

Bleak prospects for women in job market

By BRENDA PAUL

'It's horrible. The job situation in this country stinks. If it's hard for a man to get a job, then it's doubly hard for a woman.' These words from a 30 year old female Masters student and lawyer.

In 1979, the sex ratio of UNB first year law students was split 50/50. So, too, at Dalhousie's Medical school. In the ensuing years following this peak, those numbers have declined. Fewer women in the Atlantic region are going to Graduate school.

A Business Administration female graduate of 1984, currently unemployed, 'There's a pretty good market for non-traditional jobs, anything previously male-oriented, anything to do with the trades. Any travelling sales jobs I've applied for seem to discriminate against women, though. I don't know why?'

The computer field, on the other hand, doesn't appear to be suffering the same syndrome. Fifty percent of this year's graduates already have jobs.

Despite this obvious job market, however, the numbers of women applying

for study in the faculties of Computer Science, Engineering, and Forestry at UNB are declining.

In January 1985, there were 227 men in fifth year engineering and 25 women. In forestry, 89 men in the fifth year program and 20 females. Enrolled in first year, on the other hand, the figures decreased to 64 men and only 6 women. In fourth year computer science, the sex ratio was higher, 97 men and 34 women, however in first year, again the numbers declined: 97 men as opposed to 26 women. Why are these technical fields becoming increasingly male dominated-again?

According to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, here are the facts:

-Over four million Canadian women are employed or looking for work: 49% of all working-age women.

-There has been a 62% increase in the female labour force since 1969 compared to a 24% increase in the male labour force.

-Young women cannot count on being 'taken care of' all their lives: 3 out of 4 women either never marry or lose

their husbands through death, divorce, or separation (1976).

-62% of all women working for pay are in clerical, sales or service jobs: 36% in clerical, 10% in sales, and 16% in service.

-Very few women are working at 'the top'-only 5 out of every 100 employed women are in management or administrative positions.

-Women workers are concentrated where the wages are

lowest: women make up 74% of employees in clothing manufacturing where the average weekly wage is \$173.; but only 6% of employees in pulp and paper manufacturing where the average weekly wage is \$395. (December 1979).

-Women make up 39% of employed Canadians but 46% of unemployed Canadians.

-For every dollar a full-time male employee earns, a full-

time female employee earns only 62 cents.

-Two-thirds of all minimum wage workers are women.

A bleak picture? Maybe, but certainly a realistic one. Why then do we persevere? Why do we achieve higher education? We have an invaluable contribution to society. Recognize it and aim high.

The most absurd and reckless aspirations have sometimes led to extraordinary success.



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