

UNL women enrollment figures increase slowly



Women scientists sponsor lectures

To provide information about science careers to undergraduate women, the Lincoln Chapter of Graduate Women in Science is sponsoring a symposium next month. The program is "a response to changing times," said Kathleen Keeler, program committee member. "You're seeing women in careers you're not used to seeing them in."

The Oct. 26, 27 symposium will include lectures by "nine outstanding women scientists," information booths, laboratory tours and a panel discussion, Keeler said.

Topics for the panel discussion will include: choosing a science career, women in science, career and family lifestyles and training for science careers.

A speaker is being sought for an evening lecture for the general public. Dr. Margaret Mead was scheduled to speak but cancelled the engagement.

Although aimed at undergraduate women, Keeler said that the program will be available to anyone interested. "I would be very happy if this information went to men too," she said.

Funding for the symposium was obtained in cooperation with the Colleges of Agriculture and Arts and Sciences. The colleges engaged the women scientists to speak to their faculty so they will then be available for the seminars.

Graduate Women in Sciences dates back to the 1920's when it was an affiliate of Sigma Delta Epsilon, Keeler said. It is open to anyone interested in science or mathematics.

Programs of the chapter include a scholarship and research program, an introductory program for graduate students and a paper reading session in April.

There will be a meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, in 308 Oldfather for those people interested in helping lead sessions.

The increased number of undergraduate women enrolled at UNL in the past 10 years follows a national trend in college enrollment.

According to a Census Bureau report released last month, the number of women under age 35 attending college has doubled in the past decade. The report also said that women account for 47 per cent of the college age student population.

The trend at UNL is not so pronounced as it is nationally.

UNL enrollment figures indicate the number of women enrolled at UNL has increased gradually. Since 1967, the number of women enrolled has increased by only 31 per cent and only 44 per cent of the total number of undergraduates are women.

Nevertheless, women have made gains in certain areas in relation to their male counterparts. For example, the total number of undergraduates increased by 2,785 from 1967 to 1977. Women represented 70 per cent of that increase.

Bob Reid, assistant dean of academic services, said that women have more opportunities than they had 19 years ago. He said equal rights for women and possibly pressure from parents and even high school counselors

could explain the increased numbers.

"Women recognize they have a place in a working society and are looking for the necessary preparation to assume it."

Comparisons between enrollment figures for September 1967 and 1977 bear out these observations. For example, there were 20 women enrolled in the College of Engineering and Technology in 1967. This fall there are five times that number in the college. Meanwhile, the number of men in the same college has dropped by 443.

In the College of Business Administration, the number of women has increased from 129 to 685.

Reid also had figures on the numbers of freshmen enrolled for the first time at UNL. Again, the number of men was down from 1967, while the number of women was up.

Reid speculated that one reason for the decrease in male enrollment was the end of the Vietnam war and subsequent end of the draft. When the draft ended, men no longer had to choose between going to college and going to war.

Reid said minor influences on enrollment that vary from year to year are the economy and the birth rate.

Businesses 'looking for women'

The law of supply and demand apparently does not apply to the college where it frequently is practiced. While women's enrollment in the college of business administration has steadily increased during the past 10 years, their chances of getting a job also have increased, according to CBA's acting associate dean Art Kraft.

"Corporations are looking for women," he said, "They want to have women in the organization."

Companies formerly were reluctant to train women for management positions because they were afraid the women would get married and leave. It was a waste of money, but not anymore, Kraft said.

More and more women are pursuing advanced degrees, Kraft said. When they come with those credits in physics, engineering, marketing and such, corporations figure women are more willing to stay on the job.

"The better skills women have, the better opportunities they have, he said. There is no longer a teacher syndrome, he explained. Women want to compete for jobs.

More women want to work, Kraft said. "They want to get out of the house and expand their horizons. They want to contribute, to be part of the corporation."

A greater number of women are taking a shorter time out to raise a family, he said. Many have the education and the skills to get a good job. The only drawback is that most of the jobs are out of state.

"Nebraska is not a heavy manufacturing state, it's mainly agri-business and financial and insurance," he said.

"For every one advantage in Nebraska," he said, "women have nine opportunities outside. They want the best job in money and career opportunity."

There are opportunities in Nebraska, but not as many. Women "have a shot at all managerial positions," Kraft said.

Most of the jobs are middle management, with the opportunity to move up in the organization, he said.

Two women who graduated from the college with a masters in business administration (MBA) last year found jobs in international corporations. One will make \$19,000, which is the highest starting salary for an MBA. The other found a job in Lincoln and is making \$16,000.

The big push is for women, Kraft said. Corporations are looking at undergraduates. They want to start training right out of college.

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