

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
of the  
**STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL**  
concerning the  
**VISION 2000**

Presented at the 548<sup>th</sup>  
Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
December 4, 1997

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MEMORANDUM

To: John Bracey, Secretary  
Faculty Senate and the Rules Committee

From: Ann Ferguson and Emily Silverman  
Co-chairs, Faculty Senate Council on the Status of Women

Re: Update on Vision 2000 Report from 4/22/97 and Motion to Endorse

In Spring 1997 the Faculty Senate Council on the Status of Women submitted a report to the Faculty Senate called Vision 2000. This is a proposal made to the Presidents and Chancellors of the New England Land Grant Universities to ensure full and equitable participation by women faculty, staff and students in these sites. This proposal, which was preceded by the UMass Agenda for Women, has been developed over a three year period in four conferences by representatives of all the New England Land Grant University Women's Centers, Women's Studies Programs and Commissions/Councils on the Status of Women on each campus. This group, which holds a conference yearly or bi-yearly, is now known as the New England Council of Land-Grant University Women. A summary of its nine recommendations and general strategies for action occurs in the Preamble.

Members of the New England Council of Land-Grant University Women are circulating the Vision 2000 document on our campuses, asking each representative body and council to endorse the proposal. On our campus, the Women's Studies Executive Committee and the Council on the Status of Women have endorsed the proposal. **We ask that the Faculty Senate discuss and endorse this proposal in a timely fashion.** Since it is not possible to amend the existing document which is a joint effort of the advocates for women of six universities, **we are asking for an endorsement in principle of the goals of Vision 2000 rather than endorsement of every specific measure listed to achieve the goals.** We understand that each university will have to work out specific strategies for action tailored to the views and conditions of that campus.

**Suggested motion:** Moved that the Faculty Senate endorse in principle the Vision 2000 proposal of the New England Council of Land-Grant University Women as a set of strategic action goals for our campus to promote equity for women at the University, and that the Faculty Senate recommend to the Chancellor that he adopt this document as a touchstone in constructing his Strategic Plan for the University.

# **Vision 2000**

**New England Council of Land-Grant University Women**

**PREAMBLE**

**“Excellence in education requires educators to remain forever in the learning mode in order to be receptive to new information, to help evolve new paradigms incorporating new knowledge, and to continue to understand the learner.”**

[Educating the Majority: Women Challenge Tradition in Higher Education, NY: Macmillan, 1989]

“Vision 2000” is a call to our Presidents and Chancellors to ensure full and equitable participation by women in the New England Land Grant Universities. Through nine broad recommendations, the document sets forth a vision of where women at our six institutions can and should be at the beginning of the next century. “Vision 2000” is the combined effort of the faculty, staff, and students who make up the New England Council of Land-Grant University Women. The nine recommendations are:

- foster accountability
- base action plans on research results
- implement diversity initiatives
- promote family-friendly policies
- encourage women's academic and career development
- correct inequities in hiring, promotion, tenure, compensation, and working conditions for women employees
- establish and support women's centers
- end gender-bias and discrimination against women in the curriculum
- end sexual harassment and violence against women

To guarantee continuing excellence in public higher education, the leaders of our institutions, and specifically our Presidents and Chancellors, must understand the issues raised by “Vision 2000” and provide clear and visible leadership to bring the nine recommendations to fruition.

Institutional demographics are changing as more women enter higher education at all levels; however, the structures to encourage, support, and retain women have not kept pace. Women continue to be underrepresented in the curriculum, ignored or disparaged in the classroom, underrepresented in leadership roles and overrepresented in entry-level and support positions. Women face sexual violence and sexual harassment in the classroom and in the workplace, and are too often silenced by a system that protects the perpetrators of these crimes. Women of color, lesbians, and women with disabilities are further marginalized. At the same time, since men are overrepresented in the curriculum and in leadership roles, a system of privilege and gender inequity is perpetuated. We cannot commit ourselves and our institutions to principles of social justice, multiculturalism, and pluralism without a clear plan for achieving gender equity.

Despite some 30 years of gradual legislative change, fulfillment of the goal of gender equity has been slow, partial, and painful. The legal and ethical mandate is clear; institutions of higher education can no longer ignore the harmful effects of the inequitable allocation of resources. Our claim is not to additional resources, but to our fair share of resources.

We ask our Presidents and Chancellors to lead us to “Vision 2000.” Hold department heads accountable for improvement in achieving gender equity. Reward those departments that can demonstrate measurable progress. Collect and analyze data on the status of women. Publish an annual report that measures progress on each of the nine recommendations outlined in “Vision 2000.” Report our successes to the public via an annual press conference. Our campuses are involved in various strategic planning and re-engineering processes, which provide a unique opportunity for leaders to be creative, innovative, thoughtful, and specific in reallocating moneys to those groups who have historically been marginalized and underrepresented.

**RECOMMENDATION 1: FOSTER ACCOUNTABILITY**

Discussion of the problem: Accountability for gender equity is not always integral to regular administrative structures at our universities. We have relied in large part on volunteer groups, task forces, offices of human resources, and equal opportunity/ affirmative action officers to advocate for the cause of women and to monitor policies and programs affecting women on their respective campuses. As particularly significant issues have surfaced, we have responded by creating new positions, programs, or committees. Women's Studies programs, women's health programs, rape crisis programs, women's centers, and commissions and councils on women, all came into being to solve problems of gender inequity.

These offices and programs have played, and will continue to play, important roles in making our institutions more nearly equitable places for women to be educated and employed. They are also generally understaffed and underfunded in relation to their mandates, and located on the periphery of the organizational structure of authority. They are therefore able to provide encouragement, information, and technical assistance to others, but are not positioned to exercise sole responsibility for institutional change.

It is time to realign responsibility and authority for gender equity so it is more than an add on. Members of the faculty, department chairs, and deans need to be accountable for equity in curriculum, pedagogy, and academic advising. Supervisors need to be accountable for equity in hiring, workplace behavior, and career development opportunities. Student aid offices need to be accountable for equity in student need assessment, aid packages, and work-study assignments. In short, the institutional procedures already in place for establishing expectations, creating and implementing work plans, and reporting on results must be invoked to achieve the goals for gender equity.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. Student evaluations of courses and instructors include measures of gender equity in course content and classroom environment. Heads of departments, schools, and colleges use these evaluations both to identify and reward superior achievement, and to identify and intervene in undesirable practices.
2. Self-evaluation, peer review, and supervisory review of faculty teaching includes assessment of gender balance in course content and gender-inclusive pedagogical practices.
3. Job descriptions and performance evaluations for all officers, managers, and supervisors include responsibilities for monitoring and fostering gender equity efforts.
4. Annual reports issued by organizational units assess initiatives toward gender equity and establish equity-related goals for the coming year.
5. Offices and committees responsible for initiating, promulgating, and implementing institutional policies periodically review and revise such policies to assure their optimal contribution to gender equity.
6. The president of the university reports annually to the governing board and to the state legislature on the status of women at the university.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: BASE ACTION PLANS ON RESEARCH RESULTS.**

Discussion of the problem: Research, one leg of the tripartite missions of our universities, is integral to our academic values, yet it is too rarely brought to bear on processes of change in our own institutions. We call here upon our leadership to (1) apply the considerable body of research on gender in higher education to institutional practices; (2) utilize institutional research capacity to produce the data necessary to raise consciousness, instigate action, and monitor progress on our campuses; and (3) examine the degree to which the research programs and priorities of our institutions equitably benefit women.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. Annual seminars or colloquia in each academic department include at least one session devoted to research on gender issues relevant to the discipline or to higher education more generally.
2. Gender is a variable introduced into all pertinent programs of institutional research. Aggregate institutional data no longer mask gender differences.
3. Gender equity is an important consideration in the planning and budgeting for facilities, staffing, and programs.
4. University research programs equitably involve women as researchers and as beneficiaries of research programs, and benefits to women and children are a criterion by which the significance of research programs is measured.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPLEMENT DIVERSITY INITIATIVES.**

Discussion of the problem: Environments receptive to difference are environments receptive to women, and vice versa. The more diverse an institution, the more open to a variety of cultural values and practices, the more likely it is to be a place in whose work women can participate fully. Our universities are in various ways attempting to become more diverse and more sustainably pluralistic communities, although with mixed success to date. New England Land Grant University Women welcome and support these endeavors, which promote equity for women of color, for women with disabilities, for women of all sexual/affective preferences, indeed for all women.

The full benefit of diversity depends upon our universities' taking the broadest possible view of it. Initiatives should therefore include not only efforts on behalf of the current Affirmative Action populations, but also of other groups for whom Equal Opportunity at our universities has yet to become a reality, such as working class people, recent immigrant groups, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered persons, and underrepresented ethnic populations historically significant in our own states, such as Franco-Americans and Portuguese-Americans.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. University facilities and programs are invitingly accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. There are critical masses of women, persons of color, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented populations in all units and ranks, and in leadership positions, among students, staff, and faculty.

3. There are equal numbers of men and women in the underrepresented groups.
4. Women and other Affirmative Action populations are represented in all bodies of university governance in proportion to their numbers among the governed.
5. The university budget for student services/student activities is devoted to the interests and needs of non-traditional students in proportion to their numbers in the student body.
6. The university has demonstrated innovation in significantly incorporating international students and staff, and their families, into university life.
7. The retention rates among underrepresented groups are not lower than those of other students and employees.
8. The office responsible for oversight of the university's equal opportunity policies and affirmative action plans has the resources and the authority necessary to carry out its charge, and is regarded by the campus community as a highly effective compliance office.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: PROMOTE FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES.**

Discussion of the problem: Employers who fail to acknowledge the economic importance and social burden of work for family and community discriminate against women. Single or married women whose family members require care often experience demands and stresses which are typically much greater than those experienced by their male peers. Far fewer women than men can choose to have children without interrupting or retarding their career development by several years. Women are also often called on to provide care for elderly parents. Because of such differentials, opportunities for advancement which require full-time devotion to the job are open to most otherwise qualified men, but too few otherwise qualified women.

Society has chosen to reward those who postpone or interrupt a career to serve in the armed forces by making it easier for them to resume a career after their period of service. Veteran's education benefits and preferential hiring are a form of compensation for contributions to society. Work for family and community deserves similar consideration.

Our universities can choose to value as job-related assets the experience gained by working women with families. We can promote opportunities for women to participate and to advance in the workforce by enhancing childcare services, liberalizing family leave provisions, facilitating flexible work arrangements, and instituting provisions for slowing or temporarily stopping the tenure process. Such investments make our universities fit workplaces for people with families.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. University childcare includes drop-in, evening, after-school, and school-vacation programs. Fees for services are charged on a sliding scale.
2. Student health insurance includes year-round benefits for dependents.
3. University supervisors make extraordinary efforts to accommodate employee requests for flextime, job

sharing, reduced work schedules, work from home, or family leave. When such accommodation is impossible within the limitations of the employing unit, the central office of human resources stands ready to assist in meeting the employee's need to reconcile demands of work and family.

4. Tenure policies make available to all probationary faculty both family leave, during which the tenure clock stops, and reduction from full-time to part-time status, during which the clock slows proportionately. Faculty who exercise such options are not penalized by their peers for having extended the probationary period.
5. University employees are encouraged to take time during the day to attend their children's school functions or to volunteer in their children's schools.
6. The university has established an effective program of relocation assistance for domestic partners of new employees.
7. University benefits formerly restricted to legally married spouses of employees extend to all established domestic partners.
8. The university supports families and personal life with training for supervisors on work-family issues, periodic work-family surveys, workshops and support groups on work-family issues, and designated work-family staff.

**RECOMMENDATION 5: ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S ACADEMIC AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT.**

Discussion of the problem: After more than twenty years of affirmative actions, women are still found in disproportionate numbers in low-paid and low-status jobs and specialties. There are still major penalties for being female: many programs and colleges in our institutions that have a high proportion of female students and faculty also have lower pay and less institutional clout.

To achieve equal pay, prestige, job satisfaction, and autonomy, women students and employees need access to education, credentials, mentors, and evaluative procedures that are truly gender-neutral. Strategies for change must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the factors that hinder women's personal and professional development within our male-dominated disciplines and places of work.

Our universities must change in many ways to provide each and every woman true equality of opportunity. Supervisors must embrace the notion that the university's mission and their own department's productivity are enhanced by encouraging the personal and professional development of all employees. Departments and disciplines must change curricula, pedagogies, and workplace practices so that women students and faculty can translate entry-level access and ability into satisfying careers. Teacher preparation programs must collaborate with schools to liberate the aspirations of young women and men and of current and future teachers. And our Cooperative Extension programs must carry these models of gender equity into every community in our states.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. All members of the university community have equitable access to information: all employees have library privileges equal to those of faculty, all employees have equal access to the Internet, and all employees are guaranteed full access to information affecting their employment.

2. All members of the university community have equal access to educational benefits: supervisors do not deny flexible scheduling to accommodate coursework without compelling reasons demonstrated in writing, and educational pursuits are recognized as positive work contributions in annual performance evaluations.
3. All members of the university community have equal access to important communities and conversations: release time for university service is guaranteed, all employees have clear and prompt access to decision-makers, and differences in male and female socialization no longer disempower women in classrooms, committees, disciplines, and offices.
4. The university has created effective approaches to meeting professional development needs, and funding available to support professional development is equitably allotted to women.
5. University institutes for public policy, curricula for teacher preparation and enhancement, Cooperative Extension services, and other programs of research, teaching, and public service exercise visible leadership in the promotion of gender equity in other institutions of the States we serve, as part of their explicit or implicit mission to maximize the development of human potential.

**RECOMMENDATION 6: ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT WOMEN'S CENTERS.**

Discussion of the problem: An effective Women's Center is an invaluable resource to any university committed to the pursuit of gender equity. It provides a safe space for women in a frequently hostile or indifferent environment. It develops and promotes women's leadership. It models for the larger university the values and practices essential to any institution that intends fully to meet the educational needs of women. It is the nucleus of networks organized for mutual support and for community action essential both to individual well-being and to progressive social change. It is the single best source of information, education, and advocacy in matters of concern to women. Unfortunately, however, it rarely receives public recognition of these functions or resources commensurate with their importance.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. Senior institutional leaders rely upon consultation and advice from the Women's Center in their efforts to encourage, support, and maintain new roles for women.
2. Centrally located and accessible facilities, staffing, operating budget; and reporting relationship of the Women's Center convey to both the campus and the larger community its importance to the institution as a whole.
3. The Women's Center is featured as an exceptional resource in the recruitment of students, staff, and faculty.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: END GENDER-BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE CURRICULUM OF EACH UNIVERSITY.**

Discussion of the problem: Women's status within American higher education reflects an intellectual bias that is deeply rooted in the disciplinary methods and social assumptions of university communities. Such bias weakens and limits university research efforts. It deters women students from many fields that could benefit from their equal presence with men as students, researchers, and professional leaders. Until such bias is acknowledged and addressed through faculty development and support for curricular change, women and men will continue to be denied the full benefits of higher education. Women's Studies and women's presence in the institution cannot be ghettoized. Critical and innovative work on the curriculum must be seen as an intellectual imperative to transform the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Two approaches to organizing women-friendly and culturally diverse curricula are best seen as complementary rather than antagonistic. Our universities need both a strong separate academic program in Women's Studies and an institutional commitment affirmed at every level to transforming the curriculum with perspectives from scholarship on women and other historically oppressed groups. The process of transformation is best conducted with guidance from an autonomous Women's Studies site and active Women's Studies scholars working cooperatively with others.

Colleges and universities that have moved assertively to offer more diverse experiences have benefited from higher rates of student satisfaction and recruitment, while also better preparing the ir students for the future. Leadership at the highest levels is needed to spur and maintain curricular and pedagogical transformation in all academic programs.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. All General Education courses integrate scholarship on and by women and use content and pedagogies that are women-friendly.
2. Academic departments that consistently surface with disproportionately high female drop-out rates are penalized.
3. All student evaluation instruments include questions on the inclusiveness of the curriculum and on the appropriateness of teaching methods to different kinds of students.
4. Faculty whose students identify their courses, teaching styles, and mentoring as failing to be inclusive do not receive teaching prizes, satisfactory teaching evaluations, or merit raises.
5. Each campus has met targets for staffing Women's Studies positions for the year 2000 based on benchmarks set by leading public universities.
6. There are opportunities for graduate work in Women's Studies both within departments and in interdisciplinary courses. Graduate students are encouraged and supported in focusing their study on women's issues.
7. The university has established mechanisms for ongoing review of courses and curricula and ongoing faculty development to assure appropriate inclusion of scholarship by and about women and members of other historically underrepresented groups.

**RECOMMENDATION 8: END SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.**

Discussion of the problem: As long as women remain at unequal risk for violence and intimidation at their places of study and work, our campuses discriminate against women. While some progress has been achieved in providing support services to survivors of rape, sexual harassment, and dating and domestic assault, much more is required to demonstrate that our universities are fully committed to changing the fundamental social and physical conditions that sustain violence against women. Many women express dissatisfaction with existing methods of prevention and redress. On some campuses, even basic services for survivors (such as an easily accessible, effective, and visibly confidential advocate) are lacking; whereas on other campuses, several offices need better coordination to insure continued progress.

In too many cases, women remain silenced about violent or intimidating behavior by superiors, peers, and partners. Some women are driven out of the university by a spuriously even-handed approach, which rarely results in real sanctions for the perpetrators or real justice for the survivors. When accountability for women's safety is marginalized in Equal Opportunity or other offices outside the regular reporting structures, the result is often to forestall legal remedies that women off campus can pursue if they are attacked in their homes, workplaces, or in public spaces.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. A visible and confidential support system, clear consequences for behavior, and vocal commitment to anti-violence policies from president and vice presidents have made it possible for women on our campuses to report assault and harassment and to seek redress. The university truly exemplifies a zero tolerance of sexual harassment and violence against women.
2. The university withdraws recognition and support from groups shown to be implicated at rates higher than the general campus population in acts of sexual harassment or violence against women.
3. The university ensures the safety of survivors during periods of investigation. Individuals found responsible for violent acts are disciplined, usually by termination of association with the university. If circumstances do not warrant such termination, disciplinary measures imposed include curfews, escorts, increased supervision, designation of off-limit sites, and other restrictions on freedom of movement, as appropriate to the protection of the survivor and of others similarly situated.
4. Criteria for evaluation of administrators and supervisors include items to test women's satisfaction with the university's response to the problem of sexual harassment and violence. Women students and employees report satisfaction with university grievance, public safety, and judicial mechanisms they have used.
5. Administrators and supervisors about whom dissatisfaction is reported are held responsible for providing themselves and staffs with training and professional development on issues of violence against women and sexual harassment. Failure to achieve acceptable levels of satisfaction among supervisees within a reasonable period of time is grounds for disciplinary action.
6. The university has instituted a process in which all administrators, faculty, graduate teaching assistants, staff, and students are trained in issues of sexual harassment and violence, paying particular attention to groups that are particularly vulnerable, such as graduate students and support staff.

**RECOMMENDATION 9: CORRECT INEQUITIES IN HIRING, PROMOTION, TENURE, COMPENSATION, AND WORKING CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES.**

Discussion of the problem: A survey of the distribution of women employees at our institutions indicates that they are conspicuously underrepresented in many of the organizational units. Women's opportunities for career advancement are inequitably restricted, as evidenced by their disproportionate under-representation in positions of administrative and supervisory responsibility, and by their disproportionate overrepresentation in positions of lower rank or status, less compensation, and less job security. Faculty and other professional women are less well paid than their male counterparts, and faculty women are less likely to achieve tenure or, having achieved tenure, to be promoted to full professor. Non-exempt staff positions tend to be highly sex-segregated. In the segments of the workforce in which women predominate, such as clerical and office workers, opportunities for career advancement are severely limited. Far too many women report being intimidated or silenced, when they have spoken out against these facts of university life; they also report profound distrust or dissatisfaction with available grievance and other conflict resolution mechanisms.

**Vision for the Year 2000:**

1. Employees in all ranks report that they have satisfactory access to opportunities for career advancement.
2. Equity monies are allocated in each collective bargaining process to address gender inequities in earnings.
3. There are no significant gender differences in achievement of tenure or in years in rank for members of the faculty.
4. Peer review and evaluation of faculty teaching and research gives equitable recognition to the substance and methodologies of work in Women's Studies.
5. Employees express satisfaction with the grievance or other conflict resolution mechanisms they have utilized.
6. No employees report reluctance to utilize available grievance or other conflict resolution mechanisms.
7. Wage levels of non-exempt staff are based upon considerations of comparable worth.
8. A sophisticated analysis of salaries, taking into account such factors as the market value of a discipline or professional expertise, highest degree earned, position or rank, and years in position or rank, suggests that gender is not a factor.
9. The university hires an outside firm specializing in public institution compensation studies to undertake a salary and wage analysis every three years.

## RESOURCES

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