

The New Agenda of Women for Higher Education at UMass

A Report from the Faculty Senate Council on the Status of Women

Fall 1993

PREAMBLE

In the summer of 1988, *Educating the Majority: Women Challenge Tradition in Higher Education* was published as part of the American Council on Education/Macmillan Series in Higher Education. One chapter of the book, "The New Agenda of Women for Higher Education" was published as an ACE Special Report by the ACE Commission on Women in Higher Education. In the fall of 1990, the University of Massachusetts Faculty Senate Council on the Status of Women reviewed the "New Agenda" for its applicability to the Amherst campus.

The "New Agenda" is a call for action giving fifteen recommendations which would assist college campuses to maintain a focus on the importance of women's role in higher education. Following a comprehensive review of the recommendations in the "New Agenda," we have identified five areas from among the fifteen recommendations to represent the call for action at the Amherst campus.

The focus of the "New Agenda" on the Amherst campus is on addressing the needs of women: women students, women faculty, and women staff. The University of Massachusetts has demonstrated commitment to equity on this campus and has shown leadership in addressing issues of concern for women. Our goal is to ensure continued administrative support and adequate funding for the programs and services for women. In the process, we must be cognizant of the interplay of race, class, and gender, ensuring that changes reflect the concerns of all underrepresented campus groups.

Mechanisms for advocating for women must be part of the formal institutional structure. While the University has engaged in efforts to address many concerns which have an impact on women, we suggest that these efforts be maintained, further developed, evaluated, remedied, and that information about these concerns and efforts be disseminated. It is not sufficient to make the monitoring of policies and programs the responsibility of volunteers and task forces. We are asking that the campus administration assume a leadership role in mapping out a new agenda for women for the University community. We strongly urge that the Chancellor appoint a person whose formal responsibilities include advocacy for women on campus. This person would ensure that women are adequately represented on campus committees, monitor campus reports and long range planning processes for the inclusion of impact statements on women, and assist with the implementation and oversight of the five goals outlined in the agenda. In addition, this individual should have responsibility for preparing an annual report on the status of women on this campus. It is recommended that this person be located within the Chancellor's area, be provided with adequate administrative and fiscal support, and assume membership on the Council on the Status of Women.

Listed below are five major goals that represent the framework for addressing the concerns of women students, faculty, and staff on this campus. Specific recommendations are included under each goal. Yearly evaluations should be conducted to determine what progress has been made in achieving stated goals.

- I. Correct Inequities in Hiring, Promotion, Tenure and Salary
- II. Provide a Supportive Campus Climate for Women
- III. Review all Policies for Effect on Women
- IV. Give Specific Attention to Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, Including Physical, Emotional and Sexual Violence.
- V. Develop an Institution-Wide Concern for Children and Families

I. Correct Inequities in Hiring, Promotion, Tenure and Salary

Determine if inequities exist in the personnel process—hiring practices, establishment of salaries, promotional opportunities (where appropriate), tenure and retention, and if inequities are found, take steps to eradicate them. It is recognized that while no official university policy is purposefully designed to inhibit the movement of women among our ranks, and noting that progress has been made in the hiring and promotion of women, inequities may still currently exist or may occur in the future. It is crucial that all existing documents and policies that govern personnel practices, and the impact and effects, if any, they are having on women be examined and corrected. Without such a review inequities may continue.

A. Hiring

1. Continue to develop and subsequently implement annual and long range hiring goals in the Affirmative Action Plan to address under representation of women in identified academic and professional areas, especially high-level administrative and managerial positions.
2. Review hiring patterns for classified staff annually to ensure that women are not “channeled” into lower paying positions.
3. Review hiring patterns for students annually to ensure women are not “channeled” into lower paying positions.
4. Review hiring patterns for graduate students annually to ensure parity between genders.
5. Provide guidelines and strategies for enlarging the pool of applicants for academic, administrative and clerical positions to ensure adequate representation of women and minorities. Ensure that advertising sources are adequately addressing this need and that women are adequately represented on search committees.

B. Retention

1. Each department should develop a retention plan which provides guidance and support for women faculty in achieving tenure and for staff in obtaining career advancement and promotion.
2. Develop a career ladder for professional and classified staff and provide educational programs that address staff training and development.
3. Create and maintain a sensitive and comfortable working environment, especially in male dominated areas; this in part can be accomplished through targeted workshops and training programs.
4. Explore creative approaches to work schedules and staffing to ensure representation of women faculty and staff on campus committees and to accommodate the demands of working parents and family caregivers wherever possible. Review the policies and practices of departments in regard to these areas.
5. Review University-wide policies and current departmental practices regarding release time for courses taken during working hours. Expand the current policy to allow for the professional development of all employees by providing for a basic allotment of release time for everyone, irrespective of the current requirement that the courses be job related. Ensure the fair and equitable application of these policies, and provide a campus-wide mechanism for appeals to resolve disputes.
6. For women faculty and staff, develop an effective partner accommodation program.
7. Review areas with a high female turnover rate to identify problem areas and take immediate measures to correct this situation.
8. Conduct exit interviews, wherever possible, to gain important feedback on the campus environment as it relates to women.

C. Promotion

1. Review promotion practices and monitor actual promotions of female faculty and staff to ensure equity with their male counterparts.
2. For staff, clearly identify career paths, whenever possible.

D. Salary

1. Conduct periodic equity studies for ALL categories of employment (faculty, staff, administration, and students, undergraduate and graduate) to identify existing inequities. In addition,

- for faculty, review starting salaries to ensure parity, and review merit distribution processes to ensure absolute equity between genders;
- for professional staff, review the OLNEY Plan to ensure that decision making criteria are free of gender influence;
- for classified staff, review salary scales to ensure that pay rates are reflective of job content and are free of gender bias;
- for graduate assistants, review stipend levels to ensure equity;
- for undergraduate students review hourly rates of pay to ensure equal pay for equal work; also review departmental policies for salary increases to guarantee parity.

2. Upon determining salary inequities, ensure the availability of funds to address them in a timely fashion, either through the budget process, or some other mechanism identified and supported by the administration.

E. Monitoring and Report Writing

1. Reports should be prepared annually by Schools, Departments and University administration, outlining definitive goals and objectives, and noting progress in all areas mentioned above. These reports should be highlighted in the annual report of the Council on the Status of Women.
2. In addition, any studies or reports which address personnel issues should include a specific review of the progress of women (e.g. Provost's Office Cohort Study for tenure track faculty).

II. Provide a Supportive Campus Climate for Women

A. Administrative leadership

1. Providing a supportive climate for women at this University should be viewed as a competitive advantage rather than as a means for avoiding possible litigation. University advertising, public relations and recruiting efforts should reflect this view.
2. Providing and maintaining this supportive climate should be an ongoing administrative function. Women's issues should be addressed in the planning documents for every academic unit on campus and tracked appropriately. Academic departments should be specifically accountable for women student recruiting, retention and graduate placement efforts and results. Offices which serve the entire University community should examine how they can better serve women and make these services known to the community.

B. Provide a supportive climate for women students

1. Admissions, Student Affairs, Housing and other offices which primarily serve the student population should examine how they can better serve women students and make the availability of such services better known to students.

2. Maintain and adequately fund academic departments that consistently serve women students (Nursing, Education, Women's Studies, Consumer Studies).

3. Encourage and reward increased enrollment of women in “non-traditional” departments such as Physics, COINS, Sports Management and Engineering (the School of Engineering has a Minority Program but no official Women's Program or Director).

4. Support and encourage Continuing Education, University Without Walls and similar programs with specific recognition of their contribution to providing educational opportunities for women at UMass.

5. Develop an academic support program specific to the needs of reentry women students with particular attention to providing access to the regular academic program for reentry women.

6. Since women students generally have male faculty advisors it would be useful to provide these advisors with a handbook, or at least a checklist of possible questions to ask, to make the advising process more useful to women students.

7. Because of the importance and visibility of athletics in undergraduate education, the Athletic Program should be particularly encouraged in promoting a climate where women can feel comfortable in participating and competing in both intramural and intercollegiate sports programs. Title IX Regulations should be reviewed not just for adherence but incorporated as a vehicle for true expansion of the athletic program for women students.

8. Develop a coordinated and accountable program of health services and education for women, including the provision of reproductive care services, health counseling, and basic primary care.

C. Provide a supportive climate for women faculty, staff, and administrators

1. Personnel, Employee Assistance, Center for Teaching, and other University offices which handle primarily faculty and staff concerns should assess how they can and should respond to the needs of women faculty and staff. Many of the concerns can be addressed with little cost or difficulty (e.g. stopping the tenure clock for maternity leave) with a very positive benefit to women employees.

2. Those offices predominately used by women (Everywoman's Center, Childcare Center, Escort Services, etc.) should be maintained and adequately funded to insure their continued accessibility.

3. Basic workplace issues such as adequate privacy, equal pay for equal work, a safe and secure work environment, and freedom from sexual harassment and/or intimidation in the workplace must be continuously examined if they are to be resolved. University officers at every level of administration must be held accountable for this ongoing examination process.
4. Encourage the development of effective networks for women faculty and staff on campus.

III. Review all Policies for Effect on Women

- A. All University policies should be reviewed annually for their impact on women and amended as necessary. This includes policies on hiring, promotion, and tenure; salary equity review; merit; sabbatical and leave of absence; grievance procedures; sexual harassment; and student athletic programs.
- B. Search procedures for all position levels (student, faculty, staff, administration) should be evaluated for their inclusion of women on search committees and in the applicant pools.
- C. Any new institutional policy or long range planning document that is developed to provide guidance for the future should include a commitment to addressing the impact of that planning or policy on women. Women should have a visible leadership role in all stages of planning, development, and monitoring of University policies or long range plans.

IV. Give Specific Attention to Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, Including Physical, Emotional and Sexual Violence.

- A. Maintain and adequately fund campus based rape crisis services, including a 24-hour hotline, counseling, advocacy, education, and training on issues of violence against women.
- B. Maintain and provide administrative support for the Student Affairs Sexual Assault Advisory Committee, whose charge it is to improve the University's response to victims of sexual violence and to educate the University community about issues of sexual violence. This should include the development of intra-agency protocols and centralized reporting procedures, and the sponsoring of violence against women awareness days community forums.
- C. Review, in collaboration with the Student Affairs Sexual Assault Advisory Committee, University judicial procedures in response to sexual assault. Make changes in judicial policies to render these procedures more supportive and fair to victims of sexual assault.
- D. Provide required training for Student Affairs Departments including the Dean of Students Office, Employee Assistance Program, Public Safety, New Student Program, Housing Services, Health Services and Mental Health Services to insure that staff are sensitized and knowledgeable on issues of violence against women, familiar with intra-agency protocols and able to respond appropriately to victims/survivors of abuse and sexual assault.

E. Support the inclusion of issues of violence against women into the academic curriculum. Specific course offerings which address the issues of violence against women should be encouraged and special colloquia sponsored yearly. A faculty development series should be developed by the Center for Teaching on issues of violence against women, course guidelines and materials catalogued and made available, and library acquisitions and audiovisual purchases enhanced.

F. Implement a plan for providing on-going education programs to targeted student groups about dating violence and date rape, including residence halls, Greek fraternity and sorority organizations, new students program, campus organizations and athletic teams.

G. Maintain the campus escort service and perform an annual safety audit.

H. Review and update the Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures. Implement a plan for yearly distribution of the sexual harassment policy to all members of the University community, including faculty, staff, and students. This should be coupled with a plan for educating the community on this policy and the grievance procedures.

I. Implement a plan to provide yearly required education and sensitivity training on sexual harassment and training on the University Sexual Harassment Policy and grievance procedures to all members of the University administration, including Deans, Directors, Department Heads, Professional Staff, and supervising staff, faculty and staff, who have a special responsibility to enforce and carry out the sexual harassment policy.

V. Develop an Institution-Wide Concern for Children and Families

A. Ensure that all University policies and employee benefits be inclusive of options and services that demonstrate a concern for families and children, including domestic partner benefits, maternity and family leave, child care, elder parent care, job sharing and flex time, and “stop the clock” tenure scheduling.

B. Reexamine and institute changes in the family leave policies including maternity leave, bereavement leave, and a leave for dependent care. Suggestions for immediate change include:

1. Explore a paid parental leave policy that is not dependent on sick leave policy. Expand the current two months Maternity Leave Without pay to four months (one semester). Extend the number of sick days that can be used toward maternity leave from 40 days of sick leave (complementing the current 2 months leave now presently allowed) to 60 days of sick leave, (which corresponds to 3 calendar months leave).

2. Expand the Family/Dependent Care Leave beyond the 10 days of paid sick leave presently allowed, possibly making it consistent with the Maternity Leave Policy. At a minimum, an employee should be guaranteed a leave without pay beyond 10 days of paid leave, perhaps up

to one year of family leave without pay.

3. Options such as flexible scheduling, part-time employment or job sharing should be available to allow all employees more flexibility in caring for the needs of her/his family.

4., Student needs should be addressed within the leave policies. Accommodations should be made in academic programs and paid positions by faculty and administrators to address leaves for purposes of maternity needs, illness, or personal/family crises. All graduate students should be able to extend their statute of limitations for maternity leave and family sick leave. Undergraduates should be guaranteed an extension beyond the 10 semesters presently allowed to complete their academic program, for pregnancy or personal/family sick leave.

5. The Dependent Care Benefit Program, initially designed as a pilot program, which currently allows the employee to designate up to \$5,000 a year for dependent care as tax deductible, should be maintained with the amount eligible for tax deferral periodically reviewed and revised.

C. Reexamine the policies concerning Sabbatical and Professional Improvement Leaves, compile data concerning their use by women, and evaluate their effectiveness and accessibility. Suggestions for immediate change include:

1. Sabbatical leaves should be an entitlement and not subject to denial based on a department's or school's lack of funds. The University should support the leave if the department or school itself cannot, insuring that there will be no discrimination in approving leaves by gender.

2. Professional Development leaves should be available to all professional staff with policies providing explicit guarantees that staff will return to the same level after a professional leave.

3. University policies should be developed that address the continuing education and career development needs of faculty and professional and classified staff. This should include the provision of time for staff to attend University courses, seminars, and campus-wide committees and meetings. The gender impact of career mobility in the classified staff should be examined and provisions instituted to insure equal opportunity.

D. The University Child Care System should be expanded, adequately funded, and incorporated as an important resource for faculty, students, and staff, providing personal childcare and opportunities for education and research. The University Child Care System should be affordable, accessible, and of the highest quality. It should encompass multicultural, educational, and social components. Suggestions for immediate change include:

1. Maintain a University-based child care system. This system has many advantages over a vendor-directed service and provides for a strong commitment to multiculturalism and educational innovations in the provision of exemplary child care.

2. Expand the financial base of the child care system through a combination of University funds, grants, and foundation awards. The University should provide assistance in securing a strong financial base through the Fundraising office, Research Affairs, and the Corporate Foundation and Development Office.
3. Re-institute center-based infant day care and examine the possibility of providing a network of family-based day care, of offering flexible child care schedules, and extended hours of operation.
4. Examine the possibility of developing a Sick Child Care Service through the University Health Services and providing conference child care services through Conference Services.
5. Undertake a study to examine the adequacy of the current child care program and facilities, to determine where Child Care Services should be administratively located (currently in Housing Services), and how it should be expanded to address the needs of a diverse student, faculty and staff body.