



WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

Dr. Robert B. Gagosian, *President and Director*

June 16, 2003

TO: WHOI Staff, Postdocs and Students
FROM: Bob Gagosian
SUBJECT: UPDATE REGARDING GENDER EQUITY

As part of the follow up to the Report of the Gender Equity Review Committee, I am pleased to provide my second update on the actions taken thus far. As noted last year, our action plan was ambitious, but we continue to make important strides towards achieving true gender equity in all respects at the Institution. This document only covers those action items not previously discussed and finalized. Please refer to the Report, my initial response, the 2002 update and the status of all the action items for a complete picture of what has been accomplished to date. This information can be found in its entirety on the Director of Research's web site at <http://www.whoi.edu/administration/dirres/internal/status.html>.

- The Mentoring Program Task Force completed its charge and provided me with an excellent report and recommendations concerning an Institution-wide mentoring program. This program will commence as a pilot program this fall. Once we have gained a year of experience, we will be in a good position to evaluate it and, assuming it is successful, formalize a long-range effort in this area. More information on this innovative and important program can be found under the Mentoring Task Force link at <http://www.whoi.edu/committees/mentoring/overview/>.
- With regard to our efforts to increase the number of women in our postdoctoral applicant pool, the Academic Programs Office has written a follow-up report to its Action Plan of April 2001. It can be found under the Status of Action Items section on the Director of Research's web site at http://www.whoi.edu/administration/dirres/internal/GE_Postdoc_Update_2003.html.
- The Gender Climate Assessment Advisory Committee (with representation from all areas of the Institution) has been involved in developing a pilot program to be used to educate the WHOI community with regard to discriminatory behaviors and the impact of "micro-inequities". This program is being fine-tuned by the consultant and should be up and running this Fall.
- The Institution hosted Dr. Virginia Valian as the first in our series of speakers addressing gender equity issues. For an abstract of her talk and a link to the materials on her web site see http://www.whoi.edu/administration/dirres/internal/Why_So_Slow_Abstract.pdf. The second speaker will be Dr. Kathleen Crane, author of *Sea Legs, Tales of a Woman Oceanographer*. Information on her visit is forthcoming from the Academic Programs Office.

Because Dr. Valian's presentations on gender issues in the workplace and conversations stimulated by her visit have brought greater awareness of issues of gender equity to all levels of the Institution, I would like to comment further on this topic.

From her presentations and the subsequent discussions Jim Luyten had with women scientists and other employees, three important points emerged:

1. Women at WHOI have multiple, small disadvantages that can add up to significant roadblocks to their advancement.
2. Although men are perceived as often having a greater sense of entitlement than women, clearly the leading criterion for advancement must be (and must be perceived to be) work performance.
3. To improve our environment, both men and women need to recognize and address issues of gender equity and respond to incidents of inequitable treatment on the basis of gender or any other personal characteristic, such as ethnicity, age, race, color, religion, creed, citizenship, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

A change in our culture toward more equitable treatment of *everyone* is essential to build an environment at WHOI that enables us to attract, retain and promote the best-qualified individuals.

There have been instances at WHOI of unacceptable treatment of women—both subtle and obvious. When instances have been brought to our attention, there have been consequences. In recent years, a number of individuals who have behaved unacceptably toward their colleagues have seen financial implications and/or limited access to Institution resources as the result of their actions.

We recognize, however, that penalties for such behavior can only address egregious, obvious behaviors and are insufficient to change the equally unacceptable but more subtle and unconscious attitudes that affect our day-to-day work environment. Therefore, we are committed to strengthening our efforts to address this important issue. Monitoring and managing inappropriate behavior in meetings and within departments is the responsibility of all members of our community, but this is especially true for the senior administration. To begin, we will help address the Chairs' particular responsibilities in this area by providing management education and tools for them, including training in gender issues. We have met with the Chairs and they are very supportive of this plan.

In addition, as noted in previous memos and meetings, we will continue to encourage the departments to seek out and recruit tenured women and endeavor to provide the salary and start up funds to encourage them to move to WHOI.

All of these efforts are designed to further our progress towards having a truly equitable environment for all. We certainly welcome further suggestions and input. Building a more equitable environment starts with awareness, and can be achieved only if we all take responsibility for making it part of what we do every day.