

*New Jersey Council on Gender Parity  
in  
Labor and Education  
"A Progress Report"*

*December 2001*

**John J. Heldrich**, Chair  
*State Employment & Training  
Commission*

**Dianne Mills McKay**, Chair  
*Council on Gender Parity  
in Labor & Education*

**Overview**

The New Jersey Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education, created by the New Jersey Legislature with unanimous bipartisan support in late 1999, brings together business, education, and government to address the persistent inequities that women face in the labor market. Although women comprise more than half of the college students in New Jersey and nationally, occupational and educational segregation persist. This is particularly troublesome as our economy continues its shift away from manufacturing and toward service industries especially those that demand high level technical and scientific skills.

The Council, which is housed within the State Employment and Training Commission, is comprised of fourteen members eight from the business, education, and nonprofit sectors, and six from state agencies whose mission complements that of the Council. Dianne Mills McKay is Chair of the Council. The members are:

Christine Amalfe      Partner at the law firm of Gibbons, Del Deo, Dolan,

	Griffinger, and Vecchione
Theresa Brown	Freeholder, Office of Burlington County
Michele Darling	Executive Vice President, Human Resources and Corporate Governance, Prudential Insurance Company
Velvet Miller	President and Chief Executive Officer, Horizon Mercy
Patricia Palmeri	Director, WISE Women's Center, Essex County College
Linda Stamato	Acting Dean, Douglass College, Rutgers University
John Tesoriero	Executive Director, Commission on Science and Technology

The representatives from state agencies are:

Lisa Ashbaugh	Department of Human Services
Gary Nigh	Commission on Higher Education
Linda Bowker	Department of Community Affairs
Tom Henry	Department of Education
Nancy Jusko	Commission on Commerce and Economic Growth
Virginia Pasqualini	Department of Labor

In addition, Henry Plotkin, Executive Director of the State Employment and Training Commission, and Barbara Lee, Dean of the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, serve as ex-officio members. The Council is staffed by the Rutgers Center for Women and Work, and is supported by a \$95,000 appropriation included in the statute that established the Council. The mission of the Council is to:

- Improve the life chances of women, and particularly for women of color, by forging a partnership to eliminate the causes of gender inequity in education and in the workplace.
- Provide policymakers, business leaders, and educational leaders with advice on expanding educational and occupational opportunities for women in New Jersey.
- Ensure that women are appropriately prepared to move into the scientific and technical careers that are in high demand by the labor market.
- Ensure those historically excluded groups, such as welfare recipients and displaced homemakers, receive the training and support they need to be full participants in the labor force.
- Identify best practices and models that have been used successfully to increase the proportion of women in occupations and educational programs in which they have historically been underrepresented.

In its first year of operation, the Council collected data on the representation of women in scientific and technical careers, as well as the demand for workers in these careers. The Council sought to understand why there are so many unfilled jobs in these sectors, yet women represent

such a small portion of this workforce and are underrepresented in educational programs that prepare workers for scientific and technical careers. Armed with these data, the Council held two conferences with experts in education, the workplace, and gender equity. These activities culminated in two reports: *Women and Work: Prospects for Parity in the New Economy*, issued by the Council in May 2001, and *Bridging the Gap: Gender Equity in Science, Engineering and Technology*, issued by the Rutgers Center for Women and Work. These reports, which are enclosed in this packet, are the foundation upon which the Council will build its work during its second year.

A detailed description of the Council and its work follows this overview. As the only such Council in the United States, we have attracted much attention for our work, both at the state and federal levels. Council members and staff have spoken about the work of the Council throughout the state, region, and country. We have developed a partnership with the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor to enhance training and educational opportunities for former welfare recipients.

### **Council's Initiatives**

The Council's first initiative is to address issues of gender equity in science, engineering and technology educational programs and workplaces. This focus emerged out of the growing concern regarding the increasingly large number of unfilled jobs in science, engineering and technology in New Jersey, and the under-representation of women in these fields.

The Council found that the issue of women's participation in science and technology jobs and educational training programs is critical for New Jersey's economic success. Women are projected to account for two-thirds (or 63 percent) of the State's labor force growth by 2008. It is further predicted that this pattern will continue through 2015. In addition, women also continue to make up a large portion of the State's college student population. Trends indicate that the number of white men entering college will decrease throughout the early part of this century. This suggests that women will continue to make up a significant portion of New Jersey's labor force, yet they are not prepared to assume positions in science and technology that are critical to New Jersey's economic success.

Through this initiative, the Council is at the forefront of research issues on women in education and the workforce. In collaboration with the Center for Women and Work and the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, we have initiated a long-term data collection process on New Jersey workers. This data project allows the Council to conduct original research on gender equity in New Jersey. We have completed the survey construction, and the survey data and report will be released in late Spring 2002.

### **Accomplishments of the Council**

In order to increase public understanding of the issue of gender equity in science and technology, the Council sponsored two conferences and issued two reports. The first event *Gender Equity in the Workplace: Setting the Agenda* was held on October 26, 2001. At this mini-conference, the Council invited experts from the educational, business and government

sectors of New Jersey to brainstorm the issues surrounding gender parity in science, engineering and technology fields. This event served as a catalyst for the Council's extensive investigation of the available data.

The results of this data collection are found in the report, *Women and Work: Prospects for Parity in the New Economy*, issued by the Council in May 2001. This report documents the increasingly large gap between the occupational needs of the New Jersey labor force and the available skilled labor. It also summarizes the main reasons for the under-representation of women in science, engineering and technology fields that were identified by the mini-conference participants as well as current research at the pre-college, college and workplace levels.

A more detailed discussion of the research regarding gender equity is found in the report *Bridging the Gap: Gender Equity in Science, Engineering and Technology*. This report was commissioned by the Council and prepared by the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University. This report is intended to be a resource that synthesizes the literature that the Council has reviewed in its investigation of gender equity in science, engineering and technology.

On May 30, 2001, the Council held its second event, *A Woman's Place: Her Role in the New Economy*. At this conference, participants shared information about programs and best practices in New Jersey's schools and workplaces to help attract and retain women in science, engineering and technology.

In addition, the Council members and staff have been invited to share their research at other venues. Some of the events are mentioned below:

- State Employment and Training Commission One-Stop Conference, December 2000, Imagining the Future, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Session-Setting the Stage: An Agenda for Gender Parity.
- Women's Business Center Annual Conference, April 2001, Expanding Your Business Globally Through Trade and Technology, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Session-Workforce Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Institute for Women's Policy Research Conference, June 2001, The Status of Women: Facing the Facts, Forging the Future, Washington DC, Session-What's at Stake for Women in the Wired Workplace.
- Garden State Employment and Training Association's Conference, June 2001, True Partners, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Session-Perspectives on Gender Equity.
- American Association of University Women Convention, June 2001, Austin, Texas, Session-Foundation Research and Community Action.
- National Coalition for Sex Equity in Education 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference, September 2001, Providence, Rhode Island, Session-Bridging the Gap: Gender Equity in Science, Math and Technology Classrooms.
- United States Department of Labor Conference, November 2001, The New Economy: Women and Girls in High Tech, Palisades, New York, Session-Science, Engineering and Technology Best Practices.

- Douglass College Teacher Appreciation Day, November 2001, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Session-Transitioning to College or Workforce: Issues Important to Young Women.
- The Center for the American Women in Politics Conference, November 2001, Working Smarter, Governing Better, Dana Point, California, Session- Leveling the Playing Field: Educational Equity Inside and Outside the Classroom.
- State Employment and Training Commission One-Stop Conference, December 2001, "WIA and Beyond: Staying Ahead of Tomorrow", Atlantic City, New Jersey, Session- "Setting the Stage: An Agenda for Gender Parity".

The Council has conducted informal presentations for the New Jersey League of Women Voters, the New Jersey Technology Council, the Institute for Women's Leadership, Rutgers University, Douglass College, the New Jersey Academy of Science, and DeVry Institute, among others. Council staff members were also part of a focus group held at The College of New Jersey. As a result of this focus group, the New Jersey Academy of Science compiled the report, *Education Policy Map of the New Jersey State*.

The Council has worked with national organizations such as the United States Department of Labor, the Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology, the American Association of University Women, the Society for Women Engineers, and the National Council for Research on Women. In this capacity, the Council provides expert advice and research on educational and labor force opportunities for women. Currently, we serve as an advisory body on a United States Department of Labor grant recently awarded to the New Jersey Department of Labor focusing on distance learning for women. The grant will allow 100 under-employed women the opportunity to obtain educational credits while remaining employed.

The Council has helped to support the development of the Center for Women and Work's online library of resources on women and work. This library contains over 1600 scholarly journal articles, newspaper articles, and books about different aspects of women and work, and complements the Rutgers Data Bank on Working Women (<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cww/>). The library is intended for use by students, researchers, policymakers, reporters, and the general public. To our knowledge, this is the only systematically organized collection of literature, data, and analysis on women and work.

### **Future Goals of the Council**

As the Council moves into 2002 and beyond, we plan to expand our role as an oversight body on gender equity within the State. We will enhance our collaborative partnerships in order to centralize resources and expertise to address issues of gender equity in educational and workforce programs. Some of the issues we will be working on include:

- Supporting national efforts to address the problems of achieving equity for women and minorities in science, engineering and technology.

- Spearheading data collection in the forms of collating existing reports and conducting original research to determine the status of women and minorities in education programs and occupations. Specifically, we are focusing on collecting and disseminating information on the distribution and enrollment of women and minorities in New Jersey occupations and educational programs; and conducting research that identifies gaps in the current data collection state systems and formulating data collection relevant to closing these gaps.
- Sharing existing and newly developed programs by working with teachers, students, parents, counselors, and workforce professionals to eliminate barriers in science, engineering and technology for girls and minorities at the pre-college and college levels. Specifically, we will focus on providing technological literacy education, diversity and gender equity training, and sexual harassment and gender harassment training.
- Working with businesses to provide career education opportunities to encourage girls and minorities into the fields of science, engineering and technology. In doing so, we will encourage the partnerships between higher education and business to assess workplace needs and skills.
- Sharing successful strategies to remove barriers that discourage women and minorities from entering and staying in science, engineering and technology jobs. We will work with business to increase the number of women and minorities in science, engineering and technology fields, formulate ways to ease the transition into science, engineering, technology and nontraditional occupations, and secure the retention of women and minorities in these fields.