

## SUMMARY OF EQUITY CLIMATE ASSESSMENT STUDY OF 1988

In an effort to provide the Institution with an overview of the Equity Climate Assessment Study (herein referred to as the Study), and its results, the consultant's findings and recommendations are summarized below. This summary has been reviewed by Dr. Marcia Boyles, President of Educational Consultant Services (ECS), whose firm conducted the Study, and she concurs that it is reflective of the full report. All members of the WHOI community are urged to read the complete text of the Study, which will be available in the following: the Directorate's, Controller's, Development, Education, Facilities, Marine Policy, Personnel, Port, Scientific Departmental and Special Assistant to the Director's offices.

The objective and agreement with the consultants was to examine the equity climate at the Institution, "equity" being defined as issues relating to gender, race, age, etc. In the process of conducting the study, it became evident to ECS that a number of employees interpreted "equity climate" more broadly than intended, encompassing non-equity related issues. In light of this development, ECS agreed to include all findings in the Study, regardless of their direct relationship to the primary objective. This summary reflects those same results.

The Study is comprised of the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Findings and Discussion
4. Conclusions and Recommendations
5. Appendices

Sections 3, 4 and 5 each have subsections devoted to Students, Scientific and Technical Staffs, Graded and Marine Staffs and Administrative Staff. In addition, sections 3 and 4 have overall Institutional and Directorate subsections and, while the first four subsections of the appendices detail the multiple choice and written responses to the questionnaires, the fifth subsection displays the interview responses.

The findings of the consultant are based upon the following arithmetic breakdown of participants:

<u>Constituency</u>	<u># Questionnaires Distributed</u>	<u># Responses</u>		<u>Interviews</u>	
		<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Students	127	43	35	12	5
Sci/Tech	272	21	131	19	19
Graded/Marine	423	89	110	26	10
Admin Staff	<u>49</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>38</b>

**ISSUES ADDRESSED:**

Many issues and concerns expressed in the Study were common to all constituencies. However, each group (as delineated above) also had its own unique set of concerns. The common issues for all groups included:

- Recruitment
- Salary and Promotion (including tenure)
- Discrimination & Harassment\* both in Woods Hole and at sea
- Advising, Mentoring & Supervising
- Other Equity-related Issues such as child-care
- Communication both from the equity as well as the non-equity standpoint
- Institutional governance and committees

In addition, student issues included such topics as structure of the Joint Program; the roles of the Educational Coordinators, Joint Committees and Education Office; role-models; social and health needs and examination of reasons for leaving/considering leaving the Joint Program. Non-equity issues addressed for employees included overall work environment, salary levels and career development (seen as both an equity and non-equity related subject).

**RESPONSES BY PARTICIPANTS:**

Below are summarized the written questionnaire and oral interview responses (as presented in the Appendices) by question.

Concerning the question, *“What is being done now to ensure equity at WHOI?”* each of the four groups most frequently cited the commission of the study and the appointment of the Special Assistant to the Director/Affirmative Action Officer. Other frequent responses were: open meetings on the subject of equity; memos, policy statements and other communications on equity; existing policies and attitudes being pro-equity; no problem in this area; increased awareness of equity issues; improvements in shipboard behaviors and attitudes towards women; and increased numbers of women Joint Program students.

Conversely, regarding the question, *“What still needs to be done by WHOI to ensure equity?”* by far the number one response by the students and Scientific and Technical staffs was to recruit more women and minorities to the Scientific and Technical staffs. This response was tied as the second most frequent for Graded and Marine staffs who cited the number one concern to be pay equity. Next in frequency for all groups were cited management training and education of supervisors, scientists and the community at large to issues of equity and discrimination; and ensuring salary and promotion (including tenure) equity. Other frequent responses were to address child-care needs; improve communication at all levels; determine and deal with reasons women students drop out of the Joint program; develop well-publicized policies and procedures; maintain Institutional leadership regarding equity issues; and appoint women to senior/leadership positions.

---

\*For purposes of the Study, discrimination was defined as subtle when it involved patronizing or hostile attitudes towards women or minorities; overt when exhibited by openly sexist/racist comments or very different treatment of females and males or minorities and non-minorities; and harassment when involving unwanted sexual advances from a person in authority and/or other behaviors that create an especially offensive or hostile work environment.

The other written set of responses concerned the most positive aspects of working at the Institution and those areas most in need of improvement. (These questions were not asked of students.)

By far the most common response to the positive aspects of working at the Institution was appreciation of co-workers and/or support staff. Secondly, the independence and freedom to work/create; the work itself; the overall congenial, informal atmosphere of the Institution; and the facilities/space/equipment (including computers) were cited as most positive. Other frequent responses were good supervision, geographic location, the library and feeling appreciated.

The area most frequently perceived as needing attention was space, followed by equipment; improved facilities (i.e., heating, cooling, lighting, etc.; cleaning of buildings; financial support during funding shortfalls; and increased support staff.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Following discussion and after reaching conclusions on the various issues addressed, ECS recommended ways in which the Institution might enhance the climate with regard to equity and equity-related issues. Some of these recommendations were common or similar for each group and some were unique to a particular group. The consultants state, "Our approach, and the recommendations made in this study, reflect the following premises:

- Programs and policies that benefit women also benefit men.
- Institutional leadership must be involved in efforts to improve the status of women and minorities, providing visible endorsement and support.
- There are no single right or correct solutions to problems of inequity. Institutions vary in mission, demographic characteristics, financial resources, and in their strategies to promote equity.
- Breaking barriers to equity requires institutional catalysts, formal structures and activities, informal networks and activities, and institutional support for change.
- Change is a slow and complex process that requires both short-term and long-term planning and management."

Relating specifically to **Joint Program Students**, recommendations included routine monitoring of qualifications of admitted versus non-admitted applicants; revised recruitment materials; workshops dealing with discriminatory behaviors for students and faculty; greater monitoring of dissertation defenses and general exams; encouragement of women guest speakers; complete review of the Educational Coordinator system including definition of the role, evaluation of incumbents and training; more frequent meetings with students; more sponsored social activities for students and space for informal gathering; and in-house workshops topics such as stress management.

Recommendations directly related to the **Scientific and Technical Staffs** include the routine involvement of the women on the staffs in the recruitment and hiring processes as well as other special efforts to recruit women; hiring a woman/minority candidate when qualifications are the same/similar or better than other candidates; examination of salary and promotion criteria and oversight procedures for technical staff and better communication of guidelines; clarification and

communication of tenure process practices and procedures such as the practice of including women in decisions regarding women and clarification of the “clock stopping” policy; greater recognition of educational activities in tenure decisions; mandatory workshops including descriptions of discriminatory behaviors and their impact and illegality as well as other personnel issues; establishing a committee to discuss methods of decreasing discriminatory behaviors on research vessels; and consideration of a forum for discussion and recommendation of policies and revisions of policies that affect the staffs.

**Graded and Marine Staff** recommendations include examination of relative worth of female-dominated versus male-dominated positions and efforts to recruit persons of the under-represented sex to the positions dominated by the opposite sex; management training for supervisors covering personnel practices as well as discrimination and other equity issues; more in-house training; dissemination of information on promotion criteria and preparation; and efforts to promote more women into supervisory positions.

Concerning the **Administrative Staff**, recommendations include examination of the administrative classifications and salaries with better communication of the process and system, and training for administrators regarding unprofessional, illegal and discriminatory behaviors.

In addition to the above, recommendations which affect all groups to some degree were made under the heading of **Institutional and Directorate**. These include strong efforts to recruit a woman scientist to the Directorate and Staff Council; development/revision of guidelines on applicant interviewing and broad-based dissemination of these guidelines; review of oversight of recruitment, promotion and salary practices and communication of same; restructure and redefinition of the Women’s and EEO Advisory committees; consideration of extending maternity/granting paternity leaves; monitoring of child-care needs with consideration of establishing a facility if warranted; establishing a part-time career development coordinator; attention to sexual discrimination/harassment on all UNOLS fleet vessels; evaluation of effectiveness of equity efforts two years hence; consideration of new forms of Institutional governance; and establishing a job or skills bank to help alleviate job insecurities.

In conclusion, there are several **common themes** regarding equity which are inherent in this extensive report:

- Important strides have been made as evidenced by the commission of the study and the appointment of the Special Assistant to the Director to help in dealing with issues of equity.
- The Institution must attract and retain more women in administration and on the Scientific/Technical staffs as well as in supervisory roles on the Graded and Marine staffs.
- Senior staff members (and all advisors of students) need training in better mentoring techniques for both junior staff and students.
- Existing Institution policies and practices with regard to hiring, salary and promotion decisions should be reviewed, communicated and adherence assured.
- All constituencies must be educated on issues of discrimination and, in particular, discriminatory behaviors.
- All who supervise other individuals should be trained in appropriate supervisory techniques and practices.

Finally, to quote from the report, “Women and men continue to have very different experiences in both work and educational settings, although they function side by side. These differences are widely found in most places of employment, as well as in many colleges and universities. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution is to be commended for recognizing that these gender-based differences occur, and, through commission of this study and other efforts, attempting to determine the type and the extent of inequities within the WHOI community. The present study reveals that all levels of attitudes toward, and understanding of, equity issues exist among employees and students of the Institution, ranging from open opposition and considerable lack of understanding, to total acceptance of the desirability of equity and sophistication about the issues involved. No one class of members of the WHOI community, nor either gender, can be said to have a monopoly on a specific set of attitudes, or knowledge about, equity.”

Again, everyone is encouraged to read the full report.