking around.

Many of the respondents alleged that Western is a more damaging environment for women than other universities. One noted: "I came from another large Ontario university. There were problems there as well, but gender was not an issue the way it is here." Even women who work in stereotypically male-dominant fields concluded that the University compares unfavourably with other educational institutions. Said one: "My discipline is a male field. There'd probably be difficulties in most departments in my discipline, but this is probably one of the worst cases."

Inevitably there will be critics of this report. Some will complain that the sample of respondents is not representative of all faculty women on campus. Others will be offended that the women who participated are unwilling to be identified. Some will simply dismiss their stories as sour grapes.

In response to our critics we'd like to point out that the women we interviewed independently reported essentially the same kinds of disturbing experiences across a number of different academic units (seven different faculties or schools and six different departments). Furthermore, in view of the very small number of women faculty members at Western (only 227 out of 1,425), 35 respondents constitute a significant sample.

We also want to acknowledge that the environment at Western is not wholly demoralizing or debilitating for women, or equally chilly across fac-

ulties, departments, and administrative units. Some women did report supportive relationships with their male colleagues. A strong commitment to equity in some quarters has resulted in attempts to change discriminatory practices. There is some degree of optimism that such warming of the climate is spreading, and can be further spread if a concerted effort is made to foster it.

Our concern is that even if the experiences of stereotyping, devaluation, and exclusion that we heard about were isolated exceptions (which they clearly are not), they would be unacceptable in a university committed both legally and morally to principles of fairness and equity in employment.

Obviously there are personal and collective responses that can be taken to many of the problems described in this report. But they do not represent the institutional solution we seek. Non-institutional responses fail to recognize the influence this chilly climate has on women at the University as a whole. The University of Western Ontario will have to make these problems a primary target of the remedial programs to be instituted in compliance with the federal requirements for employment equity.

We think the following recommendations would be worth serious consideration:

1. The University of Western Ontario should set up procedures for systematically collecting anecdotal, as well as statistical, information on women's status and experience in the University environment. An annual report should be distributed publicly which outlines the quantitative and qualitative findings of these studies.
2. Individual units should be required to establish committees on women's issues whose mandate is to determine the extent of the problem and to propose mechanisms for changing the "chilly" environment. Where necessary, external consultants should be retained to assist these committees in their work. These committees should be subject to institutional review on a regular basis. Provisions should be made for penalizing or censuring those units who fail to realize their own and the University's objectives in changing the quality of the institutional climate for women. A key measure of success in this connection is the ability of individual units to attract and retain women faculty. Failure in this, as well as in other measures of success in improving the climate for women, should be grounds for putting such units under external administration.
3. University-wide programs should be instituted for educating and "sensitizing" administrators and other members of the University campus to the nature of sex discrimination.
4. Formal structures and institutions for the support of women should be established. These might include the following: a mentoring system for

- women, a women's centre, a specialized complaint procedure for the reporting and resolution of the sorts of problems detailed in this report.
5. A university-wide policy on non-sexist language should be formulated and enforced for all documents, regulations, and media published in or by the University. This policy should apply not only to the University calendar, departmental brochures, course outlines and University papers and magazines, but also to all internal documents including departmental constitutions and Faculty and Senate policy statements. This would seem to be a minimal expression of the University's commitment to equity for women.
 6. Finally, one of the key steps towards "warming" the climate for women will be the appointment of more women to the Faculty and to senior positions in the administration. The intolerably low proportion of women is one of the major factors which permit the continuing isolation and devaluation of women generally. A significant improvement in the gender-balance ratio would do much to dispel the sexism that is still so rampant at the University of Western Ontario.

Notes

- 1 For examples of literature describing some of the problems experienced by racialized faculty and by First Nations' faculty (some of it published subsequent to the release of this report), see Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); Y.T. Moses, *Black Women in Academe: Issues and Strategies*, and S. Nieves-Squires, *Hispanic Women: Making their Presence on Campus Less Tenuous* (Washington DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1988); Joy James and Ruth Farmer, eds., *Spirit, Space and Survival: African American Women in (White) Academe* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Lynn Brodie Welch, ed., *Perspectives on Minority Women in Higher Education* (New York: Praeger, 1992); Benjamin P. Bowser et al., *Confronting Diversity Issues on Campus* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993); Patricia A. Monture, "Ka-Nin-Geh-Heh-Gah-E-Sa-Nonh-Ya-Gah," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 2, 1 (1986): 159 (translated into French in *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 6, 1 [1993]: 119); Patricia A. Monture, "Now that the Door is Open: First Nations and the Law School Experience," *Queen's Law Journal*, 15 (1990): 179; Emily Carasco, "A Case of Double Jeopardy: Race and Gender," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 6, 1 (1993): 142; Derrick Bell, "The Final Report: Harvard's Affirmative Action Allegory," *Michigan Law Review*, 87 (1989): 2382; Richard Delgado, "Minority Law Professors' Lives: The Bell-Delgado Survey," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 24 (1989): 349; Indira Karamcheti, "Caliban in the Classroom," *Radical Teacher*, 44 (Winter 1993): 13-17; and Ann duCille, "The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanour and Black Feminist Studies," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 19, 31 (1994): 591. On class bias within the academy, see Michelle M. Tokarczyk and Elizabeth A. Fay, *Working-Class Women in the Academy: Laborers in the Knowledge Factory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993). On issues of disability, see M.D. Lepofsky, "Disabled Persons and Canadian Law Schools: The Right to the Equal Benefit of the Law School," *McGill Law Journal*, 36 (1991): 636. On issues of sexual identity, see Margaret Cruikshank, ed., *Lesbian Studies: Present and Future* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1982); Louie Crew, ed., *The Gay Academic* (Palm Springs,

- CA: ETC Press, 1978); Elly Bulkin, "Heterosexism and Women's Studies," *Radical Teacher*, 17 (Winter 1981): 25-31; Margaret Cruikshank, "Lesbians in the Academic World," in Ginny Vida, ed., *Our Right to Love: A Lesbian Resource Book* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978); Melanie Kaye, "Anti-Semitism, Homophobia, and the Good White Knight," *off our backs*, 12 (May 1982): 30-31; Judith McDaniel, "Is There Room for Me in the Closet: My Life as the Only Lesbian Professor," *Heresies*, 7 (Fall 1979): 36-39; Julia Stanley and Susan Wolfe, "Crooked and Straight in Academia," in Gloria Kaufman and Mary Kay Blakely, eds., *Pulling Our Own Strings: Feminist Humor and Satire* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1980); Bianca Guttag, "Homophobia in Library School," in Celeste West and Elizabeth Katz, eds., *Revolting Librarians* (San Francisco: Bootlegger Press, 1972); Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5, 4 (1980): 631; Marilyn Frye, "A Lesbian Perspective on Women's Studies," in Cruikshank, *Lesbian Studies*, p. 194-98; and Sarah-Hope Parmeter and Irene Reti, eds., *The Lesbian in Front of the Classroom: Writings by Lesbian Teachers* (Santa Cruz, CA: Herbooks, 1988).
- 2 Bernice R. Sandler, *The Campus Climate Revisited: Chilly for Women Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students* (Washington, DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1986), p. 1-2. This 1986 report followed two previous publications that dealt with the chilly climate for women students: Roberta M. Hall with Bernice R. Sandler, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?* (Washington, DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1982), and Roberta M. Hall and Bernice R. Sandler, *Out of the Classroom Climate: A Chilly Campus Climate for Women?* (Washington, DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1984).
 - 3 Sandler, *The Campus Climate Revisited*, p. 2, 3, 17.
 - 4 Robert Weyant, "Sexual Harassment: The Tip of a Larger Problem," excerpted from a presentation to the Senate of the University of Calgary, September 30, 1983.
 - 5 Sandler, *The Campus Climate Revisited*, p. 17.