



2004

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Gustafson, Sara (2004) "In Quest of True Equality: A Study of the Climate for Women at Gettysburg Since 1975," *The Gettysburg Historical Journal*: Vol. 3 , Article 5.

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# In Quest of True Equality: A Study of the Climate for Women at Gettysburg Since 1975

## **Abstract**

In 2003, the election of Katherine Haley Will as Gettysburg College's thirteenth president began a new era for women on campus. Will will be the first female president in the history of the college, and her election signifies the tremendous legal and psychological changes that have shaken both the college and the nation over the past quarter century. Federal legislation, the slowly-broadening vision of the school's administration, and the proactive stance taken by women themselves have contributed to making Gettysburg College a place of seemingly strong gender equality.

## **Keywords**

Gettysburg College, gender equality, women

## **In Quest of True Equality: A Study of the Climate for Women at Gettysburg Since 1975**

*Sara Gustafson*

In 2003, the election of Katherine Haley Will as Gettysburg College's thirteenth president began a new era for women on campus. Will will be the first female president in the history of the college, and her election signifies the tremendous legal and psychological changes that have shaken both the college and the nation over the past quarter century. Federal legislation, the slowly-broadening vision of the school's administration, and the proactive stance taken by women themselves have contributed to making Gettysburg College a place of seemingly strong gender equality.

For example, in January of 1985, President Charles Glassick took a large step toward gender equality with his establishment of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Given nine charges by which to address women's issues, the Commission's overall duty, as defined by Glassick, was "to study and evaluate all matters related to the environment for women, both inside and outside of the classroom."<sup>1</sup> Made up of students, faculty, administrators, and staff, the Commission has, since its inception, investigated women's roles and treatment in athletics, Greek society, and academic life. Its findings, especially in its 1986 Assessment of Educational and Social Climate for Women at Gettysburg College,<sup>2</sup> have led to greater attention to and awareness of the concerns of women, and its many recommendations have improved the climate for all women on campus. This and other actions taken by the college within the

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<sup>1</sup> President's Commission on Women, January 1, 1985, Gettysburg College Archives (hereafter GCA).

<sup>2</sup> Karen Bogart and Marcia Boyles, Assessment of Educational and Social Climate for Women at Gettysburg College (July, 1986) pp. 6-36.

past twenty-five years have given women, both students and employees, a greater sense of acceptance and belonging. 1999 graduate Colleen Gormley spoke of the sense of empowerment the school had given her, saying, “Gettysburg instilled this attitude in me that I can do anything . . . . I left Gettysburg with an independence and confidence I did not have when I entered.”<sup>3</sup>

Gormley’s words support a general consensus that the climate for women on campus has improved since the early 1970s; however, one runs the risk of becoming too complacent by looking only at the college’s achievements in the quest for gender equality and ignoring its failures. While blatant sexism has slowly disappeared from the college’s hiring, admission, and classroom policies, a current of subtle discrimination and even harassment still runs below the surface. Male members of the community, and even many female members, may not notice it; however, these subtle sexist attitudes still sometimes contribute to making the climate for women on campus less than friendly. While legally, discrimination has diminished over the past twenty-five years, psychologically, women are still second class citizens in many ways. By looking at the college’s record on issues of athletics, admissions, employment policies, and awareness of women’s health and safety, as well as general attitudes toward women and sex, one can see both the progress that Gettysburg has made since 1975 and the distance it still has to go in order to become a place of true gender equality.

Nationwide, one of the most obvious shifts in favor of women’s equality has occurred in the area of athletics. Since 1972 when Title IX of the Education Amendments made it illegal for educational institutions to discriminate on the basis of

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<sup>3</sup> Colleen Gormley, email interview by Sara Gustafson, 12 February 2004.

sex in any educational program or activity<sup>4</sup>, women's participation in athletics has increased dramatically. According to one government study, the number of women participating in intercollegiate athletics in 1997 had grown to be four times the number of female participants in 1971.<sup>5</sup> In the wake of Title IX, colleges across America were adding more women's sports, and women athletes were demanding facilities, budgets, equipment, coaching staffs, and salaries that were equal to the men's teams. Some federal administrations enforced the law more strictly than others; for example, the first Bush administration hardly enforced it at all.<sup>6</sup> However, despite the occasional laxness in enforcement, Title IX drastically changed the place of women in college athletics.

Like at most other coed institutions, the attention and respect paid to female athletes at Gettysburg before Title IX was minimal. As of 1960, only three sports were offered for women: swimming, field hockey, and basketball; women's facilities and equipment were sub-par, and the number of scholarships reserved for female athletes was not regulated.<sup>7</sup> The enactment of Title IX changed all that, drawing more attention to the inequities within the athletics department. The restructuring of the women's intramural program in 1975 offered more women the opportunity to participate in athletic activities: tennis, volleyball, badminton, and archery among others.<sup>8</sup> In 1976, the girls' intercollegiate volleyball club petitioned for the right to have a team; soon after, volleyball became the second varsity sport open to women.<sup>9</sup> It can be argued that without

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<sup>4</sup> Title IX Section 1681a, U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/titleix.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Title IX: 25 Years of Progress, U.S. Department of Education. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/TitleIX/part2.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Carol Cantele, interview with Sara Gustafson, 1 March 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence* Vol. II (Gettysburg, PA: Gettysburg College, 1987) pp. 951.

<sup>8</sup> "New Women's Intramural Program Replaces WAA," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXIX No. 1 (19 September 1975) pp. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Leslie Shindel, "Women's Volleyball Begins First Year," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXX No. 1 (17 September 1976) pp. 7.

the federal ruling from Title IX, the school's administration and Board of Trustees may have been reluctant to make the budgetary changes needed to extend women's athletics; regardless of that speculation, however, the fact remains that Gettysburg did make an effort to abide by the standards of nondiscrimination set by Title IX.

Still, as in the rest of the nation, change at Gettysburg was slow. For years after the enactment of Title IX, women athletes and coaches found themselves struggling to receive equal benefits and recognition. While the number of women's sports slowly increased with the addition of lacrosse, tennis, volleyball, cross country, softball, and track and field, the women's soccer club was still struggling to gain team status as late as 1987.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time that female athletes were pushing for more team sports to be opened to them, they were also fighting for equal facilities and budgets. On its page about the cheerleading squad, the 1975 *Spectrum* showed that women's sports were not fully funded. A caption to the squad's picture stated that the girls raised their own funds in order to be able to cheer at away games.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, an article by the women's field hockey team in the fall of 1975 exposed numerous inequities within the athletic department's treatment of male and female athletes. For example, the article stated that the women were not allowed to use the steam room with the men, despite the fact that the college could not afford to fund a similar facility specifically for women. The number of coaches was also radically unbalanced; the article cited the fact that the football team had a total of eight coaches, while not a single women's team could afford a junior varsity coach. Plank Gym, the facility used by the women's teams, was in such a state of

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<sup>10</sup> Mary E. Allen, "Women's soccer goal; Division III status," *Gettysburgian* Vol. XCI No. 1 (18 September 1987) pp. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Spectrum*, 1975, pp. 67. GCA.

disrepair that the roof leaked when it rained. Furthermore, many male athletes received full grant scholarship packages, a benefit that was not available to any of the women.<sup>12</sup> Unequal funding also affected female coaches. In its 1986 assessment statement, the Women's Commission discovered that newly hired male coaches were often paid more than women who were already on the staff, ignoring the women's seniority.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to drastically unequal facilities and budgets, female athletes were afforded less recognition and respect from the college administration. Carol Cantele, alumna of the class of 1983, head women's lacrosse coach, and full-time athletics administrator, told one story of discrimination during her undergraduate years as a member of the women's field hockey team. Having made it all the way to the national championships, the women almost did not receive approval from the administration to go to the championship game. The administration was reluctant both to spend the money for the bus, hotel, and meals and to excuse the team from a day of classes; they did not see the point because, in Cantele's words, "we were just girls."<sup>14</sup> Clearly, while Gettysburg's policies did not bar women from participating in athletics, even after Title IX discrimination and inequalities still existed within the athletics department in fairly obvious ways.

According to Cantele, Title IX began to take strong hold more recently in the 1990s with the establishment of the Equity and Disclosure Act, an amendment that acts as a watchdog to educational institutions. The act forces institutions to review their budgets and funding every October and to submit their findings to the federal government

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<sup>12</sup> "Sports Inequalities Irk Women's Hockey Squad," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXIX No. 3 (3 October 1975) pp. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Bogart and Boyles, *Assessment on Climate*, pp. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Cantele, interview.

for review. This encourages institutions to pay closer attention to a more equal allocation of funds for both male and female athletes.<sup>15</sup> Cantele said that in her twelve years of coaching for Gettysburg, she has seen support for women's athletics grow. The athletics department now keeps adequate records and statistics on women's teams and athletes, and much more time is devoted to the recruitment of women.

While she is of course pleased by these developments, Cantele said she hopes to see the day when all athletics programs are viewed practically and realistically, instead of being divided into male or female and subjected to an almost obsessive scrutiny to determine whether they are completely equal. Some sports by necessity require a larger budget and more equipment than others. For example, the football team needs to be larger than the women's tennis team, so it makes sense that the football team would receive more funding. The fact that the football team takes a bus to away games while the women's tennis team takes a van is not a matter of sexual discrimination; it is simply a matter of practicality. Cantele said that by using common sense in these situations and not putting all of the focus on the issue of gender, Gettysburg's athletics department will be able to make its teams truly equal. What equality means, and what Title IX is all about, according to Cantele, is, "Would a male football player feel equally valued and satisfied playing on the women's lacrosse team? In the end, I think the answer is yes, because Gettysburg values its female athletes. Girls are proud to put on the Gettysburg uniform."<sup>16</sup>

Female faculty, staff, and administrators shared in the women athletes' demand for equal rights and recognition. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had made it illegal for

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

employers to base hiring or promotion policies on gender; however, a wide disparity between male and female employees nationwide still existed. For many years, Gettysburg was no different. A 1976 study conducted by the campus's Affirmative Action Task Force showed that over a span of ten years, from 1966-1976, the ratio of male to female faculty members showed no change; women still represented only twenty-two percent of the total faculty, while men represented seventy-eight percent.<sup>17</sup> In 1975, there were only twenty women on the faculty. Most of those women were instructors or assistant professors; very few held high-standing or tenured positions.<sup>18</sup> Despite more attention given to women's rights in the workplace, this trend was slow to change. The Women's Commission's assessment found that in 1985-6, out of 141 faculty members only thirty-three were women; men held ninety-two percent of the college's professorships, while women held only eight percent.<sup>19</sup> Conversely, the assessment also found that the college's low-status clerical positions were held exclusively by women; these positions had little opportunity for advancement or salary increases.<sup>20</sup> Even into the 1990s, decades after the sexual revolution had taken place in America, men at Gettysburg had more opportunity for advancement into high-paying and highly-respected positions.

The college has taken steps over the past twenty-five years to institute more equal promotion and hiring practices. There have been cases of women breaking the psychological gender barrier and being hired for high-profile positions; an example of this was the appointment of the first female Treasurer, Dr. Jennie Mingolelli, in 1993.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Karen Dworski and Linda Espenshade, "Women With Class," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXIX No. 11 (23 January 1976) pp. 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Spectrum*, 1975, GCA.

<sup>19</sup> Bogart and Boyles, *Assessment on Climate*, pp. 23.

<sup>20</sup> Bogart and Boyles, *Assessment on Climate*, pp. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Petrus, "College Appoints First Female Treasurer Ever," *Gettysburgian* Vol. XCVII No. 3 (9 September 1993) pp. 1.

It is unlikely that women like Dr. Mingoelli were appointed simply as token women to balance out the ratio of male to female faculty; these appointments truly show the movement of the college toward more equal hiring practices. Even with such developments, however, women still tended to hold fewer and lower positions on campus. Today, almost twenty years later, it is possible to see disparities in the number of male and female faculty, especially in certain departments. According to Dr. Kathleen Iannello, today's political science department has nine full-time professors; of these nine, only three are tenured women.<sup>22</sup>

Along with addressing a disparate male to female faculty ratio, women faculty members and other employees also found themselves faced with the issue of equal pay for equal work. Nationwide statistics showed that female faculty and staff on college campuses received lower salaries than men. In some cases, this was because women typically held lower positions; however, many times, women were paid less even if they held the same position and did the same amount of work as their male counterparts.<sup>23</sup> The same disparities existed at Gettysburg. However, at a certain point, the college did take steps to address the issue of equal pay. Iannello remembered that in 1990, her first year at Gettysburg, she received a check for two hundred dollars in her mailbox, along with a letter stating that the check was to make up for the difference in wages that had been discovered by a recent investigation.<sup>24</sup> While an extra two hundred dollars most likely did not equal up to the amount made by male faculty members, this story does

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<sup>22</sup> Kathleen Iannello, interview with Sara Gustafson, 5 March 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Roberta Hall and Bernice Sandler, *The Campus Climate Revisited: Chilly for Women Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students*, Project on the Status and Education of Women pamphlet (October 1986) pp. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Kathleen Iannello, interview.

show the steps that the college was taking in order to promote gender equality for its employees.

As hiring practices and salaries gradually became more equal, women employees at Gettysburg experienced more subtle forms of discrimination. One of the largest struggles female employees faced was over the issue of maternity leave. As recently as 1997, the college did not offer maternity leave to its female employees. As a result, women who wanted to have children needed to find alternate, and in many cases creative, ways to do so without losing their salaries and positions. Many women timed their pregnancies to coincide with their sabbaticals;<sup>25</sup> others timed it so their due date would fall in late May, after the end of the spring semester.<sup>26</sup> Women who had C-sections could apply for Disability Leave, since it was a surgical procedure; others made special deals with the Provost, such as agreeing to teach an overload of courses in their returning semester.<sup>27</sup> The attitude toward maternity leave shows how women faculty members were discriminated against. Dr. Janet Riggs, alumna of the class of 1977 and professor of mathematics and psychology, remembered when she mentioned to President Glassick that she was pregnant for the second time; he responded with a dig, saying, “Oh. I suppose this means you’re going to ask for another semester off.”<sup>28</sup>

Even after the establishment of parental leave policies and the campus daycare center, The Growing Place, the college has still made it difficult for women to have a career and a family at the same time. The Growing Place formally addressed the issue of childcare; however, it remains under-funded and under-staffed. Important departmental

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Janet Riggs, interview with Sara Gustafson, 5 March 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Kathleen Iannello, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Janet Riggs, interview, March 5, 2004.

and committee meetings are still scheduled for four o'clock in the afternoon, an inconvenient time for any faculty member with school-aged children. Unlike other schools, according to Iannello, there is an "informal norm" at Gettysburg that employees do not bring their children to meetings.<sup>29</sup> These policies and standards do not familial responsibilities into account. Since the societal norm is still for women to take on most of the duties of child-rearing, the burden of trying to juggle these inconvenient policies with their family responsibilities falls mostly on women employees. Policies like these provide excellent examples of the kind of subtle discrimination that still exists, despite federal legislation, against female employees at Gettysburg.

Female students faced obstacles of their own in their search for equality. Involvement in social life is an important part of the college experience, and as such, is an excellent indicator of the level of gender equality on campus. Over the years, female students have struggled to carve a niche for themselves in the campus social life. In the years since 1975, the easiest way for women to get involved has been to join a sorority. After Sigma Sigma Sigma was established in 1978, Gettysburg was home to seven national sororities.<sup>30</sup> During the early 1980s, half of the women on campus were in a sorority.<sup>31</sup> Greek life offered women a way to become active and visible on campus; it also allowed them to connect with one another and form a strong sense of fellowship. Involvement in sororities was the easiest way for female students to become a vital part of the campus community, so it is not surprising that the number of girls pledging to sororities has remained high over the years.

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<sup>29</sup> Katherine Iannello, interview.

<sup>30</sup> Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, pp. 933. Since the publication of Glatfelter's history in 1987, the number of sororities has changed; today there are only five.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Despite the opportunities that sororities offered women, looking at sorority activities and experiences since 1975 does provide two examples of gender inequality that existed, and exists even today. The first and most obvious example is the fact that fraternities were given houses, while sororities only had offices in the basements of various buildings. The Women's Commission assessment touted this as a clear inequity<sup>32</sup>, and it is one that has existed even to recent years. Gormley commented on the double standard, saying, "Sororities had suite rooms, but no house, another advantage the men had. We were always told it could be traced back to some old Pennsylvania law that said if more than six women lived in the same house it was seen as a brothel . . . . So the sororities were not given houses."<sup>33</sup> Whatever the justification, it cannot be denied that sororities did not, and still do not, receive the same benefits as fraternities.

The second example of gender inequality that can be seen by looking at sorority life is the lack of other activities available for female students. The importance of Greek life to women on campus during the 1970s and 1980s gives evidence of a certain amount of gender inequality, in that it was one of few activities in which women felt truly welcomed and valued. Riggs remembered pledging to Chi Omega in the fall of her sophomore year simply because there was a lack of anything else to do. If a woman was not in a sorority, Riggs said she "felt like second-class merchandise."<sup>34</sup> The fact that women's involvement in campus activities was somewhat limited is evidenced through several letters to the *Gettysburgian* in 1975. These letters, written by two women campaigning for a position on the Student Senate, highlighted the lack of representation of women in campus life. Carolyn Reaves-Bey pointed out that only one female student

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<sup>32</sup> Bogart and Boyles, *Assessment on Climate*, pp. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Colleen Gormley, email interview

<sup>34</sup> Janet Riggs, interview.

had ever served as Senate President.<sup>35</sup> Jeanne Treacy cited the under-representation of female students in areas such as Residential Life and athletics.<sup>36</sup>

The fact that, for many years, sorority activities constituted the majority of women's involvement in campus social life shows that women did not have, or at least felt that they did not have, equal access to greater social involvement. The social climate for women on campus does seem to have improved in recent years. Riggs said that the social atmosphere for women today is healthier, because, with more educational and cultural activities for women, there is not as much pressure to join a sorority.<sup>37</sup> Gormley agreed, pointing out that during three out of her four years as an undergraduate, the Senate President was a woman, as were the majority of her class officers. Her experience would suggest that the social climate for women has become more welcoming; she said, "I never felt . . . like my options on campus were limited because I was a woman."<sup>38</sup> The increase in women participating in activities other than Greek life since 1975 shows that the campus social life has seen vast improvement in gender equality.

At the same time the women of Gettysburg were fighting to gain equal rights in the classroom and the social community, they were also fighting to gain equal respect for their bodies. The sexual revolution in America in the 1960s and 1970s helped women to take control of their lives and their bodies and to redefine themselves in terms of their identity as complete human beings instead of simply in terms of their sexuality or reproductive capabilities. During this revolution, and for many years after, however, women still struggled against the male-dominated society that attempted to limit them to

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<sup>35</sup> Carolyn Reaves-Bey, Letter to the editor, *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXIX No. 15 (7 March 1975) pp. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Jeanne Treacy, Letter to the editor, *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXIX No. 16 (14 March 1975) pp. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Janet Riggs, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Colleen Gormley, email interview.

purely domestic or sexual roles. Female students at Gettysburg after 1975 faced this same struggle. Below the surface of the college community ran the view, sometimes subtle and sometimes overt, that women were sexual objects. For example, into the late 1970s, the annual Homecoming festivities included the election of a Homecoming Queen and her court<sup>39</sup>; like all pageants and competitions of the sort, the women were judged on the basis of beauty and sexuality. The election of a Queen was protested in 1976, however, by a campus group that found the competition degrading to women. In a letter to the *Gettysburgian*, the group stated that, “The criteria of beauty and popularity have long been stereotypes which women have been conditioned to live up to . . . . We feel that it is wrong to define womanhood in these terms.”<sup>40</sup> This protest was apparently successful because there was no mention of a Homecoming Queen in the *Gettysburgian*’s 1977 coverage of Homecoming Weekend. While it addressed only a minor issue in campus life, this protest showed the growing awareness of and concern about how women were viewed on campus.

Another example of this growing trend was a letter to the editor in a 1976 issue of the *Gettysburgian*. In this letter, a concerned group of students, including two men, addressed the issue of certain fraternities’ pledging activities that promoted a degrading attitude toward women. Of particular concern to these students was the practice of showing pornographic films to pledges; these films contained graphically obscene images, such as women being urinated on or engaging in intercourse with dogs. According to this group of students, viewing these films “. . . reinforces the feeling that

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<sup>39</sup> “Seven Senior Women Nominated to Serve as Homecoming Queen,” *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXX No. 5 (22 October 1976) pp. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Karen Dworski and Joy Keller, “More Than Meets Your Eye,” *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXX No. 7 (5 November 1976) pp. 3.

women are powerless and valueless other than as manipulatable [sic] things.”<sup>41</sup> They also illustrated the potential connection between these films with their violent sexual images and the incidence of gang rapes and other “sexual atrocities” on campus.<sup>42</sup>

While these letters and other actions of protest showed a growing concern over the existence of demeaning attitudes toward women, they also showed that these attitudes were prevalent enough on campus for students to feel the need to take action. Despite the great strides that women all across the country had made in terms of asserting their equality and worth as human beings, much of society, both in Gettysburg and in the nation in general, still defined women in terms of their sexuality or domesticity. A campus-wide survey conducted in 1976 showed that twenty-eight percent of the men on campus still believed that women should be kept in the home; even more surprising, perhaps, is the fact that twelve percent of the women on campus shared this belief.<sup>43</sup> The fact that female students receiving a liberal arts education (which would ideally prepare them to take their place in the larger world) would believe that they had no place in that world, showed the extent to which women still had to struggle against a society that viewed them as second-class citizens.

Even in more recent years, the view of women as sexual objects endured. In a letter to the editor in a 1993 issue of the *Gettysburgian*, a male student made a crude and blatantly sexist suggestion: the establishment of college-run brothels. He went on to list several of the benefits of his plan: an enormous source of revenue for the college, a

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<sup>41</sup> Letter to the editor, *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXX No. 12 (13 February 1976) pp.2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> “Profile Compares Gettysburg Students to National Norms,” *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXX No. 18 (9 April 1976) pp. 8.

“perfect, controlled market environment for economics and management majors,”<sup>44</sup> and lastly, an incentive to sports recruits.<sup>45</sup> While there is a good chance that this student’s suggestion was facetious, it still revealed the continuing sexual objectification of women on campus. Even the tongue-in-cheek suggestion that the sexual exploitation of women should be used to benefit the college financially was an offensive statement showing that women at Gettysburg still had to contend with a certain amount of sexual discrimination.

Since the 1970s, in addition to fighting degrading sexual attitudes, women have also had to fight to receive consideration for, and control of, their bodies. A major aspect of the sexual revolution was the growing attention paid to women’s health issues; this included women’s efforts to gain greater sexual and reproductive controls and freedoms. Female students at Gettysburg had an especially difficult time bringing attention to their health and reproductive needs. In many ways, the administration and the Board of Trustees turned a blind eye to the issue of sex because it was a controversial subject. It is human nature to ignore uncomfortable subjects because it is simply easier to pretend they do not exist and hope they will disappear. However, ignoring an uncomfortable subject never does resolve the issue, and this was true for the college’s neglect of women’s health and reproductive issues.

The birth control pill had been introduced in the 1960s, and as female students’ awareness of their rights grew, so did their demand for access to this and other methods of contraception. In fact, demand for on-campus access to contraception was not limited to female students; male students wanted access to contraception as well. In a 1975

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<sup>44</sup> Larson E. Whipsnade, “Proposed brothel would be sports recruiting incentive,” *Gettysburgian* (1 April 1993) pp. 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

article in the *Gettysburgian*, Duncan R. James wrote about the “sexual situation”<sup>46</sup> on campus. He mocked the college’s naïve and negligent attitude toward sexual activity among students, saying, “. . . if the College regulates visitation hours and refuses to allow distribution of birth control methods at the Infirmary, then obviously, sexual intercourse will cease to exist.”<sup>47</sup> Reminding readers of the Infirmary’s duty to provide services that would benefit all students, he pointed out that sexually active students were being denied benefits to which they had a right as mature, responsible adults.<sup>48</sup> The lack of available birth control would continue to be an issue for the college, and in particular for female students, since it has long been the norm that contraception is a woman’s responsibility. Ten years after James wrote his demand for access to contraception, birth control was still not available at the campus health center. A student survey conducted by Barb Nilan and Christine Theiman in 1985 showed that students, both male and female, still disagreed with this policy, saying that the availability of birth control was the responsibility of the health center because it would address a serious health issue on campus.<sup>49</sup>

Often, students were on their own in the fight to gain access to contraception. Janice Onieal, a nurse practitioner at the Health Center, remembered several faculty members who were very vocally opposed on religious and moral grounds to the distribution of condoms.<sup>50</sup> Even after the Board of Trustees gave the health center permission to prescribe contraception on-site, employees still had to “jump through

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<sup>46</sup> Duncan R. James, “Inconceivable!”, *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXIX No. 2 (26 September 1975) pp. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Barb Nilan and Christine Theiman, “Birth Control Questions,” *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXIX No. 9 (8 November 1985) pp. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Janice Onieal, interview by Sara Gustafson, 3 March 2004.

hoops,” according to Onieal.<sup>51</sup> Still, the college did make gradual progress in paying attention to the reproductive rights of students, as evidenced by an article in a 1987 issue of the *Gettysburgian* by a health center nurse practitioner, who educated students on the different types of contraception.<sup>52</sup> This article showed that the college was finally paying attention to the issue of reproductive rights, and by extension, women’s health issues. In fact, as access to contraception increased, so did access to gynecological services. Where female students had once been forced to seek out gynecological care in town, in the mid-1990s the health center began offering on-site exams, STD testing, and pregnancy testing.<sup>53</sup> Although for many years, the college’s refusal to address these issues of women’s health and reproductive rights detracted greatly from women’s equal status on campus, its policies gradually changed to allow for less discrimination against students, particularly women, who chose to be sexually active.

Women at Gettysburg have come a long way in gaining equality in athletics, academics, and social life. However, the largest remaining obstacle to true gender equality on campus is, and has always been, the incidence of sexual harassment, assault, and rape. According to William Lafferty, Director of Security Services, the number of reported sexual assaults has been at an average of three or four per year during the last several years; however, national statistics show that up to eighty percent of sexual assaults on college campuses go unreported.<sup>54</sup> Lafferty also stated that most incidents of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Connie Songer, “Health Information Project,” *Gettysburgian* Vol. LCI No. 3 (2 October 1987) pp. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Janice Onieal, interview.

<sup>54</sup> William Lafferty, email interview by Sara Gustafson, 2 March 2004. Statistics prior to 2001 were impossible to retrieve, since federal legislation only requires Safety and Security to keep records on file for a specified period of time.

sexual violence occur between students in some form of a relationship, and that in nine cases out of ten, alcohol has been used by both the victim and the perpetrator.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the ground gained by women at Gettysburg in areas such as athletics and employment, sexual violence has remained a constant threat to both women's safety and to gender equality over the past twenty-five years. The years 1978-1983 saw a string of sexual assaults, indecent exposures, and even rapes.<sup>56</sup> The most high-profile case came in 1992 with the arrest of a senior male student for six counts of forcible rape and nine counts of other sexual assaults.<sup>57</sup> These and other instances of sexual violence created, and continue to create, an atmosphere of danger and mistrust that could make the climate for female students extremely uncomfortable.

While the majority of sexual violence since 1975 went unreported, there was an informal consciousness on campus that such violence was occurring. Riggs remembered gang rape at fraternity parties being a "not infrequent occurrence."<sup>58</sup> In more recent years, date rape drugs have become a new issue of concern for female students. In the late 1990s, the security office declared several instances of date rape to be unfounded because of a lack of evidence<sup>59</sup>; however, Riggs said that she knows "date rape goes on for sure" because she has personally talked to female students who have been victims.<sup>60</sup>

Not only do these instances show that women have continued to be subject to sexual

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<sup>55</sup> William Lafferty, interview by Sara Gustafson, 5 March 2004.

<sup>56</sup> "Unknown Assailants Use Scare Tactics on Women," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXI No. 23 (12 May 1978) pp. 1; "Glassick Confirms Board; SAE Suspended for 3 Years," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXII No. 18 (21 March 1979) pp. 1.; "College Co-ed Raped in Pre-Break Incident," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXIII No. 9 (11 January 1980) pp. 4.; "Three Assaults Occur in Past Ten Days," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXIII No. 11 (25 January 1980) pp. 1.; Dan Cicala, "Sexual Assault Spurs Tighter Security," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXVII No. 1 (26 September 1983) pp. 1.; Dan Cicala, "Another Sexual Assault Occurs, Spurs Urgings for Security," *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXVII No. 7 (14 November 1983) pp. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Tim Bish, Shawn Bunting, and Heather Wissner, "Senior arrested for rapes," *Gettysburgian* Vol. XCVI No. 6 (22 October 1992) pp. 1, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Janet Riggs, interview.

<sup>59</sup> William Lafferty, interview.

<sup>60</sup> Janet Riggs, interview.

objectification and violence since the 1970s, the fact that most victims of sexual violence fail to report their attackers shows that there is still an air of discrimination and animosity toward women on campus. Riggs clearly remembered this unfriendly, unsupportive climate toward female victims of sexual violence. She said that many times during her undergraduate years, she saw female victims, and not their male attackers, being blamed for the incident by both male and female students. According to Riggs, “People would look at these women and label them, like, ‘She’s a slut.’”<sup>61</sup> This tendency to blame the victim instead of the perpetrator created a hostile environment for women struggling with sexual violence at Gettysburg.

As the incidence of sexual violence grew, the college tried to address the issue in various ways. In 1978, a group of male students formed an escort service for female students.<sup>62</sup> The administration, in conjunction with the security office, encouraged female students to walk in groups, stay in well-lit areas, and lock their doors. In more recent years, Gormley said, “The number of emergency call boxes increased and I think residence halls were moving to being locked twenty-four hours a day.”<sup>63</sup> Educational programs run by the health center and the security office have resulted in a slight decrease in the number of sexual assaults reported. However, the fact that the security office received reports of six forcible rapes and five other sexual offenses between 2001 and 2003 shows that sexual violence has remained an obstacle to gender equality on campus.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> “Student Service Offers Women Campus Escorts,” *Gettysburgian* Vol. LXXXI No. 21 (28 April 1978) pp. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Colleen Gormley, email interview.

In addition to sexual violence, sexual harassment has existed on campus since 1975 for both female students and female faculty. Sexist jokes, disparaging remarks, and unwelcome attention such as touching or suggestive comments were common occurrences on campus. While the majority of sexual harassment occurred between male and female students, there were also reports of sexual harassment and sexist behavior by the faculty toward the students. The Women's Commission assessment stated that seventy-five percent of the students interviewed reported sexual harassment between students; twenty-five percent reported harassment or sexism on the part of a faculty member.<sup>64</sup> Iannello spoke of two instances when female students were sexually harassed by a male faculty member. In one case, the faculty member would blatantly hit on his students, going so far as to attend weekend fraternity parties and make passes at female students. In another case, a male professor would insist on hugging his female students and would ask them to do such things as straighten his tie for him.<sup>65</sup> The Women's Commission assessment also reported a certain amount of sexist behavior on the part of male faculty members toward their female counterparts. These behaviors included male professors referring to each other as "professor" or "Dr." while referring to female professors with the same degrees as "Ms."<sup>66</sup> Sexual harassment and sexist behavior continues to negatively impact the climate for women on campus because it discourages them from fully participating in academic life, and it demeans their contributions as members of the college community. The areas of sexual violence and sexual harassment were, and continue to be, the most obvious areas of gender inequality.

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<sup>64</sup> Bogart and Boyles, *Assessment on Climate*, pp. 19.

<sup>65</sup> Kathleen Iannello, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Bogart and Boyles, *Assessment on Climate*, pp. 19.

On the other hand, the area where Gettysburg most obviously fostered gender equality was the establishment of the Women's Center and the Women's Studies Department. In 1988, the Women's Center was founded. While the Center did not address the issue of women's studies in the curriculum, it did provide programs of special interest to women, such as sexual abuse counseling and speakers on women's rights. As interest in women's studies and gender issues grew nationwide, female students and faculty at Gettysburg began to demand courses dealing with women's issues. Some students took this to the extreme. In 1986, members of the Women's Action Group, a student-run women's group, boycotted classes in protest of the lack of courses specifically dealing with women.<sup>67</sup> Showing how their vision of the college had broadened to include women and women's issues, later that same year the faculty voted to establish a Women's Studies Program.<sup>68</sup> The expansion of the program, and the establishment in 1993 of Women's Studies as a major,<sup>69</sup> helped to improve the general academic climate for women by enhancing the value placed on women's contributions to the college community. The major faced, and still faces, some instances of inequality; for example, any student who majors in Women's Studies must also major in another department, and until this year, no Women's Studies faculty member was offered a tenured position in that department.<sup>70</sup> However, despite these inequalities, the fact that such a department has received so much positive reaction and undergone so much growth since its inception shows that Gettysburg has been slowly developing a more fair and positive attitude toward women.

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<sup>67</sup> Lisa J. Palm, "WAG Probes Inequities," *Gettysburgian* Vol. XC (11 April 1986) pp. 3.

<sup>68</sup> "The Women's Studies Program," flier (2004-5) pp. 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Joyce Sprague, interview by Sara Gustafson, 5 March 2004.

In the years since 1975, women at Gettysburg experienced changes that affected everything from their academic pursuits to their reproductive health. Like the rest of the nation, Gettysburg responded to the sexual revolution by expanding the roles and opportunities open to women and by ensuring the equal treatment of women. Despite the advances made in women's athletics, employment opportunities, and academic life, however, women at Gettysburg continue to experience instances of sexual harassment, discrimination, and even violence. Because of these continuing incidents, Gettysburg has not yet been transformed into a place of true gender equality. True equality can only be achieved when all members of the college community feel equally valued, appreciated, and protected. While the college has made great strides toward gender equality, there still remains work to be done to ensure that women at Gettysburg feel truly respected as members of the college community.