

Faculty says advancement poor Departure of women worries professors

By Linda Hartmann
Staff Reporter

Some UNL faculty members, worried by the recent loss of several women faculty members and administrators, said problems with attitudes, tenure and reward for female faculty members must be dealt with.

Natalie Porter, assistant professor of psychology and director of the Psychological Consultation Center, said poor attitudes toward women were a major factor in her recent decision to leave UNL to teach at the University of New Mexico Medical Center.

Suzanne Brown, assistant to vice chancellor for student affairs, said that many women think their chances for advancement at UNL are poor. Men may feel the same way, she said.

Bob Furgason, vice chancellor for academic affairs, said people are leaving UNL because of the strained financial situation — a problem not confined to women.

Helen Moore, associate professor of sociology and chairwoman of Women's Studies, said people in Women's Studies have written several letters to Furgason and to college deans because they are concerned about the loss of women faculty members to other schools. Moore said women are being actively recruited.

Studies on women and tenure at UNL have shown that women are slightly less likely to receive tenure than men.

Tenure percentages

One study, conducted for the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women, gave several conclusions:

- Although the percentage of women receiving tenure has increased from 39.1 percent in 1979 to 50.6 percent in 1983, the percentage of males tenured was higher with 68.6 percent in 1979 and 75.6 percent in 1983.

- Tenured women constitute 8.2 percent of the UNL faculty. Tenured men make up 63.6 percent of the faculty.

- The colleges with the highest percentage of tenured women are the College of Home Economics, the Teachers College and the libraries. In no other college do women constitute even 10 percent of tenured faculty.

Another study conducted for the American Association of University Professors stated that between 1973 and 1984 at UNL, only 62 percent of women tenure-line faculty members were tenured, compared to 81 percent of the men.

"Taking into account experience and years at UNL, this difference diminishes but does not disappear," the study said.

Fewer women hired

Susan Welch, political science professor, contributed to the research for the AAUP study. She said the study found no indication that women were being discriminated against. Some problem spots exist in the university, she said, but she declined to identify them.

Welch said 1984 was an exception to the statistics. An unusual number of women were denied tenure that year, she said.

Furgason said the studies used small samples and were difficult to draw conclusions from. He said about six years ago, fewer women were hired, so it takes time for the number of tenured women faculty to catch up.

As of spring 1984, the AAUP study said slightly less than 15 percent of the faculty members at the rank of assistant professor or above were women. The study also said one reason women may achieve tenure more slowly than men is that they are hired at slightly lower ranks than men.

Another reason: There are so few women on campus that are called on to serve on numerous committees, Porter said. Serving on committee is important to make sure women's issues are addressed, she said, but it keeps some women from concentrating on things they must do to be recommended for tenure.

'Ceiling effect'

Barbara Kerr left UNL this fall for a position at Iowa State University. She said UNL is generally ineffective in rewarding faculty excellence both monetarily and in recognition. Kerr said the situation is worse for women.

Porter gave two reasons for this. She said resources are so small that UNL cannot afford to reward faculty members, and the central administration gives faculty little decision-making power. When everyone is fighting for "a piece of the pie," she said, women faculty members have a poor chance of getting what they deserve.

Kerr said UNL has a kind of "ceiling effect" for women.

"Women can go so high and no higher," she said.

Brown said reality suggests that such an effect exists at UNL. She said UNL has no women vice-chancellors and only one woman dean, although women have been candidates for the positions.

Furgason said there is no ceiling effect at UNL. He said women have opportunities to seek higher positions. UNL must compete for and seek women for the pool of applicants to higher administration positions, and that the administration thinks more women need to be hired, he said.

Brown said there is "not much evidence that increasing the numbers of women faculty members is a high priority at UNL."

Porter said UNL must be committed to hiring more women.

Shorts

Student Alumni

Student Alumni Association applications will be available Jan. 20, 1986, Campus Activities and Programs office and at the Wick Alumni Center. Applications are due Jan. 29, and

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