

In March 2008, the Taskforce on the Status of Women at Middlebury College presented President Liebowitz with the results of a nine-month review on the issues affecting women at Middlebury College. Although this report suggested that Middlebury College has made great strides forward (especially since the 1990 report), it noted many places in which room for improvement remains. The report made 72 specific recommendations to improve the status of women at the institution. The 2008 Taskforce's charge was broad and, thus, recommendations were made regarding staff and faculty employment, leadership, student life, and diversity. In August of 2008, this Steering Committee was charged with prioritizing the recommendations and creating an implementation plan and a process for regularly assessing the extent to which the College has successfully met our prioritized goals. We approached these tasks fully aware that our current financial situation differs from what it was in March of 2008. Nonetheless, we believe that many of the recommendations can be acted upon without significant new costs to the institution. In fact, we are happy to note that many recommendations from the March 2008 report have already been addressed. Thus, as we lay out our plan for implementation and review, we celebrate the strong commitment this Administration and the College community has to ensuring equal status and opportunity for all members of our community.

Methodology

The Steering Committee met regularly (almost weekly) over the fall semester. During these meetings, we discussed the importance and ease of implementing the different recommendations as a group. In addition, we reached out to those members of President's Staff who will be directly responsible for implementing these recommendations (VP & Chief Financial Officer, Executive VP & Treasurer, Provost, Dean of Faculty, Dean of the College, Director of Athletics, and VP for Institutional Planning and Diversity, (VPIPD)) to ask them for their thoughts on the merit of each recommendation and on the best manner of moving forward on implementation. During our discussions with the different members of President's Staff, it became clear that some recommendations were easier to operationally define and implement than others. In addition, on occasion, we were convinced that a particular recommendation might not be the best way to meet a worthy goal. In such cases, we deferred to those individuals with expertise who would be responsible for moving these recommendations forward, and we either collaboratively redefined the recommendation or, on rare occasions, suggested that the recommendation be addressed at a later time. A table summarizing thoughts about implementation and priorities as established by the members of President's Staff responsible for implementation is attached to this report.

Annual Reporting and Ongoing Oversight

As we reviewed the two prior reports and considered the progress made after each, we realized that a lack of consistent oversight with regard to the reports' recommendations may have hindered implementation of these recommendations. Thus, while this Steering Committee believes that the full five-year program-wide review recommended in the 2008 report is an important assessment and planning tool, we believe that the five-year review alone will not provide sufficient oversight and focus to ensure steady implementation of the report's recommendations. Accordingly, we recommend that the VPIPD be charged with overseeing and

gathering information about the implementation process on an annual basis. Specifically, this Steering Committee recommends that those individuals from President's Staff who will implement the recommendations report annually on the status of women in their domains and on their individual progress in implementing the specific recommendations from the 2008 report. We recommend that these annual progress reports be performed both orally to the President and President's Staff and, before such meeting, in writing to the VPIPD. The VPIPD will use these annual progress reports and other data gathered from the College's records, to track year to year progress with regard to the status of women at the College. Additionally, these records will serve as a basis for the next five-year review. This will provide reliable documentation of the progress made towards the goals set forth in this latest report. The group conducting the five-year review will have a clear sense of the paths the implementations of the various recommendations have taken over the preceding five years. We want to make it clear that we assume the VPIPD will be empowered to question and encourage progress annually from those individuals directly responsible for implementation in their respective areas. In this manner, we hope that steady focus will enable the College to achieve the report's major goals by 2013.

Although we do not currently have a VPIPD, this Steering Committee suggests that those members of President's Staff responsible for implementing the 2008 recommendations provide the written and oral reports at a President's Staff meeting this May regarding the progress they have made between January and May. If there is still not a VPIPD by the May meeting, we ask that the Steering Committee be reconvened to receive the written reports regarding progress to date. Thereafter, the responsible individuals will report annually in May, and the VPIPD will hold these reports. In short, the Steering Committee's first recommendation is that the process of reviewing and considering the status of women at Middlebury College be formalized, with a recurring annual focus; this Committee believes that only such sustained and focused attention can ensure that we make timely progress towards meeting the goals set forth in the 2008 report.

The Four Primary Goals

The 72 recommendations from the 2008 report cover the concerns and experiences of female employees (both staff and faculty) as well as students. Although these groups have vastly different concerns and experiences, this Steering Committee believes that the majority of the 2008 recommendations relate to one or more of four overarching goals:

- (1) increasing representation of women in College leadership roles;
- (2) ensuring that compensation and promotion at the College are not related to gender;
- (3) promoting work/life balance for College employees and students; and
- (4) creating a community that fosters respect among students and provides a healthy and safe base from which to live and learn.

Each of these overarching goals is discussed in detail below. These four major goals should be viewed as a framework for understanding and interpreting the specific recommendations of the 2008 report. Instead of prioritizing each of the 72 recommendations, we have provided these

goals with the hope that those responsible for implementing the 2008 report's recommendations will consider these four goals as touchstones for guiding their implementation of the recommendations and for devising, if necessary, alternative methods of reaching these primary goals.

Goal # 1: Achieving balance between men and women across the institution – especially in positions of leadership.

We believe that to meet this goal the College must respond in a proactive and aggressive manner with regard to recruiting and retaining women in positions of leadership. Both of the prior reports highlighted the fact that Middlebury needs to do more with regard to parity between men and women in leadership roles.¹ Of particular concern to this Steering Committee is the fact that the number of women represented in leadership roles seems to have declined since the March 2008 report. As late as 1997, *all* of the top nine administrators at the College were men. In the spring of 2008, women held half of the Academic Administration positions, including Provost and Dean of Faculty. Unfortunately, as of the fall of 2008, only two of the top administrative positions are held by women (and one of those individuals is on leave). Although two of the College's five vice presidents are women, one is leaving and the other one is on leave this year. In addition, although in spring of 2008, seven of the seventeen members of President's Staff were female (35%) (compared to four of twenty-three (17%) in 1997), at the end of 2008 only three females remain.

This pattern holds with regard to faculty in leadership positions. In 2007-2008, women chaired 35% of the College's departments and programs. In 2008-2009, this figure dropped to 28% (not much better than the 23% in 1996-1997). A difference is also apparent with regard to endowed professorships, although marked improvement has occurred here within the last year. However, in the area of endowed professorships women still lag behind men. Endowed professorships come with not only status but also financial resources and occasionally reduced teaching loads. Thus, they are both prestigious and directly facilitate the advancement of one's scholarly goals, thereby affecting subsequent compensation. In 2007-2008 female faculty members held 7 of the 45 endowed professorship positions (16%). Currently, 12 of 50 such positions (25%) are held by female colleagues. This significant improvement was produced by the President's appointment, this fall, of five women to endowed professorships. These appointments were clearly a strong step in the right direction, but more remains to be done.

With regard to representation, we are disturbed to find a lack of balance between male and female faculty at both the Full and Associate Professor levels. In the 2006-2007 academic year, 26% of the full professors at Middlebury were female. We cannot help but wonder, had the College been more aggressive in addressing this issue after receiving the 1990 report, whether this difference would be so great almost 20 years later. Similarly, as of 2006-2007, only 39% of those colleagues at the Tenure Track Associate level were female. The 1997 report clearly emphasized that female faculty were more likely to leave the College than their male

¹ Leadership for our purposes involves positions of higher level of responsibility and status than the typical role. Thus, leadership roles would include the roles of administrator, VP, department chair, program chair, or endowed professor. An additional concern for this report is general representativeness of women at each level of the organization (i.e., having an equal number of male and female associate professors).

counterparts, yet, although this tendency was noted 11 years ago, the problem has not been resolved— it appears female faculty early in their career are still more likely to leave the College than their male peers. Given that these discrepancies were reported in both of the two prior reports and we have yet to achieve balance, it is clear that understanding this phenomenon needs more attention.

Middlebury's performance with regard to recruiting and retaining faculty of color is also unfortunate. Currently we have no African-American female faculty members in tenure track positions (and few domestic faculty of color period). Thus, we echo both the 2008 report (recommendations #9, #29, #59) and the Strategic Plan (recommendation #29) and urge the College to continue its efforts to not only recruit but to retain women of color as staff and faculty.

There are many different ways to increase the College's chances of hiring and retaining female faculty in general and specifically those of color. We should advertise jobs in a broader group of publications. We should be flexible with regard to the specific research sub-fields and even consider those fields with a higher percent of faculty of color and women (Obviously the EAC must decide which specific faculty positions are warranted. However, often it is the case that a department's needs relate to having specific core-courses taught, and it would be possible for faculty with expertise in many different sub-fields to do this. Focus on a particular sub-field that happens to be male dominated may have the unattended consequence of perpetuating gender imbalance. We should be proactive in helping partners find employment in the region. We should consider making upper level targeted opportunity hires for women and all faculty of color. We should explore ways to attract such candidates beyond salary (perhaps extra start-up funds or help with housing for a year to two). Undoubtedly, those individuals responsible for implementing the specific recommendations for the 2008 report will be able to creatively address this as they move forward to address gender imbalance in leadership positions between male and female faculty.

An imbalance between men and women holds for coaching faculty as well. In 1997, 31.25% of the head-coaching faculty were women; as of March 2008, 25% of the head coaches at Middlebury were women. Of our 11 NESCAC peer institutions, only one school has fewer female head coaches than Middlebury; the other nine schools have more. There are a number of options to increase the number of female coaches in the future. We can try to develop our own female coaches through training and mentoring in robust Assistant coach positions. We might try to form a coalition of schools to do this. We might need to educate ourselves and our students about the value this would bring to our institution. Again, we believe it is clear that sustained attention must be directed at this issue. The same attention and resources given to recruitment and retention of female academic faculty should be used in the recruitment and retention of female coaching faculty.

With regard to middle/upper management (i.e. below the VP level) staff positions, there are few women in general represented in these positions and even fewer over 50. A number of women from the latter group have voiced concerns about how they are treated at the institution and believe that they have been passed over in favor of men with less experience. We recognize that these are only perceptions based on anecdotal reports. Nonetheless, such perceptions alone may be damaging for the institution. Given our concern with this perception, we wish to

highlight Recommendation #5 from the 2008 report, which suggests “that the College should revitalize and promote the existing College Ombudsperson program.” In particular, we agree with the 2008 Taskforce that this program should become an additional formal outlet for staff concerns and advocacy and that the Office for Institutional Planning and Diversity should be involved with the program, as well as Staff Council and Human Resources. Finally, in an effort to understand the extent of discontent among managerial women over 50 (and how these may compare with men in similar positions), we suggest that the VPIPD conduct exit interviews with both women and men over 50 who have left middle/upper management staff positions in the last 18 months.

The 1990 report mentioned the importance of having women in leadership roles and maintaining balanced representation for women and men throughout the institution. Eighteen years later we still struggle with this goal. It is this Steering Committee’s view that we have the power to remedy each of these imbalances, if we choose to give this goal sustained and focused attention.

Goal #2: Male and female staff and faculty are treated equally at Middlebury College with regard to pay and other forms of compensation.

This concern is based on both objective and subjective impressions of differences between men’s and women’s compensation, currently insufficient data exists to understand such differences where they exist. For example, in general, female faculty currently make less than men, and although some of this might be explained by the timing of when each faculty member received his or her PhD, it is not clear that this factor alone resolves the question. To understand this discrepancy, the College must invest the time needed to collect the appropriate data to regularly assess what factors relate to compensation over faculty careers. Much of this data already exists, but is not compiled into a usable data set. We suggest that the institution retrospectively collect career-related information into one database. Going forward, this task would be easier if annual faculty information were collected electronically. Once the College has a thorough electronic dossier for each faculty member, it will be possible to examine the factors driving the differential wages and assess career development paths for men and women faculty. We assume that length of time since PhD, publication and presentation records, committee service, and course loads would be a part of this data set. In addition, since a number of female colleagues mentioned that they are less likely to be granted course releases or other career enhancing opportunities compared with men (e.g., an extra semester leave), these items should be included also. We suggest that the VPIPD, the Provost, and Faculty Council work together to define which variables belong in such a dataset. At the minimum, it is clear that institutional research is needed to understand faculty career development in general and to ensure that the paths do not differ as a function of systemic bias between men and women.

With regard to staff compensation, much has improved since the 1990 report. However, the issue of flex time and how it is granted remains an issue for women, as does the College’s parental leave policy. Both of these are discussed below under work/life balance.

Goal #3: The 2006 Strategic Plan's Recommendation #25 to promote a greater work/life balance for faculty, staff and students. This is of particular importance for female staff and faculty with families.

The College's policies and attitudes undoubtedly have the power to help or hurt the way employees and students experience the work/life balance. One important policy in need of improvement is parental leave for staff who welcome a new child into their family, either by birth or adoption. Given that the burden of providing attention for new children often falls disproportionately on women, the Steering Committee considers the College's parental leave policy to have an important bearing on the status of women at the College. The 1997 report recommended expanding parental leave for both faculty and staff. After this report, parental leave was expanded for faculty but not for staff. Staff members currently are allotted little in paid family leave, particularly in contrast to faculty. Thus, we fully support the 2008 recommendation that staff be awarded more family leave than is currently the case. We recognize that, in the current economic climate, it may not be possible to allot 10 weeks paid family leave immediately, but, nonetheless, we encourage the institution to move forward incrementally, perhaps increasing the amount of time granted by one week for the next fiscal year and one additional week per year thereafter. The Steering Committee finds this to be a particularly important issue because it affects female staff and their career development and it speaks to greater equity between staff and faculty.

In addition, the College should continue to strive to make the campus a welcoming place for families. One question, which is currently being investigated, is the extent to which the current childcare options in the community meet our staff and faculty needs. The availability of reasonably priced reliable childcare is particularly important for female employees. The Dean of Faculty is currently investigating our community's needs, and we are optimistic that this data will be useful in assuring childcare needs are met as much as possible. Again, we understand that there are certain economic realities, especially regarding childcare, that are difficult to overcome. Nonetheless, we also recognize that the College currently spends a considerable amount on this issue and perhaps these dollars could be spent in a way that provides more direct aid to staff and faculty in a more income sensitive manner. We assume those responsible for implementing the recommendations in the 2008 report will consider the importance of childcare.

Flex time can also help staff maintain work/life balance and the Steering Committee supports all the recommendations from the 2008 report (#24-26) for increasing the use and availability of flex-time for staff when reasonable.

From a faculty perspective, work/life balance is equally important and a perceived lack of balance at Middlebury may well explain some of the other discrepancies between men and women (e.g., pay differentials between male and female faculty and the fact that more female, than male, Associate Professors leave the College). There is research outside Middlebury College that suggests women with children are less likely to stay in the academy compared with their male counterparts or females without children (Mason and Goulden, 2002)². It is interesting

² Mason, M. & Goulden, M. (2002, November/December). *Do Babies Matter? The Effect of Family Formation on the Lifelong Careers of Academic Men and Women. Academe.*

to note that this data suggest that when they do stay in the academy, females with children fare significantly worse than females without children who are still significantly less advantaged compared to males with children. This suggests that both gender and the combination of gender and family status serve to handicap female faculty. The 1990 report and the 1997 report both highlighted the value of having female faculty members at all levels as teachers, role models and as scholars. It is imperative that we find a way to optimize success for both female and male faculty at Middlebury College.

The issue of work/life balance is also important for students. Multiple student respondents to the 2008 Taskforce's survey suggested that academic stress led them to engage in unhealthy stress reduction behaviors such as excessive alcohol consumption. Although academic stress undoubtedly affects both male and female students, there is reason to believe that men and women respond differently to this lack of work/life balance. Thus, we believe that the College should continue to consider ways to increase such a balance so that we can provide our students with an optimal learning environment. We applaud the efforts already underway to help students deal with the natural pressures involved in being at a competitive liberal arts program. The unhealthy use of alcohol has been highlighted as a priority by the President and the division of Student Life, led by the Dean of the College, is taking the lead in addressing this concern. In addition, the College's efforts in promoting education on sexual harassment and assault are to be commended, as is the new Director of Health and Wellness position.

Goal #4: That Middlebury College provide an optimal, safe, and healthy learning and living environment for our female students. To this aim the College should continue to be proactive in providing support for a variety of issues ranging from homophobia, to sexism, to eating disorders and expanding understanding of diversity.

Part of the challenge in providing a safe and healthy environment for women is the fact that the typical college social scene may be offensive to women. Although this is typical, we believe that Middlebury College is not typical, and thus we can continue to strive for improvement and a better than average social experience for our female students. We can consider ways to assist students joining our community in understanding the mature, responsible behavior expected of Middlebury College students. The 2008 report suggested that one way to achieve this would be via a mentoring program between first-year students and seniors. Undoubtedly there are other ways. We emphasize that the goal is to provide a safe and healthy living environment for both women and men at the College.

Additionally we want to highlight the extent to which the College has demonstrated, and continues to demonstrate, a strong commitment to the health and well-being of our students. In fact, we believe that with regard to this the College is a model. For example, Chellis House and the WAGS program both provide programming and support for issues important to women. The newly established Queer Studies House and the new Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity will provide similar venues for different aspects of diversity. Additionally, the new Director of Health and Wellness as well as our current Health and Counseling Centers provide tremendous support for students' health and well-being. The fact that the College continues to support and expand such centers is a demonstration of our deep commitment to the community. Furthermore, we applaud the Administration's support of the position of VPIPD, in light of the current

economic crisis. This support is a clear demonstration of the institution's commitment to these issues.

In sum, we believe that having the VPIPD overseeing annual reporting on the extent to which these four overarching goals, and the particular recommendations from the 2008 report, are being achieved will keep us focused on the goal of assuring Middlebury College takes a leadership position with regard to the equitable treatment of women.

We have attached two appendices to this report:

- ◇ *(A) a list of the recommendations from the 2008 report along with the name of the responsible party on President's Staff and the page number where each recommendation is found in the original report.*
- ◇ *(B) a summary of the comments and thoughts regarding implementation for each recommendation based on our communications with the members of President's Staff responsible for implementation.*