Advancing Women In Leadership

Appeasing Women Faculty:

A Case Study in Gender Politics

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Consistent with decades of research, the present study suggests that career satisfaction of many academic women can be affected significantly by their experience and/or perception of the way in which their university deals with a number of specific gender-related issues.

APPEASING WOMEN FACULTY

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In 1988, at "Sycamore State University," (SSU) a Midwestern Research I University, a task force of faculty women conducted a Needs Assessment to determine the support for an expanded Women's Resource Office on campus. They invited all women faculty to submit a letter outlining concerns relevant to women at SSU. In their responses, words such as chilly … nonsupportive … unsympathetic … hostile … isolating … deplorable … disrespectful … sexually harassing … were used to describe the campus climate.

Subsequent to the publication of a Needs Assessment Report, a number of policies were created and implemented by the university's upper administration in an apparent attempt to address the problems that the assessment had identified. To address underrepresentation of academic women on the campus, job searches were now carefully monitored by an expanded Affirmative Action Office (AAO) to ensure that the pools of applicants for faculty and upper administrative positions contained women and minorities. Faculty salary equity studies were now conducted annually

by the AAO. To address a problem commonly associated with promotion and tenure, women faculty were now able to "stop the tenure clock" for a year for child bearing. Addressing worklife issues, a dual career couples policy was established to assist departments in hiring the trailing spouses of a prime candidate for a faculty position in another department or school; a relocation assistance program was initiated and a coordinator was hired to identify non-faculty employment possibilities for the spouse of a recruited faculty member. Institutional support was provided with funding of a Women's Resource Office and hiring a full-time director with the express purpose of improving the campus climate for women. An anti-harassment policy explicitly forbidding, among other things, gender harassment and/or discrimination was developed.

This spate of policy initiatives gave many the impression that SSU had adapted to the needs and rights of women faculty. Many of those merely reflected changes in gender roles in American society. New policies and practices can give women faculty a false sense of comfort without actually producing changes in the conditions that underlie their problems. Adoption of new policies does not necessarily result in effective new practices. This is what the data reported below suggest. These data are consistent with the findings of other studies indicating that, in so far as colleges and universities do change in ways that recognize the difficulties facing their women faculties, they are slow to do so. Such reticence has been reported in the handling of issues such as promotion and tenure (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), leave policies (Laughlin & Baretta, 1990), compensation (Glazer-Raymo, 1999), and academic acceptance of feminist scholarship (Martin, 2000).

PROBLEMS FACING WOMEN IN ACADEME

The issues perceived by faculty women at SSU in 1988 and 1997 are hardly unique; they have been a topic of study for decades. Competing claims of the personal and professional realms can be staggering for young women academics. Many are not only expected to be top professionals but good wives and loving mothers as well. Those competing expectations can provide a type of stress that their male counterparts rarely if ever experience (Williams, 1999). Even senior male colleagues who are emotionally supportive of them can assign them work tasks that exacerbate work interference with their family relationships (Bernas & Majors, 2002).

University professorships were designed for men with wives who provided childcare, edited and typed their papers, and in some cases, graded student work. Unlike those in comparable professions, professors are more likely to take work home, and less likely to spend time with their children or assist with housework (Theisen, 1997). Even when they work full time, women still assume most of the responsibilities for household chores and childcare (Hammond, 1996; Hochschild, 1997). Tenure and promotion decisions are usually made during the childbearing years. While most universities have policies that can slow the tenure clock for women, very few of them actually take parental leave (Finkel, Olswang, and She, 1994). Women faculty are so concerned about being taken seriously as professionals that they often refuse the benefits to which they are entitled. Many

believe they must prove that they can bear and/or rear children without having their career paths deviate from those of their male colleagues (Theisen, 1997).

Women faculty are often advised to curtail their teaching and service activities in order to publish more (Park 1996). However, women, as well as minority faculty, are more likely to accede to institutional demands to devote time to teaching and service activities (Astin & Bayer, 1973). They commonly see themselves as having a special responsibility to women and minority students, often ignoring their own need to publish, creating "a possible mismatch between institutional demands and the perspectives of women and minority faculty members" (Allen,1994, P. 28). Spending a disproportionate time being "good citizens" can result in fewer publications, further damaging women's opportunities for promotion (Blakemore, Swtizer, DiIorio, and Fairchild, 1997; Creamer, 1995).

Compounding the problems of women faculty is the fact that they often receive little respect in the classroom (Sandler, 1991). Students expect their female professors to be warm and nurturing, but when they are, they are perceived as weak. If they are more assertive, they are viewed as being "bitches" (Sandler, 1991, p. 8). Women's challenges in the classroom are significantly increased when they are combined with considerations of race and/or sexual orientation (Bensimon, 1992; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; Moses, 1997). Minority and lesbian women are often evaluated more harshly by students than are their colleagues (Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998; Felty, 1997; Gerber, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Nieves-Squires, 1992), again illustrating the point that women are differentially discriminated against by the varied intersections of other arrangements of social inequality (Collins, 1990).

Women faculty in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines described a "null environment for women" where they received little support or colleagueship on campus (Betz, 1992, 89). Rosser (1997) observed that the overwhelmingly male nature of STEM disciplines has not only afforded women limited access to participation, but it has shaped the very nature of the disciplines themselves. She noted that the physical and life sciences, for example, are neither unbiased nor value-free. Everything from what is studied to the subjects for the experiments is male-dominated. When women begin to enter a field, different questions are asked and methodological and theoretical assumptions challenged. This often leads to the trivializing of their scholarship. In the social sciences, women's scholarship is often devalued, especially if it focuses on race or sexual orientation (Hyman, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Williams, 1992).

Often the only women in their departments, particularly in the STEM disciplines, female faculty commonly are not part of the camaraderie that often develops among young colleagues. This can result in lack of access to information and professional opportunities (Fox, 1996). Johnsrud and Des Jarlais 's (1994) research revealed that faculty women report greater isolation and fewer mentors than do their male peers. Their data indicate that women tend to be promoted more slowly than their male counterparts, and they are far more likely to leave an institution before gaining tenure. The situation is even more difficult for minority women (Holland, 1989).

Women academics who aspire to become administrators (Department Heads, Deans, Vice Presidents) also encounter the gender filters that accompany the profession (Schmuck and Schubert 1995). The persistent dominance of white males in administrative roles appears to hold despite the growing body of literature touting women's leadership styles as inclusive and empowering (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Burke & McKeon, 1992; Morrison & Von Glinow 1990; Noddings, 1991; Gilligan, 1982).

Not surprisingly, the inequities between male and female faculty are reflected in their salaries. More than three decades after Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, women faculty still earn from 5 to 10 % less than their male counterparts (Almanac, 2001). Women who have two or more children can expect to earn 13% less than their male counterparts (Waldfogel, 1997).

Findings of the 1988 Needs Assessment indicated that the problems identified in the research literature were present on the SSU campus. Nine years after the publication of that report, a University Task Force on Women's Issues found that women faculty still experienced many of the same problems that initially were identified. However, the 1997 study was not a replication of the 1988 Needs Assessment, nor did it capture any of the voices that made the original study so powerful.

The following research partially replicated the 1988 Needs Assessment, foregrounding the voices of academic women at SSU in 1997. The study also drew on the 1997 University Task Force on Women's Issues report. It explores the extent to which there were differences in the concerns expressed by women faculty in 1988 and in 1997, and whether these differences reflect actual changes that have occurred in the conditions they confront at SSU. This study illustrates that universities can adopt policies that reproduce the status quo by creating an aura of change without eliminating the conditions that create problems for women faculty.

While the type of qualitative research used in this study cannot lead to findings that are demonstrably capable of generalization, the analysis is intended to provide some insight into continuing challenges facing academic women at many other colleges and universities. In 1997, SSU appeared to be typical of the Research I Universities that comprised its conference, which extended from Iowa through Pennsylvania, with an enrollment of 37,000 students, 1,700 full-time faculty members, an endowment of $857M, and research and development spending of $92M. The University differed somewhat from these peer institutions in its heavy concentration on engineering and the physical sciences.

METHODS

In October, 1997, two waves of questionnaires were sent to all 431 SSU women faculty members holding professorial rank. Sixty-seven women responded for a response rate of 15.5%. In 1988, 48 of 201 women faculty responded to the needs assessment for a response rate of 23.8%. Such response rates are not surprising

given the open-ended nature of the questions, which require in-depth, and therefore time-consuming, answers.

Comparing the 1988 and the 1997 responses to the surveys is essential to understanding the changing climate for academic women at SSU. As part of the comparative process, I want to let the respondents tell their stories. At the same time, I recognize my responsibility to contextualize those stories.

Very few of the respondents to the 1988 survey chose to remain anonymous despite their ability to do so. By contrast, in 1997, very few women signed their names. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that, despite reassurances, the women who did not respond to the survey were fearful of being identified. In fact, one Assistant Professor told me that while she had responded to my survey, one of her colleagues had mentioned that her fear of being identified led her to decide not to respond. I can only wonder how many other women failed to respond for the same reason. The extent to which there is dissatisfaction at present might well be underrepresented in this study.

The schools and departments of which any university is comprised are highly diverse. They have very different and often competing goals. For example, primary committees, which determine promotions, use different standards to rate their candidates. While one department may only consider published articles, another can decide to privilege teaching and/or service. The ability to recognize individual female respondents is considerable in a study of university faculties such as that of SSU, where many departments, and some entire schools, have few women faculty.

To ensure that anonymity could be guaranteed, the participants' data on department, school, rank, years at SSU, race, and sexual orientation, which taken together, could identify a particular respondent, were not gathered. Therefore, the differences inherent between and among those schools and departments, as well as the differences between and among white women, women of color, and lesbians, must be borne in mind when reading and attempting to make sense of the participants' experiences. It seems reasonable to assume that women in more supportive departments and schools will experience the university as a whole more positively than will those in less supportive environments, and that white women may experience the university more positively than minority women. However, many concerns expressed by women faculty, such as childbearing and childcare issues, a meaningful Women's Resource Office, and dual career programs, extend beyond the control of any school or department.

In addition, the first questionnaire was sent to women with the express purpose of determining the need for an expanded Women's Resource Office. Therefore, the women who responded and the types of responses, may have differed sharply from those in the second survey, which had no such agenda.

The qualitative study involved in answering these questions described the work lives of women faculty on the SSU campus in 1997. As in the case of the original study, questionnaires were sent to all women faculty on the SSU campus. I

constructed a questionnaire that consisted of three open-ended questions, the second of which was identical to the one in the original study. These open-ended questions sought to capture the lived experience of the participants, which is the hallmark of phenomenological inquiry (Patton,1990; Van Manen, 1990):

1. Please describe your experiences as a woman working at SSU. Feel free to respond with positive as well as negative experiences.

2. Please outline your concerns regarding any issues relevant to women at SSU. You may address issues concerning the status of women at SSU that have touched you directly, that you know to be of concern to other women, or that characterize the general climate here. Feel free to respond regardless of the nature or number of issues you feel are problematic.

3. Please describe the changes for women you have seen at SSU during the years you have worked here. Feel free to describe negative as well as positive changes. Since this study was modeled on the 1988 Needs Assessment, I began by reading the report prepared by the University Task Force of Women Faculty. I examined the categories that were developed by the task force to organize the data. Those categories were:
1. Gender-based Inequities
a. Distribution of Women
b. Salary
c. Promotion and Tenure
2. Influence and Power
3. Institutional response to Changing Employee Needs (Worklife issues).
4. Institutional Support
5. General Climate

In order to ensure that the data were, in fact, categorized as systematically as possible, I first read through the 1988 survey responses, each of which is numbered. I had a blank sheet of paper with the categories written on top. Whenever I read a statement that appeared to fit one of the categories, I entered the number of that respondent in the appropriate column. When I finished, I put the responses aside for several days and then read and categorized them a second time. In those cases where I had entered the same response in different categories, I attempted to understand why the differences had occurred, and decided which was the better category for the response. I followed the same procedure for the 1997 data. I also employed a second coder, who followed the same process I had, reading through the data twice and arriving at the best decision as to where each of the responses belonged. We compared our sheets, agreeing on 89% of the responses to the first survey. We then discussed the cases where there was disagreement. We were able to resolve three of those, which were the result of an error by one or the other of us. I coded the remaining four responses myself. We followed the same process on the new surveys. We again agreed on 89% of the responses. As before, we discussed the remaining cases. We were able to resolve nine of them, leaving nine for me to enter in the categories where I felt they belonged.

Patton (1990) recommended utilizing multiple methodologies when studying a phenomenon in order to strengthen the design. That process is termed "triangulation" (p. 187). To triangulate the data, I reviewed the literature cited above. Quantitative data describing the distribution of women on SSU's campus in 1988 and 1997, SSU and national salary data for the same years, and internal reports on the status of women faculty at SSU provided the third point of triangulation. All tended to support many of the concerns voiced by the respondents, as well as their perceptions of the gains they believed women had made.

PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER DESCRIMINATION IN 1988 AND 1997

Data in Table I show that the proportion of respondents voicing their concerns about each of the issues had decreased. The magnitude of changes ranged from the dramatic reduction in the frequency with which they worried about institutional support (an 86 percentage point decrease) to a 10 point decrease in their expressed concern with the problems of promotion and tenure. Data presented bear on the question of whether the perceived improvements in the status of women faculty at SSU can be adequately explained by the University's adoption of an extensive set of well-publicized administrative actions that produced structural changes or if reference to additional factors is necessary in order to account for present attitudes.

Distribution of Women Faculty

Access to the original data gathered by the 1988 Faculty Affairs Task Force permits me to present the voices of women as they told their own stories, informing our understanding of their perceptions of the career obstacles they confronted at SSU. In 1988, women faculty were greatly concerned about the dearth of professional women employed on the faculty and in the administration, and its impact on students:

- I feel isolated as a woman, and sense a lack of female role models. In addition, there is a lack of females within SSU's administration. Without mentors and a support system, it is difficult to thrive in a institution dominated by males. Respondent A-24
- I am desperately concerned about the lagging number of women who are employed as department heads, deans, and administrators. Women desperately need advocacy on this campus ... At issue here is not only a University that is lagging behind the times in employing women's skills but also the ebbing role-modeling that women and men students receive from a predominantly male staffed university. Respondent A-6

In 1988, almost one third of the respondents commented on the small number of women on the SSU faculty. Data in Table II indicate that in 1988, women were underrepresented among faculty both nationally and at SSU. Data also indicate that, overall, the disparities at SSU were greater than they were nationally.

Nine years after the initial study, only 5 %of respondents stated their dissatisfaction with the percentage of women faculty at SSU. In fact, some women expressed satisfaction at the gains they believed had been made.

- There are many more women employed at SSU and I see them slowly moving into the upper level jobs. Respondent F-24
- I see more females on our faculty and I see more formal effort to provide support to the new male and female professors. More "female density" has led to more opportunities for affiliation with females, especially younger females. Respondent F-42
- There are more women faculty on campus now, and some are moving to full professor. I hope you do this survey again (or someone else does) so we can see what happens in the next 5 or 10 years. Respondent F-47

While in 1997, expressions of women about their number had all but vanished, data in Table III indicate that women remained underrepresented among faculty both nationally and at SSU. Data also show that the disparities at SSU were greater at all ranks, with the exception of the rank of instructor, than they were nationally.

Data in Table IV show that inequality in the distribution of faculty by rank and gender at SSU had changed little between 1988 and 1997. Women had made no proportional gains at all at the rank of Full Professor, while proportional gains at all the other ranks were 5 percentage points or less.

While much was made of new university policies apparently intended to increase substantially the distribution of women on the SSU faculty, nine years after their implementation, little structural change had taken place. It is difficult to attribute the large reduction in the expression of dissatisfaction with the distribution of women faculty at SSU primarily to this meager amount of actual change.

Salary

In 1988, more than half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the salary differences of men and women faculty. Many women saw discrepancies as indicative of the lack of value the university placed on them.

- I am concerned that women in the academic arena traditionally make less money for the same positions here at SSU. I do not understand why women should be paid less than a male for doing the same job. It bothers me to hear a department head (male) state that of two people with the same position, background, and responsibilities, the male should receive a higher salary because "after all, he has a family to support." How can women be expected to value their own worth when it is obvious that their employer does not value them as highly as their male counterparts? Respondent A-3
- Statistics that break down faculty, pay scales, and rank by gender make it clear that without a strong affirmative action program, women will remain in

low-level, low-paying positions. The problem at SSU concerns an entire class of people. Thus, to address it, SSU must change the structure of the university. Respondent A-18

Data in Table V indicate that, in 1988, there were considerable discrepancies between male and female salaries at SSU. At all levels, the differences were greater than those found nationally. At the ranks of Instructor and Assistant Professor, the differences were more than twice the national average.

By 1997, the proportion of respondents mentioning concern about salary inequality had been reduced by more than half. Several of the women who responded to the 1997 survey believed that SSU had made great strides in addressing salary inequalities, and expressed views seldom heard on the campus nine years earlier:

- I'm tired of hearing women on the faculty complaining about how bad things are at SSU. It's time to get over it. Money was probably an issue years ago, but not now. Now we should be looking at other problems, like finding time to write and publish. Respondent F-32
- We're fortunate to work at a University were the administration actually looks for
  salary discrepancies and does something about them. At my last university, that didn't happen. That's one reason I left. Respondent F-62

Data in Table VI show that considerable salary inequality continued to be found at SSU in 1997. They also show that, at all ranks, the amount of inequality was greater at SSU than that which existed nationally.

Data in Table VII show that, between 1988 and 1997, virtually no progress had been made in closing the salary gender gap at SSU at the level of Professor and Associate Professor. However, gain appears to have occurred at the Assistant Professor level, where a 12 percentage point reduction in salary differences is recorded. While this represents local progress, comparison with national data suggest that this gain is not as impressive as it might appear. In 1997, at the Assistant Professor level, nationally, women actually out-earned their male counterparts by 10.9 percentage points, while at SSU, their salaries were 8.7 percentage points below those of their male counterparts. In light of these data, the large reduction in the frequency with which salary inequality is an expressed concern of the 1997 respondents compared with the 1988 respondents is surprising.

Promotion and Tenure

In 1988, about half of the respondents expressed concern about promotion and tenure processes at SSU. Many women faculty believed that promotion was more difficult for them to achieve at SSU than for men. No one expressed confidence in the equity of that process, citing undue burdens and limited opportunities.

- In my annual tenure review, a panel of full professors (some not much older than I am) decide whether I can "go up" for tenure. They are all men. They have not been in my situation - they have wives who help them. They have little idea of how truly committed I am to my profession and my field because they rarely talk to me. They have no idea of the sacrifices I make and my family makes because of my devotion to my career. In fact, they probably discount or diminish each of my considerable professional accomplishments because they see me as a woman with family responsibilities. Respondent A-20

Concerns about promotion and tenure remained in 1997, but were identified by only 22% of the respondents as being an issue. Some of the women faculty still spoke of the difficulties they encountered with the promotion and tenure process, particularly if they engaged in collaborative research or attempted to be promoted utilizing the criterion of teaching or service.

- I think tenure is still based on old standards and calls for faculty to follow the traditional path of publishing in mainstream journals in recognized fields. People doing non-traditional work in non-traditional fields are clearly at a disadvantage unless they produce above and beyond everyone else. Respondent F-62

Publish or perish certainly applies to our department, but although I have published, my publications are dual-authored … something that is not valued in our department. By the standards of our department, I have more than enough publications to be promoted. The head of our department asks me, "How do we know which part you did?" I have gotten tired of explaining collaborative research to men who can never understand it. Respondent F-29 However, in contrast to the situation in 1988, a number of 1997 respondents reported that they had support from their colleagues and believed their advancement was no different from that of their male colleagues:

- I have never felt that my gender has prevented me from advancing … I have been promoted to associate professor while having 3 children and taking a total of 2 ½ years off. Respondent F-18
- I have felt well mentored by my male colleagues. There was never any doubt that I would be promoted if I was willing to do what was expected of me. It may be different next time, but I doubt it. SSU has been really good to me. Respondent F-47

While such experiences may have been somewhat more common for women faculty in 1997, data in Table IV above show that little change had occurred in inequality in the distribution of faculty by rank and gender at SSU between 1988 and 1997.

Influence and Power

In 1988, 45% of respondents voiced their concern about the lack of influence and power of women at SSU. That year, the University had 654 Full Professors, 30 of whom were women. SSU had 61 academic departments, 2 of which had women as their heads. The university was comprised of 8 schools, none of which had a woman as its Dean. Perception of such inequality is reflected in the comments of several respondents:

- When every Vice President and every school head is a male, the campus offers no ... sense that women have a significant place in the educational process at SSU . Respondent B-5
- Most of all I find it reprehensible that a respected university like SSU does not see the importance of supporting its female faculty and staff. SSU should be a leader in recruiting and training women for a major role in the University and the world. It is time to rid the university of the 'old guard' thinking that the woman's place is in the home, or at least not in an administrative role in the University. Respondent A-6

In 1997, the proportion of respondents voicing their concern about women's lack of influence and power at SSU had dropped to 29%. In 1997, the University had 710 Full Professors, 56 of whom were women, 63 academic department heads, 4 of which had women as their heads, and 10 schools, 2 of which, Liberal Arts and Education, had women Deans. In this context, two respondents offered their observations that:

- There has been progress at SSU, albeit slow. Women are finally getting a seat at the table on this campus. Respondent F-6
- I see a few more females in high level administrative positions - two academic deans and one vice president. I see more females promoted to full professor in our school. Respondent F-42

Reduction in concern about the influence and power of women at SSU does not seem warranted in light of the data in Table VIII. In 1997, women continued to constitute a very small minority of SSU's Full Professors and Department Heads. Gains in these positions did not exceed 3.3 percentage points. The only apparent major gain involved the appointment of two women as Deans. However, the two schools that they headed were not among the schools such as Engineering, Technology, and Management on which the reputation of SSU is based.

Worklife

Institutional response to changing employee needs, or what is now termed work and family issues, was of great concern to women faculty in 1988. Overwhelmingly, the issues they cited were childcare, particularly infant care, and the lack of a dual-career policy for the spouses of faculty and administrative staff.

- There seems to be no commitment on the part of the University to making it

possible for parents to teach or attend classes or work here. I feel as if I am still being asked to choose between being a parent and a professor. Respondent B-5

- The University needs to recognize that dual career marriages are the norm now and needs to deal with issues about quality of life for faculty and their families. We should care more about the impact that job demands and lack of university support have upon children who are, after all, the future of our community and nation. Respondent A-10

Additionally, many women were struggling to find appropriate employment on campus either for themselves or their partners. It was often the women who were forced to accept positions that were not commensurate with their education, having come to the university as "trailing spouses."

- Child care is a pressing issue for many - dual-career marriages an issue for even more. My husband still lives and works in California. How can I ask him to give up a job that pays more than my salary to come live in economically depressed (name deleted)? SSU needs to recognize this problem, and attempt to find ways of mediating a very touchy issue or risk losing the bulk of its young female and male faculty. Respondent A-32
- The issue of dual professional couples is a growing problem which the University seems to have overlooked, ignored, or considered insurmountable. The University which deals with this concern effectively, however, will most likely be rewarded with the loyalty and long-term services of two individuals whose morale is likely to be much higher than is currently the case. Respondent B-6

By 1997, SSU still had failed to address the worklife issue of childcare successfully. This was a major concern of several respondents:

- The problem of childcare for infants and toddlers is an issue that other schools seek to resolve rather than ignore, as SSU does. Respondent F-25
- I have been challenged as a woman to find adequate day care for my children. At
  times I thought I needed a wife like my colleagues! My department head was understanding and helpful, but it was difficult. I think I missed a great deal of my children's growing up years. I hope it was worth it. Respondent F-26

No quantitative data were available to assess the impact of policies created to address such worklife issues as the number of successful job placements resulting from implementation of the dual career couples policy or change in the number of sexual harassment cases reviewed by the university reflecting application of the new explicit anti-harassment policy.

Research indicates that, while many universities have policies that can slow the tenure clock for women, such as that created at SSU, few women actually take

parental leave for fear that doing so would damage their career (Aisenberg &Harrington, 1998; Finkel et al. 1993). This worry was voiced at SSU:

- My heart goes out to women who decide to have children while working at this university. I never quite knew what my options were when I had my first child I asked another colleague, who had been in a similar situation. She did not know what the rules were either and told me that my trying to take leave would make things difficult for me when time for promotion came. I would be perceived as a risk by the university. She had not taken leave with her baby and had tried to keep a "low profile" while she tried to balance her need to be with her newborn against maintaining her appearance as a productive faculty member. Her advice to me was to "lay low" and not take leave. Respondent F-66
- I also believe that my male colleagues do not feel as constrained in making decisions to have children as I do. They all have (or are in the process of having) children. I, on the other hand, keep putting off the decision to have children. Although I know I can take maternity leave, I am worried about the effect having a child would have on my productivity level. Respondent F-57
- Another concern I have is for young women faculty trying to balance starting a family with the tenure clock. Unfortunately, our Stop the Tenure Clock Policy, which I believe is accepted and recognized in SOME departments on this campus, is not valued in other departments. So women won't use it. I think the pressure on those women must be unbearable. Respondent F-77

Despite the continuation of childcare problems and despite the lack of available data on the effectiveness of adopted worklife policies, the proportion of women faculty mentioning worklife issues in 1997 nevertheless dropped to about one third from the 1988 level of about one half. In part, the reduced frequency in the expression of concern might reflect positive personal experiences with some policy outcome. It also might reflect some satisfaction with the mere existence of worklife-related policies, whether or not they are known to be effective.

Institutional Support

In 1988, almost all respondents voiced concern about lack of institutional support for women at SSU. The University' s lack of support for women and women's programs was seen as a critical issue. Most responses centered around support for the Women's Resource Office (WRO) and/or a Women's Center (assessing support for continuation and expansion of the WRO was the primary reason behind the survey) and the Women's Studies program, which many respondents saw as desperately underfunded and understaffed.

- A Women's Center available to all women - students, staff, and faculty - is a necessity on every college campus, and most have a Women's Center. It is especially needed here at SSU, where women have no central place where they can congregate; get emotional, academic, or intellectual support; have resources available to them on such issues as rape or incest; or just "own" a

space of their own. Such a place is badly needed in the women-alienated atmosphere here, and it would serve as a source of strength and renewal for women feeling battered by the system itself. Respondent A-12

However, that issue had all but disappeared in 1997. Two structural changes had occurred in that period: the appointment of a half-time director for the Women's Studies program, and the upgrading of the Women's Resource Office to a separate office with a full-time director. The other form of institutional support sought by numerous women faculty, the creation of a Women's Center, did not appear to be anywhere on the University's agenda by 1997. While the two structural changes that did take place may have had symbolic significance for women faculty, other consequences are difficult to assess. Indeed, in the case of the Women's Resource Office, several respondents explicitly raised this question:

- When I first started at SSU, there was an orientation session for faculty to learn about the support services for conducting research, grant writing, etc. That was informative. I am also appreciative of the Women's Resource Office newsletter and the lecture series that was presented this academic year. I think the lecture hit on the important issues of women and their career development. But, I wonder what happens besides a lecture? Knowledge is empty without follow-through. Respondent F-41
- I see a few female administrators, but some of them seem to have been hired because of what they WON'T do rather than because of what they WILL do. Specifically, I have seen the creation of a Human Relations area and a Women's Resource office, but what have they done for the campus? Respondent F-54

In 1988, SSU had no program to assist married partners of new faculty in finding employment at the University or in or nearby the university community. Nine years later, a relocation program had been established. However, some respondents were less than enthusiastic about it helpfulness:

- As the spouse of a tenure-track professor, it has been difficulty to find a good position for myself. Well-educated, with a Ph.D. myself, I have found myself stuck in the visiting instructor role … Spouses are used for lesser paid, less benefit positions or stuck in part-time positions with little pay. Respondent F-32
- I have found SSU to be unresponsive (to put it kindly) to the needs of dual-career couples. The Relocation Program has been worse than useless for my family. Not only has it been of no help in assisting my spouse to find employment here, but the information provided by the office prior to our making the decision to come to SSU has turned out to be simply untrue. The strains of having my spouse continue to commute hundreds of miles back to the job he held before we came here have added to the stresses I feel as a new faculty member. Respondent F-48

Campus Climate

In 1988 the climate at SSU appeared unfriendly to women at best and alienating at worst. The women faculty and administrative staff experienced feelings of isolation and marginalization. The concerns ranged from sexism and lack of respect to sexual harassment:

- The whole atmosphere at SSU is, in fact, anti-woman. This is easy to say and difficult to document, but it is a feeling that impinges on all the work women do at SSU. The feeling ranges from support staff who do not respect women professors to "colleagues" who do not accept women as equals to department heads that treat women differently from men, even to higher officials who deny that sexism (or racism) exist at SSU... Women at SSU are well aware of the anti-woman ambiance here, in which we are devalued workers, though at present we have little power to change it.
  Respondent A-12
- At SSU, sexual harassment is regarded as a joke or is simply dismissed as a problem or is deemed the burden of its victims who are counseled not only to tolerate the offensive behavior but even to assume responsibility for it. From the Sycamore Chicks, whose purpose is to entertain men at athletic events to the Little Sis programs which are designed for the entertainment of male undergraduates to the old-boy faculty and administrative social networks that sustain the power of men by excluding women to the sexual jokes and innuendoes passed off as clever, humorous conversation by male colleagues in various professional and social settings, the very climate at SSU sanctions and encourages sexual harassment and the concomitant disrespect for all women associated with the institution. Respondent A-25

With no hope that changes would come anytime soon, some women contemplated leaving the university:

- I've despaired thinking SSU will ever invite (or allow) women to join the men at the top and plan to leave the university in June. Respondent X-1
- I have seen a number of top-notch women leave SSU for better paying jobs in universities that are far more supportive of women faculty. This problem in retaining women faculty makes it difficult for the women who remain and the ones who seek to socialize new young faculty at SSU. Respondent A-35

It is a sociological cliché that the pace of cultural change generally lags behind that of structural change. This appears to be the case at SSU. While complaints about the campus climate for women were less common in 1997 than they were in 1988, almost half of the respondents voiced concern about the issue. Some of their concerns were strikingly similar to those expressed in 1988:

- The "good ole boys club" syndrome is gradually waning, but the process is extremely slow at SSU. Respondent F-9
- I feel that some men faculty here consider women less than equal, not serious

competitors or otherwise limited by their feminine gender. These men are older, but unfortunately usually have more power because they are on primary committees … I have had some negative interactions with staff here at SSU. In some cases, I have not been given assistance because the staff person thought it was not her job to, for example, type an envelope for me or mail a package for me. There seems to be a feeling that women faculty can do it themselves because they are women, but men need to be helped. Respondent F-62

- I work with a department that, before I arrived, had few faculty women. Moreover, the faculty are particularly conservative, and this feeling pervades the department. (I am) greatly disillusioned with the school and with the attitudes of the University toward even the very professionally productive women hires. I find myself, consequently, increasingly isolated within my department, interacting much more with colleagues in other departments and having little or no enthusiasm to participate in departmental affairs. Respondent F-32

DISCUSSION

Decades of research documented a host of problems confronting women pursuing academic careers on America's college and university campuses. Finally recognizing some of their concerns, college and university administrators introduced numerous policies and created various offices and programs in an apparent effort to make their campuses more "friendly" to women. The present case study, conducted at a Midwestern Research I university, compares problems identified by faculty women in 1988 with concerns voiced by their peers nine years later. The study finds that the frequency with which women verbalized their concerns with every one of a variety of issues had decreased - in some cases rather dramatically. Such changes should be expected at a university that had expanded its Affirmative Action Office to monitor the hiring of women and to conduct salary inquiry studies, had adopted a policy permitting women to stop their tenure clocks for childbearing, had established a dual career couples policy, had instituted a relocation assistance program, had funded a half-time directorship for the Women's Studies Program, and fully funded a Women's Resource Office. However, a closer look at the results of the University's initiatives and attention to the voices of women faculty in 1997 provide reason to doubt that the impressive list of activities had significantly improved the situation for women at SSU. Quantitative data indicate that increases in women's numbers, salaries, representation at higher academic ranks, influence and power were remarkably modest. Qualitative data suggest that new policies and programs to assist women faculty and their families were either of little consequence or had yet to prove their worth. Given such outcomes, why should women faculty seem to be so much less dissatisfied
with their situation than they were in 1988?

By initiating the policies and programs, the university granted legitimacy to many of the concerns long expressed by women faculty. Perhaps this symbolic victory is the major factor accounting for the reduction in expressed dissatisfaction. For example,

the comments of several respondents suggest that the very presence of a Women's Resource Office might be satisfying to some women, regardless of the functions that this office actually performs. It is common within organizations that established inequalities in the allocation of values are maintained while changes are publicized that are reassuring to many even thought they make little difference in long-term social rewards (Edelman, 2001, 1993). Another factor reducing dissatisfaction might be the presence of the widespread, unscrutinized belief, stated by several respondents, that the new policies and offices had brought about significant changes, and that, in 1997, one found many more women faculty, better pay for women, more women in positions of influence and power, and so on, than were found in the not too distant history of the University. National Sample Survey data on attitudes toward political policies (Day, 1993; Henderson, et al. 1995; Tedin, 1994) as well as experimental studies of attitude formation (Crano, 1997; Sears 2001, 1993) indicate that emotional responses to symbols of change can override evaluations based on understanding the tangible costs and benefits of the matters to which the symbols of change refer.

Consistent with decades of research, the present study suggests that career satisfaction of many academic women can be affected significantly by their experience and/or perception of the way in which their university deals with a number of specific gender-related issues. Beyond this, the research suggests that women's present dissatisfactions may be reduced in the future if they believe that their university has taken action to address their grievances - even though they are not aware of the results (or lack of results) of these actions and even though they have colleagues whose own observations and experiences call the effectiveness of the new programs and policies into question. The introduction of changes by university administrators, however limited the effectiveness of those changes might be for improving the status of women faculty, apparently can pacify many and silence others who are fearful of possible negative consequences for their careers of being identified as unreasonable critics of the university.

Future comparative research might investigate the career satisfaction of academic women working on campuses having demonstrably effective programs relating to women's interests with the career satisfaction of academic women working on campuses having newly created programs relating to women's interests but having, at best, uncertain effectiveness. The results of such research would reveal the potency of the symbolic politics of gender engaged in by college and university administrations.

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