

Subcommittee on Women
Annual Report to the Joint Senate-Board Committee on Equity

1 June 2012 – 31 May 2013
(submitted by Professor Susan Gaskin, Co-Chair)

Membership 2012-2013

Susan Gaskin, Co-Chair	Civil Engineering and Applied Mechanics
Sarah Turner, Co-Chair	Geography
Abby Lippman	Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Occupational Med
Dora Koop	Management
Diana H. Lee	McGill Women's Network
Edith Zorychta	Pathology/MAUT
Francis Lord	Law
Gloria Tannenbaum	Pediatrics
Jacqueline Bede	MacDonald Campus
Lara Braitstein	Religious Studies
Lynn Butler-Kisber	Education
Linda Davis	School of Social Work
Linda Jacobs Starkey	Rep for Dean of Students
Mary Ellen MacDonald	Dentistry
Rhonda Amsel	Psychology
Shari Baum	School of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Susan Czarnocki	Libraries/Alumnae
Sandra Hyde	Anthropology
Teresa Strong-Wilson	Education
Veronica Amberg	SEDE
Vrinda Narain	Law
Alice Walker	SSMU
Yu-Yun (Mercedes) Shiue	PGSS

Our Mandate

The Senate Subcommittee on Women (SSCOW) makes recommendations to the Joint Senate Board Committee on Equity (JSBCE) on the following topics:

1) Advocacy of Women's Rights and Promotion of Women

- Providing positive action regarding the employment and promotion of women at McGill University
- Promoting equity for women in salary and pension issues
- Monitoring representation of women on University committees and in administrative positions
- Monitoring policy and practices affecting women
- Providing advocacy for the problems of obtaining research funding - Supporting research and teaching on women

2) Initiation and Consolidation of Women's Activities

Will collaborate with the Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (IGSF) when there are issues of mutual interest. As well, SSCOW will continue to offer its own advice about and support to the activities of women students and all staff.

3) Liaison and Networking for Women

- Assisting in the sponsorship of conferences on issues pertinent to women in academic and workplace contexts
- Facilitating contact with other women's groups at the University as well as regional and national organizations

Meetings

The Subcommittee on Women (SSCOW) met monthly (6 times) from September 2012 through March 2013 with work carried out by e-mail between these gatherings. Agendas for each meeting were pre-circulated, and minutes of each meeting were recorded. Our website was posted with relevant material and upcoming meetings or seminars of interest. Between 4 and 8 members attended the meetings and all decisions were made by consensus. Other members were consulted by email on substantive issues to get a broader representation.

Overview

SSCOW was active on a number of issues this year, primarily relating to our first mandate. It has been observed that most direct discrimination of women has now been removed, however indirect discrimination or under-valuation of women's achievements remains. The issues considered are summarized below.

Proposed Revisions to Tenure Requirements

SSCOW fully endorses the decision of the Administration to indefinitely table its proposal to remove service as one of the three equal components of the tenure dossier. This is on the basis firstly that the university cannot function without the service of its faculty (and willingness to serve would rapidly diminish if it were not recognized) and secondly that women faculty tend to contribute more to the service on average and hence would be more disadvantaged.

Sexual Harassment Website

SSCOW fully supports SACOMSS recommendations for changes and improvement to the Sexual Harassment website and policy implementation. Important aspects are to clarify one point of contact for students in need, to improve the information provided on the website. This was raised at the JSBCE meeting in November and assurances were provided that action was being taken.

Promotion of Women in Science and Engineering Workshop

A workshop (Jan 18, 2013) was attended by the co-chair, it was notable that many other Universities have in place either an oversight of tenure and promotion committees by a non-voting member to ensure equality and fairness of the procedure, or they have a person responsible for soliciting and assisting in promotion applications for all faculty or specifically for women faculty. This or similar could be considered for McGill.

Academic regulation 7.18.3 "Reasonable efforts shall be made by the department and the faculty to give due consideration to the gender representation of the tenured academic staff of the department and the faculty when selecting members for the DTC and the UTC".

SSCOW proposed a change to the regulations to require a gender representation with at least 40% of each gender (i.e. 2 of the 5 members of the DTC and 2 or 3 of the 6 members of the UTC). The DTC is the chair of the department plus 4 other members and 2 alternates (5.20). The UTC is the Dean of the Faculty plus

2 members nominated by the Dean and 3 members nominated by the Secretary General (5.28, 5.28.1, 5.28.2).

The main rationale is that the current regulation institutionalizes the glass ceiling and it is hoped that a more even gender distribution will lead to a more equitable assessment of contributions and diminish the well documented under assessment of women's contributions.

Meeting with Assoc. Prov. Lydia White and email consultation with 60 women profs in science and engineering: A meeting was held on Feb. 20, 2013 to discuss this proposal with the Assoc. Prov. attended by 9 women faculty and the PGSS rep. An email discussion between Feb 19–22, 2013 between 60 women professors (all ranks) in science and engineering also addressed this point. Both these consultations led to a discussion of the specific proposal and a number of related issues. During the discussion it became clear that there are problems all along the career paths of women, as substantiated in the relevant literature, however we are currently lacking detailed information to characterize the situation at McGill. A summary of the results of the discussion follow.

Discussion points relevant to the regulations concerning the composition of the DTC and UTC:

- 1) Undervaluation of women's contributions or achievements :
 - a) Much literature exists confirming the under-evaluation of women's contributions, action to counter this trend has been taken in many universities. (Note that this does not mean that all women have been subject to negative bias but that on *average* they are).
 - b) Currently McGill has an informal policy of ensuring there is at least 1 woman on UTCs (i.e. 20% women)
 - c) There is a debate about whether including women on DTC and UTC would improve this negative bias. For: women are in general more aware of negative bias and hence are easier to educate to have less bias in the evaluation process. It is easier to start change/education with those most open (does not exclude that there are some men who are also aware of the bias and act to reduce it, and some women who are unaware of the bias). Against: not proven that women would in fact have less bias.
 - d) There is concern about extra workload for tenured women who must make up the 40% women on DTC and UTC, noting that the university regulations require that committee members be tenured, i.e. Associate and Full Professors and not just full professors as is currently common in engineering. Must look into the data – likely this is an issue for only a few small departments and there are specific regulations for departments or faculties too small to fill all positions for membership of DTC or UTC's (7.20.2, 7.20.3). Similar measures could be used to fill the positions for women on DTCs and UTCs. This would be expected to be only a short term difficulty. (Note that any individual is free to accept or decline membership in a committee).
 - e) The question was raised as to whether there is a problem - are more women being denied tenure than men. It was agreed that more data was needed to investigate this.

The data required are:

- i) The composition (gender and rank) of the DTC and UTC for all tenure considerations and the decisions made with gender of the applicant noted.

- ii) The percentage of women denied tenure compared to the percentage women in the tenure cohort?
 - iii) The percentage of women with “tending to the negative” at the DTC, UTC and Provost level compared to the percentage of women in the tenure cohort. This compared to the percentage of men with “tending to the negative” at the DTC, UTC and Provost level compared to the percentage of men in the tenure cohort.
- 2) A more general question was raised: Is the hurdle for women’s equity at the hiring, tenure or promotion level?
- a) It was agreed that there are issues at all levels.

The data required is:

- i) The progression through the ranks and rates of departure for both genders, i.e. time to consideration of tenure, time to consideration of promotion, time taken to make the decision on promotion.
- b) Hiring – there is a policy from V-P Vinet in 2006 that requires all hiring committees to short list one women and provide and an explanation if they do not. This is only somewhat followed across the university, and more could be done (for example requiring equity training by SEDE for all members of hiring committees).

The data required is:

- i) The gender composition of the hiring committees compared to the gender composition of the department, compared to the gender composition of the applicant pool (graduate students in the discipline).
- ii) The gender composition of the applicants in total, those on the extended short list, those on the short list and those hired.
- iii) The compliance rate of the departmental hiring committees with V-P Vinet 2006 policy.
- c) Tenure – likely not the most significant problem as only very highly qualified women are hired given the hiring bias, but the results of the investigations above are needed for elucidation.
- d) Promotion – indication that this is a significant problem due to the very low number of full professor women in science and engineering.

The data required is:

- ii) The composition (gender and rank) of the committees (departmental promotion committee, the Dean and faculty committee, and the Statutory Selection Committee, 8.8) involved in consideration for promotion for all promotion considerations and the decisions made and the time delay of the decision with gender of the applicant noted.
- iii) The progression through the ranks for both genders, i.e. time to consideration of tenure, time to consideration of promotion, time taken to make the decision on promotion.
- iv) The percentage of women professors applying for promotion after given time delays compared to the percentage of men professors.
- v) The percentage of women denied promotion of the women associate professors applying. This compared to the percentage men associate professors denied promotion of those applying.

- 3) Consultation with women faculty members at McGill:
 - a) Women faculty at McGill are a good source of information and source for potential improvements within the McGill framework. Suggested future activities are a forum that should be solution/action focused and within the framework/constraints of McGill (rather than trying to identify all issues around the very complex and loaded problem of gender equity). These solutions could address both career issues and work/family balance.

This project is proposed as a future project when both co-chairs are available, the first step being gathering of the statistics with the support of JBSCE.

General references:

- 1) Strengthening Canada's Research Capacity: The gender dimension - the expert panel on women in University Research, Council of Canadian Academies (2012). <http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/women-researchers.aspx>