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**TO:** Gender Equity Review Committee, Scientific Staff, Directorate

**FROM:** Bob Gagosian

**DATE:** February 21, 2001

I would like to thank the Gender Equity Review Committee for its thorough, professional approach to this sensitive and critical subject. The Report itself is sensitively and honestly written and I appreciate the time and effort it took to compile the results and portray them effectively. On behalf of the entire Institution, the Committee has my gratitude.

In preparation for responding to the [Report of the Gender Equity Review Committee](#) (the Report), input has been received from each of the Scientific Departments, the women on the Scientific Staff, the Ombuds/EEO Officer and members of the Directorate. In addition, the Report was distributed to the entire Scientific Staff and ample time has been allowed for comment.

The strategies and remedies outlined in my response should not be construed to be the "solutions" to the serious issues we, and in fact, society, face with regard to gender equity. Indeed, the actions we are going to take to address these issues are only part of an ongoing effort to insure that the Institution is an attractive place to work for all people, both women and men, and members of the majority population as well as members of under-represented groups. As we have been advised in the past, "programs and policies that benefit women also benefit men."\* Our goal and intent is to have WHOI be the best place in the world to conduct ocean research and engineering and to educate future generations of ocean scientists and engineers.

With regard to the specific recommendations, in the order in which they were presented in the Report:

1. *WHOI should carefully review the salaries of women scientists to (i) ensure that women are being compensated equitably, (ii) determine why, in 3 out of the 4 ranks, women's salaries are below those of men, (iii) ensure that women "joiners" are rewarded equitably for their total careers since Ph.D.*

We have carefully reviewed the salaries of the women on the Scientific Staff and made pay adjustments in some cases, both for those who have spent their entire careers at WHOI as well as the "joiners". To be certain, however, we have asked Andy Solow to re-run his [statistical analysis](#) based upon 2001 salaries. I am also asking Andy to provide the

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\* Equity Climate Assessment Report, 1988

Ombuds/EEO Officer with a documented program that she can use to perform similar independent analyses (not limited to Scientific Staff, but also including any and all groups of employees at WHOI) whenever she feels it is necessary, but no less than twice a year, once before and once after the annual salary review. This will assist in highlighting any apparent correlation between pay differences and gender. Pay inequities related to gender are not acceptable and we will closely scrutinize any situations in which there appears to be such a correlation. I expect this to be completed by March 31, 2001.

In addition, there have been questions asked about the different processes used by each of the scientific departments in determining merit increases. This is an area in which consistency in approach would be appropriate and valuable. Therefore, I am asking the Director of Research and the Department Chairs to discuss this issue, compare existing processes, and enlist the assistance of the Ombuds/EEO Officer and/or the Human Resources Manager in determining and [documenting the best practices](#) to follow. This should be accomplished well in advance of the next merit increase cycle (by August 31, 2001).

2. *Department Chairs should review the space allocations in those groups identified in this report where women have significantly less space than men, and discuss space needs with the women who fall within those groups. If necessary, space should be reallocated to ensure that women scientists have equitable space to their male colleagues. As new space becomes available, the Department Chairs should ensure that the space needs of women are considered equally to those of men.*

Each Department Chair is being asked to carefully review the space and other resource allocations within his department to determine if any gender-based inequities exist. I believe it is universally recognized that different scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines require vastly different physical resources and we must keep those differences in mind as we proceed. A report describing current space and resource allocations and an explanation for any instances in which female staff have lesser space allocations than their male colleagues is requested by July 31, 2001. If there appear to be any issues with regard to space/resource allocation, a plan to resolve them is to be articulated as part of the report and incorporated in the recently initiated campus master planning process as it evolves.

3. *WHOI should continue to actively seek qualified women for scientific positions at the Institution, and in particular, a special effort should be made to attract senior women scientists.*

I recognize the need to increase the number of women on the Staff, particularly at the senior levels. A more diverse senior staff can enrich and enhance the manner in which research and education are conducted and can provide a variety of role models as well as potential mentors for junior staff and students. While we certainly cannot and do not discriminate on the basis of gender with regard to selecting any employee, postdoc or student, we certainly can and must step up our recruitment efforts to attract talented, successful women. Such women may be difficult to attract due to job security (hard money support) at their present organizations and family related matters, but we can and must do our best to help them overcome these obstacles, as we have with senior men we have recruited. While it is true that recruiting any senior person to the Staff can require significant financial resources, I am committed to this effort. I am asking the Director of Research and the Department Chairs to make this effort an ongoing top priority. In addition, I am requesting

that each and every member of the Scientific Staff assist in identifying and attracting qualified women at every level, but particularly at the tenure level or above, to the Institution.

4. *WHOI should ensure that sufficient mentoring and advocacy of women junior scientists is in place to provide the best possible chance of promotion.*

With regard to women currently on the Staff, we must be certain that we offer them the best possible opportunities to succeed here at WHOI. To do so, they must receive the best information possible when making decisions that affect their careers. Good mentoring is essential to all junior people, but junior women, in particular, can miss out on this critical element. The reasons for this are complex and societal, but we must work hard to overcome them.

- First, Judy McDowell and Karen Rauss have volunteered to complete a first draft of a [Scientific Staff Handbook](#) that will provide information on a wide range of topics (draft Table of Contents attached), some of which are the result of further recommendations from the Report. Karen has been asked to put together an ad hoc group of Scientific Staff members to review the draft. Anyone wishing to volunteer to participate, please contact her directly. The goal is to have the document reviewed and published by July 1, 2001.
- Secondly, the subject of mentoring has been raised many times over the years, including most recently by the Staff Assistant Ladder Review Committee. It is time that we took an Institutional overview of this complex subject. I have asked Karen to put together an [ad hoc group of employees and students](#) to address this issue and to make recommendations about a proactive approach to this subject. She will be drafting a charge for this Task Force and recommending its membership to me by the end of March, 2001.

5. *WHOI should identify the issues that are important in recruiting and retaining scientific staff in order to determine whether steps can be taken to increase the attractiveness of WHOI as a workplace for both men and women.*

Being certain that WHOI is an attractive workplace for all people is clearly in our best interest. I believe our ability to attract and retain the best and brightest individuals to any position at WHOI depends upon the total package: location, professional opportunities, salary, benefits, climate, etc. We must be vigilant with regard to our competitiveness with regard to salary and benefits and we must be certain that the atmosphere is constructive and supportive of doing world-class research. In order to determine what, if any, areas are in need of attention, I have asked the Director of Research and the Human Resources Manager to set up an inquiry system to contact any person who declines an offered position in order to determine the reason for the decline. In addition, I have asked the Ombuds/EEO Officer and the Human Resources Manager to develop an exit interview program in order to gather information about the reasons any and all employees voluntarily choose to leave the Institution. I expect these two programs to be in place by July 31, 2001.

6. *WHOI should make every effort to retain women scientists as they progress through the promotion process by (i) making sure women scientists have the necessary resources to do their work, (ii) building critical mass of scientists in areas of research that WHOI women scientists represent, and (iii) recognizing, at the Department Chair and the Directorate levels, important contributions by WHOI women scientists.*

The issues raised in this recommendation permeate much of the Report, focusing on resources (salary, space and equipment) and mentoring as well as recognition. It is obvious that the long-term solution to the gender imbalance at the senior levels is to have junior women be successful in their careers. Through a variety of methods, many of which are addressed throughout this response to the Report, we hope to accomplish this goal. In addition, I am interested in exploring ways to enhance professional recognition, both internally and externally. It goes without saying that, whenever appropriate the Institution should be nominating outstanding women and men for external awards. We also need to carefully monitor our internal reward/ award programs to be certain they are being administered equitably. I am asking the Director of Research to continue to develop and maintain records on the internal award programs and to closely examine submission versus award rates.

- In addition, although it doesn't directly impact internal gender equity, I want to remind the WHOI community that we have established the Mary Sears Woman Pioneer in Oceanography Award. The Director of Research is in the process of appointing the first nominating committee for this award.

7. *The WHOI Directorate should establish clear guidelines for the use of bridge support and make sure that the policy is applied uniformly among men and women scientists across all the departments.*

We will review the [guidelines for use of Bridge support](#) that are on the Director of Research's web page to be sure they are clear. In addition, we need to be certain that all members of the Scientific Staff are aware of the process for obtaining Bridge support and that they understand that they are entitled to it if they meet the eligibility requirements. I am asking the Executive Assistant to the Director of Research to meet with the Departmental Administrators to discuss the policy and its administration at one of their group meetings (by April 30, 2001) to be certain they are administering it uniformly. There must not be deviations among departments in administering Bridge support.

8. *WHOI should carefully review the distribution of "hard money" support among men and women scientists, including distribution among untenured and tenured groups. Although preliminary data indicate that men and women scientists both get about 2-3 months of internal support per year on average, the data may show discrepancies among the different scientific staff levels and departments.*

Salary support for Scientific Staff is one of our most precious commodities and it is allocated in several different ways including but not limited to Assistant Scientist support, Senior Scientist chairs, Johnson Education chairs, task budgets for ad hoc or short-term projects allowable on overhead, Education funds, and for other administrative responsibilities. It must be distributed equitably and I am asking the Director of Research and the

Associate Director for Education/Dean to carefully review the distribution of all of these funds *in toto* to ascertain if there are gender discrepancies in the experience of women and men with regard to these funds. I would like this review completed by May 31, 2001.

9. *Department Chairs should make a concerted effort to ensure that all scientists (i) are aware that discretionary funds are available, (ii) understand the types of activities that are appropriate for requesting discretionary funds, and (iii) know the procedures for requesting them. This is particularly important for women scientists who, in some cases, do not appear to be part of the process by which this information is disseminated.*

With regard to discretionary funds, I have asked the Director of Research to write a [description and definition](#) of this category of available funds and to advise the Staff of the percentages of the pool used each year for the various types of activities these funds support. This should be finalized by March 15, 2001. In this document we will also remind PI's that they must and should be in regular contact with their Department Chair/Administrator with regard to their needs. This information will be included in the aforementioned Staff Handbook so that it is readily available to everyone. Each science department has a limited (but recently increased) amount of discretionary money to distribute annually and the department is the preferred place for initiating a request for supplementary funding. It is the responsibility of the Chair or Administrator to provide guidance on the appropriateness of a request and direct the individual to the most likely source of funds. Many small requests can be handled at the Department level; larger needs will involve the Director of Research.

10. *WHOI should continue to strive to have women represented on both Institution and Departmental Committees in proportion to their population in the scientific staff. Because of the limited number of senior women, achieving that desired goal currently puts an undue burden on those women that are in a position to serve. Senior women who are spending a greater amount of time doing committee work than their male counterparts should receive financial compensation for the additional time taken away from research. Increasing the number of senior women will make proportionate representation easier to accomplish.*

I have long recognized that the issue of committee participation is a difficult one. We need and want female representation on committees, particularly those that impact the future needs and directions of the Institution. On the other hand, we often return to the same people for this type of assistance because, first of all they are very good at it, and secondly because there are so few women from whom to choose. Attracting and retaining more senior women will help with this issue, but in the meantime we should look at the situation faced by the women currently on the Staff and ascertain whether their committee load is heavier than that of their male counterparts. If it is, we need to decide how to either relieve them of some of that load and/or consider how to compensate or support them for some of it. I am asking Department Chairs to take a look at the staff in their departments to determine *per capita* committee responsibilities by gender and by level (tenured vs. non-tenured). The results of this examination will be shared with the Director of Research and the Associate Director for Education/Dean by July 31, 2001 and a plan of action will be formed at that time.

*11. WHOI should establish a clear policy on the allocation of salary support to scientific staff participating in Development events.*

This item echoes the above concern. I am asking the Director of Development to perform a similar exercise as the Department Chairs in #10. That is, I want to see the annual time commitment of the staff in support of development efforts. In addition, I am asking him to draft [guidelines for the allocation of support for development related activities](#). These guidelines can also become part of the Handbook and therefore, I would expect them to be completed by June 30, 2001.

*12. Each department should review its postdoctoral scholars on an annual basis to identify potential new appointments (especially of women) to the Scientific Staff.*

I believe each department already reviews its postdocs with regard to possible appointment to the Scientific Staff, as this is one of our most successful recruitment avenues. The issue may be that the postdoc pool from which to make these appointments is not well populated with women. I am asking the departments to continue to pay particular attention to the postdocs and to bring them on to the Staff when appropriate. I am asking the Associate Director for Education/Dean to engage WHOI's Educational Council in examining ways in which we can increase the number of women in our postdoctoral applicant pool and provide [a report and plan](#) of action by July 31, 2001.

*13. WHOI should now initiate a study of intangible issues that directly affect the gender climate in the workplace.*

The Institution was a pioneer in conducting a [gender climate assessment study](#) in 1988. At that time, undergoing such an intense introspective examination of gender issues was virtually unheard of. We took the recommendations to heart and I believe we have made significant strides since that time. For example, while there were only 7 women on the Scientific Staff (out of a total of 100 Staff members) in 1988, today there are 22 (out of 138). Unfortunately, we have not succeeded on all fronts (the recommendation about recruiting more senior women being the primary one). It is time to consider conducting another Institution-wide study. Karen Rauss and I have discussed this possibility and have agreed that she should put together an [advisory group](#) to assist her in deciding how to proceed with this effort. She will have her recommendations regarding the advisory committee's membership, and its charge for me by May 31, 2001. In the meantime, she volunteered to redistribute a copy of the summary from the 1988 Equity Climate Assessment Study so that we can review the recommendations from that study. I agree that it would be beneficial to review that document before proceeding.

Lastly, the Committee was very helpful in providing some suggested speakers to address gender equity issues. Karen Rauss has identified others as well. I am requesting that the Director of Research's Office take the lead on planning a series of talks. In addition, I would like that office to work with the Education Office to explore the idea of having more women visiting scholars come to WHOI, perhaps for extended periods of time such as sabbaticals. Karen has agreed to assist in this effort.

In summary, it is clear that in spite of the strides we have made since 1988, we, and society as a whole, still have much to do with regard to gender equity issues. Some of what we can accomplish at WHOI is procedural, some is remedial and much is educational. I would like to reiterate that I am fully committed to addressing these issues and I continue to welcome all input with regard to this important topic.

RBG:kpr:mml

# **Attachment**

## **Navigating the Tenure Track**

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