

CAUT Biennial Women's Conference: Doing Academia Differently

February 22-24, 2007, Ottawa.

First of all, I would like to thank LUFA for allowing me to attend this conference. It certainly was enlightening and opened up my mind to the issues that women face as a collective. I would also like to apologize for the delay in getting this report to LUFA.

I was unable to attend the first evening as my travel arrangements and work schedule conflicted and was only able to arrive after the evening session.

This year's conference covered three areas: Work-life balance, wage equity and activism in the academy.

Work-Life Balance

The first session that I attended was on Work-Life Balance by Lesley Burke. It is a challenge for many people to maintain work/life balance. In an ideal world, people should be able to go to work, do their work and then return home at the end of the day leaving their work behind and enjoy their family life. The reality for many people is that they bring their work home and also do the work that is necessary to have a functioning family and home. So, what work-life balance??

Why is work-life balance so important in Today's world? Lesley Burke outlined five areas that contribute to work-life balance conflict:

1. Economic changes – globalization, knowledge-based economy, de-regulation and labour shortages
2. Family and demographic changes – dual earner and single parent families, sandwich generation, aging workforce
3. Changing organization of work – increased workloads, flexibility, multi-tasking, tele-work
4. Social and Institutional changes – deinstitutionalization of health care, increased demand on families, difficult to care for marginalized individuals, children and elderly
5. Emerging Employment Relationships - part-time and contingent workers, self-employed, sub-contracting

Lesley also provided some work-life balance initiatives in Europe:

- building awareness of work-life balance benefits
- flexible working arrangements
- adjusting hours of employment different types of leaves for care of children and other relatives
- paid maternity/paternity leave
- unpaid parental leave

- long term care leave
- flexible use of holiday entitlement
- work-life balance and sick leave
- sabbatical leaves to pursue other interests
- reduction in work time
- time credits

Wage Equity

Pay equity and Wage discrimination legislation by Jurisdiction: An Overview

- Federal – Canadian Human Rights Act- does not apply to universities
- The pay equity act is not standard across Canada, not all provinces have this legislation, in some provinces it applies to universities and in others it does not apply. If pay equity does apply, it is not useful to academic staff generally

University professors are all classed as professors (there is no issue) except for the fact that professors are still predominantly males. A failure of the pay equity legislation is that it does not work for academic staff.

For other equity seeking groups, the following criticisms are raised:

- Not productive enough
- Maintenance provision not happening, no resources
- Very little assistance to parties
- Insufficient penalties
- Does not remedy past wage loss
- Insufficient government guidance
- Women accept lower wages to accept less “stressful” jobs

In his presentation Michael Piva makes the following observations:

- wages are wacky
- Sources of discrimination in the salary system are amplified/exaggerated
- Gender issues – identify key bargaining issues
- Large amount of money need to be set aside for anomaly funds
 - Correct past anomalies
 - Does not address issues
- Merit Increments have fuzzy criteria or none at all. There is no procedure for decision making, decisions are made arbitrarily. Merit increments are not monitored. The end result is that there is no pattern and there discrimination cannot be proven
- The current system discriminates by longevity. The age of entry into profession is getting older therefore the employee will never get the “pay off”.
- There is a delayed entry of women into the profession

- Undervaluing of women's work
 - \$100,00 gap in starting salary = \$280,00 in career earnings

Recommendations:

- Allow employer to offer new hire any salary as long as it is above the floor.
- Narrow the band with, decrease steps from floor to ceiling – correct the damage – greater positive benefit
- Negotiate a higher starting salary. Identify people to go with you to negotiate your first salary. Connect with your faculty associations

Progress through the ranks

- Write down everything to justify merit increases
- Process is not explained to young faculty staff
- Newsletter article and workshops
 - How do you qualify for PTR

Conundrum – There is no standardization among universities between merit and levels. It is better to negotiate for seniority than for merit.

CAUT policy discourages merit – rather it is better to work under the expectation that you are recruiting the greatest people thus meeting the university expectations

The Evaluation of Male-Female Wages

Differentials in Canadian Universities between 1970 - 2004

Feb 2006

Case Warman, Frances Wolley & Christopher Worswick

Start up funding tends to favour men just by the nature of the research

CAUT is starting a series of equity studies. Using annual data, the studies will explore the difference white males get on average compared to other groups. Employment equity issues are predominant in other than visible minorities such as part-time and contingent staff in the social sciences and on tenure track.

Salary inversion –new bright hires make more than those in mid-career. Question the arbitrariness and the ability to make the decision making process transparent.

Activism in the Academy

Two examples of activism in the Academy

a) Changing women through education

- Addressing sexual assault through a campus based coalition
- Eg. vigil for sexually assaulted women

b) Restructuring of higher education

- Committee on women's issues 1994- paper on employment assistance review
- Employment assistance review not done properly
- 1998 – agreed to conduct the Employment Assistance Review (EAR)
- A collective response was used in the development of a President's Advisory council that would address sexual assault and equity matters in a diversity strategy
- The diversity strategy moved from an employment equity approach to acceptance of diversity principles that would align people strategically having a greater ability to transform workplace equity. This approach would employ diversity consultants
- The beauty of committee work is that it avoids helping the university to keep the status quo.

Glenis also address the issue of unmanageable workloads as a threat to academic freedom. The key message we should be promoting is that “women are not just an interest group”. She offered the following theme for activism: “We’re not ready to make nice” (Dixie Chicks).

2. **Cindy Oliver**

Cindy provided the following stats:

- 1/3 of any faculty are women
- 19% of female professors make \$6,000.00 less than male colleagues

How do we change this reality?

Important elements of activism

1. Collective Bargaining
2. Skills Building
3. Organizing

1. **Collective Bargaining**

a) **Provincial Common Agreement** – took 2 decades to put in place

- build collective strength
- provincial standards – salaries and benefits
- This approach doesn't prescribe to merit pay or differential pay

b) **Contact Language**

- Regularization (tenure)
- 2 years @ institution and workload 50% or greater. The expectation is that the workload will continue. If the work is there then the instructor must be regularized
- Eliminate/neutralize gender bias
 - Works well for women
 - Builds solidarity between men and women

c) **Collective bargaining gains important benefits**

- Pension buy backs
 - Women make up for leaves in teaching/sessionals
 - Contingent academic staff contribute to the pension plan

- Maternity leave provisions
 - Top up from 70% of salary

2. Skills Building

Resource Manual

Connect women activists with skills

- Facing management
- Running effective meetings
- New president orientation

3. Organizing

Better Funding/Better Futures Campaign

There is no equity in our society unless we help everyone

- Examples: Helping low income women – social assistance pilot projects, single moms – income assistance, and women in the private sector to build collective capacity

National Framework for Equity

Equity report – what's missing in the data about students, faculty and post secondary institutions?

- Compile an almanac – data in a systematic way
- Time completion of graduate students
- Faculty salaries by age, rank, distribution by discipline
- Accommodations
- Bullying and harassment – what policies are in place, best strategies, where do we go from here
- Maternity and paternity leave, child care and elder care

Strategies for getting newer faculty ranks involved in faculty associations

- Look at succession planning
 - Younger reps on executive – make contact with new hires before contracts are negotiated to provide information on issues and what the union is doing to address these issues
- Orientation Packages/sessions
 - Send personal invitations to new hires/faculty
 - Ensure contracts and orientation packages are included in the letters for interview
 - Attending CAUT workshops to orient faculty to the issues and to motivate them to do more

How do you get institutions to consider contribution to buy back?

- Including sessional instructors on faculty association executive

Discussion Group 2

The purpose of the discussion groups was to share what other Status of Women committees were doing. At first I was very disillusioned with the way the discussion was going. Many of the women in the group used this session to complain about the situation at their universities. Issues that were common among the universities include the following:

- Unobtrusive use of power, universities are still male dominated institutions
- Grievances
- Unable to apply for promotion unless a full time faculty member
- Pressure to publish
- Pressure to “produce” seems to be a condition of promotion
- Once tenure achieved, the pressure is off
- The inequities in pay women receive as compared to male colleagues
- Men are more likely to be chosen for awards
- Inability to take sabbaticals due to lack of replacement faculty
- Undervaluing of service
 - Union work not recognized
 - Reluctance to join faculty associations therefore no skills building
 - Clause – service for union should be considered service within the university

At the end of the discussion there seemed to be some consensus that the women needed to work collectively to address these issues both at their own institutions and across institutions.

It seems that some new male hires are in a similar situation when it comes to promotion and progress through the ranks and that there is a perceived need to prove one self. It might be that many of the new hires are not aware of the unique situation of women in the institutional setting and so it would make sense that rather than furthering the gap that some education be provided to these new hires as a way bringing forth the issues and gaining some allies to help address these issues. Beginning in the manner may more result in institutional change.