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Status of Women in Higher Education: A Metanalysis of Institutional Reports

by Kathleen B. Watters
Carolyn S. Ridenour

The authors examined twenty-one institutional reports on the status of women on American college and university campuses. The analysis revealed a dominant discourse of women positioned as dependent on men. Among the five emergent themes included, first, the reality that women were marginalized on these campuses and second, overrepresented in lower power positions. Third, evidence suggested an unequal distribution of salary and perquisites by gender. Fourth, adopting policies toward equity can lessen gender discrimination; however, not with a lack of a strong public and visible commitment to equity by campus leadership, the fifth theme. Additional findings include explanation of three recurring institutional barriers to gender equity and discussion of effective strategies to dismantle gender inequities.

Purpose

On the heels of Title IX legislation (the landmark federal law passed in 1972), St. Louis University (SLU), a Catholic university, established one of the first commissions to study the status of women on its campus in 1973. The President's Advisory Commission on Status of Women at SLU carried out the study and produced an institutional status report. By now, three decades later, hundreds of such commissions at a wide range of American colleges and universities have produced such reports. We were interested in whether or not an analysis of commission reports on the status of women would reveal common themes, recurring barriers and comparable strategies toward equity. Based on a metanalysis of twenty-one university reports on the status of women over the past decade (see Table 1), we explored these three lines of inquiry:

1. What are common themes across these institutions regarding the status of women?

2. What are the continuing barriers to gender equity in higher education? Why do barriers persist thirty years after Title IX?
3. Are there potentially effective strategies toward gender equity that are suggested by these institutional findings?

In January 2005, thirty-three years after the passage of Title IX, remarks by the President of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, captured widespread media attention and generated much public discussion of gender equity and equal opportunity in higher education. Speaking at a scholarly conference on women in the sciences and engineering, President Summers explained that the lack of women in these fields at elite universities might be the result of innate biological or genetic differences. He also noted that the low number of women in academic science and technical fields may stem from the reluctance of women, who are also mothers, to devote the time necessary to be successful. While President Summers has contended that his remarks were misconstrued by many in the academy and media, including MIT Professor Nancy Hopkins, who walked out of his presentation at the conference, his comments prompted renewed institutional and public discussion of the status of women in higher education and, in particular, the barriers that affect women faculty and students in fields in which they have been underrepresented (Fogg, 2005).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theories of cultural change within organizations, particularly as related to gender and power (see, e.g., DiGeorgio-Lutz, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Hess-Biber & Leckenby, 2003; Martin, 1999; Rosser, 2002) and legal sanctions against gender bias form the conceptual framework for this study. The role of policy and the process of

policy development also play a role. The question that arises is in what ways do formal policies interact and construct institutional cultures? More deeply scrutinizing the discourse of these institutional reports on the status of women, according to Allan (2003), is the only way to get at the "meaning" of gender and power on campus, a prerequisite for true cultural change.

Allan analyzed 21 reports from women's commissions at four universities and explained the dynamics by which discourses within the reports construct images of women and men that might work against, rather than for, gender equity. For example, discourse that portrays the absence of women at higher faculty ranks or women as "marginalized" can ironically convey that women, naturally, are "outsiders" to these positions of power. Such discourse constructs the "problem" as a problem of women, rather than constructing the problem as one of male overinclusion (Allan, 2003). Sexual assault and concerns for women's safety are often constructed in these reports as, again, women's problem, rather than constructed as a "problem of violent behavior" (p. 54). Allan's research has informed our analysis.

We selected reports from several institutions, including what we consider the commission that started this entire movement across college campuses, the one at MIT. The reports from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1999 and Duke University in 2003 were among the most famous. The MIT report was the direct outcome of a request by faculty women five years earlier. In 1994, these women had asked that a committee be formed to study the status of women in their school.

The resulting MIT commission report has gained the most visibility, given the media and higher education press coverage and the attention it received on campuses across the country. For instance, a New York Times headline declared, "MIT Admits Discrimination against Female Professors," above a story about discrimination

in the School of Science. Particularly noteworthy was the response of MIT's President, Charles Vest, as he acknowledged that women faculty were discriminated against with respect to hiring, promotion, lab resources, space, and MIT research dollars. He commented, "I have always believed that contemporary gender discrimination within universities is part reality and part perception. True, but I now understand that reality is by far the greater part of the balance" (Goldberg, 1999, p. A1).

Media coverage of the MIT report spurred a new round of gender studies at other colleges and universities. MIT Professor Nancy Hopkins noted, "There have been hundreds of reports just like MIT's, collecting dust. When the president says 'it's true,' then it's true." Public notoriety and raised awareness provided existing studies with greater credibility. In a 2002 follow up study to the MIT 1999 report, commissioners focused on the entire institution, not just the sciences. The subsequent report included evidence of overt salary inequities, hiring inequities, and subtle forms of discrimination, access to information about promotion, departmental practices, inclusion on search committees, and marginalization. It was clear that women faculty were not yet full participants in the campus community.

In January 2001, presidents, chancellors, provosts and 25 women professors from nine major research universities met at MIT to discuss the equitable treatment of women faculty in science and engineering (Zernike, 2001). In a unanimous declaration, they admitted the seriousness of failed gender equity in their statement, "Institutions of higher education have an obligation, both for themselves and for the nation, to fully develop and utilize all the creative talent available." "We recognize that barriers still exist" for women faculty. The institutions included the California Institute of Technology, University of Michigan, Princeton University, Stanford University, Yale University; Harvard University, University of California, the University of Pennsylvania, and, of course, MIT.

The movement to examine the status of women in higher education continued. For example, in 2003, the Duke University Report was released. While this report received media coverage, most was limited to the professional press. Duke's report was far more comprehensive than the MIT study in that multiple methods were used to study the experiences of women faculty, staff, and students across the entire university. The report and recommendations, initiated by Duke's president, are far reaching and include detailed plans for change.

The recent remarks of the president of one of most prestigious universities in the world, Harvard President Summers, have resulted in renewed attention and discussion of the status of women in higher education and generated new calls for institutional review and study of the presence, position, and progress of women in the academy.

Data Sources and Methods

The MIT and Duke reports as well as reports from nineteen other colleges and universities (see Table 1) were analyzed using common qualitative data analysis methods. We used a variation of a grounded theory strategy in the analysis of the institutional reports (Janesick, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We employed the notion of "metanalysis" in its most broad sense rather than as a statistical technique. We considered each commission report as a research study. Initially, we divided the reports between us. Each of us read through half the reports, taking notes. We focused our second coding sweep through the reports, staying with the original language of the authors as much as possible, and combining codes into preliminary categories. Interpreting domains of meaning and major themes characterized the third phase of the analysis. At that point, we jointly discussed our individual interpretations.

Two methodological dynamics need to be explained. Reflexivity of the two of us as researchers (Altheide & Johnson, 1994) and strategies of

peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) both strengthened the trustworthiness of our findings. First of all, a reflexive stance acknowledges the researcher's lack of objectivity and neutrality. We are white women researchers working at a university and we bring those biographies to this research study. We have served on an Advisory Committee on Women's Issues at our university; and, the first author, Kathy, chaired that group for some time. Reflecting on our own identities and bringing in our own experience to the research are pathways to understanding that we bring particular perspectives, biases, to our analysis of the evidence. Altheide and Johnson (1994) comment on these "biases" and the need to reveal them:

One meaning of *reflexivity* [italics in the original] is that the scientific observer is part and parcel of the setting, context, and culture he or she is trying to understand and represent.... More and more scholars began to realize that the traditional problems of entrée or access to a setting, personal relations with the members in a setting, how field research data were conceived and recorded, and a host of other pragmatic issues had important implications for what a particular observer reported as the 'findings' of the researcher. (p. 486)

Peer debriefing challenges us to resolve conflicting interpretations of the evidence to strengthen its trustworthiness. The two of us provide two sets of lenses on these reports. We have multiple perspectives on these phenomena and our discussions were intended to lead toward shared understanding and a type of peer debriefing. In our discussions, emerging themes and explanations were shared and challenged by each of us to the other.

We were initially surprised at the similarity of our interpretations but, after a lengthy discussion, recognized that the common themes may be strong representations about the common experiences of women across these schools during the past decade. We combined our inter-

pretations by writing separate drafts of findings from our sets of studies. That narrative became the document that we discussed a final time as we merged each draft into this final manuscript. In the next sections, we discuss the quality of work life on these campuses, as reflected in the university reports. Our conclusions are based on this sample of institutional reports and cannot be generalized beyond the institutions whose reports we studied. Our intent is a deeper richer understanding of the status of women across these campuses. Our goals were to identify and describe common themes and barriers and distill the potentially effective strategies used by the sample institutions to advance gender equity.

We needed to take into account the nature of these institutional reports as “interpretable texts” in this study. Documents are never absent some historical context (Hodder, 2000). As records of human experience, these reports were formally written to serve an accounting function for each institution. They were driven by institutional needs, not all alike and at slightly different points in time. On the other hand, rather than first person accounts of women and men on these college campuses, the texts are manipulated second-hand accounts generated by a formalized political and social institutional process. The meaning of the construct, women’s “status,” is not an objective stable reality, but one that is fluid and assembled from a particular perspective and a particular discursive frame (Allan, 2003). Organizational actors are key stakeholders in each report; these are not neutral perspectives. Because many of the reports seem to be structured according to policy boundaries, to a certain extent, the texts have a predetermined structural meaning (e.g., personnel and promotion and tenure). In addition, what was addressed in the reports and what was not addressed in the reports were predicated on institutionalized access and boundaries.

According to Hodder (2000), “there is no ‘original’ or ‘true’ meaning of a text outside a specific historical context” (p. 704). Central

administrators mandated some of these reports while others have grown from authentic desires of individuals at lower status levels to assess campus climate for women in order to change it. We are naïve onlookers and readers, uninformed about the extent to which individual reports were generated by the former, the latter, some evolving combination of the two, or by some other motivation.

Results

In this section, we discuss the findings related to each of the three research questions in three parts. First, we address those common themes related to women’s lives on campus that we interpreted from these reports, thus discussing our findings to the first research question. Within these larger themes, we move on in the next section to describe those continuing barriers to gender equity that hinder women’s progress, research question two. Within this discussion we speculate about possible underlying causes of these continuing obstacles to women’s equal status and prestige. In the third part of our results we discuss responses to research question three, potential strategies that might be successful in achieving gender equity. We draw on the reports and the recommendations that many of the authors offer therein as well as our responses to the first two research questions. Portions of specific reports are cited in the discussion, but we deliberately do not link the citation to the institution.

Common Themes Across all Institutions Related to the Status of Women

Equity for women in higher education continues to be an elusive goal. While strides toward the inclusion of women in an equitable university climate have been evidenced, the meaning of campus life for men and women remains poles apart in many ways. Our first research question inquired as to general domains of meaning, or themes, that might be constructed from these reports. Our analysis led us to construct five general dimensions that encompass the status of women on these campuses:

Status of Women

(1) women are marginalized in campus cultures; (2) employment patterns show a correlation with gender in that women are overrepresented in positions of lower power while men are overrepresented in positions with higher power; (3) salary and perquisites are unequally distributed by gender; (4) university policies can exacerbate gender differences in people's ability to balance home and work responsibilities; and, finally, (5) the strong public voice of university leadership must commit to gender equity for progress to be made. These themes, we are quick to admit, have been constructed through what we recognized as a dominant discourse of women positioned as dependent on men (Allan, 2003). (Later, we return to this perspective as we discuss potential effective strategies to increase gender equity.) Each of these broad general themes is described next.

First of all, the campus culture tends to be one which marginalizes women; even though some progress over the past three decades (since Title IX was legislated) can be shown. The rituals, legends, ceremonies, symbols, language, beliefs, and values of most campuses are most strongly determined by men and male-centered values. Furthermore, sexual harassment and discrimination, which victimizes both women and men, is rarely reported by men and most often suffered by women. A climate of discrimination in work environment is suggested in these reports. Labs, facilities, resources and perks are more often allocated to male faculty over female faculty. While the findings of the reports identified specific manifestations of marginalization from rituals and ceremonies to laboratory space and research dollars to exclusion of women on search committees, it is the aggregate effect of marginalization that appears to perpetuate gender inequity at these institutions.

Second, gender disproportionality in work roles largely related to power differences exists on college campuses. Women remain underrepresented in several campus arenas (the more powerful positions) and overrepresented in others (the less powerful positions). Few

women hold high administrative positions; and, women are generally underrepresented among full professors on the faculty. While evidence from some disciplines such as medicine show fewer disadvantages for women, the pattern is a fairly strong one for most departments and units across campuses. At the same time, women make up a very large majority of low-level staff positions.

Third, salary disparities between women and men on campus favor men. Universities are not unlike the corporate world where women's pay is incommensurate with their job descriptions when compared to men who do the same work. In addition to salary discrepancies, hiring, retention, and promotion remain personnel problems for women on many college campuses.

Fourth, family responsibilities are not the responsibility of employers, including universities. However, it remains difficult to ignore the imbalance in family responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of men and women faculty. Women continue to devote more energy to balancing the responsibilities of family and academic duties than do men. Childcare remains an important variable in the connections between home and work for parents employed by universities, and, the responsibility seems most often to be the women's.

The university leadership's dispositions and actions surrounding gender equity are the fifth common theme. Lacking a strong public and visible commitment to gender equity, university leaders risk alienating advocates for gender equity by diminishing its perceived importance and priority. Silence from the upper echelons of the university hierarchy can confirm to the most doubtful audiences that gender equity is a nonissue. A record of only weak remedies to correct past gender inequities adds fuel to the fire. The challenge facing central administration as they wrestle with current conditions is to establish high expectations for treating people fairly and equitably in every venue of campus life. The most well-intentioned leaders

must establish a partnership with advocates for equity in monitoring progress over time.

These broad themes encompass a variety of "sub-themes," areas of gender equity concern. Moreover, these five broad dimensions serve as a conceptual backdrop for the following descriptions of the campus cultures we reviewed. Specifically, two dimensions are discussed next: the continuing barriers to gender equity and strategies to dismantle them.

Continuing Barriers to Gender Equity in Higher Education

The second research question focuses on the nature of institutional barriers to achieving progress toward gender equity. For the institutions included in our sample, gender equity was, and remains, an explicit priority. The reports represent an ongoing assessment of the status of women and numerous initiatives to advance the status of women on the respective campuses. The reports acknowledge varying degrees of disappointment and frustration with the lack of significant quantitative or qualitative progress at a particular institution or higher education in general. There is an attempt to account for the lack of progress and change by probing the institutional policies, practices and cultural barriers to gender equity. These barriers are an outcome of the created cultural patterns within an institution and can be supported by larger cultural beliefs and attitudes.

Institutional barriers – the product of beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors – undermine respect for women, limit their presence and participation, and impede positive steps toward progress. Institutional barriers can be, by their nature, intangible and difficult to identify and warrant. They support the marginalization of women and account for the usually less blatant forms of discrimination against women in the academy. Obvious discrimination still exists, but unlike thirty years ago, legal protections are in place. Despite extensive study and sound research, institutions tend to be making slow and

uneven progress toward gender equity – even when senior leadership endorses and promotes change. Three particular barriers came to light in our analysis: unhealthy climate, maladaptive organizational structure, and gender-based workload differences.

A Toxic Climate Hinders Progress toward Equity

While the formal structures of these universities may have been altered for the purposes of achieving greater gender equity, institutions maintain an informal campus climate that sustains sexist attitudes that weaken the potential effectiveness of formal remedies. Campus climate is "the sum total of the daily environment, including the culture, habits, decisions, policies, and practices that make up campus life" (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1995). Many manifestations of a toxic gender bias remain on college campuses, even when formal structural changes have taken place. In most reports this area was referred to as the "campus climate," or "campus culture," or the "learning environment."

For example, in almost all institutions, a designated office serves as the repository of complaints about gender based discrimination. Despite this remedy, many women doubt the assurance of nonretaliation and resist filing formal complaints. In one institution, approximately a third of female respondents (students as well as faculty) indicated that they would probably never use the services of such an office if they had a complaint. Furthermore, while complaints are filed, systems have not always been in place to effectively respond. Another example is worth mentioning as well: the campus culture infused by humor laced with hostility. In one institution, seventy percent of students responded on a survey of campus climate that students frequently use sexist humor and over half reported that students occasionally or often ridiculed gay, bisexual, or transgendered students. It was not atypical across the institutions to find that male faculty perceived the campus climate

in a more favorable light than did female faculty. Within the campus culture of most of these institutions, women more frequently than men were perceived as ill equipped to study math, science, technology, and engineering. The absence of women role models in positions of power, both white women and women of color, diminished the meaning of gender equality on many campuses.

Campus climate, while intangible and difficult to measure directly, influences the beliefs and expectations of individuals within that culture. From one institutional report came the words: "The Committee was struck by the intensity with which focus group participants described these concerns and by their frustration that problems identified decades ago have not yet been solved" after a section in the report on campus climate.

Deficiencies in Organizational Structure Hinder Progress Toward Equity

On the one hand, some institutions have failed to institute an infrastructure that either addresses or assumes responsibility for gender equity. On the other hand, some institutions had built an infrastructure to address gender equity but failures of monitoring and support led to its demise. Family leave policies are in place in all institutions we studied but the implementation has not always been equitable between men and women. Immediate supervisors, such as department chairs, retain wide latitude in applying the policy in some institutions. Such idiosyncratic enforcement can lead to unfair leave decisions.

Organizational structures at many of the institutions continue to neglect collecting valid and reliable data on gender bias and are, therefore, unable to effectively monitor progress. One institution, for example, reported, "At the graduate level, the institution lacks mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of its admission policies and educational programs." In another section of the same report is stated, "Without data, we cannot track progress and assign accountability."

Inequitable Faculty Workloads Hinder Progress toward Equity

In many institutions, women at the lowest academic ranks report that they carry more of the workload than do men of the same status. Women at many institutions in our sample were expected to take on more student advising and mentoring responsibilities (assigned formally or based on the expectation of chairs and more senior colleagues) because they were perceived as natural supporters in this role. A number of reports attempted to go beyond documenting workload differences to identifying the outcomes of the disparities. Across a number of the institutions, women were found to experience greater workload pressure, most often attributed to advising and mentoring demands and expectations. The findings in these reports indicated that women were engaged in more student service oriented activities than were their male counterparts. For example, the service activities of male faculty members clustered more around decision-making committees and functions. Women faculty members' "excessive" workloads not only hindered their professional development, tenure and promotion, but also limited their opportunities to participate in decision-making forums. Numerous reports cited the lack of women in leadership and administrative positions and perhaps, more importantly, in departmental decision-making committees. It is at the departmental level that significant decisions are made by one's colleagues. Resources (e.g., lab space, equipment, and travel support), initial tenure and promotion decisions, and interviewing and hiring all occur within a relatively small organizational unit and most often are the result of an internal committee decision or recommendation.

Finally we found that non-tenure track faculty, in most cases made up of women, are taking on more of the burdens in some institutions primarily because of decreasing financial resources. A typical comment from one report author states "[university] relies on a significant number of

non-tenure track faculty, who have achieved the terminal degree in their fields, these positions... are held disproportionately by women." In addition to these barriers, we examined the reports for insight into why the barriers have persisted despite institutional attention and initiatives. We discovered explanations for a number of recurring and obtrusive factors: (1) the strongly held shared belief that there is, in fact, gender equity, (2) adherence to the "pipeline" hypothesis that hiring women will bring gender equity, (3) strong dependence on gender-based normative rules, and (4) lack of accountability at decision-making levels. Reflecting on these explanations and given the power of gender discourses that position women as "victims, outsiders to the structure and culture of the institution, and as being in need of professional development" (Allan, 2003, p. 44), we attempted to clearly place the "problem" as one built by the institution itself, i.e., the "barriers." Nevertheless, Allan's discourse analysis is enlightening as to the positionality of men and women in higher education, i.e., that women are "naturally" in a nondominant position on campus. Strengthening these discrepant images of men and women rather than weakening them as "givens," plays a significant role in strategies to change them.

Strategies toward Gender Equity

The third question we asked was: What effective strategies have been used to diminish gender discrimination and increase gender equity on these campuses? Several conclusions can be drawn.

The Law

The law is one strategy to dismantle gender inequities. Since 1972 and the enactment of Title IX (Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, Title 20 U.S.C. Sections 1681-1688), institutions of higher education have had to address gender inequities. That gender equity remains an elusive goal despite those efforts obligates institutions to do more than meet strict legal mandates. Unfortunately, the law can be ineffectively used. As a matter of fact, compliance can be easily manipulated into ultimately shortchang-

ing the interests of women. Token membership on search committees and percentage quotas in athletics might be steps in the direction of change, but they are more likely to support only superficial alterations in institutional cultures of sexism, falsely assuring university leaders that the "problem" is resolved.

Increased Numbers of Women in Positions of Authority

In general, the authors of the reports discussed conditions of gender inequity in language rich with words such as "unconscious," "subtle," "unintended." Added to Allan's conclusions about how language and meaning position women, one cannot help but conclude that by commissioning these studies of their campuses, institutions are positioning themselves as not blameworthy. One perspective might be: within a wider societal culture rife with sexism, college campuses can be no different.

Weak remedies that comfortably fit the university culture can easily fail to fracture the invisible but pervasive culture of sexism. The strategy: "educate people!" accommodates well to an educational institution, but how effective is it? An insightful statement came from the authors of one report who obviously understood the empty promises of more workshops and changed mission statements. The authors rejected such superficial remedies and, instead, counted on the simple power of numbers: increased numbers of women as a direct avenue toward change.

They portrayed an image of proportionally more women on campus, and more of those women in higher positions of authority. These same authors acknowledged that ceding more power and influence to high quality senior level women would require deans to unleash the coffers in order to pay these women more to retain them on campus. Therefore, strengthening recruitment and increasing retention of women on these campuses is a promising strategy. For the strategy to be successful requires higher salaries.

The Public Commitment of Institutional Leaders

Visible commitment to gender equity on the part of university leaders is a prerequisite for deep change to occur. Only when equity is a high priority will others take notice. The highest level of leadership, including the Boards of Trustees, must make this commitment publicly. After the highest level administrators make a commitment, deans, chairs, and supervisors are then less likely to fail to carry out their responsibilities to make tangible, real, progress toward equity. In one institution's report, for example, appeared the recommendation that each department chair include statements as to how the individual being hired adds to the "diversity" as well as "intellectual strengths of the department." This new practice, when routine, would make tangible the public and consistent commitment to gender equity.

Antecedents to strong leadership commitment might come from within: groups of faculty and staff who form pressure groups to emphasize the importance of such a public focus. In some institutions, the commission reports may well have preempted those pressures. Pressure may come from outside as well. University leaders are tuned to their competitors. Higher education institutions are embedded in a wider professional and educational culture increasingly characterized as "market driven." Institutions may find themselves vying with one another for a more gender-equitable culture, a competition that might benefit both women and men. The fact remains: a highly visible public commitment to gender equity can set the agenda for progress. We might choose a stronger word than the word "friendly" used by the authors of one report in the following suggestion, but the sentiment is one that emerged from several institutions, "important for the university...to make a major, visible commitment to efforts intended to create an environment friendly to women."

Another manifestation of a public commitment to gender equity is, in a word, data. Increasing

resources to collect relevant data and to monitor progress toward equity was a successful strategy mentioned in many reports. In one institution the data were scrutinized as an "accumulation of slight disadvantages" that women suffered. Without continually probing into the realities of life on campus and without continually collecting data, those patterns will remain hidden. When they are hidden they cannot be addressed. The authors of another report stated the "serious deficiencies [in women's campus life] whose impact is most evident when sufficient data are accumulated over time and aggregated across institutional units to discern the resulting patterns."

It was clear to us from the reports that weak and failed remedies have run their course. Consciousness raising, training workshops, and seminars discussing gender issues are no longer effective strategies. Their payoff in changed campus culture no longer warrants the time, effort, and cost. Higher salaries for women, recruiting more women, additional child care facilities, while important and necessary, can be more effectively achieved when there are more women in influential positions on campus, along with a strong visible commitment on the part of the current leaders. Only with these conditions will the campus culture change.

Conclusions

Thirty years after Title IX obligated educational institutions to treat women and men equitably, colleges and universities continue to aspire to gender equity. Reviewing these institutional reports lays open the epistemological perspectives of those responsible for changing university cultures toward gender equity. According to Allan (2003), the paradigms within which institutional leaders are working may, ironically, be solidifying images of women as naturally marginalized, without access, dependent on men, and internally conflicted between desires for intellectual achievement and desires to carry out caring and nurturing roles. The images themselves are barriers to gender equity.

Is it possible that these images of women are only altered *after* the culture of college campuses change? Those seeking gender equity must constantly probe their own cognitive and attitudinal constructions of gender in order that well-intended efforts are not sabotaging gender equity.

A possible title for a second phase of our research might be, "It Was Only When They Came Together." This phrase underlines the point at which the motivation for these reports took hold. Unquestioningly accepting that benevolent faculty members, chairs, and deans were supporting their intellectual work, perhaps gender inequities remained invisible because women frequently worked in isolation. Moreover, there are frequently very few women in a department or unit. Their time and labor were work-focused. Women in staff positions might have worked in less isolated realms but they, too, may have accommodated themselves to the realities of university culture. One report writer concluded that pervasive bias against women might be a consequence of the socialization of men and women throughout their lives into "unconscious ways of thinking."

But, as soon as "they [women] came together" and compared their experiences did they begin to see a pattern of unfairness. The 1999 MIT report captured national media attention and became a focus of discussion on campuses across the country. And from MIT, the words of Professor Lotte Bailyn capture the essence of these reports' powers, a tribute to the influence a united group of women can wield:

The women who worked on these issues over the past five years are all gifted scientists, themselves convinced that gender had nothing to do with their careers. If they succeeded it was on the basis of their competence, and recognition would certainly follow; if they did not it was based on something they lacked and rewards were not warranted. During their earlier years, this belief was continuously reinforced, but

then something seemed to change. It was only when they came together, and with persistence and ingenuity, that they saw that as their careers advanced something else besides competence came into play, which for them meant an accumulation of slight disadvantages, with just the opposite for their male colleagues. Their ability to identify the inequities that resulted and the Dean's willingness to respond, have changed the environment for their work and enhanced their ability to contribute productively to the institution. (MIT 1999 Report, p. 3)

Table 1.

Sources for Evidence: University Reports

- Brown University (2002)
- Carnegie Mellon University (1993)
- Case Western Reserve University (2003)
- Duke University (2003)
- Emory University (2002)
- Georgia Institute of Technology (1998)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1999, 2002)
- Northwestern University (2002, 2003)
- Princeton University (2003)
- Rutgers University (2001)
- Stanford University (1993, 2004)
- State University of New York at Stony Brook (2000)
- University of Arizona (2000)
- University of California at Los Angeles (2002)
- University of California, San Francisco (2002)
- University of California System (2003)
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1999, 2002)
- University of Michigan (2001)
- University of Pennsylvania (2001)
- University of Wisconsin System (1999)
- Wake Forest University (1997)

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