



Sexism in American Higher Education

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Description/History

- Perception of women in higher education
 - Women as mothers first and scholars second
 - Supporters and opposers often held this view
- Women faced biased treatment as students
 - Quotas set on women's admission rates (Stanford admitted 3 males for every female)
 - Oberlin University (first coed college) had women dismissed from classes on Monday to clean the male students laundry
- Barriers to women working in academia
 - Since 1979 women have earned over $\frac{1}{2}$ of bachelors and masters and $\frac{1}{3}$ of doctorates
 - From 1950 to present day males have held the majority of positions as presidents, vice-presidents, deans, and other top administrative positions

Impact on the Local and Larger Community

- Women got over 57% of all American bachelor's degrees in 2019
 - There are lots of women in college now, and there is no shortage of academic achievement
- NMU has 57% women and 43% men (students)
- MTU has 70.7% men and 29.3% women (students)
 - STEM gap
- Not very many feminine role models in STEM
 - Self-perpetuating problem, cyclical
- Sexism at school and work is discouraging
 - Cultural ideas that men are more talented in STEM lead to subconscious bias and sexism which deters women from joining or continuing on

Community Resource

- American Association of University Women (AAUW)
 - National organization focused on empowering and supporting women through education and financial independence
 - Local chapters work within their own communities and help support national projects
 - Marquette chapter hosts a STEM programming experience for middle school girls
 - National projects include a salary negotiation workshop available online
 - Funding for AAUW comes from membership dues and donations
 - College degree required for membership but anyone can attend and take part in the programs

Interview with an Expert

- Leslie Warren: Current Vice President for the Marquette chapter
 - Warren joined after attending one of the open programs AAUW hosted
 - Warren utilizes a situational leadership approach
 - Position as NMU Dean of Library and Instructional Support
 - Position as AAUW Vice President
 - Warren employs empathy for others in her understanding of sexism
 - Pink-collar industry and sexism (librarianship)
 - Warren is frustrated that some women are fighting the same fights they have fought their whole lives

Possible Solutions

- Raising awareness
- Join a supportive organization
 - AAUW (only can be a member if you have a degree)
 - Women for Women
- Push for change in policy and legislation
 - Women need to have protections in place on campuses
- Advocate for more women in leadership positions

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