



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Sex barrier drops as job stereotypes diminish

By Tricia Waters

More women and men are advancing into non-traditional careers in the Lincoln area and nationally than before, according to educators, administrators and workers.

A career classified as non-traditional has 30 percent or less of its workers coming from the male or female population, said Marie L. Allen, a counselor at Southeast Community College.

For women, non-traditional careers include factory work, construction and auto mechanics. Male secretaries or male nurses have non-traditional jobs.

Allen, who works with women going into non-traditional careers from SECC, said that more women are represented in SECC's drafting program than any other vocational program there. Out of the total student enrollment in January 1981, women represent 27.1 percent of those studying drafting, 2.1 percent of those studying welding and 8.9 percent of auto mechanics, she said.

Those figures can be compared to an earlier study by the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs. Allen said. The council found that 10.5 percent of American factory workers and 1.8 percent of craft and technical workers were women.

More women in male jobs

The council also found that more women enrolled in vocational education programs between 1972 and 1977. In 1972, women made up 11.7 percent of vocational students and in 1977 they represented 14.4 percent, according to the council.

At the Lincoln School of Commerce, five women and two men will earn associate degrees in business administration this month, employment assistant Cheryl Golden said.

Golden said the school's accounting classes have as many women as men but the school has always enrolled more women than men, she said.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Business Admini-

stration College has increased female enrollment about 600 percent in the last nine years. The college's advising director D'Vee Buss said. Of the 2,100 business students enrolled in the fall 1971, 1,972 were women. In Fall, 1980, women represented 1,040 of the 2,817 business students.

UNL's College of Engineering has gained about 20 percent more women students each year, said Al Witte, acting assistant dean. The percent of women engineering students has increased "much faster than overall employment," he said.

Thirty percent of UNL's agriculture students are women, said Janet Krause, who teaches a class for professional women in agriculture.

Companies want women workers

Krause said many of the women agriculture students come from farming backgrounds. But more women from cities are realizing that they don't need the farm background to go into the business aspect of agriculture, she said.

Krause, Witte and Buss agreed that non-traditional career opportunities are increasing for women and their roles are changing.

Large corporations push to hire women so they can follow government guidelines, Krause said.

She said that the women's movement probably had an impact on women's career choices.

"I do believe that the whole women's movement is more prevalent now, that it has caused women to think about what they want," Krause said.

To ensure that women know what careers are available, the Lincoln Public Schools offer a class in career education for high school students, job counselor Darrell Grell said.

The students visit job sites and observe workers, Grell said.

"The students get out and see what it takes educationally to get where they want to," he said.

Grell said the trips encourage students to go back to school and work toward the career that interests them.

Teenage girls not interested

At the high school level, Grell said, few women seem interested in non-traditional careers. But the career class will visit women working on construction jobs for its next section, he said.

Many women take jobs in construction every year, said Gene Landkamer, manager of Lincoln's Nebraska Job Service. Women find jobs in street construction and home building, he said.

Richard Dittenbar, business representative for the Carpenter's Union Local No. 1055, said the union had five women apprentices within the last four years.

Dittenbar said more women work in carpentry now than in previous years. At the Triangle Pacific cabinet plant in Auburn, 45 of the 110 workers are women.

Another non-traditional career opening up for women is sales.

Judy Wesely, 39, started working as a sales representative for Dictaphone Corp. in 1980. She had four and a half years of experience selling insurance for Northwestern Mutual.

Wesely said she likes her non-traditional career because it challenges her and she can make more money than she would working in a traditional job.

But, women must work twice as hard as men to succeed in their careers, she said. But if they want it badly enough, women can succeed in non-traditional careers, Wesely said.

Expectations, blinders hinder women

Women should beware of the expectations placed on them by their families and peers, Wesely said.

"We have blinders put on us when we're very young in terms of what we think we can do," she said.

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