

**EQUITY ISSUES IN GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENTS OF CANADIAN  
UNIVERSITIES AND DEGREE-GRANTING UNIVERSITY COLLEGES**

**A Survey by the Canadian Association of Geographers**

**Designed, conducted and analysed by the CAG Standing Committee on  
Equity Issues within the discipline of geography, pursuant to a mandate  
given by the CAG Executive Committee**

**Final Report, June 1996**

**by**

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# EQUITY ISSUES IN GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENTS OF CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES AND DEGREE-GRANTING UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

## Background and Objectives of Survey

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At its June 1992 meeting, the CAG Executive decided to establish a new standing committee on equity issues within the discipline of geography. In so doing it took up an initiative proposed by the Canadian Women and Geography Study Group of the CAG and inspired by similar developments in other Canadian academic/professional associations. The committee's purpose was to monitor and raise awareness about equity issues in geography, so as to help departments create climates that minimize barriers faced by women, visible minorities, aboriginal persons and persons with disabilities to participation in the affairs of the discipline. The detailed terms of reference were approved one year later and were reproduced in the *CAG Newsletter* 1 (3), 1994 (reproduced in Annexe 1 of the present report).

Although the Equity Committee was intended to be a permanent committee of the Association, it will in fact be wound up once the final version of the present report has been accepted by the CAG Executive. This is a consequence of the Executive's decision to rationalize its committee structure to take account of the reduction in size of the Executive necessitated by government cutbacks to the CAG's funding. Henceforth, equity issues are an explicit part of the mandate of the CAG/Association Affairs Committee.

Following the mandate given to it by the Executive, the Equity committee undertook to conduct the survey of equity issues which forms the object of the present report. The survey, addressed to Chairs of all Canadian geography departments offering degrees or university-transfer programmes, sought to obtain information as to the representation of women, visible minority groups and aboriginal persons in the faculty and graduate student bodies, in general and by field of speciality.<sup>1</sup> In the case of women, it was deemed important to update the information obtained in previous surveys conducted by Janet Momsen and by the Canadian Women and Geography Study Group (see Mackenzie's 1989 article in *The Operational Geographer*,

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<sup>1</sup> Although the CAG membership data base provides detailed information about the occupational or student status and field of work of its members, many faculty and students in Canadian geography departments are not members of the Association and the membership profile diverge somewhat from the profile of all faculty and students.

reproduced in full in Annexe 2 of the present report). In the case of visible minorities and aboriginal persons, no data had previously been collected. Some questions were also designed to assess how departments were coping with the implementation of equity policies and to what extent they had access to resources helping them to accommodate faculty and students with disabilities. Open-ended responses were encouraged. In addition, information was requested about parental leave policies for graduate students, and a question was asked about PhD completion rates, since previous Canadian research has shown these to be matters of concern given the changing demographic profile of the graduate student body.

## Procedure and Survey Response Rate

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After various drafts were circulated among committee members and submitted to the CAG Executive for comments, the questionnaire was reviewed by a specially-convened CAG Ethics Committee and then pre-tested in early summer 1994. The final questionnaire was mailed to Department Chairs in August 1994 (English version) and October 1994 (French version). The English version is included as Annexe 3 of the present report. Reminders were sent out to those who did not initially respond. Many departments responded promptly but the last two questionnaires were returned only in late spring 1995. Computer coding and base tabulations were completed in July 1995 (these were paid for by a \$500 grant from the CAG to hire a student assistant).<sup>2</sup>

Responses were received from 33 out of the 42 departments contacted (78.6%).<sup>3</sup> Among the 22 universities offering PhD programmes in Geography in Fall 1994, 18 returned the questionnaire (81.8%).<sup>4</sup> These departments told us that they graduated a total of 193 master's students (Q21) and 61 PhD students (Q25) in 1993, the year preceding the survey.

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<sup>2</sup> Apart from this the only costs incurred by the CAG for the survey have been for photocopying and mailing.

<sup>3</sup> The following did not respond: University College of the Cariboo, University College of New Caledonia, the Université de Montréal, University of Ottawa, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, University of Saskatchewan, University of Waterloo and University of Winnipeg. *NB: It is normal to indicate the names of non-respondents in reports of surveys addressed to public bodies such as universities. Given that a number of questions deal with policies that are a matter of public record, and that some of the quantitative questions deal with data on aspects that vary widely from one department to another, such as area of specialty, knowing which university departments did not participate is essential to evaluating systematic bias in the survey. It must be stressed that mentioning the non-respondents is a methodological necessity and does not in any way imply reproach or criticism of departments that chose not to participate in this project.*

<sup>4</sup> Non-respondents: Montréal, Ottawa, Saskatchewan and Waterloo.

It should be noted that this is a much higher response rate than that yielded by a more general survey administered by the AAG in May 1995 in which responses were received from only 16 Canadian geography departments, including 11 classified as "Research universities" (see *AAG Directory, 1995-96*). However it is not as high as that obtained in previous Canadian surveys (see Annexe 2). The reasons for this remain a matter of speculation, but may include the length of the questionnaire or of fatigue on the part of chairs and departmental assistants in the current era of budgetary restraint coupled with increasing administrative tasks. Response rates to a few questions or parts of questions were somewhat lower than the overall response rate.

In one respect the response rate is disappointing: only 2 of the 5 francophone Québec departments returned the questionnaire. This was in spite of the fact that a version of the questionnaire was prepared in (error-free) French and with adaptation of Q11 to the situation prevailing in francophone universities in Québec. Fortunately, two of the three francophone or bilingual universities in New Brunswick and Ontario did participate in the survey.

## **Summary and Discussion of Major Findings**

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### ***Implementation of employment equity policies for faculty***

Implementation of employment equity principles and policies at the departmental level depends strongly upon the institutional framework established by universities. In Canada, nearly all Canadian universities conform to the guidelines set down by the Federal Contractors' Programme. The earliest policies were adopted in 1986, and most have been established over the last decade, with 1991 being the "peak" year among respondents to our survey. A few have undergone modification in response to Federal Contractors' Programme Compliance Reviews. The guidelines require that in order to be eligible to bid on federal contracts of \$200 000 or more, universities establish an employment equity programme. The minimum programme requirements are to collect statistics on employment of members of the designated groups, to report on workforce representation, and to establish a plan to implement employment equity. Among 33 Canadian geography departments that replied to our survey, three belonged to universities in which there is no employment equity policy.

The Federal Contractors' Programme provides little incentive for implementation beyond the minimum requirements, and no serious programme to address non-compliance. It is generally believed by employment equity experts that the standard set by the Programme has little effect in improving current conditions. Canadian universities range widely in both the scope and the implementation of employment equity programmes beyond the minimum requirements. There is

considerable variation across Canada in the extent to which universities exceed the minimum requirements and also, therefore, in the extent to which they succeed in overcoming barriers to equality.

Our survey did not collect comprehensive data on employment equity programmes in Canadian universities, and responses to questions 2 through 6 were too sketchy, or the numbers too small, to be worth presenting in tabular form. This section, therefore, addresses the situation generally, by discussing problems in the overall application of equity programmes, and identifying “best practices” that exist in some universities and departments. This discussion should provide useful background and context for the specific survey findings about the representation of women, visible minorities and aboriginals in geography departments, which we present later in this report.

Generally speaking, employment equity policies in Canadian universities have focused on hiring practices and, in conformity to requirements under the Federal Contractors' Programme, on numbers. The major point of such policies is to ensure that no individual is denied access to employment. Most, but by no means all, universities have a policy of including an employment equity statement in advertisements for academic positions, suggesting either that principles of employment equity will be followed in the hiring process, or specifying that members of the designated groups are welcome to apply. Some universities collect statistics on job applicants, recording how many members of designated groups are interviewed and/or hired. Others have sent questionnaires to their existing faculty asking them to indicate whether they consider themselves as belonging to one of the designated groups. These statistics, based on self identification, show that universities as a whole, as well as departments of geography, are far from achieving numerical representation of the designated groups within the work force. Despite the official requirement that equity policies apply to all four designated groups, the emphasis on women is overwhelming. Nonetheless, women approach representative numbers in only a few disciplines, and only at the assistant professor level. Members of visible minority groups have made the most progress in medicine and science, but are still under-represented. Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities remain seriously under- represented in nearly all fields.

In principle, however, employment equity is meant to go far beyond the numbers, to ensure the creation of an equitable work place by removing not only barriers to employment but all forms of discrimination in the workplace. Nearly all universities have in place some procedures that conform to the Federal and Provincial Human Rights Acts, especially in respect of sexual, racial and workplace harassment. Procedures for dealing with egregious violations of equity, such as sexual harassment, vary widely. Most universities have sexual harassment counsellors or advisors, although some have investigative power and others do not. Some place

responsibility for redressing cases in the hands of university committees, while others give responsibility directly to the President or Principal.

Universities have only recently begun coming to terms with the question of workplace discomfort as a feature of the overall environment. Where such an environment results from persistent discriminatory attitudes and practices, the situation is known as a "chilly climate" (for a comprehensive discussion, see Caplan 1994). This issue will be at the forefront of equity discussions for some time to come.

Structures to develop and implement general equity policies also vary greatly. Universities generally have some means to convey the principle that inequitable practices are not acceptable, and most also have designated individuals with responsibility for educational programmes, which might include developing and distributing literature, conducting seminars or counselling, as well as direct involvement in policy formation. Most also have a committee structure, but there is wide variance in the number of committees, in the degree to which equity responsibility is diffused throughout the university, and in the reporting system.

Policy implementation varies in three crucial areas. The first is the degree of *coordination* among the various equity-serving functions. In some universities, the employment equity policy is only one of a number of equity-promoting policies that might include human rights policies, or specific policies for sexual harassment, workplace harassment and racial harassment. The most effective implementation occurs when equity offices are coordinated under the purview of an individual with senior administrative responsibility, to ensure consistency, to facilitate communication, and to place equity on the agenda of senior policy makers. It is not sufficient, however, simply to state that equity is the responsibility of all senior administrators; it is necessary that the policy be implemented by persons with appropriate training and background.

The second area is the degree to which policies go *beyond the minimum* legal requirements to address the subtle ways in which barriers to equity are created, and to develop effective practices to change institutional culture. These include: hiring practices to that take measures to achieve greater representation of designated groups; the incorporation of specific equity considerations into tenure and promotion procedures; policies to facilitate family commitments; taking seriously the need for facilities for persons with disabilities; counselling services at an informal level to be used before recourse to formal complaint procedures; programmes (with funding attached) to encourage development of equitable curricula and equity-based research; university-wide programmes to encourage awareness of cultural difference; programmes for undergraduate and graduate students who are members of the designated groups; policies to address "chilly climate" issues that may not be directly addressed by formal legal procedures; representation of the designated groups on key university committees. The

most detailed equity documents (such as that, for example of the University of Guelph) specify equity procedures, as well as the officers responsible for implementation, and also develop special measures to redress the equity balance.

The third area concerns the *relationship between the university and the individual department*. An increasing number of Canadian universities now require departmental equity policies, or reports on equity practices. Most, however, are almost exclusively concerned with generating statistics on interviewing and hiring practices. Our questionnaire results indicate that 25 of 33 geography departments have departmental equity policies, while 8 either have no policies or did not respond to this question. Of the 25, eight stated that their policies apply only to women, and do not address the other three designated categories. In some departments, the general equity policy applies to all groups, but special hiring procedures apply only to women. Several survey respondents submitted copies of their university and/or departmental policies (see list in Annexe 4).

Our survey asked departmental chairs to comment on their own equity policy or on equity issues in general (Q7 and Q29). Many open-ended comments were received, which we have opted to keep confidential for the purposes of the present report, but the committee was surprised, and quite concerned, that we received numerous comments from departmental chairpersons indicating that, even when a university and/or departmental policy was in place, equity was not a consideration in departmental hiring practices. Some expressed the opinion that equity policies are themselves examples of discrimination, while others stated that the principle of "merit" comes before the principle of equity. We found these responses surprising given that we have yet to find a policy at any level in Canada that states that unqualified or less qualified individuals should ever be hired simply to fill quotas. Such comments also showed little recognition of the possibility that job descriptions might be biased in favour of white males, that curriculum might be similarly biased, or that members of the designated groups might not feel completely comfortable in the everyday departmental environment. The results suggest, therefore, that it may be in the interests of the discipline as a whole to foster further discussion around equity issues among all concerned, in order to improve understanding of the goals and mechanisms of employment equity programmes and to minimize the possibilities of backlash (see Tardy 1996). Perhaps the CAG/Association Affairs Committee could play a leading role in this respect.

### ***Faculty employment status by gender***

Survey question 11 requested data on faculty by tenure status, rank, gender and minority status. Respondents seemed to have a surprising degree of difficulty in filling out the questionnaire table

correctly. In some cases, we suspect that respondents erroneously assigned tenured associate professors to the tenure-track category, and tenure-track assistant professors to the tenured category; thus the data classifying faculty by tenure status should be treated with caution.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, few respondents clearly indicated the numbers who teach at Master's level or are eligible to supervise PhD students, so we do not present these data. Data about part-timers are also not included here because we suspect that reporting of this category was very uneven (apparently, some universities consider part-timers as "faculty", while others do not!). Given that recourse to part-timers is likely to increase as a result of the budgetary situation we believe it important to find a reliable way of monitoring the composition and status of this category of teaching staff.

FULL-TIME FACULTY BY GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS (Q11)

|                                | Total          | Men         | Women  |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Total, full-time faculty       | 543 (100%)     | 465 (100%)  | 78 (100%)<br><i>14.4% of category total</i>  |
| Tenured                        | 435.5 (80.2.%) | 397 (85.5%) | 38 (48.7%)<br><i>8.7% of category total</i>  |
| Tenure-track (not yet tenured) | 74.5 (13.7%)   | 44.5 (9.6%) | 30 (38.5%)<br><i>40.3% of category total</i> |
| Full-time temporary            | 33 (6.1%)      | 23 (4.9%)   | 10 (12.8%)<br><i>30.3% of category total</i> |

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents reported 32 assistant professors as being tenured and 7.5 associate professors as being tenure-track i.e. not yet tenured. While we know that tenure and promotion are not necessarily linked in all universities, these findings seem to show an excessive degree of such non-linkage.

FULL-TIME TENURED AND TENURE TRACK FACULTY BY GENDER AND RANK (Q11)

|                     | Total         | Men           | Women   |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---|
| Total               | 510 (100%)    | 442 (100%)    | 68 (100%),<br><i>13.3% of category total</i>  |
| Full Professor      | 214.5 (42.1%) | 212.5 (48.1%) | 2 (2.9%),<br><i>0.9% of category total</i>    |
| Associate Professor | 171.5 (33.6%) | 146.5 (33.1%) | 25 (36.8%),<br><i>14.6% of category total</i> |
| Assistant Professor | 94 (18.4%)    | 58 (13.1%)    | 36 (52.9%),<br><i>38.3% of category total</i> |
| Unranked            | 23(4.5%)      | 22(5.0%)      | 1 (1.5%),<br><i>0.4% of category total</i>    |
| Other               | 7 (1.4%)      | 3 (0.7%)      | 4 (5.9%),<br><i>57.1 % of category total</i>  |

The two tables above show that the representation of women, although still very sparse at the tenured level and almost non-existent at the full professor level among responding departments, shows considerable improvement compared to that reported in the 1988-1989 survey (see Annexe 2). Among all full-time faculty, 14.4% are women, although this drops slightly to 13.3% if temporary full-time faculty are excluded. Representation is much higher, close to 40%, among tenure-track faculty, most of whom are assistant professors, clearly showing the profound effects of recent efforts by numerous departments to seek out highly qualified women when making junior appointments. However, the heavy numerical predominance of male full and associate professors means that it will take a long time yet before there is a semblance of gender equity even if present trends continue (i.e. if hiring rates are not severely cut back or frozen).

As to the distribution of women faculty across departments, among respondent departments there are no longer any PhD granting departments with no women on their faculty. In only 6 departments is the faculty still exclusively male; these are all undergraduate-only

institutions.<sup>6</sup> One respondent from a small department commented that efforts “to employ women faculty have recently been unsuccessful... it seems the lack of opportunity for spouse/partner in a small town constrains our success”.

NUMBER OF FEMALE FACULTY (AS OF JAN. 31, 1994)

| Female faculty     | None | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of departments | 6    | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 |

However, it is troubling to note that a further 7 departments only have one woman faculty member, including 3 PhD granting departments and 2 with Master's but no PhD programmes. We will return to the implications of this for female graduate students (the “mentoring” issue) in a later section of this report. Here, we will only draw attention to the fact that considerable anecdotal evidence exists (from Canada and the US) of the difficulties women faculty may face when they are the only woman in a geography department (see e.g. AAG CSWG 1984).<sup>7</sup> It is not just a question of incidents of harassment and discrimination that have been reported to occur from time to time. Even when male colleagues try to be supportive, lone women often feel like outsiders in a departmental culture based very much on “male bonding” (see also Caplan 1994; Kealey 1989, 1990). The sacrosanct principle of collegiality, possibly more enduring on Canadian campuses than their US counterparts, despite its very real benefits, can become an obstacle to creating a more comfortable climate for women inasmuch as it can deny legitimacy to making formal complaints when informal channels have failed to produce an improvement (see Caplan 1994). Other reported problems among lone women geographers include an excess of departmental and university committee work and an overload of supervisory tasks when there is a major imbalance between female faculty and female graduate students in a certain field.<sup>8</sup> Women faculty seem to find a much improved working and social atmosphere once a “critical

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<sup>6</sup> One of which has only a minor in geography and thus should perhaps have been excluded from the survey; however since the department took the trouble to fill out the questionnaire we decided to retain it.

<sup>7</sup> The Chair of the Equity Committee has collected together a number of accounts of life as a lone (or not alone) woman in US and Canadian geography departments. Confidentiality considerations prevent allusion to any particular cases, especially Canadian examples. A report on these experiences may appear in a future issue of the CWAG newsletter.

<sup>8</sup> A Université Laval study showed that female graduate students were three times as likely as male graduate students to choose a female supervisor (Doran 1992), although this is not necessarily true in all fields of study (de la Cour et al. 1990).

mass” of female colleagues has been achieved in their department.<sup>9</sup> This could be an important factor in helping to *retain* women faculty once they have been hired (see Council of Ontario Universities, Committee on the Status of Women 1992).

### ***Visible minority and aboriginal representation among faculty and graduate students***

The data collected on representation of visible minorities and aboriginal persons are inevitably very flawed and difficult to interpret. Almost all respondents based their classification of the minority status of faculty or graduate students on their own definition/impressions, which may or may not correspond to the professor’s or the student’s self-identification. We were somewhat surprised at the extent of recourse to this procedure for the case of faculty, given the requirements of the Federal Contractors’ Act discussed above. Are these data not made available to departments by the university administration, or are they usually not collected unless/until a federal equity audit is scheduled? In addition, several respondents refused to attempt such identification either for faculty or graduate students or both, stating, understandably, that they felt uncomfortable doing so. In the case of graduate students, some respondents could not provide any figures for minorities. One stated that *“we do not distinguish these categories, in a quantitative sense”*. Curiously however, the questions asking for the breakdown of faculty and graduate students by subject field yielded higher absolute numbers of visible minorities than the questions asking for total numbers! Rechecks of some of the raw data indicate inconsistencies within some individual questionnaires which we are unable to explain but which highlight the great subjectivity of the data about minorities.

#### FACULTY

Nevertheless, in spite of likely undercounting of minorities as a result of the difficulties discussed above, it is only too clear that there are still very few aboriginal persons and members of visible minorities in our discipline. The data on faculty from Q11 indicate that among the 543 full-time faculty members counted, there are almost certainly no aboriginal persons<sup>10</sup> and only 14 members of visible minorities (10 men and 4 women), 12 of whom are in tenured or tenure track positions.

Looking at the distribution of minorities across departments, we note that 20 of the 33 departments had no visible minority men on their faculty, and 28 had no visible minority women.

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<sup>9</sup> Additional sources of information for statements made in this paragraph come from a number of key informants who responded to a query put out by D. Rose on the GeogFem Internet network in spring 1996.

Moreover, visible minorities represented a notably small share of tenured and tenure stream professors. Twenty seven of the 33 departments did not have any tenured male professors who are members of visible minorities. Of the 397.5 tenured male professors reported by the 33 departments, only 6 (1.5%) were identified as “visible minority”. Thirty one departments had no visible minority men with tenure track appointments; 32 had no temporary full-time visible minority men; and 31 departments had no visible minority women in temporary full-time positions. If we assume that new tenured and tenure stream appointments will be filled in part from the currently employed non-tenured pool, it is unlikely that visible minorities will increase their share in the foreseeable future.

Although 25 of the 33 departments indicated that they had an equity policy for faculty, minority faculty members are virtually absent from geography departments. On the whole, despite the apparently popular view that employment equity programs unfairly privilege minorities and discriminate against qualified white males, there is no evidence of real employment gains by visible minorities or aboriginal people within university geography departments. The current crisis in university funding across the country probably will not improve this situation. In fact, the low complement of visible minorities suggests that they were not being hired even in the years when departments could afford to hire faculty. Furthermore, geography departments in Canada do not appear to have hired visible minorities directly from abroad, even though there is a long tradition of foreign hiring within Canadian academic geography. Indeed, given the current poor outlook for government financial support for universities, it is entirely possible that the proportion of visible minority faculty may actually decline in the future. This has already occurred in other disciplines in some Canadian universities. The survey data on minorities raise issues beyond mere numbers. For example, the way in which agendas are developed and prioritized, as well as the way issues are framed and examined, is not independent of the agents who are in a position to have their voices heard and influence outcomes. Consequently, the current data raise doubts about geography's capacity, and the collective ability of geographers, to engage substantively both with the new globalized economy and with Canada's ethno-racial diversity.

#### GRADUATE STUDENTS

Turning now to minority representation among geography graduate students, among the 774 master's students counted in Q20, there are only 15 members of visible minorities and 2 aboriginal persons. At the PhD level, and in contrast to the situation among faculty, the situation is somewhat better for visible minority representation, especially for men. According to the counts provided by Q24, 56 (16.5%) of the 339 students belong to a visible minority, including

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<sup>10</sup> The responses to the questionnaire show that 32 of 33 departments did not employ any aboriginal men or women on their respective faculties (the remaining department had missing data).

20.6% of male students (46) and 8.6% of female students (10); however, there are no aboriginal students (see table immediately below.) If, however, the larger proportions are mainly due to the presence of international (visa) students (which seems to be the case, although the survey data do not enable us to verify this), then this does not necessarily mean that there will soon be a larger pool of minority candidates available to be hired to faculty positions.

MASTER'S STUDENTS (FROM Q20)

|                              | Total      | Men                                 | Women                               |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Total                        | 774 (100%) | 437 (100%)<br><i>56.5% of total</i> | 337 (100%)<br><i>43.5% of total</i> |
| Visible minorities           | 15 (1.9%)  | 9 (2.1%)                            | 6 (1.8%)                            |
| Aboriginal persons           | 2          | 1                                   | 1                                   |
| International students (Q22) | 73         | n.a.                                | n.a.                                |

PhD STUDENTS (FROM Q24)

|                              |            |                                     |                                      |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Total                        | 339 (100%) | 223 (100%)<br><i>65.8% of total</i> | 116 (100%),<br><i>34.2% of total</i> |
| Visible minorities           | 56 (16.5%) | 46 (20.6%)                          | 10 (8.6%)                            |
| Aboriginal persons           | 0          | 0                                   | 0                                    |
| International students (Q26) | 127        | n.a.                                | n.a.                                 |

Data by subject field (QQ23 and 27, tabulated immediately below) yield higher numbers of visible minorities, even though the total student numbers yielded by these questions are lower than the totals yielded by QQ20 and 24.<sup>11</sup> Clearly, geography departments now have an

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<sup>11</sup> The discrepancy in totals by field (5 less than totals yielded by Q24 in the case of PhD students and 132 less than in Q20 in the case of Master's students) is not explained by the exclusion of visiting/exchange students from the questions by field of study, since only one visiting/exchange student was reported. Some departments may have internally-inconsistent data. In the case of

important role in PhD level training for visible minorities (especially men). This is likely related to the intake of foreign students at this level although this is not ascertainable from the survey data as we did not distinguish this sub-group. The portrait at the Master's level remains very disquieting as regards the low representation of minorities.

FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS BY ORIENTATION AND VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS

| FIELD                 | FACULTY      |                |           |                | GRADUATE STUDENTS |           |            |            |            |           |            |            |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
|                       | Men          |                | Women     |                | Women             |           |            |            | Men        |           |            |            |
|                       | Total        | Visible minor. | Total     | Visible minor. | total             | ab,vm*    | total      | vis minor. | total      | ab,vm*    | total      | vis minor. |
| Physical              | 135          | 5              | 16.5      | 1              | 77                | 1+1       | 24         | 1          | 109        | 2         | 63         | 14         |
| Human                 | 219          | 4              | 38        | -              | 115               | 1+6       | 57         | 5          | 139        | 11        | 87         | 21         |
| Env. St/<br>Resource. | 55           | 3              | 4         | -              | 63                | 2         | 19         | 5          | 68         | 2         | 37         | 11         |
| GIS/Cartho<br>/RS     | 48.5         | 1              | 4.5       | 2              | 20                | 2         | 13         | 1          | 51         | 1+5       | 34         | 8          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>457.5</b> | <b>13</b>      | <b>63</b> | <b>3</b>       | <b>275</b>        | <b>13</b> | <b>113</b> | <b>12</b>  | <b>367</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>221</b> | <b>54</b>  |
| % Vis.<br>Min         |              | 2.8            |           | 4.76           |                   | 4.7       |            | 10.6       |            | 5.7       |            | 24.0       |

\* Aboriginal and visible minority categories have been amalgamated due to the small numbers of aboriginal students, but the numbers for each category are listed independently

As to faculty, the low numbers of visible minority appointments make it difficult to discern a specialization as far as subject area. At the graduate level there seems to be a slightly higher number of visible minority female Master's students in human geography and at the PhD level an emphasis on human and environmental studies. The largest category of male visible minority PhDs is also in human geography.

We believe that recruiting more visible minority and aboriginal students to graduate programmes should be a major goal of geography departments. Outreach to potential master's students seems particularly urgent. This may involve changing certain perceptions about the discipline and about the viability of careers building on a geography background. Recent AAG meetings give the impression that the geography graduate student body in the United States has become enormously more ethnoculturally diverse in recent years. How can we foster a similar development in Canada? Otherwise, in the absence of a base from which to hire, how can departments possibly hope to be able to move in the future toward a faculty which more closely resembles the ethnocultural diversity of the country? How can they contribute to the employment

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Master's students, 61 of the 132 "missing cases" are accounted for by the non-availability of data from Carleton University on field of study of their students. It is possible that in numerous other

equity goals set by their universities ? Will they have to look outside Canada to hire faculty from minority groups?

### ***Faculty renewal***

Of the 33 departments participating in the survey, 31 had made tenure-track hirings in the previous five years (July 1989-July 1994). We were somewhat surprised to learn that a total of 97.5 new appointments had been made (Q12); this high rate of turnover, coupled with some expansion, has no doubt assisted considerably in increasing the numbers and proportions of women on faculty. "Internal" hiring is fairly unusual; only 20 of the new recruits were already serving as limited-term appointees and only 5 were postdoctoral or other research fellows in the departments concerned (QQ13-14). As to future hiring prospects (Q15), the responding departments expected to hire a total of 71 new tenure-track faculty in the next five years (1994-1999). However, several respondents commented that these were hoped-for rather than assured hirings, and it must be remembered that in certain provinces the questionnaires were completed before severe higher education cutbacks were implemented or announced.

In principle, implementing early retirement schemes could provide considerable scope for diversifying the gender and ethnocultural composition of geography faculty (since according to the survey, white male full professors account for 41.5% of all tenured or tenure-track faculty). Without such schemes, however, it will be difficult for many departments to change the situation significantly in the next few years due to financial restrictions on hiring, as several respondents pointed out (see Council of Ontario Universities 1995 and Thiverge 1994 for helpful discussions on this issue).

### ***Graduate students and faculty by orientation***

Compiling the results to QQ16, 23 and 27 posed some definitional problems although they were not major.<sup>12</sup> As to response rate, all participating departments responded to Q16. All responding departments with PhD programmes responded to Q27 and all but one to Q23. However, as noted in an earlier footnote, not all graduate students could be identified by field of study.

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cases the data to which respondents had access on subject fields of master's students was incomplete.

<sup>12</sup> Although the classification we proposed (human, physical, environmental / resource management; GIS / cartography / remote sensing) seemed to work for most respondents, a few respondents had to group together physical and environmental—in which case they were coded as physical. In the case of faculty holding joint appointments some respondents may have made an arbitrary choice between one or another category. In a few cases, respondents indicated joint appointments, in which case we allocated 0.5 position to each category.

PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS BY GENDER AND ORIENTATION

|                     | Faculty % |       | Graduate Students % |         |         |           |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|---------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
|                     | Men       | Women | Men M               | Women M | Men PhD | Women PhD |
| Physical            | 89.1      | 10.8  | 58.6                | 41.4    | 72.4    | 27.6      |
| Human               | 85.2      | 14.8  | 54.7                | 45.3    | 60.4    | 39.6      |
| Env St/<br>Resource | 93.2      | 6.8   | 51.9                | 48.1    | 66.1    | 33.9      |
| GIS/Carto/<br>RS    | 91.5      | 8.5   | 71.8                | 28.2    | 72.3    | 27.7      |

When displayed as percentages, the gender imbalance in faculty appointments is very readily observable, with the highest proportion of female faculty (14.8%) in human geography and the lowest (6.8%) in the area of environmental studies.

At the graduate level, the balance between men and women at the Masters level is much more equitable with the exception of GIS/cartography/remote sensing where the gender imbalance is notable. At the master's level only 7.3% of women are in this field compared to 13.9% of men. At the PhD level the respective figures are 11.5% and 15.4%. It will be important to encourage more women to enter this burgeoning field given the predominance of GIS in departmental hiring (see Gober et al. 1995a, 1995b). The proportion of female graduate students declines at the PhD level although proportionately, the percentage of women PhD students in the area of human geography declines by only 5.7%. Proportionally, the representation of women PhD students in GIS remains at a similar, but low, level of around 28%. Even at the PhD level, the proportion of women is considerably higher than the proportion of women faculty members in all areas of study.

The present major imbalance between the percentage of women on faculty and the percentage of women among graduate students should draw our attention to the "mentoring" question. Some studies show that women students tend to prefer female supervisors (Doran 1992), and the experience of members of the CAG's Canadian Women and Geography Study Group shows that this situation has contributed to a disproportionate supervisory workload being taken on by female faculty in the past several years, especially at the Master's level.

Some implications for future hiring can be drawn from this table and the preceding one. For example, in the area of greatest imbalance in faculty appointments, Environmental Studies, where 93.2% percent of current faculty are men, and 48% of Master's students and 33.9% (19) of PhD students are women, there seems some potential to address this imbalance in the future. In GIS where male faculty make up 91.5% of existing appointments, there are 13 women currently enrolled in PhD programs.

### ***Enrolment and completion rates at Master's and PhD level***

Overall, as of Jan. 1994, women comprised 43.5% of Master's students in geography departments but only 34.2% of PhD students. The percentage of women among PhD students has improved since the 1980s (see Annexe 2) but the "fall-off" between Master's and PhD level remains considerable.

In the absence of qualitative data from geography students and former students it is difficult to be sure why exactly this "fall-off persists". However, existing surveys give some significant clues. A 1991 survey of over 800 male and female graduate students at Université Laval (conducted jointly by the Students' Union and the administration) found that, for women, the period of graduate study coincided with their time-span in which women graduate students were most likely to have young children at home. Because of their child-rearing responsibilities, a much lower percentage of student mothers than student fathers of young children, spent over 41 hours a week at their studies. Other studies, qualitative in nature, also point to the fact that the PhD "track" is very much based on the notion of 3-4 years of intense, more-than-full-time study by a student with no other major responsibilities in life, and that other pathways to obtaining the PhD are rarely encouraged (de la Cour et al, 1990, Working Group on the Status of Women Graduate Students in History 1991; Langlois 1986). Similarly, the knowledge that, once in an academic position, the workload generally necessary to obtain tenure and gain respect in one's department makes it extremely difficult to raise children at the same time may dissuade many women from pursuing a PhD (see e.g. Horth 1992; *Fine Pointe* 1993).

At the same time, and on a more positive note, many women may reject the PhD option because they are interested in applying their skills learned at the Master's level to gain hands-on experience. In past surveys it has been suggested that many women with master's degrees in geography were attracted to rewarding work with government agencies with good working conditions such as maternity leave and a 35-37 hour week (see Annexe 2)—possibilities that are, however, much fewer and further between in the mid-1990s.

Another issue of concern is the time taken to finish a PhD. Both the Laval survey (Doran 1992) and the CHA History survey (de la Cour et al. 1990; Working Group on the Status of Women Graduate Students in History 1991) found that completion times for women are longer than those for men. Reasons include higher rates of low incomes among women students than among their male counterparts, and a greater tendency to enrol part-time or not at all in the summer session in order to earn enough income to pursue their studies, as well as family responsibilities. Longer completion time may or may not be considerable desirable by the student, but it is definitely and increasingly considered undesirable by the university. Government

funding formulas and performance evaluation criteria use carrot and increasingly, stick, methods, to pressure universities to “process” graduate students as quickly as possible through the system. These pressures are then passed on to students; for instance, some universities have abolished the lower “non-resident” fee and now require doctoral candidates to pay full-time registration fees throughout their “ABD” period. Yet the Status of Women in Ontario universities report recommended that part-time study be encouraged rather than discouraged, to facilitate the “inclusive” university at the graduate level (*CAUT Newsletter, Status of Women Supplement 1993*) while the Canadian Federation of University Women (1992) included among its 50 recommendations for “women-friendly universities” that completion time limits be extended.

Our survey findings (table immediately below) show no clear tendency for women students in geography to be more inclined toward part-time registration, although the data may be suspect due to possibility inconsistent definitions of “part-time” between universities. One would require retrospective data as to the number of sessions students registered part-time over the whole of their studies in order to draw any conclusions.

GRADUATE STUDENTS BY REGISTRATION STATUS AND GENDER

| Master's students |            |             |             |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
|                   | Total      | Male        | Female      |
| Total             | 774 (100%) | 437 (56.5%) | 337 (43.5%) |
| Full-time*        | 549 (100%) | 314 (57.2%) | 235 (42.8%) |
| Part-time*        | 179 (100%) | 96 (53.6%)  | 83 (46.4%)  |
| PhD students      |            |             |             |
| Total             | 339 (100%) | 223 (65.8%) | 116 (34.2%) |
| Full-time*        | 277 (100%) | 180 (65.0%) | 97 (35.0%)  |
| Part-time*        | 35 (100%)  | 25 (71.4%)  | 10 (28.6%)  |

\*The figures for part-time and full-time do add up to less than the totals reported. This may be due in part to ambiguity as to the status of some graduate students (e.g. those temporarily “off the books” due to their not having terminated their studies within the time limits set by the university)

We did, however, try to obtain some indications as to completion times and rates for the PhD. Of the 33 departments that responded to the survey, 16 were in a position to admit PhD students in 1990. 12 of these provided information about the completion rates of the fall 1990 cohort (Q28a)

(the 13th did not admit any PhD students that year), and 6 of these furnished usable responses about an earlier cohort (various years between 1986 and 1989 were selected) (Q28b).<sup>13</sup>

Combining results for all cohorts yields the following:

|       | Total PhD intake in year Y | Thesis submitted within < or = (Y+4) years | Status ABD at time Y+4 years | Status "other" at time Y+4 years | Missing data as to status at time Y+4 years |
|-------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Men   | 61                         | 34.4% (21)                                 | 47.5% (29)                   | 6.6% (4)                         | 1.6% (1)                                    |
| Women | 30                         | 26.7% (8)                                  | 53.3% (16)                   | 20.0% (6)                        | 0.0% (0)                                    |

The data for the 1990 cohort alone (intake 39 men, 19 women) are very similar, thus we have not included a separate table here.

Bearing in mind that responses to this question were received from only two-thirds (13) of the 20 Canadian departments which offered PhD programmes in 1990, and that completion rate data may be very different in some of the non-responding departments (e.g. because of differences in course work requirements), some of the results nevertheless give pause for thought and, perhaps, cause for some concern. In general, only one-third of the reported PhD entrants completed all requirements for the thesis within 4 years. Given that full funding is almost never available from external or internal sources for longer than 3 or at most 4 years, this means that many students have to combine working on the thesis with part-time or full-time employment. It would be very interesting to know how geography PhD students compare with those in other disciplines in this respect; however, we know of no other survey data comparable to ours.

As for gender differences, the status of one-fifth of the women entrants was classified as "other" after 4 years, which hints at a higher drop-out or "off the books" rate than for their male counterparts. If this is the case it is consistent with the findings of the Université Laval survey (Doran 1992). The factors referred to above, namely the difficulties of combining the rigours of

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<sup>13</sup> This was the question that generated the most debate when the questionnaire was being designed and tested. Some see the issues raised are delicate both for departments and individuals. While recognizing this, the Equity Committee felt very strongly about the importance of this question. Given the "drop-off" between MA and PhD, it is all the more important, once women students do get to the PhD level to ensure minimal "loss" through drop-out or excessively long completion times. It seems that many departments do not compile this type of information on a regular basis. This meant expending a considerable effort to search out the data necessary to complete the table, an effort which not all respondents were able or willing to make; a number of respondents stated, moreover, that the data were simply not available for the 1990 cohort and/or for an earlier cohort. Some departments may also have considered this question too "sensitive". Thus, for one reason or another, in addition to the PhD departments that did not respond at all to the survey, four other departments did not respond to Q28a (Calgary, Laval, Toronto).

the PhD process with child-rearing responsibilities, coupled in many cases with financial difficulties, may come into play here.

As to the completion rates of minorities, the numbers are too small for us to draw any firm conclusions (table not presented), but there are no indications that completion rates are lower among visible minorities. Indeed some minority students who may live in extended family situations may receive more support than non-minority students and this may accelerate completion times.

The Laval and CHA surveys suggest that other factors may also contribute to a female graduate student not completing her studies, or switching into another discipline, including experiences of discrimination or sexist attitudes on the part of students or faculty, and a lack of female professors (the mentoring issue) in the department. According to these surveys as well as anecdotal reports from geography departments, achieving a critical mass of women graduate students as well as faculty seems to make all the difference to the "climate". Further research using qualitative methods is needed to explore what factors influence completion rates and times among geography graduate students, and to what extent these intersect with questions of gender relations at home and in the university, as well as with "race" and ethnicity.

### ***Parental leave policies for graduate students***

In view of the various issues raised above concerning the difficulties of combining graduate studies and raising young children, especially for women, the question of parental leave for graduate students has become an important equity issue and one that the committee felt strongly should be explored in the survey given the total absence of data on this topic.<sup>14</sup> In particular, because of the funding formulas referred to earlier, universities are becoming stricter about time limitations on finishing graduate degrees. Many departments have granted or still grant leaves of absence for maternity leave but this is often done in such a way that the student is still counted as being enrolled in her studies for the purposes of calculations of length of studies. While this may have some advantages from the student in that she remains registered in the program and may still have access to financing, it becomes a problem if she becomes short of time to complete the thesis as a result under a potentially-punitive time-limitation regime. The report of the Status of Women in Ontario Universities recommended that "non-punitive maternity leave provisions" be established in scholarships and academic programs (reported in *CAUT Bulletin*

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<sup>14</sup> The question of student access to affordable childcare facilities on or off campus was beyond the purview of our survey, but this has also been identified as a critical issue, which has been addressed to some extent in previous research (Canadian Federation of University Women 1992; Doran 1992; Klodawsky 1989). The CAG, at the behest of the Canadian Women and Geography

*supplement* 1993), as did the Canadian Federation of University Women (1992). The major granting agencies now statutorily grant leave for up to a year for parental or adoption leave to either parent, which does not count in the calculation of the duration of studies, but many universities have yet to follow suit. Students who become parents do not necessarily have the right to defer TA-ships and other university-based sources for funding.

Our survey findings (Q19) show considerable variability as to the existence of statutory policies and to the length of time allowed (see table below). In none of the responding departments could more than one year's leave be taken, with one possible exception: "Normally, 4-12 months for each category; other periods are considered on individual merit. Dean seeks approval by Department in the first instance".

| PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES |       |        |         |        |                             |    |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|---------|--------|-----------------------------|----|
| Type of STATUTORY leave | Total | 1 term | 2 terms | 1 year | Type of DISCRETIONARY leave |    |
| maternity leave         | 9     | 3      | 3       | 3      | maternity leave             | 11 |
| paternity leave         | 6     | 1      | 2       | 3      | paternity leave             | 8  |
| parental leave          | 9     | 3      | 2       | 4      | parental leave              | 8  |
| adoption leave          | 7     | 2      | 2       | 3      | adoption leave              | 8  |

Policy documents on maternity and/or parental leave submitted by eight of the responding departments (see list in Annexe 4) may or may not represent the full range of policies in force in Canadian universities, but they do show to varying degrees that some universities do indeed now recognize that parenting is a right and not a privilege of their students. Seven of the policies provide for suspension of registration during the leave period and allow either parent to take leave in the case where both parents are students. The eighth one only applies to mothers and requires that students *"maintain continuous registration and pay the appropriate student fees"* (York). While the latter policy may help some students to maintain university funding it may in some cases compound the time-limitation problem.<sup>15</sup>

Usually, if there is any kind of formal policy it is established by the university rather than by the department. In some cases there are partial formal policies but they do not cover all types of parental leave (e.g. adoption leave). Some departments or universities have developed

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Group, has experimented with a subsidy to help defray the childcare expenses incurred by graduate students presenting conference papers at annual meetings.

<sup>15</sup> An innovative program just established at the Université de Montréal encourages women students on maternity leave (i.e. not counted in the duration of studies) to apply for a special scholarship to complete a specific piece of study/research from their home on a part-time basis while caring for their infant.

policies for TAs (sometimes regulated through the collective agreement) but not for graduate students in general.

Discretionary practices are still the rule in about half the responding departments and their universities, sometimes involving a decision by the Dean on the advice of the department. The following open-ended comments/explanations were offered by respondents:

- (Leave up to discretion of dean but on advice of Department) *"There is no written policy which explicitly pertains to parental leave. Students can apply for inactive status for reasons of parenting"*

- Leave at discretion of Dean *"on recommendation of the Department"*

- *"L'étudiant s'arrange selon ses besoins, pas de politique statutaire"*

- *"Il n'y a rien de prévu statutairement mais il y a toujours possibilité d'entente cas par cas"*

- (Leave at discretion of department) *"We have had very few cases but would be accommodating if they arose"*

- *"No official policy exists though we regularly have students temporarily leave the graduate program for needs of parenting and they are not penalized"*

These respondents all pointed out that requests were always treated sympathetically. We no not doubt that this is generally the case, but we also know of examples which show that this "informality" can also be a source of additional stress for a student who believes, rightly or wrongly, that decisions might be made on an ad hoc or arbitrary basis. Students planning to combine new parenthood with graduate studies need to know the "rules of the game" so that they can organize this important period of their lives accordingly. In our view, graduate programmes would be more attractive to potential and actual students who are thinking of becoming parents (especially women) if all universities and departments were to review the parental leave issue in a systematic fashion and develop—with the participation of all interested parties—appropriate *statutory* policies. Moreover, efforts should be made, through these policies, to enable non-biological parents and men to take up greater child-rearing responsibilities through access to parental leave from their graduate studies so that student mothers in two parent families do not continue to bear most of the "dual role" with its previously-mentioned effects on the duration of studies.

### ***Departmental accessibility and services for faculty and students with disabilities***<sup>16</sup>

Many departments did not respond to all or parts of QQ9 and 10, perhaps because of a lack of graduate students and/or faculty with disabilities, which would make it likely that respondents

<sup>16</sup> We would like to thank Prof. Vera Chouinard of McMaster University for her valuable contributions to interpretation of the findings related to facilities for those with disabilities.

would not know what services could be made available should they be required. It was usually impossible for us to discern when non-responses meant “no” or “don’t know”.

It is encouraging to see that of the 33 responding departments, the vast majority (28 or 84.8%) are housed in buildings fully accessible to persons with disabilities, while a further four have partially or mostly accessible buildings or have parts of their Department in an accessible building.<sup>17</sup> There was no clear difference between departments with and without graduate programs in this respect.

The following table attempts to compile responses as to services for persons with disabilities. It should be interpreted with caution given the above caveats as to missing data.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

|                               | Faculty |             | Graduate Students |             |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                               | Number  | % ( )*      | Number            | % ( )**     |
| <b>Special equipment</b>      |         |             |                   |             |
| YES                           | 18      | 62 (54.5)   | 13                | 72.2 (59)   |
| NO                            | 11      | 38          | 5                 | 27.8        |
| Total                         | 29      |             | 18                |             |
| <b>Health care aides</b>      |         |             |                   |             |
| YES                           | 11      | 42.3 (33.3) | 6                 | 40 (27.3)   |
| NO                            | 15      | 57.7        | 9                 | 60          |
| Total                         | 26      |             | 15                |             |
| <b>Specialized Transport</b>  |         |             |                   |             |
| YES                           | 19      | 63.3 (57.5) | 14                | 73.7 (63.6) |
| NO                            | 11      | 36.7        | 5                 | 26.3        |
| Total                         | 30      |             | 19                |             |
| <b>Secretarial assistance</b> |         |             |                   |             |
| YES                           | 15      | 53.6 (45.5) | 9                 | 50 (40.9)   |
| NO                            | 13      | 46.4        | 9                 | 50          |
| Total                         | 28      |             | 18                |             |

\*N.B. There are many missing responses, percentage figures are based on the total number of departments that responded to each question and do not include those who omitted to respond. For faculty, percentage figures in brackets are based on an assumption that of the 33 survey respondents those that omitted to indicate a "YES" response do not have any provisions for disabled persons.

\*\* For Graduate students the total number of universities responding that they had graduate programs was 22, figures in brackets are based on this total.

Interpreting these data with some caution, and using the bracketed percentage figures (based on total number of responding universities and assuming non-response is the same as "no"), one might suggest that for both faculty and graduate students health care aides are the least commonly available type of special service. The results in the above table indicate that the

<sup>17</sup> In one case the building housing physical geography was not accessible. Another respondent pointed out that their building was accessible “with difficulty”. One department did not reply to this question.

service least often available to faculty and graduate students with disabilities is that of health care aides. Using the data in brackets, one can infer that only about 1/3 of the universities surveyed indicated that such services were available to faculty members, while only 27.3% of universities with graduate programmes indicated that such services were available to graduate students. Caution needs to be exercised in interpreting these results, however, since lack of awareness of community-based services of this type may have biased response.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, these results do suggest that the provision of health care aides may be an especially pressing issue for both faculty and graduate students with disabilities, and perhaps particularly for graduate students.

Relatively speaking, provision of special equipment and specialized transport seems to be slightly higher for graduate students than for faculty members, although faculty members have slightly better provision of health care aides and secretarial assistance. However, these differences are relatively small and may not be statistically significant, particularly as a number of respondents indicated that they did not really know what services were available because they had not had to seek them out, having never encountered faculty with disabilities: "The question has never arisen. If it did, such services *might* be made available".

In comparing services available to faculty and graduate students, this table, based on the aggregated frequency data, does not show if the same universities that have faculty policy and services also have services for graduate students. There is no necessary link between services for the two groups since in some cases, provision of these services may be related to the results of negotiations between the university and the various bargaining units (faculty associations, teaching support staff unions etc). A more detailed examination of the data supplied by departments with graduate programs (table not shown here) does not, however, indicate any clear pattern in this respect: for instance one department indicated that special secretarial assistance was available to faculty whereas there was no provision for graduate students, while another referred to "*tutors, note-takers*" for graduate students but indicated that there was no special provision for faculty.

Graduate students seem to be slightly more disadvantaged than faculty with respect to the provision of secretarial assistance geared to the needs of those with disabilities: whereas 45.5% of universities had such services available for faculty, only 40.9% of those universities reporting graduate programmes had such services available to graduate students. However, while not offering secretarial assistance as such, some departments may have access to special word-processing facilities for their students. According to one respondent, "*As part of Student Services a unit "Services for Students with Disabilities" responds to the specialized and varied*

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<sup>18</sup> One respondent stated that he or she did not know what was meant by "health care aides" and two others marked question marks as a response.

*needs of both graduate and undergraduate students with disabilities. A university-equipped computer lab has provision for helping students with disabilities (e.g., voice-activated computers and word-processing computers that read from scanned text)”.*

Specialized transport and equipment were the types of services most often available to faculty and graduate students with disabilities. Access to specialized equipment was slightly better in the case of graduate students (59%, 13/22) than in the case of faculty (54.5%, 18/33). A similar pattern can be observed with respect to specialized transportation (63.6%, 14/22, versus 57.5%, 19/33). It is possible, however, that there is a higher percentage of reporting about facilities for graduate students because departments may have had more experience with graduate students with disabilities than with faculty with disabilities. Still, it is sobering that almost two out of five universities seemingly did not have specialized transport available to faculty with disabilities and that in a third of graduate departments such services were apparently not available to their graduate students.

Overall, then, these results, although based on incomplete data, suggest that although much progress has doubtless been made in accommodating persons with disabilities, particularly as regards building accessibility, significant gaps in support services available to disabled faculty and graduate students in the departments surveyed. A few respondents sent us documents outlining the services available through the University's Office for Persons with Disabilities or equivalent (see list in Annexe 4). Another indicated that *“the University responds to some requests for special assistance but there doesn't seem to be a blanket policy to make such services available”*. Taken as a whole, these data suggest that lack of support services, particularly in terms of special aides and research/secretarial assistance, may still be a significant barrier to both faculty and graduate students with disabilities in the departments surveyed. Moreover, the difficulties that respondents had in answering the disability questions in our survey would seem to suggest that universities are not always doing a good job in ensuring that Department Chairs know what kinds of services could be made available should they be required. These findings, together with the lack of knowledge about such services displayed by many respondents, have somewhat troubling implications in terms of the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities within the discipline.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

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The results of this report raise a number of concerns regarding equity in the discipline of geography, in terms both of the representation of designated group members within the academic wing of the profession and the conditions of work or study for those members. Among university faculty, women are still seriously under-represented in most geography departments,

despite efforts in some departments over the past decade to increase their numbers, and despite and increase in the number of graduate students to nearly half of master's students and nearly one-third of PhD students. Members of visible minorities remain even more under-represented. There are no aboriginal persons among geography faculty and we know of only four currently enrolled in geography departments.

These findings raise a number of questions about hiring and employment practices within the discipline. Although this study was not designed to address problems in specific departments or specific practices, the general findings suggest a need to question whether hiring practices and graduate student recruitment practices are sufficiently geared to attracting members of the designated groups. They suggest that there also needs to be discussion about whether geography departments send messages of welcome and display their willingness to include a diversity of faculty and students. Are their hiring and recruitment policies proactive or do they merely meet the technical requirements of equity? Have departments examined research and teaching agenda to find out if they are of interest and relevance for a diversity of faculty and students? Have departments developed methods to encourage inclusion, including seminars on equity for all faculty, mentoring programmes, and activities designed to raise awareness of all members of the department? Have departments examined the systematic ways in which racism and sexism are perpetuated in the workplace, and developed specific measures to ensure that problems are minimized?

It is the hope of the authors of this report that our findings will provoke thought within the CAG and on the part of members of the discipline generally. To this end, we have prepared a number of recommendations and suggestions which reiterate or make more explicit some recommendations made in the main body report. These are of different orders of abstraction and policy implication, but we submit them with the hope that they might further constructive discussion and appropriate action. They could be used as a model for equity purposes within individual departments. While far from exhaustive, they perhaps provide a point of departure both for increasing levels of awareness and for shifting the demographic balance toward greater representation of diversity within the discipline.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the CAG/Association Affairs Committee pursue discussion and education around the principle of equity within the discipline of geography, including related issues of affirmative action (and backlash), and the under-representation of particular groups.

2. That departments with graduate programs and fewer than two women faculty recognize the potential restriction this may place on female graduate students seeking women supervisors as mentors and seek to improve support and staffing accordingly.
3. That departments recognize the serious under-representation of visible minority faculty and students, and the even more extreme lack of aboriginal Canadians at both master's and PhD levels and actively recruit graduate students, particularly at the master's level, to begin to address these problems.
4. That departments, with the support of their university administrations (and ultimately, that of provincial governments), intensify their efforts to offer appropriate early retirement schemes to senior faculty in an effort to diversify the gender and ethnocultural composition of geography faculty in a context of limited resources for hiring new faculty.
5. That the CAG, through its members (and perhaps CWAG or the CAG/Association Affairs Committee), pursue and support further research, using qualitative and other methods, to ascertain the reasons and factors influencing the completion rates and "fall-off" rates of graduate students across gender lines.
6. That research also be undertaken into the effects that increasingly restrictive time-limitation clauses, requirements that graduate students pay full-time fees throughout the period they are working toward a degree or other measures designed to reduce graduate degree completion times, may be having on the recruitment and retention in geography departments of women, visible minorities, aboriginal persons, and students with disabilities.
7. That geography departments work with their university administrations to make parental leave for graduate students a statutory right in those instances where it is presently only discretionary, so that students can take such leave without academic or financial penalty (including requirements that they continue to pay fees during their leave of absence) and without fear of such penalties.
8. That the CAG urge department chairs to acquaint and educate themselves and their colleagues about the types of assistance available in their universities for students with disabilities, and to make this information known to all potential graduate students, so that more persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply for graduate study. Similarly, that departmental application forms (as well as those for conferences etc.) inquire about special needs as a matter of course.

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**Annexe 1: Terms of Reference of the CAG Standing Committee on Equity  
Issues**

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**Annexe 2: Reprint of Mackenzie, Suzanne (1989) “The status of women in Canadian geography”. *The Operational Geographer / La géographie appliquée* 7 (3): 2-8.**

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**Annexe 3: CAG equity survey questionnaire including letter of introduction  
from Larry Bourne, Past President.**

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**Annexe 4: List of policy documents submitted by respondents regarding employment equity, facilities for people with disabilities and parental leave for graduate students.**

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These documents are available to interested CAG members upon request to the CAG Office.

NB: Titles italicised are official titles of documents, where known.

***Employment equity***

UNIVERSITY-LEVEL DOCUMENTS

University of Alberta, extracts from 1993 GFC Policy Manual, Section 48 (4pp); Chronology of implementation of employment equity (1p.)

University College of the Fraser Valley, *Policy Manual*, section 110.23, Educational and Employment Equity (1p); memo from Peter Jones to Selection Advisory Committee, Employment Equity (1p.)

University of Guelph, *Employment Equity Plan, 1991-1995: Summary* (21pp.); Employment Equity Policy (2pp.)

University of Manitoba, extract from *Policy and Procedure Manual*, policy no. 608, Employment Equity (1p.)

Mount Allison University, extract from faculty collective agreement, section on appointment of faculty members (4pp.)

Simon Fraser University, *Policies and Procedures*, no. GP 19, Rev. B, Employment Equity (2pp.)

Trent University, *Policies and Procedures*, Employment Equity (2pp.)

Wilfrid Laurier University, Employment Equity Policy (pamphlet)

York University, Employment Equity Policy (2pp.)

York University, Employment Equity Policy (2pp.); extract from York University Faculty Association collective agreement, section on Affirmative Action (3pp.)

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT DOCUMENTS

Concordia University, Department of Geography, Employment Equity Plan (1994) (3pp.)

McGill University, Department of Geography, Annual Report (?), 1992-93, Appendix 1, Report of the Department of Geography Committee on Equity in Academic Hiring (4pp.)

York University, Department of Geography, Affirmative Action Plan for Women (1990) (4pp.)

***Parental leave***

(Mostly 1-2 pages in length)

University of Alberta, regulations for appointing a graduate assistant

University of British Columbia, regulation on parental leave

Concordia University, extract from Graduate Admissions Regulations

University of Guelph, extract from *Regulations Governing Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Graduate Service Assistantships*

University of Manitoba, extract from *Graduate Studies Regulations*

Queen's University, extract from General Regulations

University of Toronto, extract from *The Yellow Book*

York University, extract from *Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations*

***Services for persons with disabilities***

University of Alberta, extracts from *1993 GFC Policy Manual*, Section 108.5, Disabled Student Policy/Handicapped Students (2pp).

Concordia University, extract from Student Services information, services for Disabled Students (1p.)

McGill University, *Office for Students with Disabilities* (pamphlet)

York University, Office for Persons with Disabilities, *Services Brochure* (10pp)