



# STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE, O.S.S.T.F.

60 MOBILE DRIVE, TORONTO, ONTARIO, M4A 2P3

O S S T F  
STATUS OF WOMEN  
MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

1985

Conclusions & Recommendations



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April 5, 1986

Dear Reader:

Thank you for your interest in the 1985 OSSTF Status of Women membership survey to determine "The Effects of Sexism on the Career Development of Teachers". We trust that the survey results will be useful to all those who are committed to equity in education. The following background information on specific OSSTF activities (initiatives) should serve to supplement the survey information and recommendations.

The original 1976 survey "The Effect of Sexism on the Career Development of Teachers" reported by the OSSTF Task Force on Women suggested a "multi-faceted affirmative action programme" was needed to erase the inequities for women in education. The authors stated that "Much time, patience and innovativeness is required; time, because the problem developed over a period of years, patience, because attitudinal change is a slow and frustrating process and innovativeness, because there is no one right answer."

Their words proved prophetic because although a number of recommendations were made by the Task Force, it was not until 1980 that some districts established local Status of Women Committees.

In March 1981, the Annual Assembly approved establishment of a standing committee on the Status of Women. Following are the Committee's Terms of Reference:

- a) To monitor regularly the professional status of women members of O.S.S.T.F. and to advise the Provincial Executive on the need for appropriate action with respect to any developing trends.

- b) To provide a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to the professional careers of the women in O.S.S.T.F.
- c) To recommend to the Provincial Executive research and educational programs designed to promote equality of opportunity with specific reference to women members.
- d) To maintain liaison with Provincial Standing Committees and Councils concerning the status of women in O.S.S.T.F. and in the teaching profession, and to provide assistance to the Standing Committees and Councils in meeting the needs of women teachers.
- e) To provide Districts and Divisions with assistance in establishing goals and directions for local Status of Women committees. (A.81)

Just as the 1985 Status of Women Survey has documented that "REAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THOSE AREAS WHERE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN IN PLACE FOR SOME TIME", so OSSTF Policies and Statements (Appendix A) initiated by the Status of Women Committee between 1982 and 1985 reveal the importance of a specific focus on the Status of Women in OSSTF. The report itself also affirms the usefulness and importance of the Status of Women Committee.

But the Status of Women Committee cannot work alone. We appreciate the support of the membership and the Provincial Annual Assembly in funding the 1985 Status of Women Survey. We thank particularly the members of the Provincial Executive and all others who have worked on our behalf. We now ask for the assistance of all in acting to ensure that Federation policies are implemented and that the recommendations put forth by the Status of Women Committee and Avebury Consultants are transferred to action for equity.

*Carol Brayman - Survey Co-ordinator*  
From: The Provincial Status of Women Committee

CONCLUSIONS  
&  
RECOMMENDATIONS

## CONCLUSIONS AND CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the first OSSTF Status of Women Membership Survey, conducted in 1976, considerable effort has been spent on addressing the concerns raised in that report. Some of the notable changes since the report was published include:

- Status of Women programs sponsored by OSSTF and other organizations
- Increased concern in the Ontario Ministry of Education for women's professional status.

These efforts are, in part, responsible for the positive and significant changes in how women teachers now view their careers as compared to 1976. The following list summarizes these changes and illustrates why these changes can increase the likelihood of career advancement for women:

- the aspirations of women teachers are higher
- women are more prepared to "pay the price" for advancement (i.e., they are increasing their formal qualifications, their level of activities within schools, Boards and the Federation has increased and, overall, their careers are of more importance to them than in 1976)
- women have more confidence in their effectiveness in fulfilling key administrative functions
- women receive more encouragement from superiors to apply for promotions
- women apply for promotions more often and are more often successful than they were in 1976.

In addition, when the difference in age between OSSTF women and men is taken into account, there is little or no difference between them in their level of qualification or experience.

The considerable age difference between women and men (43% of women but 62% of men are over 40 years old) accounts for the fact that men, because they are older as a group, have proportionately more experience.

2. While women's progress from 1976 to the present has been substantial across the province, further OSSTF support is needed to address some key areas of concern where men continue to have an advantage in 1985:

- women are slightly less qualified than men to apply for Vice-Principal positions
- women evaluate themselves as somewhat less innovative than men
- women consider themselves to be somewhat less effective than men in administering schools and disciplining students
- although there has been improvement since 1976, women continue to receive less encouragement to apply for promotion and remain less likely to apply for promotion.

By far the greatest advantage men teachers have over women is that women continue to have major responsibility for home and child care tasks. In consequence, women have more concerns about the negative impact promotions can have on their ability to perform these essential and largely unshared responsibilities. It appears that some of the capable young women respondents will hesitate to consider advancement unless and until administrative jobs are restructured to allow for both a successful career and responsible parenting.

In addition, the necessity of taking maternity and child care leave to fulfill parenting obligations has a negative effect on both women's career advancement and their eligibility for pension in their later years. This type of negative impact brings into question the values of the education system, the Federation and, indeed, society: a system where children have value as students but not as offspring.

OSSTF may wish to take a leadership role in exploring and lobbying for measures that eliminate the penalties imposed on women for being responsible parents. These measures could include:

- workplace daycare, to ensure that all teachers have access to quality daycare
- time off to care for sick children
- paid maternity leave
- no loss of seniority or pension for maternity leave.

3. Another critically important finding is that, although women's opinions about their promotability has improved markedly since 1976 and the opinions of male administrators concerning women's promotability have also improved, the perceptions of these decision-makers have not kept pace with women's present attitudes, level of qualification and degree of career commitment. Until male administrators are able to view women and men teachers as equally capable and promotable, women's low representation in positions of added responsibility will continue.

Women in 1985 are undertaking those aspects of the promotion process which are under their control. Their demonstrated career commitment must now be met by a reciprocal willingness on the part of their superiors to encourage them to qualify for and apply for senior positions, and to appoint them to these positions in proportion to their representation in the Federation.

4. It is important to note that although attitudes of both administrators and women themselves toward women's advancement is comparable across the province, REAL PROGRESS FOR WOMEN HAS OCCURRED MAINLY IN THOSE AREAS WHERE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN IN PLACE FOR SOME TIME.

Furthermore, Affirmative Action implementation in some Boards has progressed beyond documentation of women's employment status to the setting of achievable, measureable and realistic goals and timetables. OSSTF may wish to consider including this procedure in its lobbying activities on behalf of women.



### CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Co-operate with and continue to lobby for stronger Affirmative Action measures, including goals and timetables with the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Women's Directorate.
2. Work to maintain and strengthen Affirmative Action measures, including goals and timetables, within the Federation.
3. Implement OSSTF policies and strategies for the promotion of women to administrative positions and disseminate information about these policies and strategies to the OSSTF membership, particularly to women interested in promotion.
4. Determine from women who are now in administrative positions whether they have found further strategies which are useful. Where appropriate, incorporate these into current OSSTF strategies.
5. Continue to educate administrators about women's employment issues and remind them of their responsibility to identify qualifiable and qualified women and to encourage them to apply for promotions. As well, senior administrators should be encouraged to implement goals and timetables to monitor women's progress.

6. Continue to encourage women to apply for promotions and provide such support services as training workshops for women interested in promotion.
7. Continue to encourage women to participate in Federation activities at all levels and provide support services to enable them to do so.
8. Continue to provide women with the type of training and development that increases their leadership skills and confidence level.
9. Determine how administrative jobs can be restructured to interfere less with family responsibilities.
10. Implement workplace child care wherever feasible.
11. Continue to work toward implementation of OSSTF policies to ensure that women and men receive full pensions in spite of breaks in their careers due to maternity leaves and/or child care responsibilities.