

6. Working Women's Centre, 'Occupational Health Part 4: Stress, Job Dissatisfaction and Mental Health', Discussion Paper No. 31, Melbourne, 1978.
7. Abramson (1979), op. cit., p. 25.
8. F. Gale, 'Academic Staffing: The Search for Excellence', *Vestes*, 23, 1980.
9. A. Ziller, *Affirmative Action Handbook*, pp. 17-18, 1980. Many academic women in the United States decide not to have children. See R. Simon, S. Clark and K. Galway, 'The Woman Ph.D.: A recent Profile', *Social Problems*, 15, 2, 1967, pp. 221-236. They have shown that the women who marry but opt not to have children are more productive than their male colleagues. It is nevertheless a high price to pay and a price that male academics rarely, if ever, have to contemplate.
10. The survey was initiated by the New England and

- North West Association for Women who set up a committee to investigate the situation of women at U.N.E. The Committee comprised Bronwyn Davies, Jan Macintyre, Janet Dash and Jenny Weissel.
11. This table is taken from B. Davies, Preliminary Report of the NENWAW survey of women at U.N.E. NENWAW Newsletter No. 3, 1982.
12. The interviews have not yet been analysed in detail. This typology will be extended and elaborated when the analysis is completed.
13. C. O'Donnell, J. Dash, B. Davies, J. Gaha, P. Moore, and T. Rowse, "Report of the working party on affirmative action" *Supporting Paper to the 1982 F.A.U.S.A. Representative Council Meeting*, F.A.U.S.A., Melbourne, 1982, pp. 4-5.
14. Abramson (1979), op. cit., p ix.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

WOMEN IN ACADEMIC LIFE: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STEADY STATE.

Introduction

In these days of economic and political conservatism, the "steady state" of Australian universities has become increasingly shaky. Reductions in federal funding and attempts to reduce university enrolments through re-imposition of fees for post-graduate and second degree students have forced administrators to take unpleasant and unpopular steps to reduce expenditures. The Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University, Professor E.C. Webb has described the major loss of teaching staff resulting from funding cut-backs as affecting "the people at the bottom": tutors who are appointed on short-term tenure.¹ Such a policy will not only have adverse long-term effects on student education and on postgraduate research, but will also act regressively to reduce recent improvements in the employment status of academic women, who form a relatively high proportion of tutorial staff. This would be indeed a retrograde step at a time when the need for social justice in the employment of women is increasingly recognised. This paper considers the distribution of women in university teaching positions, offers tentative explanations of that distribution and explores its implications.

The Distribution of Women in University Teaching Positions

The position of women in academic life is an important indicator of the possibilities for women in other

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occupations. As Madge Dawson has said in a taped interview:

The university teaching occupation is a sort of test of the limits really — how far can a woman go — she can't go very far.²

That is, even in an environment where women should have the best chance to develop their potential, given the high value placed in universities on academic merit and on a vanguard role in social change, women still face career problems.

The position of academic women in Australian universities is of course not unique to Australian universities; several recent international studies indicate similar characteristics elsewhere.³ Overall, women occupy fewer positions than men and at lower levels in the academic hierarchy than men.

Study of the distribution of women academics in the three Sydney universities illustrates the uneven representation of women and the complexity of a situation where women fare better in some universities and faculties than others, and where some women fare very well indeed.

TABLE 1

The Distribution of Women in Full-Time Teaching Posts, according to Grade Held in University, 1979.

Grade	University							
	Macquarie		N.S.W.		Sydney		All Aust.	
	No.	% of grade	No.	% of grade	No.	% of grade	No.	% of grade
Professor	2	4.8	2	1.4	4	3.1	23.2	2.1
Associate Professor	4	9.7	4	2.6	5	3.0	42	3.4
Senior Lecturer	25	13.7	20	5.6	40	10.7	286.9	8.6
Lecturer	39	25.2	54	11.5	72.4	23.6	522.9	17.9
Principal Tutor	N.A.	N.A.	0	0.0	16	53.3	50.7	51.9
Senior Tutor, demonstrator assistant lecturer	32	39.5	22	44.9	20	55.5	283	37.8
Tutor, demonstrator teaching fellow	36	52.2	69.5	36.4	88.1	41.3	525	39.4
Female staff No. & % of total staff	138	24.2	171.5	12.6	245.5	19.5	1734.6	16.1

(Source: Adapted from tables supplied by Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1979, unpublished.)

As Table 1 shows, women in Australian universities in 1979 occupied 39% of tutoring positions, 18% of lectureships and 2% of professorial positions. In total, women occupied 16% of full-time teaching posts, compared with 13.8% in 1971.⁴ In Sydney, women occupied 24% of full-time teaching posts at Macquarie University, 19.5% at the University of Sydney and 12.6% at the University of New South Wales.

The facts that emerge from these figures are: first that women are under-represented at ranks above Lecturer level, with 16% of total staff yielding 2% of Professors: second, that women are over-represented at ranks below Lecturer level, with 16% of total staff yielding 39% of tutorships, which are normally untenured temporary posts; third, that the situation has shown some improvement, from 13.8% to 16% of total staff, a 15% increase in the 8 years between 1971 and 1979; fourth, that considerable variation amongst universities is evident.

The distribution of women in both full and part-time teaching posts at the Sydney universities in 1980 is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

The Distribution of Women in Full and Part-Time Teaching Posts, According to Grade and University, 1980.

Grade	University		
	Macquarie % of grade	N.S.W. % of grade	Sydney % of grade
Professor	5.3	1.6	2.6
Reader	N.A.	N.A.	4.9
Associate Professor	9.3	3.9	6.9
Senior Lecturer	13.2	5.1	12.4
Lecturer	30.8	13.9	23.1
Lecturer Part time	N.A.	N.A.	7.3
Assistant Lecturer	N.A.	N.A.	28.6
Principal Tutor	N.A.	0.0	47.6
Senior Tutor	41.3	50.0	53.6
Senior Tutor Part Time	100.0	N.A.	33.3
Tutor	57.6	41.6	37.0
Tutor Part time	85.0	N.A.	28.6

(Source: Macquarie University Calendar 1981. University of New South Wales 1980. Statistics University of Sydney Calendar, 1981.

*Part-time staff are not included.

Table 2 shows the trend noted in Table 1, that women appear to fare best overall at Macquarie University (24% of total staff in 1980) then at the University of Sydney (19%) and worst at the University of New South Wales (14%). They represented 5% of Professors and 10% of Associate Professors at Macquarie University, 3% and 7% respectively at the University of Sydney and 1.6% and 4% respectively at the University of New South Wales. Full time female tutors represented 58% of tutorial staff at Macquarie University, 42% at the University of New South Wales and 37% at the University of Sydney.

When the position of women according to faculty was investigated, the distribution shown in Table 3 appeared.

TABLE 3

Distribution of Full-Time Female Academic Staff in Faculties and Schools according to University, 1980.

Faculty/School	Macquarie		University N.S.W.		Sydney	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	7	12.9
Architecture	N.A.	N.A.	8	11.9	3	8.1
Arts	^a 99	34.7	36	26.7	85	31.1
Dentistry	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	6	20.0
Economics/Commerce	8	10.7	11	7.6	11	14.9
Engineering	N.A.	N.A.	1	0.5	0	0.0
Law	9	30.0	7	13.7	11	22.9
Medicine	N.A.	N.A.	16	12.2	31	18.3
Science	^b 15	10.1	^c 45	10.9	45	13.6
Professional Studies	N.A.	N.A.	^d 25	41.7	N.A.	N.A.
Social Work	N.A.	N.A.	11	61.1	7	50.0
Veterinary Science	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	6	10.0

^a Includes the Schools of Behavioural Sciences; Education; English and Linguistics; History, Philosophy and Politics; Modern Languages.

^b Includes the Schools of Biological Sciences; Chemistry; Earth Sciences; Mathematics and Physics.

^c Includes the Faculties of Applied Science, Biological Science and Science. Psychology is included here, although categorised in Arts at Macquarie and the University of Sydney.

^d Includes Education, Health Administration, Librarianship and Social Work. Education is included in the Arts category for Macquarie and The University of Sydney.

(Source: Macquarie University Calendar 1981.
The University of New South Wales Calendar 1981.
The University of Sydney Calendar 1981.)

Note: These figures are less accurate than University Statistics, had they been available, since calendar entries occasionally use initials, rather than first names, and some first names are used by both e.g. Lesley/Leslie; Kim.

According to faculty, as Table 3 shows, women were represented more in Professional Studies (Social Work, Librarianship etc.) and Arts than in the traditional professions such as medicine and law or the science faculties.

Taking the University of Sydney as an example, women comprised 50% of the full time academic staff in Social Work, 31% in Arts, 23% in Law and 18.3% in Medicine, yet only 14.9% in Economics and 13.6% in Science, 8.1% in architecture and 0% in Engineering. It is noteworthy that women's representation in the traditional professions, law and medicine, is significantly higher than in the technological professions of architecture and engineering.

When the representation of women on committees of the three Sydney universities was considered, it was found that overall, women were under-represented, but on particular committees, such as convocation, appeals, library and public relations, they were over represented.

The variations in distribution of academic women in these three universities indicate a complex situation worthy of further investigation through interview and case-study techniques. At this stage, tentative explanations may be offered from secondary sources.

Factors Influencing the Distribution of Academic Women

The factors which influence the distributions detailed above fall into two groupings:

- the intrinsic factors: that is, those which are related to the physiological, psychological and social characteristics of women themselves and

- the extrinsic factors: that is, those which result from organisational arrangements and attitudes of others in academic life towards women.

Intrinsic factors

Firstly, women's biological and physiological characteristics cannot be ignored; even though the effects for particular women may be slight. Pregnancy interrupts one's work role. Because complex psychological, social and cultural variables are involved researchers are not agreed on the implications of premenstrual tension or menopause.⁵ The contradictions in research findings on this sensitive issue mirror the contradictions in social attitudes to women's capabilities and roles and highlight the problems in generalisation. Further research may well disperse myths and provide a firm basis for determining the relevance of biological and physiological factors.

Secondly, because professional women face the problem of meeting both the expectations of professional colleagues at high levels and the expectations of family and community, they may be particularly subject to the sex-role dilemmas faced by all women, which result in low self-esteem and deferral to male authority. From childhood, the education system, social pressure and media images have socialized women into appropriate female behaviours which diminish their ability to participate equally with men in the world of work. Studies undertaken at the Australian National University (ANU) and by the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations show that women neither apply for positions nor aim for higher positions to the same extent as men.⁶ As the FAUSA report says, women's approach to promotion is essentially negative. A further effect of this sex-role dilemma is the tendency for women to defer to male authority: although women have been employed in universities for many years, it is only recently that the

inequitable arrangements have been questioned. In the family situation, the husband's job has been shown to take precedence over a wife's ambition to apply for a post in an interstate or overseas university. This is not really surprising when it appears that women academics often come from and marry into upper middle class groupings and therefore tend to see their work as a satisfying activity more than a financial necessity. This is not to say that financial independence is not satisfying. However, the career pressure for married women may be qualitatively different from the career pressure for men.⁷

The third major intrinsic factor is again related to traditional female roles. Women's tendency to provide help, care and service to others is carried over into the work role, and as several studies show,⁸ women tend to put considerable effort into the teaching aspects of their work at the expense of research. The FAUSA study has shown that, while both men and women publish, men publish at a higher rate than women.⁹ As women are more likely to be performing dual roles of academic and house-keeper, the after-hours time usually allocated to research is used up in domestic duties. This is evident both from published research and from personal experience.

The influence of these factors is to promote self-selection by women into service roles — for many women, Senior Tutor is the height of their ambition¹⁰ — and into faculties and departments which fit the traditional view of women. As the survey of the three Sydney universities has shown, women's representation is higher in the semi-professional areas, such as social work, librarianship, and in the Arts faculty and behavioural sciences areas. Women remain a very small proportion of staff in science based faculties overall, with the majority in biological science areas. For example, there is only one woman staff member — a Lecturer — amongst the 37 members of the School of Mathematics and Physics at Macquarie University yet there are 7 women, 2 at Senior Lecturer level — amongst the 33 full time staff members in the School of Biological Sciences.

Extrinsic factors

A glance at the history of women to university studies in the late 19th century and early 20th century shows that access was won with difficulty.¹¹ Attitudes of university personnel and of the community, and patterns of university organisation have been factors which retarded women's entry to university studies and partially determined the nature and extent of their participation. Some of the present problems related to university attitudes and structures affect all academic women, while others concern only those with children.

It is not surprising that the decision-makers in universities should have traditional expectations of women's roles when they are senior, older male academics. These traditional attitudes have been

cited by respondents to the survey conducted by the Association of Women Employees of the University of Sydney as a major difficulty: the subtle verbal discrimination against women in the usage of everyday language; the tendency to delegate tedious jobs to women; the difficulty for women of being involved with the informal colleague groupings which are important sources of ideas and contacts.¹² Marie de Lopervanche, with supporting evidence, has commented on the likely effects:

... a number of women believe that any assessment of their academic merit within Departments at Selection and Promotion Committees (most of which are male dominated) will inevitably be shrouded in a dense fog (sic) of stereotyped attitudes and values about women and their capabilities in general, even if the males in question have no conscious intention of discriminating against women.¹³

If these attitudes are general, then one would expect that women lack the nurturing of their career by senior colleagues which appears necessary for promotion, and may explain the often-cited expectation that women 'have to be twice as good as man'. It is noteworthy that at Macquarie University, comparatively high proportions of senior female staff are found in the Schools with female departmental heads: at the University of Sydney, the Department of Behavioural Sciences in Medicine is headed by a woman supported by a staff of 5 women and 1 man. Is this coincidental or is it an example of positive discrimination? The answer is unknown. Unless, however, women are employed at senior levels, junior women academics just do not have a role-model to emulate.

The traditional attitudes to women discussed above are reflected in organisational arrangements. Academic women are under-represented in decision-making bodies at most, if not all, universities. While this may be partly due to self-selection, as for example, when women have shown reluctance to serve on financial committees,¹⁴ it does not explain the under-representation in other areas. At the three Sydney universities women were under-represented in most committees, with the few exceptions including convocation, appeals, library and public relations, which include service functions in line with women's traditional roles.

Terms and conditions of employment directly or indirectly disadvantage women. For example, superannuation schemes generally do not provide benefits for the family of women contributors on death, yet such benefits are paid where a male contributor dies. Women academics participate less in superannuation schemes, partially because they tend to be older when they reach tenured positions.¹⁵ Women are permitted to retire five years earlier than men. Lack of tenure and insecurity of employment are a difficulty for the majority of aca-

demographic women, who are employed at below Lecturer level.

Appointments criteria appear to be a further factor in the under-representation of academic women. As indicated earlier, women tend to publish less extensively than men even though, as Cass has shown, they do research and publish.¹⁶ Publications remain a most important criterion for promotion, as both the FAUSA and ANU reports indicate. Exacerbating this disadvantage is the tendency noted by Fay Gale for many Australian universities to appoint from overseas and to appoint applicants with overseas higher degrees rather than the local product. Her study shows that women are disadvantaged by their fewer overseas qualifications and by family restrictions on their mobility, compared with men.¹⁷

For married women, the most important factor remains the failure of universities to adapt to the needs of women with children: lack of child care facilities and lack of flexible positions. Despite plans held ten years ago, the University of Sydney is only now acting, after considerable pressure, to improve child care facilities for staff members: child care problems were noted in all the Australian studies consulted.

Allied with this problem is the question of full-time appointment. Unless a woman is prepared to commit herself to full-time employment, she cannot obtain a senior academic position: innovations in job-sharing which would permit suitable flexibility, have not been adopted to the author's knowledge above the tutorship level, despite recommendations from the A.N.U. report.

The Implications

As a result of these attitudinal and structural factors, women academics are in general clustered in the service, rather than career areas of their professions.¹⁸ For some, this is a rational decision taken for pragmatic reasons — the intention to balance out the needs of family against the achievement of personal career goals. For others, the barriers to career development exemplify an irrational process of discrimination, with resulting personal damage. There are, of course, women academics who do not fit the general pattern evident from many studies: a few women have "made it to the top"; some women do not feel discrimination or disadvantage in the academic setting. It appears that such women have been able to overcome the socialization pressures which tend to form both female and male attitudes from an early age. Perhaps they have found it possible to compete on male terms. Nevertheless, the institutional difficulties described above are facts, and provide actual barriers which are generally absent for male academics.

At the level of the wider society, the results are unfortunate: university decision-making misses out on an important perspective because women are

under-represented. The distinctive contribution women can make to academic life is largely unrecognised. Perhaps the only "winners" in the situation are the students whom one would expect to benefit from the commitment to teaching shown by women academics. This "win" is only short-term however: unless women academics move from this service role and re-order priorities towards self-development, they, the students and the universities will be disadvantaged in the long term.

We live in changing times, however, where women are less likely to accept traditional socialization patterns and organisational arrangements. Over recent years, women have become increasingly aware of opportunities for participation in the workforce and of matters of social justice. While a number of women are content to derive job satisfaction from participation in the lower academic ranks, there should be no barriers for women who wish to compete for promotion to senior posts. Removal of these barriers requires changes in policy by the universities.

Major policy areas in need of change include: terms and conditions of employment; inclusion of women academics in decision making bodies; child-care facilities. Some changes in these areas are occurring in certain universities.

The revision of terms and conditions of employment is necessary to remove existing inequalities and to provide an environment where appointment and promotion really may be determined on merit. Superannuation is a major problem. In New South Wales the State Superannuation Scheme to which academics contribute is under review. Amendments which include the removal of discrimination between male and female fund members so that contributions and benefits are the same for both sexes¹⁹ and the removal of the option of retirement at age 55 for women contributors are being considered. The introduction of greater flexibility in senior appointments would be a further welcome policy change for those who, at different stages in the life cycle, may be responsible for care of children or frail aged parents and therefore find full-time work undesirable. Shared appointments, such as those used in the United States, merit consideration as a solution to this problem.

Adoption of policies which allow women academics to participate more in university decision making are desirable on pragmatic as well as ideological grounds. Not only would such participation be a matter of equity and justice, but also may lead to effective and efficient decision-making because a variety of perspectives would become available.

Until adequate child care facilities are established in universities, academics who are responsible for the care of young children will be disadvantaged, given the lack of community based child care in our

society. Development of campus-based facilities is therefore advocated.

The policy changes suggested above should remove some of the present disadvantages experienced by academic women and promote a situation where women may compete on merit for appointment and promotion. As Medawar has said:

The case for rejoicing in the increasing number of women who enter the learned professions has nothing primarily to do with providing them with gainful employment or giving them an opportunity to develop their full potential.

It is above all because the world is now such a complicated and rapidly changing place that it cannot even be kept going (let alone improved as we meliorists think it can be) without using the intelligence and skill of approximately 50 per cent of the human race.²⁰

Universities which have taken steps to facilitate the equitable employment of women are to be applauded. It is indeed ironic, however, that such facilitating changes should be occurring at a time when the participation of women is being undermined by the reduction in untenured junior positions where women are disproportionately represented and thus affected.

Implementation of this method of cost containment should be resisted by administrators because the short-term financial benefit in the present triennium will be far outweighed by the long-term intellectual costs in later years.

Footnotes and References

- * An earlier version of this paper written with Dr. Emy Watt, Macquarie University C.E.P. was presented at the Tenth Regional Conference of the Australian Federation of University Women — New South Wales, Dunmore Lang College, Macquarie University, 4 - 6 September, 1981.
1. Professor Webb, quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald, September 8, 1981.
 2. See, for example, G.M. Bramley and M.W. Ward, *The Role of Women in The Australian National University*, ANU Press 1976: Canberra. I. Sommerkorn, et al.,

Women's Careers, P.E.P., 1970; T. Blackstone and O. Fulton, 'Sex discrimination among University teachers: A British American comparison', *British Journal of Sociology*, 26, 3, 1975, pp. 261-275.

3. 1979 figures supplied from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (unpublished). 1971 figures from Bettina Cass et al., 'Working it out together' in C. Bell and S. Encel (eds.), *Inside the Whale*, Pergamon, 1978: Australia.
4. Bettina Cass et al., loc. cit., p.156.
5. For example, these factors have been determined as irrelevant in appointment of women as commercial airline pilots, yet P.M.T. has recently excused two women from conviction on a murder charge in England.
6. G.M. Bramley and M.W. Ward, op. cit., pp. 41-44. FAUSA Committee on the Status of Women Academics, *Project Reports*, 1977, pp. 13-14.
7. Athena Theodore, *The Professional Woman*, Mass., 1971, p. 21.
8. See, for example, Margaret Adams, 'The Compassion Trap', in C. Granich and B.K. Moran, *Women in a Sexist Society*, Basic Books, 1971.
9. FAUSA Committee on the Status of Women Academics, op. cit., p.15.
10. G.M. Bramley and M.W. Ward, op. cit., pp. 20-1.
11. Ursula Bygott, 'Women in the University of Sydney, 1882-1980' *The Gazette*, 1, 11., September 1980, pp. 15-17. See also Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, Granada (Panther Books), 1977: Great Britain.
12. Report of the Association of Women Employees of the University of Sydney Committee, 24 October 1980. See also Lorraine Elliot, 'Women in the Professions', in Jan Mercer (ed.), *The Other Half: Women in Australian Society*, Penguin, 1975: Ringwood, Vic.
13. Marie de Lepervanche, in a letter to Professor Sir Bruce Williams, University of Sydney, 17 April 1980.
14. G.M. Bramley and M.W. Ward, op. cit.
15. FAUSA Report, p.10.
16. Bettina Cass, 'Women in Academic Institutions,' in Australian Frontier Consultation Report: 'The Changing Role of Women in Society'.
17. Fay Gale, 'Academic Staffing: The Search for Excellence,' *Vestis*, 23, 1, 1980.
18. This point has been made by Marian Sawyer, referring to the political science profession. See Marian Sawyer, 'Women in the political science profession', *Politics*, XV, 1, May 1980.
19. Sydney Association of University Teachers circular, November, 1981.
20. Sir Peter Medawar, 'Advice to a Young Scientist', *The National Times*, April 6-12 1980., pp. 42-44.