

Vision 2020

**2006 Report of the
University Committee on the
Status of Women**

at the Johns Hopkins University

**to President William Brody, Provost Steven Knapp,
Vice President James McGill
and the Johns Hopkins University Board of Trustees**

September 15, 2006

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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

In keeping with Provost Steven Knapp's charge, the University Committee on the Status of Women has identified three overarching themes for attention to resolve current gender-based career obstacles for women faculty, staff and students at The Johns Hopkins University

- leadership
- work/life balance
- cultural dimensions

If Johns Hopkins addresses these issues with determination, imagination, and administrative vigor, the university will reverse its current standing and advance Johns Hopkins to the forefront among universities confronting issues relating to gender equity. Johns Hopkins now ranks *last* in its peer group in the Consortium on Financing Higher Education for its percentage of women executives. From today, Johns Hopkins has the opportunity to reform its reputation and assume the leading role among universities in the area of gender equity—defining the vision, moving forward boldly as the national model.

This committee consulted with experts in the field of gender research; analyzed previous reports; met monthly for discussion during the academic years 2002 to 2005; collected data with the support of Institutional Research; conducted surveys and extensive interviews of women students, and staff and faculty members; and worked in consultation with its guiding coalition, President William Brody, Provost Steven Knapp and Vice President James McGill.¹ As a result, this report comprises:

- a brief history of previous efforts to tackle issues of gender equity;
- powerful arguments for pursuing further change, including legal risks and best business practices;
- an examination of the root causes of gender inequity;
- practical methods for achieving and sustaining meaningful change;
- dramatic findings and reasonable recommendations to assure success.

Longstanding traditions and attitudes in the culture at the Johns Hopkins University have spawned pernicious effects on career success and satisfaction, and smothered optimism about the future among many women faculty and staff members, as well as among women students. An accumulation of adverse experiences, as reported by these constituencies to members of this committee, has created a subtly hostile environment that has limited opportunities, been detrimental to achievement, and shaped career decisions for many members of this community, especially women. While overall there has been progress since 1985, when the Homewood deans commissioned the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women, incidents still occur regularly that are not in keeping with standards the university purports to uphold.

Women have been a historically underutilized asset at Johns Hopkins. Now that half of all graduate students are women, Johns Hopkins risks losing the brainpower, creativity, and productivity of half the population if it does not make an extraordinary

¹ Subcommittee methods, findings, and recommendations are described in the separate reports of each subcommittee that follow the main report.

appeal to the women among the rising stars of the academic work force. The university must recognize the realities of contemporary life and adapt to the changing dynamics of the nation's economy to overcome obstacles that prevent the full engagement of women, including in its most senior executive and academic leadership positions. It is imperative for this university to mine women's capacity to produce knowledge and manage its academic enterprise.

Earlier reports documented broad substantive, systemic, and cultural obstacles based on gender in every division of the Johns Hopkins University. These concerns remain to the present. While there are actions that can be taken to achieve certain improvements in the short term, this report calls for changes in aspects of Johns Hopkins' institutional culture, a process that requires strong leadership, time, wisdom, understanding, dedication of resources, and commitment to a vision of success. Interventions must attack not just the symptoms but also the *root causes* of gender inequity.

Innovations in redressing gender-based inequity, achieved over the last twenty years, form the basis for moving on to the next level of issues. They provide grounds for optimism that more comprehensive interventions will make profound differences across our entire community of learning, particularly given the changing norms in society. Three critical areas should be targeted next:

- expanding leadership opportunities for women;
- guaranteeing reasonable work/life balance for all;
- transforming a culture in which gender-based obstacles and discrimination are deeply rooted.

The discrepancy between the proportion of women in the promising early stages of academic careers and those promoted to senior and leadership ranks at Johns Hopkins points to a serious problem in the advancement of women. Students interviewed for this report observed that

- “The vast majority of our professors are white males.”
- “Being presented with a mostly male faculty makes me doubt my prospects as a female scholar in my field.”

Female students expressed the desire to have female professors as well as male, and to see women in leadership roles. Another student noted that “when the gender discrimination is added on to racial/ethnic discrimination, the problem is even more serious.” This report reveals numerous issues relating to the paucity of women in leadership positions, including:

- evidence that women and men pursuing the same or comparable paths to leadership face dramatically different experiences;
- inadequate models of leadership;
- lack of succession planning.

These findings offer an obvious opportunity for increasing the representation of women at senior ranks. Linking gender equity generally, and women in leadership specifically, to its mission and its institutional strategy will allow Johns Hopkins to position itself first in the global research and higher education marketplace. In doing so, the university can enhance the growth, creativity, and productivity of a major segment of its human capital and transform itself into a model for the twenty-first century.

As an easily accomplished first effort, this committee recommends that, beginning immediately, Johns Hopkins actively and intentionally

- recruit and promote women from within the university when executive and senior administrative leadership positions become available;
- instruct search committees to seriously seek out and consider women directors of departmental and divisional programs, centers, and institutes who have developed strong qualifications for executive leadership.

In the longer term, this committee strongly recommends that Johns Hopkins move to the forefront of the gender equity arena by creating an **Institute for Next-Generation**

Leadership to

- serve as a think tank and policy research center on leadership theory, with a particular emphasis on women and other underrepresented groups and on the redesign of leadership roles.
- provide expertise for ongoing assessment of leadership roles at Johns Hopkins to advise how the evolution of their design and the provision of resources might better serve to attract women and support their success.
- greatly extend and enrich current leadership training and education for Johns Hopkins faculty and staff members aspiring to move into leadership within the university and throughout the nation and the world.

Inflated emphasis on the work environment, to the exclusion of all else, is seen by many to distinguish Johns Hopkins as a male-dominated environment, non-supportive to women. There were recurrent reports that for many women students, anticipation of difficulties in achieving work/life balance is a significant disincentive for electing an academic career. Evidence gathered by faculty and staff subcommittees substantiated the students' concerns.

The business world recognizes that work/life balance is a key issue and that when it is successfully addressed, the result is an increase in productivity and in the recruitment and retention of top workers, especially women. There is a broad acknowledgment among businesses that there is a need for clear protection of time for personal lives balanced with full-time jobs, or for the election of part-time jobs. Many in the business world recognize that workers who choose new work patterns should not be marginalized or viewed as uncommitted to a career and that there should be opportunity for an evolution in job definition over a worker's lifetime.

This report points out that obstacles to work/life balance are particularly acute in dual-earner and single-parent families, which are now the norm. The University Committee on the Status of Women believes that all members of the Johns Hopkins community should have the opportunity to organize their time and work more flexibly without this being interpreted as diminished dedication to a career or to excellence. To that end, this report encourages the university to redefine the characteristics of its ideal worker and make specific, reasonable adjustments to the way it

- conducts business;
- trains and evaluates its employees;
- provides benefits, particularly to members of the support staff.

Collegial relationships often seem elusive to women faculty and staff members and students at Johns Hopkins. Leaders must address this sense of isolation and foster a culture of intellectual gender equity by

- instituting policies, procedures, training, organizational structures, and programs to recognize, understand, and eliminate gender inequity;
- joining the entire community to undergo training to recognize gender-based obstacles and the toll these take on the morale, productivity, and success of women faculty members, staff members, and students.

This report recommends that, in the very near future, everyone in the community will assume responsibility for countering bias—whether unintended or intended—and be knowledgeable about how to lead discussions and propose solutions. The hallmarks of this new civil culture will be an environment where

- everyone will recognize behaviors that devalue women;
- discussion of such behavior is considered legitimate and important;
- each person takes responsibility for eliminating devaluing behaviors;
- people need not fear retaliation if they raise issues or disclose incidents;
- everyone will be accountable for establishing a culture that does not tolerate bias.

Accomplishing the challenging—and sophisticated—agenda of organizational changes proposed in this report will require assigning a high profile, university-wide, resource-rich, and fully supported office, which will be charged with responsibility for fostering change toward gender equity. This office will be staffed by professionals and dedicated to ensuring that solutions are implemented in a sustainable way over the long term.

By broadening its beliefs, incorporating highly self-conscious and intentional approaches to its strategic planning, and assessing and monitoring its progress in valuing and developing people, this university can ensure that all segments of faculty, students, and staff have greater opportunity for success and satisfaction. Johns Hopkins should create and actively use a rigorous and comprehensive data-based approach to set its vision, standards, and practices. It should commit to a long-term, fifteen-year intervention, setting specific goals, using rigorous measures and methods, and monitoring and systematically assessing its progress. Ownership of this approach by the board of trustees and leaders at the university, divisional, and departmental levels—as well as allocation of necessary resources to implement such an approach—can lead to real and sustained improvements and reconcile our ever-present goodwill and intentions with the realities that this committee’s extensive work has exposed.

As the Leadership Alliance Presidential Forum stressed, “if we do not change our own institutional structures and behaviors, we will make ourselves increasingly exclusive and decreasingly excellent.” Johns Hopkins needs to take the lead and institute intentional, substantial, and sustained change to ensure gender equity. The time is ripe, action is required, and change must occur administratively at the university level to secure success.

Executive Summary: Faculty-focused Subcommittee Report

Based on substantial evaluation, the faculty sub-committee identified the under-representation of women in leadership positions as a core issue. To conduct an objective analysis, the committee members used several approaches: 1) summarize the evidence of root causes and manifestation of gender-based obstacles from Status of Women faculty reports from this institution and from other academic institutions (Tables 1a, 1b, and 2 Faculty Subcommittee Report); 2) analyze institutional and national data about representation of women full time faculty at Johns Hopkins University and compare Johns Hopkins to peer universities (Appendix A, Faculty Subcommittee Report); 3) conduct subcommittee meetings to review and distill findings, identify key areas of concern; and 4) conduct several focus group interviews with senior women faculty at Johns Hopkins University concerning their perceptions of gender-based obstacles for leadership roles, taped the discussions, and summarized the findings (Appendix B, Faculty Subcommittee Report).

At the end of the study, the committee concluded that an area of particular concern at this time is the persistent dearth of women leaders at Johns Hopkins, absolutely and in comparison to the eligible pool of tenured women. This category includes all persons who manage the university or academic divisions, from the president and vice presidents to deans. This dearth of women leaders, both academic and administrative, is no longer a pipeline issue. National and Institutional data have indicated that qualified women in substantial numbers have been available for the academic pipeline for 20 years. Despite that, there is still low representation of women at senior levels as described above. This suggests the need to evaluate the culture, institutional policies, and practices to ensure that these are not contributing to this persistent gender gap.

The main recommendation of the subcommittee's report is to:

By 2020, achieve a 50% representation of women in senior faculty and leadership positions and gender equity with respect to every measure of career satisfaction and advancement:

To achieve this goal, we recommend to:

- Commit resources to increase representation of senior scholarly women
- Develop new and less opaque hiring practices for both administrative and senior faculty positions
- Consider redesign of executive leadership roles to be attractive to women and supportive of their success
- Evaluate progress and maintain ongoing channels of communication between the JHU Leadership and the UCSOW

- Routinely Conduct Climate, Salary, and Representation Survey at Institutional Level to Monitor Change

Executive Summary: Student-focused Subcommittee Report

The committee collected data on a range of issues facing students in Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, Nursing, Peabody, and Public Health. We found that there was a better need for mentoring, especially among graduate students but also among undergraduates. There was evidence of differential treatment of women by instructors of both sexes, and of undue or unwanted attention to the physical appearance of women students. Students are also concerned about balancing career and personal life. When the committee began its work, data on students was scarce and difficult to obtain. Recent efforts by Institutional Research staff are providing an improved database that will help short and long-term planning. Surveys reveal significant differences between men and women students, for instance in how they spend their time and in their perception of Hopkins as a stressful environment.

The main recommendations of the subcommittee's report are as follows:

- Increasing the number of women on the faculty and in administration will improve mentoring and create role-models for students, but only if advisors and mentors are directly available to students at all levels.
- Creating a more welcoming environment involves both large and small changes. University-wide issues include campus safety and affordable daycare. Some actions would require minimal resources (e.g., increased flexibility in graduate student residency requirements to allow for part-time graduate work).
- Our commitment to gender equity should be publicized, demonstrating that Hopkins is assuming leadership as an intellectual and cultural force.
- Regular reviews of departments and programs, whether internal or external, should address issues of equity and diversity. Reviews can help departments to understand the issues facing their students, of which they may be unaware.
- Undergraduate orientation programming can be expanded to encourage students to maintain a tolerant and respectful environment.
- Small incentives will help departments to use short-term solutions as steps toward long-term solutions.
- Regular data-collection on students and recent alumni, as is now done by Institutional Research, should continue, and all survey data should be broken down by gender. Collecting data on graduate students and the obstacles they face is the most critical need.
- Long-term goals can include outreach programs in the Baltimore area, building on new initiatives (e.g., Baltimore Scholars program), and partnering with philanthropic organizations in the region.

For more detailed discussion of findings and recommendations, with a summary of the student survey results, see the student-focused subcommittee report.

Executive Summary: Staff Subcommittee Report

The Staff subcommittee reviewed all 22 prior Johns Hopkins University reports since 1985 on gender-based concerns which were relevant to women staff at Johns Hopkins. The result of this review, summarized in Appendix 1, indicated that every report has identified the presence of significant gender-based obstacles for women including women staff; these concerns have been consistent across reports over the last 20 years. The Staff subcommittee then sought to understand whether these reported concerns are thought to persist to the present, through interviews with women staff across the Divisions of the University. The overall findings are that women staff perceive that gender-based obstacles and bias persist to date at this University. While some concerns are less severe than they were 20 years ago, they have not been resolved. These concerns are in the areas of recruitment, career development and advancement, professional training and development, compensation and benefits, work-family balance, sexual harassment and discrimination, security and facilities. Overall, these issues are thought related to a culture that devalues women broadly and women staff specifically. Further, women staff identified the dearth of women leaders and the perception of high turnover among women executive staff as evidence of an adverse climate. Areas of major progress to date relate to the establishment of training, work-life and career management programs within Human Resources. Lack of progress is thought to be due to lack of implementation of recommendations in other areas from the reports of the last 20 years.

The main recommendations of the subcommittee's report are as follows:

- Make the concerns of women staff a top institutional priority
- Institutionalize equity through policies, practices and accountability systems. Resolve the devaluation of women staff as manifested in policies, procedures, practices and norms across the university. Provide gender equity in rewards and compensations, including salary, benefits, promotion rates and recognition, including for part-time staff.
- Resolve the current hostile environment for women by creating a culture where everyone can recognize and takes responsibility for resolving behaviors that devalue women, and where people need not fear retaliation if they raise issues or disclose incidents. As part of the latter, revive the institutional Ombuds office.
- Improve career development opportunities for women staff, including instituting a university performance management system, monitoring development activities and ensuring 3 days of participation in training opportunities each year. and ensuring that performance evaluations are done annual for all staff. Train managers to value differences, recognize gender bias, and eliminate it from evaluations,
- Undertake a Staff Attitude Survey with attention to gender issues and repeat regularly.
- Institute ongoing, routine data collection and analysis across the University regarding gender-based obstacles for women staff as well as faculty and students, and institute corrective action to eliminate inequity permanently.

For more detailed discussion of findings and recommendations, see the Staff Subcommittee report.