

AC 232

BOX 86 FOLDER 6

1976

Architecture

Racism +  
Sexism

Please return to                   Affirmative Action Committee  
  Architecture Department Headquarters  
  7-303

1. Have you experienced any difficulties in your day to day life in the Architecture Department because of your race? your sex?
2. Have these been with MIT faculty? Students? Administrative staff? Secretarial staff?
3. Have there been difficulties with outside colleagues and employers in the architectural profession?
4. Has your race and/or sex caused you to receive any kind of special attention? The wrong kind of attention? Have you ever felt that race and/or sex caused you to receive too little attention? Have you felt invisible?
5. If you yourself have not been the object of discrimination, have you witnessed it happening to others?
6. Has discrimination caused you to change your career plans in any way?
7. Do you have any plans for career development which you feel may be frustrated in the future? How do you plan to deal with possible career discrimination based on race and/or sex?
8. What do you do and whom do you talk to when a disturbing incident occurs?

Please add your comments and notes on your experience.

Appendix 2            Comment Sheet

Please tell us what you think. Have you had similar experiences to ones reported here? Different experiences? Do you agree or disagree with the analysis here?

Please return to Affirmative Action Committee, MIT 7-303

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Studies  
about  
MIT

May 18, 1976

DAILY LIFE IN OUR DEPARTMENT:  
PROBLEMS OF RACISM AND SEXISM

Affirmative Action Committee  
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MIT, 7-303  
77 Mass. Ave.,  
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We would like to thank Ann Vitiello for valuable assistance in editing and producing this report.

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## I. Introduction

The Architecture Department's Affirmative Action Plan provides a discussion of the presence of female and minority students, staff, and faculty in our department and specifies policies for female and minority recruitment and career development. Although the plan identifies the department's numerical strengths and weaknesses (as of July 1, 1975), it says very little about the day to day experiences of women and minority members of our department. Since unequal education and unequal career development are often the results of attitudes rather than policies, our committee has undertaken a survey of students, staff, and faculty in our department with the intention of identifying subtle (and not-so-subtle) discriminatory attitudes towards race and sex. We used questionnaires; committee members also consulted with many individuals who wished to talk about their experiences rather than write about them. This report is based on the first 50 responses (written or interview) to our inquiry. Five of these responses are from white males. The remainder, 45, are from female and/or minority respondents, who constitute about half of the female and/or minority members of the department. Thus we feel we write with authority about the minority and female experience here, although relatively few white males

have shared their thoughts with us about problems of racism and sexism. The report will deal first, with unequal education and career preparation, as experienced by students; and second, with unequal career development, as experienced by staff and faculty. In seeking frameworks of analysis, we would like to acknowledge our debt to Mary Rowe, "Saturn's Rings: Grains of Sand and Bits of Ice," and to Eileen Shapiro et. al., "Obstacles to Equal Education at Harvard Resulting from Sex Discrimination,"<sup>1</sup> as well as to other studies cited in the text of this report.

Appendix 1 contains our questionnaire and information on the number of responses we received. The incidents described in this report occurred between 1972 and 1976 in the MIT Department of Architecture; all names have been deleted to protect participants' identities.



II. Unequal Education and Career Preparation  
 A. Student Experience

Student experience of sexist and racist attitudes may occur in such a way as to make the victims feel isolated in their anger. Those who provoked the anger may defend themselves by saying "I didn't mean it," or "You're oversensitive," or "It's trivial," but repetitions of such incidents over several years add up to unequal education for minority students, women students, and especially, minority women students. In their own words, students recount experiences of invisibility, hostility, spotlighting, and sexual innuendo.

1. INVISIBLE FEMALE AND MINORITY PRESENCE

I have answered a question in a class and had the teacher basically hear it but not acknowledge it and then when a male in the class gave the same answer, it was accepted as correct and the discussion went on from there. I was, in that case, invisible.

Several members of the architecture faculty appear not to listen or to take what I say seriously because I am a woman. They attend to the same things said by a man.

Why pay tuition to be ignored?

I've heard that it's particularly difficult to win the attention, much less the favor of Prof. X if you happen to be female.

...my design professors...either avoid contact with or are uncomfortable with women students...or is it me?

Invisible female presence is underscored by sexist language, which assumes all humans, or all architects, or all students are male. Thus phrases like "man and the environment,

draftsman, "the architect and his skills, grate on women who are specifically excluded. Various fellowship announcements, and course materials go on in this vein. As one respondent writes:

The language used in both formal and informal documents, memos, and educational materials is in general "male oriented"; e.g. I have in front of me a memo which reads "a degree candidate prepares himself in..."

Even more serious examples of ignoring female and minority presence are textbooks which mention only the work of white male architects, excluding the work of women and minority architects, and courses and texts which rely upon crude stereotypes concerning women and minority users of buildings.<sup>2</sup>

2. CONDESCENSION AND HOSTILITY TOWARD WOMEN AND MINORITY STUDENTS (or...my gosh, how in the world did you do that?)

In one class it was asked who had worked in construction, over the summer. When I raised my hand the teacher at first didn't see it and then acted uncomfortable and said "Oh, did you really? What did you do?" which everyone else had been recounting as a matter of fact. The problem here was not so much the teachers reaction, but the objective fact that women have not yet worked very much in these areas, so female presence is bound to be special/strange, and depending on a variety of factors, this will either be rewarding or paralysing. It is a constant difficulty to go against accepted social mores.

There was a mild skepticism which seemed to underlie a basic belief that women really don't have the dedication to the profession which men have. We constantly are in a position of having to prove ourselves.

Some of the discriminatory incidents I've heard of revolve around a faculty person not believing a minority student can properly do the work at all. A specific action I remember was when the number of units for a class was reduced from the standard, due to a 'low

level of work input.' That seemed shaky.

Few people believe blacks can make it at MIT.

I think that I am taken 'less seriously' than men in my classes, although this is difficult to point out in overt behavior.

In building technology courses, I have known professors to assume that the women would not do well. Here it is often a question of background, not sex. Women at MIT are clearly as capable as the men, but in the Architecture Department the women are likely to come from more humanistic backgrounds than male MIT undergrads. That does not mean they won't grasp a scientific concept if it is clearly explained to them.

Once I had a professor and a TA, both of whom worked on the same research project. One day while I was talking with them, the professor told the TA that he had interviewed a woman that day for an opening on their research staff...and commented that while she had OK professional qualifications, she was very good-looking, and we all knew that that was all that mattered, anyhow.

In conclusion we note an educational study by Rosenthal and Jacobsen.<sup>3</sup> The experimenter chose a group of students with a random distribution of IQ's from a class and fabricated a story to their teacher that these were all 'special' students who were expected to be high IQ achievers (without telling the students themselves this). The whole class was tested at the end of the term, at which point the teacher's belief about those students came true....the 'special' students in whose ability the teacher was 'programmed' to believe did significantly better than their classmates who, though otherwise identical, were not 'believed in' in the same way by their teacher. The moral of the story is that somehow (through extra attention, subtle cues, etc.) the teacher had communicated to a group of students high expectations and confidence in them. Sensing this support,

the students' morale was boosted, and they actually did perform better than those to whom this support was not given. The Department survey shows the opposite happening here: some students are sensing that faculty have little confidence in them or low expectations of them.

### 3. SPOTLIGHTING

In addition to blatant, outspoken condescension and hostility there are a number of ways of subtly implying a lack of belief in a student's ability which in some ways can be a heavier deadweight than direct criticism because it's much harder to confront and discuss openly or fight back against. One is paying too much attention to women and minority students: "spotlighting" them, as Eileen Shapiro calls it. Students pick up the 'vibes' pretty clearly:

A professor for a course I'm in now treats the women in the class as 'cute, dumb, little-girl architects who need special help...why we do...but not in the overbearingly patronizing way that it's given!

...also, this type of fussy over-helping communicates an attitude that 'we know you can't do it on your own!' (minority student)

...special attention...I like it...I need it... and I get paranoid thinking that its only because I'm a woman.

I was in a computer course where the TA's gave special attention to the women students to the point where the male students were losing out. When it became clear the women students were not interested in a relationship, all help ceased. The point is: how much help you received should not have been sex-related.

I have witnessed design teachers severely criticizing women students at reviews in ways which I find suspect. In architecture, feedback on work is always subjective and therefore it is hard to know what is the proper amount of criticism and what is overdoing it...the

the amount of harsh criticism at reviews is disproportional considering the amount of teaching help offered to the student by the teacher.

I feel that my work isn't judged as an individual in the class, but as 'that woman' in the class! I feel compelled to perform on behalf of all the women in the school, and that I am judged in that way.

#### 4. SEX IN THE STUDIO

For women students, hostility or spotlighting may be particularly uncomfortable if it comes in the form of sexual innuendo.

I have been acutely aware of design professors avoiding close contact with the women students. Either a distance is kept with sexist joking and 'flirting,' keeping the woman in her place by making sex more important than her study of design...or else the professor has some internal fear of a potential involvement with the woman student and so maintains a cold, studied distance. In either case, the woman is not respected for her serious study of architecture.

I have seen one of my design teachers exhibit one behavior to the women students (playful flirtatiousness), and another (competitive comradery) to the men in the class. In this case, since I don't particularly enjoy such game playing, it got in the way of learning from this teacher who clearly is very knowledgeable. The women students who did respond in like manner (by flirting) would receive more attention, but at reviews got even more strident criticism.

To generalize, I have found that teachers have responded positively to my work and ideas, but that at times the atmosphere was difficult for me in that their attention was...colored with too much interest (i.e., sex-related).

One student reported:

In Prof. X's (name deleted) studio, I had several crits. He kept saying I had to move my design solution to a "new level" when I finally asked how I could get to this "new level" of understanding, he said, "Have an affair!"

Another student described a design teacher who constantly flirted with women students. When asked how this affected her studies, she said "Not much, he didn't have his eye on me."

Field trips for a studio were reported by another student:

The men were irritated because the women were getting so much attention.

Many complaints, according to one respondent, resulted in a plea for two teachers to "clean up their act!" Which was perhaps a more fortunate outcome than that where a woman student took the blame herself:

One design professor loved to chat rather than talk about my work, but I loved to chat, too. I felt frustrated at the end of the term, but nonetheless wholly responsible.

More tragically, those faculty who do feel that teaching women must have a sexual motive sometimes block the path of those teachers who can see beyond sexual side-tracks.

I was in one studio where the professor gave me practically no attention. One time when I did have a desk crit he was so uncomfortable very little got said. Later in the semester, I developed a fine working relationship with a male TA. The professor then kidded the TA about how much attention he was giving me...implying sexual interest...until the TA began to get a bit embarrassed.

For both women and minority students, the immediate solution may seem to be avoidance of certain faculty:

I have heard from 4 black students that they have taken studios with professors who they felt displayed racist attitudes throughout the semester. To the extent that I have not had such experiences, it may be because I have avoided taking studios with those particular faculty people.

There is a grapevine among the women students about which faculty members have trouble relating to the women students. The mere fact of the existence of this type of underground information bespeaks that the women students consider it a serious problem. Sexism clearly affects their ability to learn from a professor, and thus relates to the overall value of their education at MIT.

#### B. Field Experience

Employment in the architectural profession may occur during the time that people study at MIT. This outside employment often has a profound affect on individuals' sense of themselves as professionals. A recent AIA study shows women earning 40% less than men of equal training and experience; equivalent data for minority architects does not exist but planning studies suggest women and minorities encounter similar patterns of discrimination in status and pay.<sup>4</sup> Since the profession's affirmative action record is bad, MIT's push for minority and female career preparation is severely handicapped and the school has little power to change professional discrimination. We include a section in this report on outside discrimination in order to stress the importance of sensitive job placement in our own affirmative action program and in order to inform all MIT students of situations women and minority students are likely to face.

## 1. Construction

One woman writes: "contractors are surprisingly respectful, even modest and puritanical," in a situation where she is identified as an architect. Another, when she is assumed to be a carpenter, comments on "very obvious discrimination:"

"Walking into a lumber yard in carpenter's work clothes has elicited any number of remarks, which have had the net effect of making me wonder if I was not deformed in some way. Working class men when threatened are directly offensive, whereas professional colleagues tend to make less obvious cracks, like alluding to your personal appearance."

Another respondent cites an interchange with a building inspector who refused to believe she could finish a construction job where she was supervising a crew of several men. He asked "How old are you?" and when told she was 26, volunteered that he had a son who was a plumber, and asked, "would you like to meet him?"

Two women students mention their frustrated desire to specialize in some aspect of construction or contracting and their conclusion that male chauvinism in this area makes it wiser to work in an office. Office work is far from easy however, as more reports discuss.

## 2. Architectural Offices

One woman student writes:

I came to graduate school because I was unsatisfied with what I was learning in my job and I think it was because of discrimination. I would rather work for myself than in an office. I feel depressed and



pessimistic about earning a living... I am tempted to withdraw (so) I don't have to hear the kind of crap... Constant surprise when I tell people what I do: "Oh, really?" "Very good!" or "You don't look old enough..."

Another responds to the question about career frustration:

After working as the only woman in the design sections of two different offices, dealing with clients' unbelief ("Honey, you're too young and pretty to be an architect") and lecherous advances disguised as desk discussions of my work, I got fed up. I decided to specialize in an area of research where I could work alone, and have greater control over my professional contacts.

Others write:

I have been discouraged from continuing my architectural studies by many potential employers, because I am a woman.

I was told by one potential employer that they couldn't use me because the office already had a woman.

I am less concerned about dealing with outside clients than I am about dealing with my male professional peers.

Another adds:

It is only on the rare occasions when I and my female colleagues surround a single male architect that men have any notion at all of how isolated women professionals are made to feel. The man's reaction to this unusual situation is often terror, and then a weak joke "Is this the ladies club?" or another man's jibe, "Is that your harem, Mr. X "

### C. Coping with Unequal Education

Alienation and anger come through very clearly when students describe coping mechanisms.

My personal experience has been one of constant struggle against being overwhelmed by a strange and very cold environment. It has been a constant struggle to maintain and assert my identity in the face of a group of people

and an environment which espouses a value system and a life style which I find to be narrow, parochial and one-dimensional. I say this with the knowledge that there are other places I could go and find environments which are much more pluralistic and accepting of a variety of lifestyles and cultures. I have found living with the acute awareness that one is essentially a stranger in a strange land emotionally and psychologically exhausting and draining. Nevertheless, I value the experience because it has forced me to confront and begin to cope with the realities with which I will have to live in my professional life. (minority woman)

In addition to the psychological drain, many minority and women students see the "educational opportunity," for which they came to MIT and for which every precious tuition dollar goes, shrinking before their very eyes (unless a surcharge in interpersonal struggle is paid to cope with some faculty). Discrimination at the blatant "we-don't-allow-women-and-minorities-to-study-here" level has been curtailed, but subtler forms still flourish.

I feel it is important to demonstrate that it was not long ago when very blatant discrimination was acceptable, and that many of the same people are still prominent members of the department. (woman)

Although our department has many antithetic viewpoints represented within it, there seems still to be an intolerance for whole realms of ideas, which I find more limiting and doubt provoking than any outright prejudice. (minority)

Nearly every woman and minority student who responded to this questionnaire anticipates frustration and difficulty in trying to fulfill their career plans once they leave MIT. Nearly all feel that the anticipated difficulty has and will force them to modify their plans.

#### 1. Working twice as hard

Many assume they will have to work twice as hard

white males to meet their goals:

I anticipate difficulty acquiring a job as a practicing architect; I'll have to work twice as hard. (woman student)

I definitely anticipate difficulties. My only plan to deal with this is to try harder than most men. (woman student)

I have long known of discrimination! Well, I must make sure my skills and qualifications are impeccable. (minority student)

## 2. Focusing Anger

In general, black students (male and female) were determined and had a focus for directed anger:

I know the law and I'll take court action if necessary.

I will fight using any means.

I must know the laws and be ready to stand up for my rights in court. I will not be defeated in my will and spirit although I may lose a battle.

Many of the women, on the other hand, didn't seem to know where or how to direct their anger. Cultural upbringing which regards aggressive behavior as unfeminine led to real conflict in regard to the way in which they should respond:

...I've never confronted a teacher about his attitude but I'm getting close to it.

Faculty give out double signals and I don't know how to respond.

Women also expressed a desire to avoid confrontation which might limit their career options, just as women and blacks had avoided certain design teachers:

I feel I will have to avoid working with certain kinds of men because of the psychic and emotional strains and hence I feel more limited in some ways.

I feel like I'm still too sensitive and I tend to withdraw. I don't often enough have a thick skin and a quick

tongue. I guess if I succeed, I'll be another one of those mean tough bitches they say professional women become.

and stereotypes about female parenting cause still more ambiguity:

I really want to have both a family and a career. I don't know if it's possible to do both fully. Men have always managed to have careers and families but they had wives. It's the accommodation of these two desires that's going to be difficult in any plans I have for career development...

### 3. Seeking Role Models

Almost all of those responding strongly expressed their need for role models, both as someone to look toward as a successful example and as someone who could give advice, understanding, and encouragement. Over and over again, women students mentioned the importance of women architects on the faculty.

The women on the faculty at MIT are my role models. Seeing them tells me I can do it.

Professor X (a women) is really important. She takes herself and her work very seriously - it is good for male faculty, to help them understand how seriously women students take themselves and their work.

One black student was made to feel uneasy about his professional needs during the time before 1975 when there were no part-time black faculty:

As childish as this sounds, I would like to have had a faculty role model during my stay here to talk to.

In addition to the need for role models many black students felt that their primary concern in architecture was to work

in lower income minority communities and that this interest and concern was not reflected in the interests or the comprehension of the faculty as much as they hoped.

What did people do and whom did they talk to when a disturbing incident occurred? Many respondents said they greatly needed the support of their peer group whether it was women or minority, but that they didn't seek this support often enough:

There's been too much whispering in the bathrooms.

I speak to other students, my friends, my lover. I've never confronted my teachers though I'm getting closer to that now and I do occasionally ask strangers not to call me sweetie or girl.

I speak to my black brothers and sisters.

Although one student reported:

I speak to my friends - in the past I spoke to authorities but became frustrated--they believed these incidents to be "minor problems" or personality conflicts. (minority)

Several others named specific female faculty or the department's affirmative action officer as a source of help. And one wrote:

There are a number of men in the department who are highly conscious; they are a pleasure.

From reading the questionnaires it becomes obvious that role models for women and minority students are a necessity not just a desirable quantity. It becomes obvious that the percentages of women and minority students must be kept up in relation to class size and particularly, in the case of minority students, increased. And, most important, the number of "highly conscious" white males must increase in order that female and minority ghettos do not develop as insulated islands in an insensitive department.

## III. Unequal Career Development

Patterns of ignoring female or minority presence, hostility, condescension, and spotlighting can add up to unequal education for MIT students, by undermining their confidence, and making them feel less competent than their white male peers. In similar ways, discriminatory attitudes may lead to unequal career development for women and minority faculty and staff. Their reports were perhaps more analytical and less optimistic than those submitted by students: a certain caution can be noted.

## A. FACULTY EXPERIENCE AT MIT

Although female and minority faculty had many experiences similar to those reported by students and staff, there was less willingness to speak freely among faculty. One respondent felt that he would have to write a book if he wrote anything at all. Others thought it easier to focus on their work than analyse complex interpersonal problems, or didn't want to open "Pandora's box" of suppressed but emotionally charged issues. There was embarrassment about revealing experiences which people felt were singularly theirs. Some felt as though they didn't have an adequate typology to describe various experiences, but could relate incidents. Others had many ways of describing what had happened and felt they couldn't talk about it at all without going into great detail. It is possible to see all these attitudes as extensions of students' plans for defending their careers -- one finds the same problems of invisibility, hostility, and spotlighting; the same attempts to focus or avoid anger, and the same confusion about roles vis a vis white males.

## Professional roles - double standards

Sociologists who have researched the roles of one or two females in predominantly male professional groups illuminate the personality stereotypes which develop to isolate women. Kanter argues that professional men type

professional women as mother, dutiful daughter, sex kitten, or iron maiden.<sup>5</sup> "Mother" roles develop when men accept dependance on an older woman, usually for keeping the office "family" together. The <sup>"pet" or</sup> "dutiful daughter," is forever an obedient protegee, with no chance to grow up. The "seductress" is made a sexual object, constantly flirted with. Any woman, particularly one with a feminist analysis, who resists the preceding three stereotypes becomes an "iron maiden," (or castrating bitch) self-confident, assertive about women's rights, etc., etc. Wolman and Wolman describe more of the small work group's dynamic.<sup>6</sup> One professional woman in an otherwise male group tend to become paired as the satellite of a flirtatious or partonizing male group leader, or to become isolated as a "weak" group member, perhaps with a supportive, non-chauvinist male sharing her isolation. They show that for a woman becoming "one of the boys" is difficult; becoming group leader is close to impossible. These studies are not limited to the architectural profession, but they provide typologies which fit many situations here, and explain why women faculty, in particular, feel isolated and subjected to different standards of achievement than those applied to white males.

There were instance in which confidence in women was seen by male colleagues as aggression, whereas confidence in men was seen as a laudable characteristic. The male was called a "heavy-hitter," the female was "on dangerous ground."



One person noted that professional talk was seen as cold when coming from a woman, as evinced by remarks such as "X, you're all business," whereas friendly chatter was sometimes mistaken as flirtation, or inability to think in a professional way. Males flirting were described as "movers," approvingly, while women flirting were "flighty."

Professional relationships between male faculty and female faculty were cited as presenting difficulties. One said:

I find it difficult to call a male colleague within my field and make a lunch date to discuss a mutual topic of interest. Intellectual curiosity is easily misinterpreted; committee work seems clearly routine, but discussion of ideas for their own sake, more tenuous. At another university, the day I began my first teaching job in the architecture department, I was introduced to a senior professor. I expressed interest in some material he had just published. His response was to suggest we discuss it over lunch. No sooner had we left the department office than he turned to me and said, 'Baby, I'd like to ball you right now!'

This sort of sexual assault is an extreme version of a more oblique way of making sure a woman's work is not taken seriously:

I meet with a visiting critic and editor who is publishing an article of mine and wants to discuss further contributions to his journal. It is a business meeting but when I explain that to my senior colleague he insists on accompanying us--and then makes sure that the conversation never turns to any substantive issues about work; instead he chats about people that the editor knows but I do not.

A tenured male professor suggests at a faculty meeting that students no doubt like my course because 'I dress well and have big eyes.'

### Women in Male Dominated Groups

The alternative to the sexual or social ploy may be the cold shoulder:

The first year I was at MIT, very few male faculty spoke to me very much. It was only after 2 years that I began to be talked to, invited to lunch very occasionally, and casually joked with by male faculty about something other than being a woman.

The ignoring of female presence may become institutionalized, as in the case of a department announcement.

Our area of the department has 6 regular faculty, 3 men and 3 women. Imagine my surprise when I saw an announcement of our new program which listed 10 men and 1 woman! Two of the female faculty were "forgotten" and seven males from other areas or visitors were added. When asked to send a correction, the senior man refused saying it would "only call attention to his mistake."

Even male faculty able to deal with women on a one to one basis may fail in groups:

I have often found that male faculty who are friendly and regard me as a peer on a one-to-one basis, are not able to maintain that stance in a group of males. It seems like any group of males has a competitive dynamic, as well as a cliquish one. If they are competing with each other they can use their relationship to the woman to further their position. They can befriend me in a possessive way, (because they like me), but also for their own self-aggrandizement in the view of other males. Or they can put me down in front of others for the same reason. In the first case I must act as a grateful but obedient daughter, in the latter I am demeaned.

If the group is less competitive and more cliquish... Either they regard me as an intruder, different; or they all lavish special attentions. If the first, I feel invisible, have trouble being acknowledged. Whereas, a male member who says the same thing later is readily acknowledged and the conversation proceeds. If I am acknowledged someone will say 'that's interesting,' restate in his own words, and further discussion will be addressed to him instead of me. If I confront the

group with this, I'm seen as even more of a deviant. If I do not act independantly I am reduced to a passive role. I may then continue my points outside the group on a one-to-one basis and hope to influence decisions in that way. In the second case, of being the object of special attention, I feel that I am expected to be the coquette, and also to assert only those ideas which will please the whole group.

In some cases the sexual fantasies and intellectual competition may be more explicit:

A tenured/<sup>MIT</sup>professor, an outside/<sup>Harvard</sup>professor, and I are discussing the work of a very distinguished woman in our field. He has heard her give a lecture in Europe, and tells me that she was wearing her glasses on a chain which hung around her neck. He then tells me that this led him to fantasize about Magritte's surrealist painting, "The Rape," which shows a woman's breasts as eyes and her vulva as mouth. Thus, to him, her lecture was emanating from her vagina! He concludes the story by saying none of her work is any good. The other man present agrees.

In other cases women's work may be put down without sexual innuendo, as when, in a group where all the untenured faculty are women, a tenured professor allows "if anyone else is tenured it will 'destroy' the program."

Should a woman faculty member persist with an unpopular point of view in a group discussion, males may offer put-downs which re-emphasize/<sup>female</sup>role stereotypes they look for, while discounting intellectual content as emotional reaction. Thus:

She's a nurse... (said of a design teacher with a very serious professional manner, in an attempt to make her seem motherly)

She's just going through her women's libber stage. (dutiful daughter becoming iron maiden).

At a committee meeting I suggest that a woman's reappointment is in jeopardy because the senior professor in her field has a clear history of

discrimination against women, both students and faculty. The committee chairperson (a tenured male professor) accuses me publicly of attempting to malign a distinguished professor as a childish rebellion against authority, i.e., father figures. (dutiful daughter gone wrong)

You're so difficult, no wonder you're still single.  
(iron maiden, no chance of becoming a seductress)

Not knowing how to relate to women faculty as equals -- as women who are not students or secretaries, who are not mothers, daughters, or lovers, seems to lead many male faculty into even more incidents of hostility and condescension.

#### Hostility and Condescension towards Female and Minority Faculty

Several female faculty cited committee meetings or other occasions where discriminatory introductions were made:

This is Professor X, this is Professor Y, Professor Z, and this is \_\_\_\_\_ (first name only -- the woman referred to by her first name is also a professor, in each case.)

Another professor complained that she was not consistently invited to meetings of a faculty group to which she officially belonged. On one occasion a tenured professor asked her advice about ordering the refreshments for these meetings, and still did not invite her to attend. When she asked why she was not regularly invited, she was told that it was too far to walk to her office. Also on the subject of names, two female faculty report a male professor keeps confusing their names, joking, "You know, all women look alike to me." Another female professor reports a colleague from another department, seeing her near the gym, in tennis clothes, greets her: "You're not only a professor, you're a

tennis player too?" in tones of incredulity.

One faculty member reported her experience with two different faculty seminars (small groups of about ten to thirty scholars meeting to present papers and discuss work once every few weeks):

I was invited to join the first group when I was appointed to the MIT faculty, by a senior faculty member, who said by way of explanation, 'It used to be very small. When X and Y first started it, they eliminated women and faculty from third-class universities, but now it's open...' The next incident was a year later. I was interviewed by a senior faculty member from another department as a potential participant in a seminar dealing with philosophical revolutions, times in Western history when profound changes occurred in approaches to political and intellectual life. The man asked what subject I would work on. I answered, 'The development of feminist analyses of society in the 19th and 20th centuries.' 'Oh, feminism is not an intellectual subject,' he replied. 'Now if you were to work on anti-semitism, for instance, that might be interesting intellectually...'

Ignoring female presence and women's work may also take the form of appropriating women's work, when an achievement by a woman is felt in some way to belong to a male associate. An instance was cited in which course material taught by a female was taken over by a tenured male, and in the topics which were left to her, he decreased class sizes. Also, one person noted that in construction work, males tended to take the credit for those things which she had built.

#### Spotlighting

After all these hassles, women are expected to be delighted when someone wants them up front for p.r.:

Until recently a reason frequently given to me for committee appointments was 'we need a woman on this committee.'

Two weeks before a regional conference, a program was distributed, which listed only male speakers. One of the organizers, a man, then asked me to take part, saying, 'These are the speakers we really needed to have. We'd like you to comment on a paper, because we don't have any women.' I refused, pointing out that this was tokenism, and saying that I was short of time that week. The man then moved from tokenism to paternalism, by asking my husband, who has nothing whatever to do with the event, if he couldn't persuade me to agree to come!

Spotlighting connected with token committee assignments or work groups may be tied in with hostility and innuendo. One female faculty member reports being telephoned at 2am on a weekday by an abusive faculty member who wanted to discuss a committee meeting; another reported several unexpected midnight calls to discuss work. Calls at 10pm on Friday nights from various faculty wanting to "have a drink and discuss that committee," are a hassle to at least one single female faculty member, which she feels is connected with being the only woman on some of these same committees.

In addition to keeping up token representation on committees minority and women faculty are usually expected to carry the burdens of the department's Affirmative Action program, appearing at national and regional conferences, initiating department programs, counselling advising female and minority students. If more white male faculty members were to engage in these activities, more enthusiastically, especially the recruitment and public relations activities,

minority and women faculty could have more time, out of the spotlight, for career development in academic areas.

Summarizing the unequal career development for female and minority faculty, one finds for women, cases of uneasy group relationships, invisibility, hostility, innuendo, and spotlighting. Minority faculty also experience problems with spotlighting. We lack the information on minority faculty to say more about other areas. Keeping up the numbers of women and minority faculty in the department is important to their ability to function. As well as filling a need for more student role models, additional women and minority faculty would help the faculty already here to feel less isolated in white male groups.

## B. Staff Experience

The administrative and secretarial staff in the department reported many incidents to our committee concerning their interactions with faculty, students, and the MIT administration. While female students and faculty often wrote about isolation in male peer groups, resulting in hostility and spotlighting, staff experience a different sort of separateness. They work with predominantly male groups of students and faculty, yet they are considered part of a predominantly female work force experiencing difficulties related to stereotypes about "women's work" which are an inverted form of the stereotypes about "man's work" which women architects encounter.

### 1. Role Definition

One woman writes:

It appears that secretaries have a hard time transcending the role of mechanic (i.e. given a specific duty or order--type a dictated letter, phone so-and-so and tell that person such and such) to thinking, as an independent thinker and organizer. The word secretary still carries a stigma of non-initiative, a passive role.

She goes on to quote her boss's disparagement of her job:

Anybody with a brain wouldn't be a secretary; how could they possibly enjoy not working at something challenging!

This attitude is shared by an administrator, who-writes:

I am not a secretary and always (perhaps indignantly) correct people when they call me that. I find that the word has a demeaning concept. Others, both men and women, generally do too, for they respond much better when I tell them I am Professor X's assistant and not his secretary.



The problem is summed up by another who writes:

At MIT (and no doubt at other large universities as well during these times of low employment levels) many of the (female) "staff" members and other "support personnel" are as highly educated and talented as their superiors. Unfortunately, they rarely have a chance to use their backgrounds and abilities and to easily are stereotyped as "secretaries" - even if that is not their position. I think we should be working to abolish these distinctions and to treat people as individuals...

What is expected of a secretary? One respondent commented on illegal hiring practices she had observed, complaining that secretaries may be required to meet certain physical standards set by the boss. Thus someone might request a secretary in a certain age range ("We have a young group here."), someone "attractive," someone of a certain race. This secretary was also offended by the racist implications when someone interviewing her described a potential boss, saying "Well, he's black...", and hesitating, which she felt was testing her willingness to work for a black man. The respondent also noted that a secretary might be "expected to use her lunch hour for meetings that the Institute or department sets up to communicate with secretaries regarding the work situation."

## 2. Office Housework

Several women complained about non-secretarial tasks added to their work load; making them "office wives" for male bosses:

There is still the type of discrimination that says women naturally are more attuned to doing "housework" jobs around the office and I think that is something

totally uncalled for.

Another complains about having to:

...make the coffee and heat water for tea no matter how many men and boys take part in the consumption. In some cases she (a secretary) is still expected to make and serve it to her boss and his guests.

Two women who refused to fetch or prepare faculty lunches made their position on this sort of "office housework" quite clear. A faculty member then reported hearing a tenured professor boasting that his secretary still took care of his lunch.

One of the difficulties of secretarial life may be vacillation of roles. The secretary may "be constantly interrupted from her (or his) work to do trivial tasks, but she (or he) must not interrupt the boss except in an emergency." She (or he) may be hassled with trivial work which she (or he) feels the boss could perfectly well do himself or herself. She (or he) may be saddled with personal work (at no extra compensation) like making travel arrangements for the boss's family, balancing the boss's checkbook, typing the boss's personal letters, or listening to the boss's marital problems. Even if these activities are performed as personal favors, there is usually little or no personal reciprocity.

### 3. Executive Work, Overwork

In contrast to trivial work and personal work, there is executive work which the secretary may be asked to take on

without executive pay. One faculty member was reported to have asked his secretary to grade student work. Other skilled jobs secretaries have been assigned include running conferences, doing graphic design, and reading proofs. All of these jobs rarely lead to planned career development--most often they are extra work at the same pay.

Even if a secretary refuses personal work and executive work as not being part of the job, there is the problem of overwork:

A secretary at MIT can expect to be hired to work for one or two people but end up working for more--particularly in cases of new faculty being added to the department with a budget which won't allow for money for a secretary (the money can be better spent on luncheons or other luxuries) because additional work can always be squeezed out of the secretary. I was once hired to work for two men and ended up working for three when a new faculty member was hired. I was not asked or even warned and got no compensation for the extra work. I was treated like a curiosity when I objected. In another situation I was hired to work for two men but because of where my desk was located every man or boy who walked through the office door thought I worked for him. These examples are typical.

Overwork for female administrators can include taking on more and more responsibilities, for more and more people, without the support staff or the salary that a male administrator would receive. One administrator reported that a male doing only one third of her job was paid several thousand dollars more per year, while other males doing equivalent MIT jobs enjoyed secretarial assistance and student staff. The case of unequal work for unequal pay leads one to understand why women secretaries resent the entrance of higher-paid,

higher status men with inferior qualifications:

Men who are infiltrating the field with no experience start at higher salaries and get more frequent raises and promotions. Unfortunately, the women they displace do not have as easy a time getting into a man's field and if they are allowed in they can expect to get less pay and fewer promotions. Because, regardless of the fact that it costs just as much for a woman to support herself as a man and that in so many cases she is the sole supporter of a family, the myth of the male breadwinner still exists.

#### 4. Hostility, Condescension, Innuendo, Assault

The stresses of overwork may be exacerbated by difficult professional contacts due to hostility, condescension, and sexual innuendo. For example, female staff reported being repeatedly shouted at and sworn at by callers who then behave in an obsequious manner when the boss appears. One person described a typical incident of this kind:

The incident involved Mr. X of the Z office. He wanted me to relay a message to Professor Y, was very irritated and sharp, called numerous times, each time becoming more nasty. As soon as Professor Y spoke with him, Mr. X was all sweetness and kindness and was of course willing to go along with anything Professor Y said.

Personal relationships are also made difficult if a boss expects a secretary to lie to callers ("he (or she) is not here now") in order to save face or avoid confronting hostility personally. Bosses may also demean their secretaries by referring to them with possessive and diminutive terms such as "my girl" or "the girl" (you never hear "my boy" or even "the boy") which may lead callers to presume upon the

boss's patronizing relationship.

Sexual innuendo may become part of such a patronizing relationship. One tenured faculty member was observed being asked by an administrator to attend a committee meeting. He bantered with the female administrator flirtatiously, "Will you be there so we can hold hands?" Gross sexual assault may also threaten the staff:

One day I was up on the 4th floor of building 10 'running an errand' for my boss when a male student in the Architecture Department, whose name I did not know, ran up behind me and grabbed me between the thighs and turned around and ran off in the opposite direction. When I reported it to two male administrators in the department, one asked if the student was black and when I said no he just dropped the subject and walked out of the office and the other said 'not one of our students' and walked away from me. I was able to find this student's department folder with his picture and got his name but felt very humiliated about pursuing it. Finally I reported it to the Campus Patrol so that it would go on record but they insisted that it must have been someone from outside MIT, and suggested I go look at mug shots at the Cambridge Police Station.

When administrators racist fears were allayed she was not able to pursue her aggressor!

The staff experience at MIT is difficult to summarize, since role definition, office housework, and executive work without executive pay can be related to problems of hierarchy as well as of sexism. The generally preferential treatment male staff at MIT receive, however, shows that sexism does operate in treatment of female staff. One can ask, "If the staff member or secretary I work with were male, would I treat him any differently?" Problems of long range career

development for staff are more severe than for students or faculty--others may complain of not moving up the career ladder but for staff the ladder, beyond a certain point, does not really exist. In contrast to this note of pessimism, we can applaud the first IAP design studio taught for the staff in 1976--potential career development in architecture which exists for staff here was at least realized for two hectic weeks.

## IV. Recommendations

This report reflects the results of 50 members of the department attempting to describe their experiences here, and members of the Affirmative Action Committee trying to put these experiences into some framework for discussion and analysis. We had far more material than we could use in this report, and tried to select typical rather than unusual incidents. Yet we heard from so few white males that we know we have only one side of the story. We do not want to make white males defensive; but we want everyone, white and minority, male and female, to become sensitive. We hope that issues related to race and sex can be more discussed openly as a result of this report, and that the report will provide a context in which future incidents can be evaluated, rather than dismissed as trivial upsets or personality problems. Our most important recommendation, therefore, is open discussion of incidents at the time they occur.

We would also like to recommend increasing the numbers of female and minority faculty, staff and students here. We especially need female and minority design faculty, or full-time, multi-year contracts. We need much clearer career development commitments to female and minority faculty, and to all staff. We need increased recruitment of minority students, and increased departmental support, including job placement, for both female and minority students.

We also ask that tenured faculty, who in many ways establish

the intellectual and emotional tone of the department, to think about the issues of racism and sexism very seriously. This would involve consideration of course content, of behavior towards students and untenured faculty, of behavior towards staff. An egalitarian style of working and learning which enhances the existing receptivity of MIT to women and minorities is what we seek.



NOTES

1. Mary Rowe, "Saturn's Rings," in Graduate and Professional Education of Women, American Association of University Women, 1974, pp. 1-9; "Saturn's Rings II," excerpted in Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin, vol. 50, no. 1, Sept.-Oct. 1975, pp. 14-18; "The Saturn's Rings Phenomenon: Micro-Inequalities and Unequal Opportunity," 1976, working paper.
2. Eileen Shapiro, et.al., Obstacles to Equal Education at Harvard Resulting from Sex Discrimination, a report of the Student Taskforce of the Joint Committee on the Status of Women, Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Harvard School of Public Health, October 1974.

For a review of the literature on women see Dolores Hayden and Gwen Wright, "Review Essay: Architecture and Urban Planning," Signs, forthcoming, August 1976.

3. Rosenthal and Jacobson, "Teachers' I.Q. Expectations as Determinants of Pupils I.Q. Gains," (reference forthcoming).
4. Judith Edelman, chairperson, A.I.A. Task Force on Women Status of Women in the Architectural Profession, February 1975

Lisa B. Yondrof, "Women and Blacks in Planning," American Society of Planning Officials, Planning Advisory Service Memo M-10 (Chicago, 1972). See also Ellen Berkeley, "No Jews Need Apply," concerning anti-semitism in professional offices, Village Voice, Mar. 22, 1976.

5. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Sex and Interaction in Groups with Skewed Sex Ratios: The Problems of the Solitary Woman in a Male Dominated Group," working paper, 1974.
6. Carol Wolman, M.D. and Hal Frank, "The Solo Woman in a Professional Peer Group," delivered at annual meeting of American Psychiatric Association, May 1973.

Appendix 1

		white male	minority (male & female)	female (white & minority)	minority female
Students	334	220	31	88	5
Staff-administrative and biweekly	17	0	1	17	1
Faculty	45	31	3 (3 part time)	11 (4 part time)	0
<hr/>					
Total	396	251	35	116	6
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>					
Respondents	50	5	11	34	5
Percentage of responses	13%	2%	31%	29%	83%

The following questionnaire was sent to all department members:

Figures revised as of June 1, 1976. Neither the Department of Architecture and the Dean's Office furnished exact totals because of part-time jobs, special students, etc.

Please return to                      Affirmative Action Committee  
   Architecture Department Headquarters  
   7-303

1. Have you experienced any difficulties in your day to day life in the Architecture Department because of your race? your sex?
2. Have these been with MIT faculty? Students? Administrative staff? Secretarial staff?
3. Have there been difficulties with outside colleagues and employers in the architectural profession?
4. Has your race and/or sex caused you to receive any kind of special attention? The wrong kind of attention? Have you ever felt that race and/or sex caused you to receive too little attention? Have you felt invisible?
5. If you yourself have not been the object of discrimination, have you witnessed it happening to others?
6. Has discrimination caused you to change your career plans in any way?
7. Do you have any plans for career development which you feel may be frustrated in the future? How do you plan to deal with possible career discrimination based on race and/or sex?
8. What do you do and whom do you talk to when a disturbing incident occurs?

Please add your comments and notes on your experience.

Appendix 2            Comment Sheet

Please tell us what you think. Have you had similar experiences to ones reported here? Different experiences? Do you agree or disagree with the analysis here?

Please return to Affirmative Action Committee, MIT 7-303

DIGITIZE?

DRAFT

May 18, 1976

DAILY LIFE IN OUR DEPARTMENT:  
PROBLEMS OF RACISM AND SEXISM

Affirmative Action Committee  
Department of Architecture  
MIT, 7-303  
77 Mass. Ave.,  
Cambridge, Mass.

Affirmative Action Committee 1975-76

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Dolores Hayden  
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Members

Ann Abernathy  
Kevin Benjamin  
Bonnie Blanchard  
D.L. Chandler  
Rosemary Grimshaw  
Lisa Heshong  
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Margo Jones

Editors of this report

Hayden, Abernathy, Blanchard, Chandler, Grimshaw, Outzs

We would like to thank Ann Vitiello for valuable assistance in editing and producing this report.

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## I. Introduction

The Architecture Department's Affirmative Action Plan provides a discussion of the presence of female and minority students, staff, and faculty in our department and specifies policies for female and minority recruitment and career development. Although the plan identifies the department's numerical strengths and weaknesses (as of July 1, 1975), it says very little about the day to day experiences of women and minority members of our department. Since unequal education and unequal career development are often the results of attitudes rather than policies, our committee has undertaken a survey of students, staff, and faculty in our department with the intention of identifying subtle (and not-so-subtle) discriminatory attitudes towards race and sex. We used questionnaires; committee members also consulted with many individuals who wished to talk about their experiences rather than write about them. This report is based on the first 50 responses (written or interview) to our inquiry. Five of these responses are from white males. The remainder, 45, are from female and/or minority respondents, who constitute about half of the female and/or minority members of the department. Thus we feel we write with authority about the minority and female experience here, although relatively few white males



have shared their thoughts with us about problems of racism and sexism. The report will deal first, with unequal education and career preparation, as experienced by students; and second, with unequal career development, as experienced by staff and faculty. In seeking frameworks of analysis, we would like to acknowledge our debt to Mary Rowe, "Saturn's Rings: Grains of Sand and Bits of Ice," and to Eileen Shapiro et. al., "Obstacles to Equal Education at Harvard Resulting from Sex Discrimination,"<sup>1</sup> as well as to other studies cited in the text of this report.

Appendix 1 contains our questionnaire and information on the number of responses we received. The incidents described in this report occurred between 1972 and 1976 in the MIT Department of Architecture; all names have been deleted to protect participants' identities.

## II. Unequal Education and Career Preparation

### A. Student Experience

Student experience of sexist and racist attitudes may occur in such a way as to make the victims feel isolated in their anger. Those who provoked the anger may defend themselves by saying "I didn't mean it," or "You're oversensitive," or "It's trivial," but repetitions of such incidents over several years add up to unequal education for minority students, women students., and especially, minority women students. In their own words, students recount experiences of invisibility, hostility, spotlighting, and sexual innuendo.

#### 1. INVISIBLE FEMALE AND MINORITY PRESENCE

I have answered a question in a class and had the teacher basically hear it but not acknowledge it and then when a male in the class gave the same answer, it was accepted as correct and the discussion went on from there. I was, in that case, invisible.

Several members of the architecture faculty appear not to listen or to take what I say seriously because I am a woman. They attend to the same things said by a man.

Why pay tuition to be ignored?

I've heard that it's particularly difficult to win the attention, much less the favor of Prof. X if you happen to be female.

...my design professors...either avoid contact with or are uncomfortable with women students...or is it me?

Invisible female presence is underscored by sexist language, which assumes all humans, or all architects, or all students are male. Thus phrases like "man and the environment,

draftsman, "the architect and his skills, grate on women who are specifically excluded. Various fellowship announcements, and course materials go on in this vein. As one respondent writes:

The language used in both formal and informal documents, memos, and educational materials is in general "male oriented"; e.g. I have in front of me a memo which reads "a degree candidate prepares himself in..."

Even more serious examples of ignoring female and minority presence are textbooks which mention only the work of white male architects, excluding the work of women and minority architects, and courses and texts which rely upon crude stereotypes concerning women and minority users of buildings.<sup>2</sup>

2. CONDESCENSION AND HOSTILITY TOWARD WOMEN AND MINORITY STUDENTS (or...my gosh, how in the world did you do that?)

In one class it was asked who had worked in construction, over the summer. When I raised my hand the teacher at first didn't see it and then acted uncomfortable and said "Oh, did you really? What did you do?" which everyone else had been recounting as a matter of fact. The problem here was not so much the teachers reaction, but the objective fact that women have not yet worked very much in these areas, so female presence is bound to be special/strange, and depending on a variety of factors, this will either be rewarding or paralysing. It is a constant difficulty to go against accepted social mores.

There was a mild skepticism which seemed to underlie a basic belief that women really don't have the dedication to the profession which men have. We constantly are in a position of having to prove ourselves.

Some of the discriminatory incidents I've heard of revolve around a faculty person not believing a minority student can properly do the work at all. A specific action I remember was when the number of units for a class was reduced from the standard, due to a 'low

level of work input.' That seemed shaky.

Few people believe blacks can make it at MIT.

I think that I am taken 'less seriously' than men in my classes, although this is difficult to point out in overt behavior.

In building technology courses, I have known professors to assume that the women would not do well. Here it is often a question of background, not sex. Women at MIT are clearly as capable as the men, but in the Architecture Department the women are likely to come from more humanistic backgrounds than male MIT undergrads. That does not mean they won't grasp a scientific concept if it is clearly explained to them.

Once I had a professor and a TA, both of whom worked on the same research project. One day while I was talking with them, the professor told the TA that he had interviewed a woman that day for an opening on their research staff...and commented that while she had OK professional qualifications, she was very good-looking, and we all knew that that was all that mattered, anyhow.

In conclusion we note an educational study by Rosenthal and Jacobsen.<sup>3</sup> The experimenter chose a group of students with a random distribution of IQ's from a class and fabricated a story to their teacher that these were all 'special' students who were expected to be high IQ achievers (without telling the students themselves this). The whole class was tested at the end of the term, at which point the teacher's belief about those students came true....the 'special' students in whose ability the teacher was 'programmed' to believe did significantly better than their classmates who, though otherwise identical, were not 'believed in' in the same way by their teacher. The moral of the story is that somehow (through extra attention, subtle cues, etc.) the teacher had communicated to a group of students high expectations and confidence in them. Sensing this support,

the students' morale was boosted, and they actually did perform better than those to whom this support was not given. The Department survey shows the opposite happening here: some students are sensing that faculty have little confidence in them or low expectations of them.

### 3. SPOTLIGHTING

In addition to blatant, outspoken condescension and hostility there are a number of ways of subtly implying a lack of belief in a student's ability which in some ways can be a heavier deadweight than direct criticism because it's much harder to confront and discuss openly or fight back against. One is paying too much attention to women and minority students: "spotlighting" them, as Eileen Shapiro calls it. Students pick up the 'vibes' pretty clearly:

A professor for a course i'm in now treats the women in the class as 'cute, dumb, little-girl architects who need special help...why we do...but not in the overbearingly patronizing way that it's given!

...also, this type of fussy over-helping communicates an attitude that 'we know you can't do it on your own!  
(minority student)  
...special attention...I like it...I need it... and I get paranoid thinking that its only because I'm a woman.

I was in a computer course where the TA's gave special attention to the women students to the point where the male students were losing out. When it became clear the women students were not interested in a relationship, all help ceased. The point is: how much help you received should not have been sex-related.

I have witnessed design teachers severely criticizing women students at reviews in ways which I find suspect. In architecture, feedback on work is always subjective and therefore it is hard to know what is the proper amount of criticism and what is overdoing it...the

the amount of harsh criticism at reviews is disproportional considering the amount of teaching help offered to the student by the teacher.

I feel that my work isn't judged as an individual in the class, but as 'that woman' in the class! I feel compelled to perform on behalf of all the women in the school, and that I am judged in that way.

#### 4. SEX IN THE STUDIO

For women students, hostility or spotlighting may be particularly uncomfortable if it comes in the form of sexual innuendo.

I have been acutely aware of design professors avoiding close contact with the women students. Either a distance is kept with sexist joking and 'flirting,' keeping the woman in her place by making sex more important than her study of design...or else the professor has some internal fear of a potential involvement with the woman student and so maintains a cold, studied distance. In either case, the woman is not respected for her serious study of architecture.

I have seen one of my design teachers exhibit one behavior to the women students (playful flirtatiousness), and another (competitive comradery) to the men in the class. In this case, since I don't particularly enjoy such game playing, it got in the way of learning from this teacher who clearly is very knowledgeable. The women students who did respond in like manner (by flirting) would receive more attention, but at reviews got even more strident criticism.

To generalize, I have found that teachers have responded positively to my work and ideas, but that at times the atmosphere was difficult for me in that their attention was...colored with too much interest (i.e., sex-related).

One student reported:

In Prof. X's (name deleted) studio, I had several crits. He kept saying I had to move my design solution to a "new level" when I finally asked how I could get to this "new level" of understanding, he said, "Have an affair!"

Another student described a design teacher who constantly flirted with women students. When asked how this affected her studies, she said "Not much, he didn't have his eye on me."

Field trips for a studio were reported by another student:

"The men were irritated because the women were getting so much attention."

Many complaints, according to one respondent, resulted in a plea for two teachers to "clean up their act!" Which was perhaps a more fortunate outcome than that where a woman student took the blame herself:

One design professor loved to chat rather than talk about my work, but I loved to chat, too. I felt frustrated at the end of the term, but nonetheless wholly responsible.

More tragically, those faculty who do feel that teaching women must have a sexual motive sometimes block the path of those teachers who can see beyond sexual side-tracks.

I was in one studio where the professor gave me practically no attention. One time when I did have a desk crit he was so uncomfortable very little got said. Later in the semester, I developed a fine working relationship with a male TA. The professor then kidded the TA about how much attention he was giving me...implying sexual interest...until the TA began to get a bit embarrassed.

For both women and minority students, the immediate solution may seem to be avoidance of certain faculty:

I have heard from 4 black students that they have taken studios with professors who they felt displayed racist attitudes throughout the semester. To the extent that I have not had such experiences, it may be because I have avoided taking studios with those particular faculty people.

There is a grapevine among the women students about which faculty members have trouble relating to the women students. The mere fact of the existence of this type of underground information bespeaks that the women students consider it a serious problem. Sexism clearly affects their ability to learn from a professor, and thus relates to the overall value of their education at MIT.

#### B. Field Experience

Employment in the architectural profession may occur during the time that people study at MIT. This outside employment often has a profound affect on individuals' sense of themselves as professionals. A recent AIA study shows women earning 40% less than men of equal training and experience; equivalent data for minority architects does not exist but planning studies suggest women and minorities encounter similar patterns of discrimination in status and pay.<sup>4</sup> Since the profession's affirmative action record is bad, MIT's push for minority and female career preparation is severely handicapped and the school has little power to change professional discrimination. We include a section in this report on outside discrimination in order to stress the importance of sensitive job placement in our own affirmative action program and in order to inform all MIT students of situations women and minority students are likely to face.



## 1. Construction

One woman writes: "contractors are surprisingly respectful, even modest and puritanical," in a situation where she is identified as an architect. Another, when she is assumed to be a carpenter, comments on "very obvious discrimination:"

"Walking into a lumber yard in carpenter's work clothes has elicited any number of remarks, which have had the net effect of making me wonder if I was not deformed in some way. Working class men when threatened are directly offensive, whereas professional colleagues tend to make less obvious cracks, like alluding to your personal appearance."

Another respondent cites an interchange with a building inspector who refused to believe she could finish a construction job where she was supervising a crew of several men. He asked "How old are you?" and when told she was 26, volunteered that he had a son who was a plumber, and asked, "would you like to meet him?"

Two women students mention their frustrated desire to specialize in some aspect of construction or contracting and their conclusion that male chauvinism in this area makes it wiser to work in an office. Office work is far from easy however, as more reports discuss.

## 2. Architectural Offices

One woman student writes:

I came to graduate school because I was unsatisfied with what I was learning in my job and I think it was because of discrimination. I would rather work for myself than in an office. I feel depressed and

pessimistic about earning a living... I am tempted to withdraw (so) I don't have to hear the kind of crap... Constant surprise when I tell people what I do: "Oh, really?" "Very good!" or "You don't look old enough..."

Another responds to the question about career frustration:

After working as the only woman in the design sections of two different offices, dealing with clients' unbelief ("Honey, you're too young and pretty to be an architect") and lecherous advances disguised as desk discussions of my work, I got fed up. I decided to specialize in an area of research where I could work alone, and have greater control over my professional contacts.

Others write:

I have been discouraged from continuing my architectural studies by many potential employers, because I am a woman.

I was told by one potential employer that they couldn't use me because the office already had a woman.

I am less concerned about dealing with outside clients than I am about dealing with my male professional peers.

Another adds:

It is only on the rare occasions when I and my female colleagues surround a single male architect that men have any notion at all of how isolated women professionals are made to feel. The man's reaction to this unusual situation is often terror, and then a weak joke "Is this the ladies club?" or another man's jibe, "Is that your harem, Mr. X?"

### C. Coping with Unequal Education

Alienation and anger come through very clearly when students describe coping mechanisms.

My personal experience has been one of constant struggle against being overwhelmed by a strange and very cold environment. It has been a constant struggle to maintain and assert my identity in the face of a group of people

and an environment which espouses a value system and a life style which I find to be narrow, parochial and one-dimensional. I say this with the knowledge that there are other places I could go and find environments which are much more pluralistic and accepting of a variety of lifestyles and cultures. I have found living with the acute awareness that one is essentially a stranger in a strange land emotionally and psychologically exhausting and draining. Nevertheless, I value the experience because it has forced me to confront and begin to cope with the realities with which I will have to live in my professional life. (minority woman)

In addition to the psychological drain, many minority and women students see the "educational opportunity," for which they came to MIT and for which every precious tuition dollar goes, shrinking before their very eyes (unless a surcharge in interpersonal struggle is paid to cope with some faculty). Discrimination at the blatant "we-don't-allow-women-and-minorities-to-study-here" level has been curtailed, but subtler forms still flourish.

I feel it is important to demonstrate that it was not long ago when very blatant discrimination was acceptable, and that many of the same people are still prominent members of the department. (woman)

Although our department has many antithetic viewpoints represented within it, there seems still to be an intolerance for whole realms of ideas, which I find more limiting and doubt provoking than any outright prejudice. (minority)

Nearly every woman and minority student who responded to this questionnaire anticipates frustration and difficulty in trying to fulfill their career plans once they leave MIT. Nearly all feel that the anticipated difficulty has and will force them to modify their plans.

1. Working twice as hard

Many assume they will have to work twice as hard

white males to meet their goals:

I anticipate difficulty acquiring a job as a practicing architect; I'll have to work twice as hard. (woman student)

I definitely anticipate difficulties. My only plan to deal with this is to try harder than most men. (woman student)

I have long known of discrimination! Well, I must make sure my skills and qualifications are impeccable. (minority student)

## 2. Focusing Anger

In general, black students (male and female) were determined and had a focus for directed anger:

I know the law and I'll take court action if necessary.

I will fight using any means.

I must know the laws and be ready to stand up for my rights in court. I will not be defeated in my will and spirit although I may lose a battle.

Many of the women, on the other hand, didn't seem to know where or how to direct their anger. Cultural upbringing which regards aggressive behavior as unfeminine led to real conflict in regard to the way in which they should respond:

...I've never confronted a teacher about his attitude but I'm getting close to it.

Faculty give out double signals and I don't know how to respond.

Women also expressed a desire to avoid confrontation which might limit their career options, just as women and blacks had avoided certain design teachers:

I feel I will have to avoid working with certain kinds of men because of the psychic and emotional strains and hence I feel more limited in some ways.

I feel like I'm still too sensitive and I tend to withdraw. I don't often enough have a thick skin and a quick

tongue. I guess if I succeed, I'll be another one of those mean tough bitches they say professional women become.

and stereotypes about female parenting cause still more ambiguity:

I really want to have both a family and a career. I don't know if it's possible to do both fully. Men have always managed to have careers and families but they had wives. It's the accommodation of these two desires that's going to be difficult in any plans I have for career development...

### 3. Seeking Role Models

Almost all of those responding strongly expressed their need for role models, both as someone to look toward as a successful example and as someone who could give advice, understanding, and encouragement. Over and over again, women students mentioned the importance of women architects on the faculty.

The women on the faculty at MIT are my role models. Seeing them tells me I can do it.

Professor X (a women) is really important. She takes herself and her work very seriously - it is good for male faculty, to help them understand how seriously women students take themselves and their work.

One black student was made to feel uneasy about his professional needs during the time before 1975 when there were no part-time black faculty:

As childish as this sounds, I would like to have had a faculty role model during my stay here to talk to.

In addition to the need for role models many black students felt that their primary concern in architecture was to work

in lower income minority communities and that this interest and concern was not reflected in the interests or the comprehension of the faculty as much as they hoped.

What did people do and whom did they talk to when a disturbing incident occurred? Many respondents said they greatly needed the support of their peer group whether it was women or minority, but that they didn't seek this support often enough:

There's been too much whispering in the bathrooms.

I speak to other students, my friends, my lover. I've never confronted my teachers though I'm getting closer to that now and I do occasionally ask strangers not to call me sweetie or girl.

I speak to my black brothers and sisters.

Although one student reported:

I speak to my friends - in the past I spoke to authorities but became frustrated--they believed these incidents to be "minor problems" or personality conflicts. (minority)

Several others named specific female faculty or the department's affirmative action officer as a source of help. And one wrote:

There are a number of men in the department who are highly conscious; they are a pleasure.

From reading the questionnaires it becomes obvious that role models for women and minority students are a necessity not just a desirable quantity. It becomes obvious that the percentages of women and minority students must be kept up in relation to class size and particularly, in the case of minority students, increased. And, most important, the number of "highly conscious" white males must increase in order that female and minority ghettos do not develop as insulated islands in an insensitive department.

### III. Unequal Career Development

Patterns of ignoring female or minority presence, hostility, condescension, and spotlighting can add up to unequal education for MIT students, by undermining their confidence, and making them feel less competent than their white male peers. In similar ways, discriminatory attitudes may lead to unequal career development for women and minority faculty and staff. Their reports were perhaps more analytical and less optimistic than those submitted by students: a certain caution can be noted.

## A. FACULTY EXPERIENCE AT MIT

Although female and minority faculty had many experiences similar to those reported by students and staff, there was less willingness to speak freely among faculty. One respondent felt that he would have to write a book if he wrote anything at all. Others thought it easier to focus on their work than analyse complex interpersonal problems, or didn't want to open "Pandora's box" of suppressed but emotionally charged issues. There was embarrassment about revealing experiences which people felt were singularly theirs. Some felt as though they didn't have an adequate typology to describe various experiences, but could relate incidents. Others had many ways of describing what had happened and felt they couldn't talk about it at all without going into great detail. It is possible to see all these attitudes as extensions of students' plans for defending their careers -- one finds the same problems of invisibility, hostility, and spotlighting; the same attempts to focus or avoid anger, and the same confusion about roles vis à vis white males.

## Professional roles - double standards

Sociologists who have researched the roles of one or two females in predominantly male professional groups illuminate the personality stereotypes which develop to isolate women. Kanter argues that professional men type



professional women as mother, dutiful daughter, sex kitten, or iron maiden.<sup>5</sup> "Mother" roles develop when men accept dependance on an older woman, usually for keeping the office "family" together. The <sup>"pet" or</sup> "dutiful daughter," is forever an obedient protegee, with no chance to grow up. The "seductress" is made a sexual object, constantly flirted with. Any woman, particularly one with a feminist analysis, who resists the preceding three stereotypes becomes an "iron maiden," (or castrating bitch) self-confident, assertive about women's rights, etc., etc. Wolman and Wolman describe more of the small work group's dynamic.<sup>6</sup> One professional woman in an otherwise male group tend to become paired as the satellite of a flirtatious or partonizing male group leader, or to become isolated as a "weak" group member, perhaps with a supportive, non-chauvinist male sharing her isolation. They show that for a woman becoming "one of the boys" is difficult; becoming group leader is close to impossible. These studies are not limited to the architectural profession, but they provide typologies which fit many situations here, and explain why women faculty, in particular, feel isolated and subjected to different standards of achievement than those applied to white males.

There were instance in which confidence in women was seen by male colleagues as aggression, whereas confidence in men was seen as a laudable characteristic. The male was called a "heavy-hitter," the female was "on dangerous ground."

One person noted that professional talk was seen as cold when coming from a woman, as evinced by remarks such as "X, you're all business," whereas friendly chatter was sometimes mistaken as flirtation, or inability to think in a professional way. Males flirting were described as "movers," approvingly, while women flirting were "flighty."

Professional relationships between male faculty and female faculty were cited as presenting difficulties. One said:

I find it difficult to call a male colleague within my field and make a lunch date to discuss a mutual topic of interest. Intellectual curiosity is easily misinterpreted; committee work seems clearly routine, but discussion of ideas for their own sake, more tenuous. At another university, the day I began my first teaching job in the architecture department, I was introduced to a senior professor. I expressed interest in some material he had just published. His response was to suggest we discuss it over lunch. No sooner had we left the department office than he turned to me and said, 'Baby, I'd like to ball you right now!'

This sort of sexual assault is an extreme version of a more oblique way of making sure a woman's work is not taken seriously:

I meet with a visiting critic and editor who is publishing an article of mine and wants to discuss further contributions to his journal. It is a business meeting but when I explain that to my senior colleague he insists on accompanying us--and then makes sure that the conversation never turns to any substantive issues about work; instead he chats about people that the editor knows but I do not.

A tenured male professor suggests at a faculty meeting that students no doubt like my course because 'I dress well and have big eyes.'

### Women in Male Dominated Groups

The alternative to the sexual or social ploy may be the cold shoulder:

The first year I was at MIT, very few male faculty spoke to me very much. It was only after 2 years that I began to be talked to, invited to lunch very occasionally, and casually joked with by male faculty about something other than being a woman.

The ignoring of female presence may become institutionalized, as in the case of a department announcement.

Our area of the department has 6 regular faculty, 3 men and 3 women. Imagine my surprise when I saw an announcement of our new program which listed 10 men and 1 woman! Two of the female faculty were "forgotten" and seven males from other areas or visitors were added. When asked to send a correction, the senior man refused saying it would "only call attention to his mistake."

Even male faculty able to deal with women on a one to one basis may fail in groups:

I have often found that male faculty who are friendly and regard me as a peer on a one-to-one basis, are not able to maintain that stance in a group of males. It seems like any group of males has a competitive dynamic, as well as a cliquish one. If they are competing with each other they can use their relationship to the woman to further their position. They can befriend me in a possessive way, (because they like me), but also for their own self-aggrandizement in the view of other males. Or they can put me down in front of others for the same reason. In the first case I must act as a grateful but obedient daughter, in the latter I am demeaned.

If the group is less competitive and more cliquish... Either they regard me as an intruder, different; or they all lavish special attentions. If the first, I feel invisible, have trouble being acknowledged. Whereas, a male member who says the same thing later is readily acknowledged and the conversation proceeds. If I am acknowledged someone will say 'that's interesting,' restate in his own words, and further discussion will be addressed to him instead of me. If I confront the

group with this, I'm seen as even more of a deviant. If I do not act independantly I am reduced to a passive role. I may then continue my points outside the group on a one-to-one basis and hope to influence decisions in that way. In the second case, of being the object of special attention, I feel that I am expected to be the coquette, and also to assert only those ideas which will please the whole group.

In some cases the sexual fantasies and intellectual competition may be more explicit:

A tenured/<sup>MIT</sup>professor, an outside/<sup>Harvard</sup>professor, and I are discussing the work of a very distinguished woman in our field. He has heard her give a lecture in Europe, and tells me that she was wearing her glasses on a chain which hung around her neck. He then tells me that this led him to fantasize about Magritte's surrealist painting, "The Rape," which shows a woman's breasts as eyes and her vulva as mouth. Thus, to him, her lecture was emanating from her vagina! He concludes the story by saying none of her work is any good. The other man present agrees.

In other cases women's work may be put down without sexual innuendo, as when, in a group where all the untenured faculty are women, a tenured professor allows "if anyone else is tenured it will 'destroy' the program."

Should a woman faculty member persist with an unpopular point of view in a group discussion, males may offer put-downs which re-emphasize/<sup>female</sup>role stereotypes they look for, while discounting intellectual content as emotional reaction. Thus:

She's a nurse... (said of a design teacher with a very serious professional manner, in an attempt to make her seem motherly)

She's just going through her women's libber stage. (dutiful daughter becoming iron maiden).

At a committee meeting I suggest that a woman's reappointment is in jeopardy because the senior professor in her field has a clear history of

discrimination against women, both students and faculty. The committee chairperson (a tenured male professor) accuses me publicly of attempting to malign a distinguished professor as a childish rebellion against authority, i.e., father figures. (dutiful daughter gone wrong)

You're so difficult, no wonder you're still single.  
(iron maiden, no chance of becoming a seductress)

Not knowing how to relate to women faculty as equals -- as women who are not students or secretaries, who are not mothers, daughters, or lovers, seems to lead many male faculty into even more incidents of hostility and condescension.

#### Hostility and Condescension towards Female and Minority Faculty

Several female faculty cited committee meetings or other occasions where discriminatory introductions were made:

This is Professor X, this is Professor Y, Professor Z, and this is \_\_\_\_\_ (first name only -- the woman referred to by her first name is also a professor, in each case.)

Another professor complained that she was not consistently invited to meetings of a faculty group to which she officially belonged. On one occasion a tenured professor asked her advice about ordering the refreshments for these meetings, and still did not invite her to attend. When she asked why she was not regularly invited, she was told that it was too far to walk to her office. Also on the subject of names, two female faculty report a male professor keeps confusing their names, joking, "You know, all women look alike to me." Another female professor reports a colleague from another department, seeing her near the gym, in tennis clothes, greets her: "You're not only a professor, you're a

tennis player too?" in tones of incredulity.

One faculty member reported her experience with two different faculty seminars (small groups of about ten to thirty scholars meeting to present papers and discuss work once every few weeks):

I was invited to join the first group when I was appointed to the MIT faculty, by a senior faculty member, who said by way of explanation, 'It used to be very small. When X and Y first started it, they eliminated women and faculty from third-class universities, but now it's open...' The next incident was a year later. I was interviewed by a senior faculty member from another department as a potential participant in a seminar dealing with philosophical revolutions, times in Western history when profound changes occurred in approaches to political and intellectual life. The man asked what subject I would work on. I answered, 'The development of feminist analyses of society in the 19th and 20th centuries.' 'Oh, feminism is not an intellectual subject,' he replied. 'Now if you were to work on anti-semitism, for instance, that might be interesting intellectually...'

Ignoring female presence and women's work may also take the form of appropriating women's work, when an achievement by a woman is felt in some way to belong to a male associate. An instance was cited in which course material taught by a female was taken over by a tenured male, and in the topics which were left to her, he decreased class sizes. Also, one person noted that in construction work, males tended to take the credit for those things which she had built.

#### Spotlighting

After all these hassles, women are expected to be delighted when someone wants them up front for p.r.:

Until recently a reason frequently given to me for committee appointments was 'we need a woman on this committee.'

Two weeks before a regional conference, a program was distributed, which listed only male speakers. One of the organizers, a man, then asked me to take part, saying, 'These are the speakers we really needed to have. We'd like you to comment on a paper, because we don't have any women.' I refused, pointing out that this was tokenism, and saying that I was short of time that week. The man then moved from tokenism to paternalism, by asking my husband, who has nothing whatever to do with the event, if he couldn't persuade me to agree to come!

Spotlighting connected with token committee assignments or work groups may be tied in with hostility and innuendo. One female faculty member reports being telephoned at 2am on a weekday by an abusive faculty member who wanted to discuss a committee meeting; another reported several unexpected midnight calls to discuss work. Calls at 10pm on Friday nights from various faculty wanting to "have a drink and discuss that committee," are a hassle to at least one single female faculty member, which she feels is connected with being the only woman on some of these same committees.

In addition to keeping up token representation on committees minority and women faculty are usually expected to carry the burdens of the department's Affirmative Action program, appearing at national and regional conferences, initiating department programs, counselling advising female and minority students. If more white male faculty members were to engage in these activities, more enthusiastically, especially the recruitment and public relations activities,

minority and women faculty could have more time, out of the spotlight, for career development in academic areas.

Summarizing the unequal career development for female and minority faculty, one finds for women, cases of uneasy group relationships, invisibility, hostility, innuendo, and spotlighting. Minority faculty also experience problems with spotlighting. We lack the information on minority faculty to say more about other areas. Keeping up the numbers of women and minority faculty in the department is important to their ability to function. As well as filling a need for more student role models, additional women and minority faculty would help the faculty already here to feel less isolated in white male groups.



## B. Staff Experience

The administrative and secretarial staff in the department reported many incidents to our committee concerning their interactions with faculty, students, and the MIT administration. While female students and faculty often wrote about isolation in male peer groups, resulting in hostility and spotlighting, staff experience a different sort of separateness. They work with predominantly male groups of students and faculty, yet they are considered part of a predominantly female work force experiencing difficulties related to stereotypes about "women's work" which are an inverted form of the stereotypes about "man's work" which women architects encounter.

### 1. Role Definition

One woman writes:

It appears that secretaries have a hard time transcending the role of mechanic (i.e. given a specific duty or order--type a dictated letter, phone so-and-so and tell that person such and such) to thinking, as an independent thinker and organizer. The word secretary still carries a stigma of non-initiative, a passive role.

She goes on to quote her boss's disparagement of her job:

Anybody with a brain wouldn't be a secretary; how could they possibly enjoy not working at something challenging!

This attitude is shared by an administrator, who-writes:

I am not a secretary and always (perhaps indignantly) correct people when they call me that. I find that the word has a demeaning concept. Others, both men and women, generally do too, for they respond much better when I tell them I am Professor X's assistant and not his secretary.

The problem is summed up by another who writes:

At MIT (and no doubt at other large universities as well during these times of low employment levels) many of the (female) "staff" members and other "support personnel" are as highly educated and talented as their superiors. Unfortunately, they rarely have a chance to use their backgrounds and abilities and to easily are stereotyped as "secretaries" - even if that is not their position. I think we should be working to abolish these distinctions and to treat people as individuals...

What is expected of a secretary? One respondent commented on illegal hiring practices she had observed, complaining that secretaries may be required to meet certain physical standards set by the boss. Thus someone might request a secretary in a certain age range ("We have a young group here."), someone "attractive," someone of a certain race. This secretary was also offended by the racist implications when someone interviewing her described a potential boss, saying "Well, he's black...", and hesitating, which she felt was testing her willingness to work for a black man. The respondent also noted that a secretary might be "expected to use her lunch hour for meetings that the Institute or department sets up to communicate with secretaries regarding the work situation."

## 2. Office Housework

Several women complained about non-secretarial tasks added to their work load; making them "office wives" for male bosses:

There is still the type of discrimination that says women naturally are more attuned to doing "housework" jobs around the office and I think that is something

totally uncalled for.

Another complains about having to:

...make the coffee and heat water for tea no matter how many men and boys take part in the consumption. In some cases she (a secretary) is still expected to make and serve it to her boss and his guests.

Two women who refused to fetch or prepare faculty lunches made their position on this sort of "office housework" quite clear. A faculty member then reported hearing a tenured professor boasting that his secretary still took care of his lunch.

One of the difficulties of secretarial life may be vacillation of roles. The secretary may "be constantly interrupted from her (or his) work to do trivial tasks, but she (or he) must not interrupt the boss except in an emergency." She (or he) may be hassled with trivial work which she (or he) feels the boss could perfectly well do himself or herself. She (or he) may be saddled with personal work (at no extra compensation) like making travel arrangements for the boss's family, balancing the boss's checkbook, typing the boss's personal letters, or listening to the boss's marital problems. Even if these activities are performed as personal favors, there is usually little or no personal reciprocity.

### 3. Executive Work, Overwork

In contrast to trivial work and personal work, there is executive work which the secretary may be asked to take on

without executive pay. One faculty member was reported to have asked his secretary to grade student work. Other skilled jobs secretaries have been assigned include running conferences, doing graphic design, and reading proofs. All of these jobs rarely lead to planned career development--most often they are extra work at the same pay.

Even if a secretary refuses personal work and executive work as not being part of the job, there is the problem of overwork:

A secretary at MIT can expect to be hired to work for one or two people but end up working for more--particularly in cases of new faculty being added to the department with a budget which won't allow for money for a secretary (the money can be better spent on luncheons or other luxuries) because additional work can always be squeezed out of the secretary. I was once hired to work for two men and ended up working for three when a new faculty member was hired. I was not asked or even warned and got no compensation for the extra work. I was treated like a curiosity when I objected. In another situation I was hired to work for two men but because of where my desk was located every man or boy who walked through the office door thought I worked for him. These examples are typical.

Overwork for female administrators can include taking on more and more responsibilities, for more and more people, without the support staff or the salary that a male administrator would receive. One administrator reported that a male doing only one third of her job was paid several thousand dollars more per year, while other males doing equivalent MIT jobs enjoyed secretarial assistance and student staff. The case of unequal work for unequal pay leads one to understand why women secretaries resent the entrance of higher-paid,

higher status men with inferior qualifications:

Men who are infiltrating the field with no experience start at higher salaries and get more frequent raises and promotions. Unfortunately, the women they displace do not have as easy a time getting into a man's field and if they are allowed in they can expect to get less pay and fewer promotions. Because, regardless of the fact that it costs just as much for a woman to support herself as a man and that in so many cases she is the sole supporter of a family, the myth of the male breadwinner still exists.

#### 4. Hostility, Condescension, Innuendo, Assault

The stresses of overwork may be exacerbated by difficult professional contacts due to hostility, condescension, and sexual innuendo. For example, female staff reported being repeatedly shouted at and sworn at by callers who then behave in an obsequious manner when the boss appears. One person described a typical incident of this kind:

The incident involved Mr. X of the Z office. He wanted me to relay a message to Professor Y, was very irritated and sharp, called numerous times, each time becoming more nasty. As soon as Professor Y spoke with him, Mr. X was all sweetness and kindness and was of course willing to go along with anything Professor Y said.

Personal relationships are also made difficult if a boss expects a secretary to lie to callers ("he (or she) is not here now") in order to save face or avoid confronting hostility personally. Bosses may also demean their secretaries by referring to them with possessive and diminutive terms such as "my girl" or "the girl" (you never hear "my boy" or even "the boy") which may lead callers to presume upon the

boss's patronizing relationship.

Sexual innuendo may become part of such a patronizing relationship. One tenured faculty member was observed being asked by an administrator to attend a committee meeting. He bantered with the female administrator flirtatiously, "Will you be there so we can hold hands?" Gross sexual assault may also threaten the staff:

One day I was up on the 4th floor of building 10 'running an errand' for my boss when a male student in the Architecture Department, whose name I did not know, ran up behind me and grabbed me between the thighs and turned around and ran off in the opposite direction. When I reported it to two male administrators in the department, one asked if the student was black and when I said no he just dropped the subject and walked out of the office and the other said 'not one of our students' and walked away from me. I was able to find this student's department folder with his picture and got his name but felt very humiliated about pursuing it. Finally I reported it to the Campus Patrol so that it would go on record but they insisted that it must have been someone from outside MIT, and suggested I go look at mug shots at the Cambridge Police Station.

When administrators racist fears were allayed she was not able to pursue her aggressor!

The staff experience at MIT is difficult to summarize, since role definition, office housework, and executive work without executive pay can be related to problems of hierarchy as well as of sexism. The generally preferential treatment male staff at MIT receive, however, shows that sexism does operate in treatment of female staff. One can ask, "If the staff member or secretary I work with were male, would I treat him any differently?" Problems of long range career

development for staff are more severe than for students or faculty--others may complain of not moving up the career ladder but for staff the ladder, beyond a certain point, does not really exist. In contrast to this note of pessimism, we can applaud the first IAP design studio taught for the staff in 1976--potential career development in architecture which exists for staff here was at least realized for two hectic weeks.

#### IV. Recommendations

This report reflects the results of 50 members of the department attempting to describe their experiences here, and members of the Affirmative Action Committee trying to put these experiences into some framework for discussion and analysis. We had far more material than we could use in this report, and tried to select typical rather than unusual incidents. Yet we heard from so few white males that we know we have only one side of the story. We do not want to make white males defensive; but we want everyone, white and minority, male and female, to become sensitive. We hope that issues related to race and sex can be more discussed openly as a result of this report, and that the report will provide a context in which future incidents can be evaluated, rather than dismissed as trivial upsets or personality problems. Our most important recommendation, therefore, is open discussion of incidents at the time they occur.

We would also like to recommend increasing the numbers of female and minority faculty, staff and students here. We especially need female and minority design faculty, or full-time, multi-year contracts. We need much clearer career development commitments to female and minority faculty, and to all staff. We need increased recruitment of minority students, and increased departmental support, including job placement, for both female and minority students.

We also ask that tenured faculty, who in many ways establish



the intellectual and emotional tone of the department, to think about the issues of racism and sexism very seriously. This would involve consideration of course content, of behavior towards students and untenured faculty, of behavior towards staff. An egalitarian style of working and learning which enhances the existing receptivity of MIT to women and minorities is what we seek.

## NOTES

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2. Eileen Shapiro, et.al., Obstacles to Equal Education at Harvard Resulting from Sex Discrimination, a report of the Student Taskforce of the Joint Committee on the Status of Women, Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Harvard School of Public Health, October 1974.  
  
For a review of the literature on women see Dolores Hayden and Gwen Wright, "Review Essay: Architecture and Urban Planning," Signs, forthcoming, August 1976.
3. Rosenthal and Jacobson, "Teachers' I.Q. Expectations as Determinants of Pupils I.Q. Gains," (reference forthcoming).
4. Judith Edelman, chairperson, A.I.A. Task Force on Women Status of Women in the Architectural Profession, February 1975  
  
Lisa B. Yondrof, "Women and Blacks in Planning," American Society of Planning Officials, Planning Advisory Service Memo M-10 (Chicago, 1972). See also Ellen Berkeley, "No Jews Need Apply," concerning anti-semitism in professional offices, Village Voice, Mar. 22, 1976.
5. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Sex and Interaction in Groups with Skewed Sex Ratios: The Problems of the Solitary Woman in a Male Dominated Group," working paper, 1974.
6. Carol Wolman, M.D. and Hal Frank, "The Solo Woman in a Professional Peer Group," delivered at annual meeting of American Psychiatric Association, May 1973.

Appendix 1

		white male	minority (male & female)	female (white & minority)	minority female
Students	300	235	23	42	5
Staff-administrative and biweekly	17	0	1	17	1
Faculty	45	31	3 (3 part time)	11 (4 part time)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>6</b>
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Respondents	50	5	11	34	5
Percentage of responses	14%	2%	41%	49%	83%

The following questionnaire was sent to all department members: