

EMPLOYMENT: A NEWS FEATURE
ON POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION GRADUATES - WHAT
HAPPENED TO THE CLASS OF
'76

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Canadian University Press

OTTAWA — A Statistics Canada survey has confirmed what many people suspected for years - women are consistently paid less than their male counterparts, even when they have obtained a post-secondary education degree or certificate.

And the survey results will also shock those who believe that their bachelor's degree will find them a job in their field. Only 42 per cent of the survey respondents with bachelor's degrees said their current jobs are directly related to their university studies. Twenty per cent of the degree holders said their jobs actually had no relation whatsoever to their studies.

The StatsCan survey was probably the most comprehensive examination of the Canadian post-secondary education graduate situation ever done. The pollsters interviewed 29,609 students who in 1976 completed requirements for a university degree or college diploma or certificate. That's about one-third of all Canadian graduates for that year.

The StatsCan interviews took place in June, 1978, approximately two years after the graduates had completed their requirements. Some of the survey's conclusions were:

- Women holding bachelor degrees are being paid from \$1,000 to \$4,000 less than men with the same degree in every field, except fine and applied arts and the humanities, per year.

- Women with a masters degree, except in the humanities field, fare even worse. The survey, which compared median rather than averaged salaries to get a more

accurate picture, found wage differences of about \$1,500 per year in mathematics and physical sciences up to a high of almost \$7,000 per year in the health professions field. Differences in salary between men and women with Phds were similar but because of the small number of women with doctorates the survey could not compile enough results for any conclusions.

- There are more women with degrees or certificates looking for full-time work than men in almost every field.

- Only 42 per cent of the bachelor degree graduates feel their jobs are directly related to their studies. Broken down into fields, 65 per cent of those in education got directly related jobs at the top of the scale while only 22 per cent of humanities graduates found directly related work.

- Sixty-five per cent of the country's college graduates did find directly related jobs.

- Overall 83.5 per cent of 1976 post-secondary education graduates had found full-time work. The top job-finding fields in university were business management and commerce, health professions and engineering and applied sciences, with about 95 per cent of the bachelor graduates employed by June, 1978. At the colleges data processing and computer science programs are a ticket to sure-fire employment, with more than 98 per cent of those graduating in jobs when the survey was taken. Other fields with more than 90 per cent employment include business management and commerce, secretarial arts and sciences, medical and dental services and engineering and related technologies.

- A masters degree is worth about 38 per cent, or \$5,000 to \$6,000 more per year in salary than a bachelors degree, but a PhD will only garner the graduate an additional 5.5 per cent, or about \$1,100 more than the masters.

- Generally speaking, salaries increase with the number of years of education completed.

- British Columbia is the most popular place to work among graduates, while Nova Scotia ranks last. B.C. had a net gain in both college and university graduates but N.S. had net losses in both.

Statistician Bob Cornish, who compiled and analysed most of the survey's results has some other observations about the post-secondary graduate situation.

Cornish says that after seeing the survey he believes that for the university student a masters degree is the best investment to make. In terms of cost effectiveness the masters gives a student a higher salary for the additional time spent at university and also a better chance at finding a related job, he said.

Cornish said another observation from the survey is the incidence of masters degree holders "bumping" those with bachelors out of jobs. He found that 70 per cent of those with masters degrees did not need that level of education to meet the job requirements. Consequently employers with a choice between applicants will pick the masters graduate.

Those considering that a PhD will get them a higher wage than a masters should also remember that the four years extra studies will mean a wage loss of about \$80,000, Cornish says.

PhDs also have another problem - overeducation. Cornish says employers are reluctant to hire someone who is overqualified for a job and this has led to Phds actually hiding their degree from an employer to get hired.

Another part of the survey showed that 50 per cent of those in the humanities and social sciences expected to be able to find work in their field, a completely unrealistic dream, according to Cornish. He says people should examine the job situation in a field before entering it if they hope to find work related to their studies.

Cornish advises students to:

- Take summer or part-time work in your field if possible in order to learn what the job would be like and make contacts for the future. "I can't stress its importance enough," he says.

- Take aptitude tests and get professional career guidance. "It's worth every penny spent at the entrance level," he said.

- Look at trends in the business world to get an idea where jobs could lie in the future.

- Sell yourself to an employer, going back a few times to convince your employer you really do want the job.

- Start looking for a job mid-way through the year, when many employers make decisions on hiring later in the year.

- Finally, use all the information available. The StatsCan survey, titled Employment of 1976 University and College Graduates, can be obtained for free simply by writing to: Statistics Canada, Education, Science and Culture Division, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0T6.

