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# Is Feminism Still Relevant?

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# IS FEMINISM STILL RELEVANT?

## ECONOMICS

The average American woman makes 78.7¢ on the white American man's dollar. However, this figure is misleading because it does not take race into account. White women make 80.5¢ on the white man's dollar, African American women make 69.6¢, and Latina women make 59.8¢.

(African American and Latino men also make less than white men, but Asian men make slightly more)

Twice as many American women over 65 as men live in poverty. 50% of ALL American women over age 65 would be living in poverty if not for Social Security.

The federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25/hr. If it had risen with inflation since 1968, it would now be more than \$10.50/hr. Almost two thirds of minimum wage workers are female.

22% of all federal judges are female.

Only 20% of the 90 women serving in Congress are women of color.

The US ranks 80<sup>th</sup> in the world for its percentage of women in national legislature. Iraq, Afghanistan, Cuba, and China all rank higher.

Three of the past four Secretaries of State have been female: Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton.

Penn's undergraduate student body is 53% female

Penn ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> among its peer institutions for percentage of female assistant professors

17.5% of Penn's full professors are female – significantly lower than the national average.

Penn has had only 7 female commencement speakers in the past 40 years... and just 1 in the past 15. Additionally, in the past 12 years women have composed a mere 26% of SPEC Connaissance speakers

Penn Archives & OSA

Penn Gender Equity Report

By looking into the history of the Women's Center and immersing myself in the environment of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, I was able to see how far women's rights have come since my mother was the age that I am now. However, it is clear that gender equity is something that we have not yet attained, despite the progress that has been made. Women may make up 50% of degree earners but they're only 28% of full professors nationwide, 3.8% of Fortune 500 CEOs, and 16.8% of Congress. However, they are 92% of plastic surgery recipients, 90% of rape victims, and 85% of domestic violence victims. As these statistics and the surrounding graphics suggest, feminism is just as relevant as it has ever been.

In the United States, 50% of the workforce is female, and more than 50% of undergraduate degree earners are female. There are now more female Supreme Court Justices than there ever have been, and the summer 2012 Olympics were the first to feature women from every attending country. Team USA was actually composed of more women than men, and women won the majority of US medals. Many people say we have achieved gender equity, and that the need for feminism is a thing of the past. Through my CURF summer research position I explored the issue in various dimensions by delving into the Penn Women's Center archives, attending the National Council For Research on Women's annual conference, and gathering information for a PowerPoint entitled "Does Penn Need a Women's Center?"

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

1 out of every 6 women will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. There is a 2/3 chance that she will know her attacker.

American women are more likely to be murdered by a current or former romantic partner than by any other perpetrator. This is not the case for American men.

An estimated 25% of women will be abused by a romantic partner at some point during their lives. Women age 20-24 are the most likely to experience nonfatal relationship abuse.

PA ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for its proportion of female state legislators.

PA law requires women to wait 24 hours before receiving an abortion. It also mandates that women are informed about "the possible detrimental chological effects of an abortion" even though the American Psychological Association has stated that there is no scientific evidence to support this claim.

27.3% of PA institutions of higher education are headed by women – higher than the national average.

82% of Pennsylvania counties lack an abortion provider.

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Since 2010's midterm elections, there has been a huge spike in state laws limiting access to legal abortion. These ranged from the defunding of reproductive health clinics like Planned Parenthood, to mandatory biased counseling, to outright bans on abortions after 20 weeks – without an exception for the mother's health, or for victims of rape or incest – a direct attack on Roe v. Wade.

The Affordable Care Act requires insurers to cover women's gynecology visits, birth control, well-baby care and more without charging copays.

Many countries, including Pakistan, Moldova, & Croatia provide paid maternity leave. Liberia, Swaziland, & the United States are among the only nations that do not. The USA is far behind its peers in this regard.

## PENNSYLVANIA