
Women Administrators in Academic Libraries: Three Decades of Change

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ABSTRACT

From the 1960s until the 1990s, gender equity was a topic of great interest in library workforce studies. In the almost forty years since affirmative action law was made applicable to institutions of higher education, efforts have been made to increase the number of women administrators in academic libraries, and it is now assumed that women have achieved parity. However, there is little hard evidence available about their representation in all types and levels of academic libraries. A follow-up study was done to two earlier studies of the status of women in academic libraries. Using the *American Library Directory* as a source, the gender of individuals holding the positions of director, associate or assistant director, or department head in ARL and Liberal Arts I libraries in 1972, 1982, 1994, and 2004 were studied. Although women have not yet achieved parity at all levels, the percentage of women administrators has increased significantly over the years. There is still a substantial gap at the director's level in the Liberal Arts I and a smaller one at ARL libraries, however, the results show that since the 1970s, women have succeeded in almost erasing the gender gap in academic library administration.

INTRODUCTION

Librarianship was one of the earliest professions to be open to women. With the growth in the number of libraries at the end of the nineteenth century, educated women were needed to fill the increasing number of new positions being created; by 1900, almost 75 percent of all librarians in the United States were women. The percentage of female librarians continued to increase into the twentieth century, reaching its highest point in

1930 when the profession was 91 percent female (Williams, 1995). Even today when opportunities are available for women to enter a wide variety of professions, librarianship is still predominately a women's field: over 82 percent of professional librarians in the United States are female (Davis & Hall, 2007, p. 9).

Although women have constituted the bulk of librarians for over a hundred years, they were an overlooked majority for a large portion of that time. It was not until 1974 that Anita Schiller (1974) published her seminal research on the status of female librarians, in which she noted a consistent pattern of discrimination against women in libraries that had resulted in a pay gap between the genders and an underrepresentation of women in upper-level positions, especially in larger and more prestigious libraries. Schiller's work was published during a period of growing awareness of discrimination of all types in the United States. The Civil Rights movement and a renewed interest in feminism were reshaping most sectors of society. Wide-reaching legal remedies were being put into place in an attempt to improve inequities in the workplace. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required all employers to provide equal pay to men and women who performed work similar in skill, effort, and responsibility, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in all employment practices. Affirmative action created in 1965 by Executive Order 11246 required government contractors to have a written plan to remedy the effects of past discrimination. In 1972, federal equal opportunity legislation was extended to institutions of higher education.

Schiller's work was the first that looked systematically at the status of women in librarianship, but it was certainly not the last. Since the mid-1970s, there have been many attempts to gauge the place of women in the library profession and their success in gaining upper-level administrative positions. Although there has been research focusing on the status of women in public and special libraries, the majority of the research has looked at academic librarianship, the sector of the profession that has traditionally employed the lowest percentage of women. At present, approximately 70 percent of credentialed academic librarians in the United States are female (Davis & Hall, 2007, p. 20). In the largest research libraries, the percentage is even lower; slightly less than two thirds of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) professional staff is female (Association of Research Libraries, 2008, p. 10).

In the almost forty years since affirmative action and EEO legislation were made applicable to academic libraries, there have been substantive efforts to increase the number of female administrators, and undoubtedly women have made great strides in obtaining administrative positions in academic libraries. These changes have been especially dramatic in the ARL libraries, the largest and most prestigious libraries in the United States

and Canada. In 1972, when equal opportunity law was made applicable to academic libraries, there were two female ARL directors; in 2007–8, women held sixty-nine (almost 56 percent) out of the 111 reported ARL directorships (Association of Research Libraries, 2008, p. 13).

In a similar manner, women have made strides in achieving pay equity with their male colleagues, although there is still a persistent gender gap in salaries. The annual *Library Journal* survey of entry-level positions shows that the salaries of beginning female librarians are on average almost 8 percent lower than those of beginning male librarians (Maatta, 2008). This salary gap between male and female librarians is found in all types of libraries, including academic libraries. The latest ARL Salary Survey shows that the overall salary of women in the ARL university libraries was 95 percent of that paid to men. This is however a “marked closure” of the salary gap between genders over the long run. In 1980–81, women in ARL libraries were paid approximately 87 percent of what their male colleagues were paid (Association of Research Libraries, 2008, p. 10). So women seem to be moving toward greater equality in both positions held and in salary earned.

Many librarians look at the changed administrative landscape, and assume that the problem of gender equity has been corrected. However, despite statistics showing an increased number of women directors, there is little hard evidence available about their representation in all types and levels of academic libraries and whether women are continuing to make the gains necessary to lead to parity.

It is time to take another look at gender equity. This study charts the trajectory of the progress women have made in assuming administrative positions in academic libraries during the past three decades. It builds upon earlier research begun in the 1980s that examined the impact of affirmative action in increasing the number of women in all levels of the administration in various types of academic libraries. Since current efforts at achieving diversity in academic libraries are largely targeted to race and ethnicity, there seems to be an assumption that gender equity has been achieved. This study examines that assumption and provides an answer to the question of whether women are now holding the positions of director, associate director, and department head in academic libraries in proportion to their representation in the profession.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been written since 1974 about the status of women in academic libraries, but only a small part of that literature has looked at the career progression of women administrators. As the profession has moved to looking at diversity largely in terms of race and ethnicity, an even smaller amount of literature on the topic has been recently published. The stress on diversity in a wider sense is a welcome one, but it has resulted in decreasing attention paid to the progress of women in academic librarianship.

A few recent studies have looked at the percentage of women holding directorships in certain types of academic libraries. Hatcher (1997), in her survey of the group of Council on State University Libraries (COSUL), found that women held only 28 percent of the directorships in these libraries, although females were finding it easier to obtain library director positions through external hires. Fisher (1997) questioned the perception that males dominated managerial ranks in librarianship. He used the listings in the 1993–94 *American Library Directory* to ascertain the number of men and women holding managerial positions, either as directors or branch managers, in academic, public, and special libraries. Looking specifically at academic libraries, he found that women directors were more common in medium and small academic libraries, but that 64 percent of large and 58 percent of medium-large academic libraries were headed by men (Fisher, 1997). Deborah Hollis (1999) used the *American Library Directory* from 1986–87 through 1997–98 to identify the library deans and directors of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) university members. In 1986, 18 percent of the eighty-six libraries had female directors; by 1997, 43 percent were headed by women. The universities in the South and Midwest were slower to promote women to directorships than those in the West and Southwest. In all sections of the country, however, men and women of color continued to have a very small presence among directors (Hollis, 1999). McCracken's (2000) research on the importance of the PhD degree for academic library directors focused on the libraries of selective liberal arts colleges; he found that in those libraries, thirty-three (41 percent) of the sixty directorships were held by women. None of these most recent studies have shown women holding director's positions in proportion to their representation in academic librarianship.

Several recent articles have explored the relationship between female academic librarians' administrative success and various factors often associated with such success. Zemon and Bahr (2005) looked at the impact of motherhood on becoming an academic library director and found that it was not a significant factor in preventing women from attaining directorships. Kirkland (1997) looked at the impact of mentoring on success in attaining administrative positions; she found it to be an important factor and concluded that a more active approach to mentoring would allow librarianship to cultivate its "missing women library directors."

Despite the commonly held view that women have achieved parity in academic library administration, there are a few authors who remind us that the goal may not have been achieved. In an editorial in *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Martell (1995) states his concern that affirmative action programs in the United States will be dismantled, effectively undermining the success that such programs have had in increasing diversity. Martell is concerned about diversity in its broadest sense, but he observes that although progress for women seems to have been particularly suc-

cessful at the level of director, the results are less clear for other levels. Hildenbrand (1997) in "Still Not Equal: Closing the Library Gender Gap" covers the advances made by women in librarianship but expresses apprehension about the inequities that still exist, including the salary differences between males and females in almost all types of libraries and the disparities between male and female faculty in schools of library and information science. Hildenbrand concludes that while statistical data show some gains for women over the past twenty years, traditional patterns persist, and that the profession's interest in data collections and publication devoted to gender equity appears to be dwindling despite the "puzzling persistence of inequity in a profession that is more than eighty percent women, including an under-representation at the top" (Hildenbrand, 1997, p. 45).

In 2004, Marta Maestrovic Deyrup asks the question "Is the Revolution Over? Gender, Economic and Professional Parity in Academic Library Leadership Positions." She examined the Carnegie doctoral research/extensive institutions between December 2002 and January 2003 and at that time found that women held 55 percent of the directorships of these institutions. She concludes that "the issue of women's advancement to parity in the academic library field has reached a satisfactory conclusion," and suggests that now recruitment and retention are the issues that need to be addressed as the generation of women directors who broke through the gender barrier begins to retire (Deyrup, 2004). Recruitment and retention are indeed important issues, but is it really time to declare that the revolution for women in academic librarianship has been won? Women are unquestionably holding more administrative positions of all types than they were before the struggle for gender equity in librarianship began. But has parity been reached? The question still seems to be unanswered, and a declaration of victory may be premature.

METHODOLOGY

To provide an overview of the status of women in administration of academic libraries, a follow-up study was done to two earlier pieces of research on the same topic. In an effort to assess the impact of affirmative action law on women in academic libraries, Moran published research in 1985 that compared the status of women in academic libraries in 1972 and 1982. Although affirmative action law applied to both women and minorities, only women were looked at in the study. Using the *American Library Directory* as a source, the names of individuals holding the positions of director, associate director or assistant director, or department head in three types of academic libraries in 1972 and in 1982 were gathered. The results of the study showed that in the decade after 1972, when affirmative action laws were applied to institutions of higher education, women made some advances in being appointed to administrative positions. The great-

est numerical gains for women were found in midlevel administrative positions, especially the assistant/associate library director (AUL) positions in non-ARL research and doctoral granting universities and the ARL libraries and in the department head level at the ARL libraries. There were more female directors, but the gains at that level were disappointing. Female directors had increased from 34 percent to 39 percent in liberal arts colleges, which as a group had always had the most female directors. However, women still constituted fewer than 20 percent of the directors in the larger, research libraries, having increased from 6 percent to 18 percent in the non-ARL research and doctoral granting universities, and from 2 percent to 14 percent in the ARL libraries. The most encouraging data, however, was the evidence provided of the larger number of women at the AUL and department head rank, because these women were now in positions where they would be gaining experience that would qualify them to move into director's positions as they became available. Moran suggested that with time, many of these women would be promoted into director's positions.

In the mid-1990s, Sullivan (1996) replicated the work done by Moran. Looking at the same group of libraries in the earlier study, she found that the expectation that women who had achieved midlevel administrative positions in 1982 would be ready to move into director's positions was correct. Interestingly, the most dramatic increase in women directors came in the ARL libraries, where it had been most difficult for women to attain directorships previously. In 1994 women held 42 percent of the directorships of Liberal Arts I colleges, 45 percent in the non-ARL research libraries, and 38 percent in the ARL libraries. Although the study indicated that women did not yet hold directorships in proportion to their representation in the library workforce, nonetheless the increase in female administrators from a decade before was encouraging and provided evidence that progress toward equity was continuing.

In 1985, Moran commented that although advances for women had resulted from affirmative action and more should be expected, "we must not become complacent and assume that these advances will occur automatically" (p. 215). Although women seem to have achieved parity in academic libraries in the more than three decades since EEO law was applied to academic libraries, it is premature to declare victory without an analysis of exactly how many administrative positions women have achieved and if they are maintaining those positions. This research builds upon Moran's and Sullivan's earlier work and revisits the impact of affirmative action on women in academic libraries.

In order to compare the results of Moran's 1982 study with the realities of today's situation, the same methodology was used to analyze the distribution of men and women in the three tiers of administration. Listings in *American Library Directory* for 1994 and 2004 were used to gather

information on the people in these positions in two types of libraries: the ARL libraries and the libraries found in liberal arts colleges that had previously been classified in the Carnegie Classification as "Liberal Arts I" institutions. The ARL libraries need little introduction. These are the largest academic research libraries in the United States. The Carnegie Classification Liberal Arts I institutions were a small group of highly selective, elite undergraduate institutions that scored very high on a selectivity index and were among the undergraduate institutions which had the most graduates later receiving PhDs at leading universities. The ARL and the Liberal Arts I libraries were selected because they represented institutions where women were most likely to encounter a glass ceiling. To provide continuity, the same 100 ARL academic libraries and the same 113 Carnegie Liberal Arts I academic libraries examined in the previous research were the focus of this new study.

The Liberal Arts I academic classification is no longer used by Carnegie. In 1994, the categories in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education were redone, and the categories modified. However, regardless of how the Carnegie classification now categorizes them, the same ARL and Liberal Arts I institutions that had been used in the 1984 study were used in this study.

The three tiers of administration included directors (tier one), associate directors (tier two), and department heads (tier three). Associate directors were eliminated from our study when their titles indicated that they were in donor relations, public relations, or human relations. The rationale was that these individuals can be in a different career track than the other assistant directors and that frequently these positions are held by someone without a library degree. Absent from our analysis were heads of branch libraries, because these individuals are unique to large library systems and so do not have comparable positions in smaller libraries. Acting incumbents for any of the three tiers were included. If a position was open in one year, even if it had been occupied in the other year, that position was not included in the analysis.

The data in *American Library Directory* were often not comparable from one edition to the next, as the way in which the libraries reported their positions was not always the same. For example, sometimes the position titles changed and sometimes only the director was listed. Where data were missing or ambiguous, the institutions were contacted and asked to provide the data, and the *American Library Directory* editions for 1993, 1995, 2003, and 2005 were consulted to see if another edition would provide more information. If the data were still missing, the institution was eliminated from the study. If the gender of the incumbent in a position was not readily apparent from the first name or if only initials were used, attempts were made to establish gender by checking biographical directories, the Internet, and other editions of the *American Library Directory*. In the few

instances when gender was not able to be established, the individual was eliminated from the analyses. Finally, one institution had been absorbed into another institution and so was eliminated from the study. After excluding institutions for all these reasons, there were 99 ARL libraries and 112 Carnegie Liberal Arts I libraries in the study, a total of 211 libraries.

In addition to analyzing the data from 1972, 1982, 1994, and 2004 to determine trends, a workforce analysis was conducted on the resulting data. This allows for the snapshot of the workforce of academic library administration to be analyzed in light of the number of men and women in libraries, looking at the difference in percentages between the number of women in library administration and the general availability of women in the labor market for academic libraries, as well as comparing that data to the percentage of women in management positions in the United States.

RESULTS

At the highest levels of administration in academic libraries, women still have not achieved parity; the percentage of women holding directors' positions is still lower than the overall percentage of women working in academic libraries. However, in both ARL and Carnegie Liberal Arts I libraries, the number of women in administration has increased dramatically. As can be seen in Table 1, the percentage of women directors increased from 39 percent in 1994 to nearly 61 percent in 2004 in ARL libraries; in Carnegie Liberal Arts I libraries, the percentage of women directors increased from 40 percent in 1994 to almost 51 percent in 2004. In both types of libraries, in 2004 there were more women than men in all management levels. The numbers are especially striking in ARL libraries, when one considers that in 1972 only 2 percent of the directors were women.

Since the earlier studies had shown that the percentages of women holding the ranks of department head or AUL were increasing, it would be expected that if there were no gender discrimination the number of female directors would have increased. In order to become a library director, candidates must show that they possess the desired qualifications. One of those qualifications is a demonstrated record of progressively increasing administrative experience in a similar institution. The previous studies have shown that there were already a large number of women in the system gaining experience at the lower administrative ranks and becoming qualified for a higher position. It is unknown to what extent female managers have remained in the type of library that they were in at the time the data was captured; however, even assuming that there has been some cross-pollination between ARL and Carnegie libraries, there are enough females in each decade in the department head levels in both ARL and Liberal Arts I libraries to supply open positions in the assistant/associate directors levels for both types of libraries and similarly to supply candidates for the director level positions in both.

Table 1. Women in Academic Libraries, 1972–2004

	ARL			Carnegie (Liberal Arts I)		
	<i>Director</i>	<i>Asst/Assoc Director</i>	<i>Dept Head</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>Asst/Assoc Director</i>	<i>Dept Head</i>
1972*	<i>n</i> = 2 (2.2%)	<i>n</i> = 40 (19.6%)	<i>n</i> = 381 (50.7%)	<i>n</i> = 38 (33.9%)	<i>n</i> = 31 (59.6%)	<i>n</i> = 317 (78.3%)
1982*	<i>n</i> = 12 (13.5%)	<i>n</i> = 63 (38.4%)	<i>n</i> = 458 (56.9%)	<i>n</i> = 44 (38.9%)	<i>n</i> = 22 (59.5%)	<i>n</i> = 340 (73.9%)
1994	<i>n</i> = 39 (39.4%)	<i>n</i> = 132 (51.2%)	<i>n</i> = 455 (61.8%)	<i>n</i> = 45 (40.2%)	<i>n</i> = 355 (71.6%)	<i>n</i> = 407 (76.6%)
2004	<i>n</i> = 52 (60.6%)	<i>n</i> = 124 (58.2%)	<i>n</i> = 281 (63.6%)	<i>n</i> = 57 (50.9%)	<i>n</i> = 366 (73.9%)	<i>n</i> = 428 (74.6%)

*The 1972 and 1982 data are from Moran's "Impact of affirmative action on academic libraries."

In 1972, nearly 51 percent of the department heads in ARL libraries and 78 percent of the department heads in Carnegie Liberal Arts I libraries were women. These numbers have increased slightly each decade, bringing the number of women in the department head level in 2004 to almost 64 percent for ARL libraries and 75 percent in Liberal Arts I libraries. This same pattern continues in the assistant/associate directors levels, where more dramatic gains have been attained. In 1972, 20 percent of the ARL assistant/associate directors were women, and in 2004, 58 percent of the ARL AULs were women, more than doubling the representation of women in this level of administration. Just from 1994 to 2004, the representation of female AULs in ARL libraries increased by 7 percent, even though the total number of women AULs declined. (This decline is attributed to fewer total positions, not to a smaller percentage of women in those positions.)

An analysis of the "flows" into the director's position allows an interesting look at the amount of turnover in these positions from 1994 and 2004 and at how often males and how often females moved into vacant positions. Although the positions may have changed more frequently than indicated by the analysis, it provides a rough approximation of how many directors' positions became vacant and were refilled during the ten years being studied. As can be seen in Table 2, for the ninety-nine ARL libraries studied, only ten male directors and eleven female directors remained in their positions from 1994 to 2004. There were forty-two libraries in which a new director of a different gender was hired. For fourteen of the positions that had been held by women, men were hired as their replacements. However, twenty-eight of the positions that had been held by men in 1994 were held by women in 2004. Thirteen of the female directors in 1994 were replaced by other female directors in 2004, and twenty-three of the male directors in 1994 were replaced by other male directors in 2004.

In the 112 Liberal Arts I libraries studied, only twenty-six male direc-

tors and fourteen female directors remained in their positions. There were thirty-one positions in which the gender of the director changed with the new hire. For thirteen of the positions that had been held by women, men were hired as their replacements. However, twenty of the positions that were held by men in 1994 were held by women in 2004. Seventeen of the female directors in 1994 were replaced by other female directors in 2004, and twenty-one of the male directors in 1994 were replaced by male directors in 2004.

These numbers illustrate not only the high turnover in the director-level positions between 1994 and 2004 in both the ARL and Liberal Arts I Libraries, but also explain how the increase in female directors has been attained. In the ten year period studied, 64 percent of the Liberal Arts I libraries had new directors, and 79 percent of the ARL libraries had new directors, thus providing opportunity for more women to assume director positions. The number of female directors increased by 33 percent in ARL libraries and increased by 26 percent in Liberal Arts I libraries as women not only remained in their positions or were replaced by other women, but were hired to replace men in the director positions. Unfortunately, this same analysis is not possible for the other administrative levels in the ARL and Liberal Arts I libraries studied, as not only did the titles of positions change, some positions were eliminated and new positions were added.

Given the high proportion of females employed in academic libraries of all types, it is interesting to compare the percentage of women in management in academic libraries to the percentage of women in management positions nationwide. As can be seen in Table 3, just as the percentage of women was increasing in the upper levels of academic library administration from 1994–2004, so too was the percentage of women in management positions of all types. Librarianship is a female-intensive profession, and perhaps it is not surprising that female representation in library management finally exceeds that national average of female managers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average number of women in management positions in the United States was 32 percent in 1994 (1999), which increased to 50 percent in 2004 (2005). Based on our data, the average of all the Liberal I and ARL library management positions held by women was 64 percent in 1994 and 67 percent in 2004. In both years, female academic librarians in management positions far exceeded the national average for female managers.

DISCUSSION

From the 1960s until the 1990s, gender equity was a topic of great importance in library workforce studies. Women have definitely made progress in achieving larger numbers of administrative posts than they had held previously, and most librarians have assumed that the struggle to achieve gender equity has been won. This study suggests that although women are

Table 2. ARL and Liberal Arts I Library Directors, 1994–2004

	ARL	Liberal Arts I
Number male directors in same job	10	26
Number female directors in same job	11	14
Number female to male director changes	14	13
Number male to female director changes	28	20
Number female to female director changes	13	17
Number male to male director changes	23	21
Total number of directors	99	111

Table 3. Women in Management, 1994 and 2004

	1994	2004
Managers in the General Population	32%	50%
Academic Library Managers	64%	67%

not yet represented in all areas of academic library administration in proportion to their representation in the total academic library workforce, they have made great strides and have actually achieved equity in some areas of administration.

In the ARL libraries, 64 percent of librarians are female (Association of Research Libraries, 2008, p. 10). Although there are no exact statistics available for the percentage of female librarians in the Carnegie Libraries studied, it is reasonable to expect that they would be similar to academic libraries in general, where approximately 70 percent of the credentialed librarians are female (Davis & Hall, 2007, p. 20). The benchmark typically used in studies of workforce equity is the percentage of individuals of a certain group (gender, race, etc.) working in a relevant position compared to the percentage of that group available in the workforce. Some random variation is unavoidable, but over time, logic suggests that an unbiased hiring/promotion system would reflect the same percentage of individuals throughout the system that are available in the qualified workforce.

The results from this study are encouraging and demonstrate the strides that women have made in achieving administrative positions since affirmative action laws were made applicable to institutions of higher education in 1972.

Since 1972, the ARL libraries have made the biggest advances in the proportion of administrative positions held by women. In 1972, 2 percent of the directors, 20 percent of the AULs, and 51 percent of the department heads were female. Those percentages lagged far behind the percentage of females then available in the ARL work force. In 2004, the figures show dramatic improvement. Sixty-one percent of the directors,

58 percent of the AULs, and 64 percent of the department heads were women; these percentages far better reflect the general workforce, which is 64 percent female.

There was a higher proportion of women in the administrative ranks in the Liberal Arts I college libraries in 1972 (nearly 34 percent of the directors, nearly 60 percent of the assistant/associate directors, and 78 percent of the department heads). These libraries have also gained in the percentages of female administrators, and in 2004, 51 percent of the directors, 74 percent of the assistant/associate directors, and 75 percent of the departments heads were women. With a female representation in the workforce of 70 percent, women are slightly overrepresented in the assistant/associate director and the department head positions. However, they still remain underrepresented at the director level.

Do these percentages mean that women have achieved equity in the administration of academic libraries? Only in the director's level in the Liberal Arts I libraries is the gap large enough to cause concern. In all the other cases, the representation of women is either equal or within 5 or 6 percent of achieving equity, and in two types of administrative positions women are slightly overrepresented.

These results are encouraging. They demonstrate the tremendous progress women have made in the thirty years studied in their ability to be hired in all ranks of administration, and even more importantly, they show that women have almost achieved equity with their male colleagues. There is still a substantial gap at the director's level in the Carnegie Libraries and a smaller gap at the ARL libraries, but in all the cases, except for the director's level at the Carnegie Libraries, this gap might be explained by random variations in the hiring patterns in a particular year. Although it would be highly unusual for the proportions of administrators to exactly mirror the percentages of males and females in the academic library workforce, it is a bit troubling that the only overrepresentation was found in the lower ranks of administration in the smaller, non-ARL libraries.

Overall, however, women in academic libraries have achieved greater equity than their other female colleagues on campus. According to a recent AAUP study, women are still a minority of tenured and tenure-track faculty, although women earn more than half the PhDs conferred in the United States (West & Curtis, 2006). "Women face more obstacles as faculty in higher education than they do as managers and directors in corporate America," according to the report (p. 7). Women have not been "welcomed into the faculty ranks," says the report, and they confront an "inequitable hurdle" when it comes time to apply for tenure (p. 9). Females are not only underrepresented in the faculty ranks but also in the administration of institutions of higher education. For instance, only 20 percent of all four year colleges or universities have a woman president (American Council on Education, 2007).

Academic librarianship has been ahead of other sectors of higher education in reaching near equity for women. Of course, it must be remembered that since most librarians are female, librarianship would naturally have had more success in advancing women into upper-level positions than other sectors that do not have such a high proportion of women. Nonetheless, since there are still societal factors such as child and elder care and limited mobility, which affect women more than men, the gains made by women librarians in achieving administrative positions in academic libraries are especially impressive. Women may not yet have achieved complete equity, but they are certainly within striking distance.

However, it is important for librarians to realize that they cannot rest on their laurels. The near equity that has been achieved for women must be guarded and improved upon. The new hiring emphases on race and ethnicity, although very important for the profession as a whole, must be watched to ensure that they do not disadvantage women as a whole. In addition, the continuing pay gap between male and female librarians is troubling, and further research should be undertaken to discover why female librarians are receiving lower salaries than their male colleagues.

It has been over thirty-five years since equal opportunity legislation was extended to institutions of higher education. In that third of a century female librarians have succeeded in almost erasing the gender gap in academic library administration. It is an achievement that all librarians can celebrate. We have definitely come a long way in a relatively short time.

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