

Women Faculty: Few and Far Between

By Julie Wheelwright
For Canadian University Press

"If you take two people," says Michael Shaw, "one man and one woman at a university, they're going to do equally well."

Shaw is an administration vice-president at the University of B.C. He's also happily ensconced in that university's form-

idable Old Boys network, complete with all the attitudes that membership implies. So perhaps it is only too typical of university administrators that Shaw feels "there are more important things" than looking into the numbers of women teaching.

Asked about the small percentage of women in faculty positions, Shaw

points to the small number of women who enter graduate school. Asked why the numbers of graduate students are so small, Shaw shrugs.

"I don't really know why it exists, it's the way of the world, it's the way these female students think."

Shaw may truly believe men and women find equal opportunities at university, but his reluctance to investigate the statistics has prevented him from making educated statements about the situation.

Those statistics— cold, stark, lifeless— tell a startling tale. UBC has more than 2,000 faculty members. Only 12 per cent are women. Women make up 13 per cent of the faculty at Simon Fraser University.

Only 6.7 per cent of women are faculty at the University of Victoria. Yet women make up a full third of more transient positions like lecturers.

A 1980 statistics Canada summer employment survey of returning students found that fewer than their male counterparts found jobs. It should also come as no surprise that some students' summer earnings are, on the average, lower than men's.

So in economic terms it is difficult for women to remain simply as undergraduate students. When they do reach the graduate level, they are a minority in the Canadian university system. In 1978-79, according to Statistics Canada, women in graduate school made up only 34.5 per cent of the nation's total enrollment.

In Saskatchewan, with the smallest number of women in the masters and doctorate programs in the coun-

try, women make up 26 per cent of the total. In Nova Scotia women made up 37.9 per cent of the total, the largest in the country.

The trend is clear. The higher up the educational ladder one climbs, the fewer women one encounters. The women who do make it and receive a university position, suffer a myriad of problems.

"The women who make it, that is, who get a job in the university on a full-time basis, encounter lower salaries, slower advancement less likelihood of being granted tenure, and, in many cases, heavier work loads at the undergraduate level." Jill Vickers and June Adams wrote in their 1977 study on Canadian women in post-secondary institutions.

Capilano College history and womens studies professor Marlene Legates also agrees women in academic fields still face the "first hired last hired" syndrome. Rather than the education gap between men and women improving, the situation is getting worse.

Legates, who also taught at UBC and SFU, says part of the problem is university administrators who do little or nothing to encourage women to join their institutions.

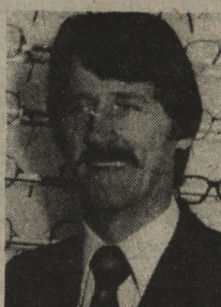
"There is no commitment on the part of the university to do anything about it. There is no concern at all."

She adds it will take a concerted effort on the part of administrators to rectify the current situation. "I think the only possible beginning is to launch an affirmative action programme."



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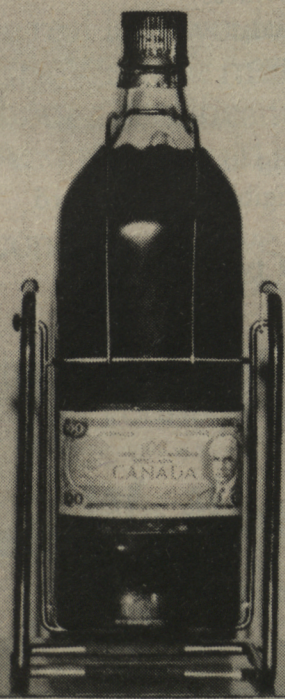
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