

Why do we still need women's centers?

education

- Women now make up the majority of college students, but they are more likely to be the majority in less prestigious colleges and in less prestigious academic majors.¹
- Women still lag behind men in earning doctoral and professional degrees.²
- There are fewer women in math and science (receiving, for example, only 18% of undergraduate engineering degrees and 12% of doctoral engineering degrees), due in large part to the hostile environment many face in these fields.³
- In many departments, women still feel that the university climate is not supportive of their success i.e. they get less attention, feedback and encouragement from teachers than male students get, and at times face outright incivility in their classes. A study found that women applying for a research grant needed to be 2.5 times more productive than men in order to be considered equally competent.⁴
- Schools are eliminating affirmative action programs responsible for increasing access to higher education for women, particularly women of color.⁵

athletics

- Girls make up only about 42% of high school and college varsity athletes, even though they represent more than 50% of the student population.¹¹
- Each year male athletes receive over \$136 million more than female athletes in college athletic scholarships at NCAA member institutions.¹²
- Women in Division I colleges are over 50% of the student body, but receive only 32% of athletic recruiting dollars and 36% of athletic operating budgets.¹³
- In 2008, only 43% of coaches of women's teams were women. In 1972, the number was over 90 percent.¹⁴

politics

- Although a record number of women serve in the U.S. Congress, the numbers are staggeringly unequal.
- No woman has served as U.S. President or Vice-President.
- In the 111th Congress, 17 of 100 in the U.S. Senate are women (13D, 4R) and out of 435 seats, only 73 in the House of Representatives are women (56D, 17R), plus 3 (3D) Delegates.²⁷
- State Governors: 6 Governors (3D, 3R) and 9 Lieutenant Governors (6D, 3R)²⁸
- Secretaries of State: 12 of 50 (10D, 2R)²⁹
- Attorney Generals: 4 (4D)³⁰

math and science

- Women receive 47% of bachelor's degrees in mathematics and 40% of bachelor's degrees in physical sciences; however, women are awarded only 25% of doctorate degrees in each of these areas.⁶
- In engineering, women receive only 18% of bachelor's degrees, 21% of master's degrees, and 12% of doctorate degrees.⁷
- The highest median starting salaries for college graduates are in the fields of computer science & engineering, fields that have the lowest percentage of women.⁸
- In computer and information sciences, there is a downward trend. The number of women receiving bachelor's degrees in computer and information sciences reached a high of 37% in 1984, but dropped to 28% in 2000-01.⁹
- Based on 2009/2010 enrollment figures, only 23% of freshmen from the College of Science and Engineering at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities are women.¹⁰

sexual harassment & sexual assault

- Sexual harassment and stalking were consistently the top 3 sexual crimes committed against women on the University of Minnesota campus, according to Aurora's Center's statistics.
- Stalking is particularly prevalent on college campuses; in fact, more than half of all stalking victims are between 18-29 years old, and 13% of college women have been stalked.¹⁹
- The use of technology to stalk and harass female students will only become more prevalent as technology becomes a more integral part of our lives. A study of students at the University of New Hampshire found that approximately 10 - 15% of surveyed students reported receiving threatening or harassing email or Instant Messages.²⁰
- Most cases of sexual assault go unreported. Less than 5% of completed and attempted rapes of college students are brought to the attention of campus authorities and/or law enforcement.²¹ Sexual assault is widely considered to be the most underreported violent crime in America due in part by the complex victim-perpetrator relationship. 48.8% of college women who were victims of attacks that met the definition of rape did not even consider what happened to them as rape.²² In addition, we live in a society that often blames women for the assault.²³
- Eight in 10 students experience some form of harassment during their K-12 school years, and more than 25% of them experience it often.²⁴
- 60% of students—both boys and girls—experience physical sexual harassment at some point in their school years.²⁵
- Girls are more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment, but boys today are more likely to be harassed than boys were in 1993.²⁶

earnings

- The wage gap between men and women has narrowed during the past three decades. Women who work full time earned about 78 percent of the wages of their male counterparts in 2002, compared to 63 percent in 1979.²
- A typical college-educated woman working full time earns \$44,200 a year compared to \$61,800 for college-educated male workers—a difference of \$17,600!²
- High-skill, high-wage jobs and training programs are still dominated by men. Low-skill, low-wage jobs and training programs are still dominated by women. Even the highest paid workers in the traditionally female jobs do not earn salaries similar to the salaries in the traditionally male jobs. In no case does the amount earned by the top 10% of workers in the predominantly female fields of cosmetology, child care, or medical assistant even begin to approach the median wages earned by those in the predominantly male occupations.¹⁸

professors and administrators

- While women are more than 50% of the lecturers and instructors, and a little less than 50% of the assistant professors, they are only 36% of associate professors and only 21% of full professors. And only 2.4% of full professors are women of color.
- On average, compared to men, women earn less, hold lower ranking position, and are less likely to have tenure.
- Women head only 19% of colleges and universities.

Adapted from document by Wanda Viento, Minnesota State University-Mankato

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