



## RESEARCH NOTE #4

# *"We've heard the story of "Change will come" long enough:"* The Struggle for Gender Equity at UTSC

by Christine Berkowitz<sup>i</sup>

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## ***"We've heard the story of "Change will come" long enough: The Struggle for Gender Equity at UTSC***

"Often the institutional perspective is they focus on the numbers of women students, for example, the numbers that have increased, women students and women faculty. ...But the tendency is to focus on those numbers and the percentages, rather than the true stories, or the real-life stories, that are behind those numbers, and the real challenges that women students, staff, and faculty experience in their lives, in the complicated lives that they live."

Connie Guberman, Associate Professor, Teaching, Womens' and Gender Studies, Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough, excerpt from "Women In Higher Education Roundtable Conversation," 2020

"We've talked about that leaky pipeline for the entire decade that I was in training, and the entire decade that I've been a faculty member. And we've done nothing about it. So, the sense of urgency that we mentioned, the sense of being impatient and making something happen now, because we've heard the story of "Change will come" long enough, I think is definitely something that resonates for me."

Aarthi Aashok, Professor, Teaching Stream, and Associate Chair, Teaching and Undergraduate Affairs, in the Department of Biological Sciences at UTSC, excerpt from "Women In Higher Education Roundtable Conversation," 2020

"what I really learned here and what I really hear a lot of the other powerful women say here is that your existence is resistance because these places weren't made for us."

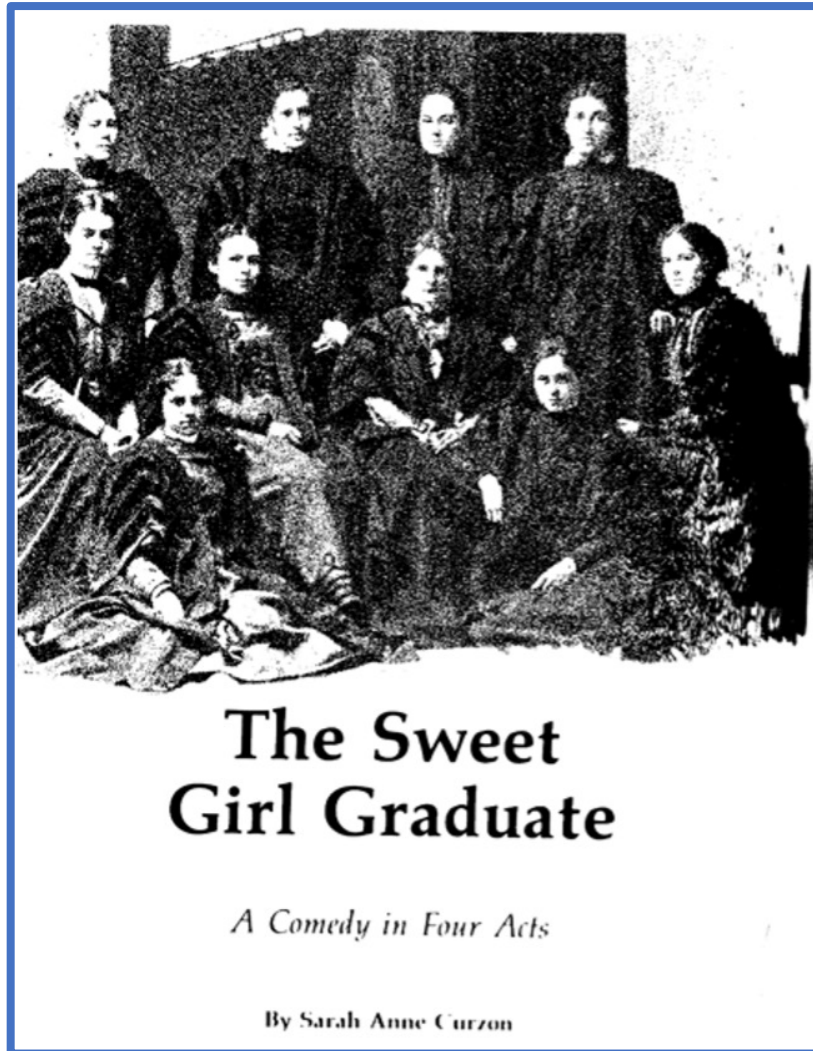
Diane Hill, indigenous undergraduate student, excerpt from Stories of UTSC interview, 2015

## Introduction:

Scarborough College celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 1984, the same year the University of Toronto celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the admission of the first woman to University College, 1884. As part of the celebrations, the Women's Centenary Committee at Scarborough College sponsored a production of The Sweet Girl Graduate. ("Women's Centenary Committee" 1984) Written in 1882 by Sarah Anne Curzon, the play tells the story of a young woman who, barred from attending University College, disguised herself as a man to gain admission. After demonstrating by graduating with a Master of Arts degree that "Canadian girls are equal in mental power with Canadian boys," she revealed her identity. (Pledge Project, n.d.)

Despite the opening of institutions of higher education to women in the late 19th century and more significantly in the 1960s, the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women noted that slightly more girls than boys were graduating from high school, but those numbers were not sustained in terms of university degrees where men surpassed women. (Bird et al. 1970, 60) In 1967 although over half of the graduates in education, library science and social work in 1967 were women, the more traditional female academic fields, only a third of total graduates in arts, science and commerce were women. (Bird et al. 1970, 9) Thus as Scarborough College opened its doors, higher education remained a male dominated institution.

Scarborough College opened its doors to 191 students in 1965. (Ball 1989, 4) Reflecting the findings of the Royal Commission, of the 191 students, 53 were female (28%), 138 male. (citation) There were 43 faculty members; three were female (7%). (Ball 1989, 5) By 1984 and the 20th anniversary, the percentage of female students at Scarborough College had almost doubled, slightly outnumbering their male counterparts - 51% of the total student body. (Office of the Registrar, University of Toronto Scarborough 2020) Female faculty, despite having grown in representation, did not reflect the composition of the student body - only 17% of total faculty appointments were women. (Scarborough College, University of Toronto 1984)



As part of the celebrations, the Women's Centenary Committee at Scarborough College sponsored a production of The Sweet Girl Graduate. Written in 1882 by Sarah Anne Curzon, the play tells the story of a young woman who, barred from attending University College, disguised herself as a man to gain admission. After demonstrating by graduating with a Master of Arts degree that "Canadian girls are equal in mental power with Canadian boys," she revealed her identity. Source: The Sweet Girl Graduate - PLEDGE Project - Plays by Canadian Women, <https://www.pledgeproject.ca/plays/sweet-girl-graduate/>, accessed 2022-10-06 15:08:30

## The Incoming Class of 1968...

Every August since 1998, Beloit College has produced “The Mindset List,” a description of the social and cultural context shaping the lives of the fall incoming first year university classes in the United States. Excerpts from the list published in 2015 for the incoming class of 2019 (named for the year you graduate): students were most likely [...]



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Students reflect on their experience at Scarborough College in the 1960s...

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## Shirley Criscione

*A retired elementary school teacher, Shirley was a student in the first graduating class at Scarborough College, 1968*

" in '65, when Scarborough College<sup>1</sup> started, that's when I started. There were only three-year degrees at that time.<sup>2</sup> You could either get a B.A., or a B.Sc., and I got a B.A., and I graduated in '68 [with a degree in English Literature].... In actual fact, the two women that were on the faculty were actually my profs. So it was Ms. Vicari and Miss Avison.<sup>3</sup> And those were the only two women on the faculty at that time. And because it was a very, very small group, we knew everyone.<sup>4</sup> We knew all the profs, the profs all knew us. ... The head librarian was a woman, and there were two other librarians, or library techs. One was a male and one was a female, and there were a lot of students who worked in the library as well. Just one funny story, one day we were sitting around in a meeting place, and Mrs. Sobey the head librarian came down, pointed at one of the fellows, and said, "You have a book overdue. Get it back." So we kind of thought that was funny.

And I guess one of the funniest things that happened to me, as a student, when I was in my third year, ... so I was in my astronomy class, and I had worn a pantsuit to class. And it's the first time I'd worn slacks. We didn't wear slacks. I'd worn a pantsuit to class, and the professor, at the end of the class, said "Miss Allen, please stay back." And he spoke to me at the end of the class and told me, "You will not wear pants in my class again." And I didn't. Now, of course, now... Maybe by the time I was 35 I would have been able to tell him, but I didn't, because we were women, we did what we were told. And so I never

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Toronto Scarborough was known as Scarborough College from 1964 to 1995; the name was then changed to the University of Toronto at Scarborough in 1996 and finally the University of Toronto Scarborough in 2006. <https://utsc.calendar.utoronto.ca/calendar-pdfs>

<sup>2</sup> The college was originally organized administratively in interdisciplinary divisions rather than departments - Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences - and with a focus on undergraduate teaching, offered the General Courses of the UofT Faculty of Arts and Science with the possibility of offering honours courses at some point in the future. (Ball 1989), (Scarborough College 1975, 14).

<sup>3</sup> Both Vicari and Avison were lecturers in the English Department with BA. MA. degrees and the only female faculty in the English department. In the same calendar, female faculty and administrators were listed as "Miss" or "Mrs." There were no female administrators listed; in total, out of 83 faculty, there were 11 female faculty or 13%. There were no female faculty in the Social Science Division; 6 in the Humanities Division (18%); 5 in the Sciences Division (15%). (Scarborough College, University of Toronto 1968)

<sup>4</sup> There were 191 students enrolled in 1965 when Shirley started her program and 1436 by the time she graduated. (Ball 1989, 4), (Scarborough College, University of Toronto 1968), (Scarborough College 1969), (Scarborough College, University of Toronto 1970)



The students pictured here are attending the reception before the Graduation Ceremony was held at Miller Lash House in 1970. Miller Lash House was the residence of the Principal when the college first opened and since has become an events space.  
Source: Memories of Scarborough Campus, University of Toronto Scarborough,  
<https://ark.digital.utsc.utoronto.ca/ark:61220/utsc9696>

again, wore slacks to university. When I started working, teaching, we weren't allowed to wear pants either. We had to wear dresses or skirts. But that changed, and I was very happy about that. (Connie Guberman et al. 2020)



*Listen to more of Shirley's story here:*

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## Maureen

*A retired drama teacher, Maureen was a student in the second graduating class at Scarborough College in 1969 and went on after graduation to volunteer on the Alumni Association and as Chair of the College of Electors.*

I'm an alumna, graduated in 1969, entered the building in 1966... January (laughs)... 1965, we started on the main campus.

I'm an immigrant from Britain, my mother and father came here with me, of course, in 1953. Neither of my parents attended university, both of them left school at 15, and one of my father's greatest dreams was to have his daughter attend university and I always wanted to be a teacher.

I'm not sure of what at one point or another, but I always wanted to be a teacher from the time I got into high school. When I applied to the University of Toronto, I applied for the main campus but my marks were less than spectacular, so they assigned me to come to Scarborough. At that point, I probably had a choice because I'd been accepted to York as well, but I decided to come to Scarborough and, cause it seemed like an interesting adventure to say the least... so I came here.

It was very interesting because there were so few of us and if you look at the two original ...buildings, we were like peas rattling in a bucket (laughter). Really, there were so few of us and so much space, which was really beneficial to us because there were lots of places to study, lot's of places to meet, the cafeteria was never busy. The professors had small classes therefore we got better attention, it was a real... it was a benefit to me to come here even though I was not happy with sort of being sent here, and over the years it has been a benefit all along. (Maureen 2015)



*Listen to more of Maureen's story here:*



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## Stephanie Geddes

*A retired teacher and principal, Stephanie was a member of the first Scarborough College(UTSC) graduating class of 1968.*

One thing was, it was just the beginning of women's lib. For instance at Hart House, women were not allowed in Hart House unless it was after hours and it was some formal event like a dance. But during the day women were not allowed in there, it was men only. And in the pool and men would swim and I hear in the, in the flesh, in their birthday suits 'cause that was the way it was done. It was very, from that way, it was very male-oriented.

I talked about how we all wore skirts and dresses. I remember getting issues of *The Varsity* and there'd be reports of women burning their bras and stuff. And at first I thought, "Now, why would women do that?" Because there was no understanding of what women's liberation was all about and so part of being in the university at that time was discovering what women's liberation was all about, 'cause it was just in its infancy. We hadn't even, we didn't even realize we had to be liberated but it was, it was — talk about the glass ceiling. I think the glass ceiling was a mile thick in those days. And so, that was one basic difference that affected us I think because a lot of women started protesting that they wanted Hart House to be open. And I remember we used to go to dances at Hart House and they were fabulous like they'd have different rooms and in each room they'd have different music and so you could dance to all different eras of music and it was so wonderful. And I'd go in that building and I think "This building is so beautiful, you know? But I can't go in by myself."

(Geddes, Bruce and Stephanie 2016)

*Listen to more of Stephanie's story here:*



As part of our research, a roundtable discussion was hosted in the summer of 2020.(Connie Guberman et al. 2020) Participants addressed the larger social context for women's participation as students, faculty and staff in higher education and specifically at UTSC from the 1960s to the present. A number of themes emerged from this conversation that resonate with the stories told



The fact that Hart House on the St. George Campus was initially restricted to men only, provides important context to the life of women in university in the 1960s and 70s. In 1957, John F. Kennedy, then junior Senator for Massachusetts, was the guest at a debate in Hart House and female students requested admission to the debate and were denied triggering a protest that started the eventual opening of Hart House to women in the early 1970s. Watch this wonderful video where Linda Silver Dranoff, Canadian feminist author, activist, and organizer of the protest, tells the story.

by other female students, faculty and staff participating in this research. Participants of the Round Table addressed the persistence of **conscious and unconscious bias** with respect to gender and race that creates barriers to women's participation at all levels. They considered the ways in which women have been and continue to be judged on **gendered notions of suitable behaviour and appearance**. They discussed the persistent **role of violence** in the lives of women generally and at all levels within the academy. While acknowledging that important advances have been made, participants considered the **impact of the lower levels of female representation on the length of time taken to achieve effective change, the ability of those entering the academy to ultimately achieve success in an equitable fashion** as well as the reality that **changes made have resulted from the dedicated advocacy work of the women affected within** the academy.

## *An Overview of the Themes*

### *The Value of Mentorship and Representation*

As students, faculty and staff, we articulate frequently in our institutional discussions of equity, diversity and inclusion, how important it is to our sense of belonging and ability to succeed to be in an environment where there are others who look like us. This appears to be as true today as it was in the past. It goes without saying that an absence of women in authority and in decision making roles makes it more difficult for women to advance, whether as students, faculty or in administration. The stories shared below corroborate this fact, clearly articulating both the value that they received from strong female mentors, allies and sponsors and the challenges they faced when those important relationships were not available.

Those who recall the early days of our campus share their sense that women were simply not expected to participate in higher education as students, faculty or staff. (Zinaty, Georgette 2015) In the words of one of the members of the first graduating class of '68, " A lot of people when you went to university they would say "Oh you're going for your MRS degree." That was the big saying "You're going for your MRS degree" 'cause that was a way to get married." (Geddes, Bruce and Stephanie 2016) Those who did often did so not out of a personal desire but because of encouragement from high school teachers or undergraduate faculty to pursue the next level. (Criscione, Shirley 2019)

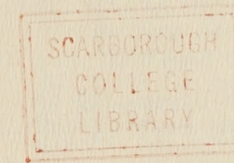
Many recall, some as recently as the 2000s, being the only woman or one of just a few in their program as an undergraduate or in their department as a graduate student and/or new faculty member. In those cases, the presence of another woman in the department was critical to their ongoing success. One participant who began her faculty appointment in the tenure stream in 2000, in a department with only two other female faculty members, attributed her later success in leadership as having: "not

In this edition of the *Scarborough College Bulletin*, July 20, 1973, Marvi Bradshaw, Instructor, Chemistry, presents the results of a study to determine the post-graduation activities of students in the UofT graduating class of 1971. (M. Bradshaw 1973, 1) The report did not distinguish between Scarborough College and all of UofT. The data does allow for a comparison of male(m) and female(f) student activities post-graduation. It is interesting to note that the results support the statements made by our participants that female graduates were more likely to seek teacher training.(Criscione, Shirley 2019) It is also worth noting that the gender breakdown of the student cohort of Scarborough College in 1971 were 46% female and 54% male.(Office of the Registrar, University of Toronto Scarborough 2020) cont'd on next page.

# SCARBOROUGH COLLEGE BULLETIN

Number 36

July 20, 1973



## THE CLASS OF '71 by M. Bradshaw

The Career Counselling Placement Centre of the University of Toronto has published a study, entitled "THE CLASS OF '71 REVISITED". The purpose of the study was to enquire into the post-graduate activities of the 1971 graduates.

Of the 4,250 students graduating 1,857 (44.5%) responded to the survey; of these graduates, 40.3% had four-year Bachelor's degrees, 28.2% had three-year degrees, 5.8% had B.Ed.s, 20.7% had Masters' and 5.0% had Doctorates. 60% of the respondents were males and 40% were females.

The study reported that the average male graduate (M) and the average female graduate (F), having a Bachelor's degree, was as likely to continue his/her education immediately as to enter the job market. F was more likely to seek teacher training than M (44% versus 13%) and M was more likely than F to pursue post-graduate professional training (approximately 3 to 1).

52% of the graduates sought employment rather than further training. 63% of them began their job search by March, 1971 (half had started three months earlier, while nearly 20% did not begin

until after graduation). Most of them began work in the high "job start" months of May and September; 25% were without jobs after four months and 13% were still jobless after nine months. Two-thirds of the graduates submitted twelve or fewer applications before finding a job, while the remaining one-third had to make from thirteen to seventy-seven applications.

50% of the female graduates preferred to have a job in Metro Toronto; whereas, 63% of the males did not mind leaving Toronto, but half of them preferred a city of at least 100,000 people. 63% of the graduates found employment in Toronto and 7% in cities with populations greater than 100,000. 80% of the graduates found their jobs on their own initiative; 20% of them took "Placement Centre-referred" jobs.

During their job-search period after graduation, family support was the main source of income for 36% of the graduates. Savings were the next most frequently used means, supporting 27% more of the Class of '71 job-seekers.

cont'd

Basically, if M and F sought work diligently, they were quite likely to find jobs they wanted, when and where they wanted and the pay they wanted. However, they were almost as likely to take further training as to seek work and an alarming 23% chance existed that, having sought jobs, they might be either unemployed (13%) or unhappily employed (10%) nine months after graduation.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has published a somewhat similar report on the 1971 and 1972 graduates of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. It would be interesting to compare some of the data relating to the 1971 graduates of University of Toronto and of the CAATs. (It should be noted that the University of Toronto report includes information to the end of January, 1972; the CAAT survey ends with December 31st, 1971. The difference of the one month, particularly eight months after graduation, is probably not too great a discrepancy to allow comparisons to be made).

The chart below shows the post-graduate activities of the 1971 graduates.

	<u>U. of T.</u>	<u>CAATS</u>
Employed	45%	78%
Unemployed	7%	10%
Continuing education	44%	11%
Other	4%	1%

Starting salaries for the U. of T. graduates, males and females, and for the CAAT graduates is shown below.

<u>Starting Salaries</u>	<u>U. of T.</u>		<u>CAATS</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>(M &amp; F)</u>
Less than \$5,000.	4%	16%	43%
\$5,000. to \$6,500.	8%	18%	35%
\$6,500. to \$9,000.	64%	49%	21%
More than \$9,000.	24%	17%	1%

The job satisfaction is as follows:

	<u>U. of T.*</u>		<u>CAATS</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>(M &amp; F)</u>
Satisfied			
Yes	48%	41%	78%
No			22%
Extremely dissatisfied	4%	10%	

\*80% felt their job had potential.

For anyone wishing to read the original reports, a copy of "The Class of '71 Revisited" is in the Student Services Office and the CAAT report can be borrowed from Marvi Bradshaw.

#### WHAT'S YOUR GRADE?

by John H. Corbett

It was with pleasure and some surprise that I recently received an invitation from the Curriculum Committee of the Division of Humanities to comment on the "unusually high" grades awarded in some of my courses last year, and on the concern which those grades caused in the College Committee on Standing. Perhaps a sensitive soul might have felt a rebuke implicit in this summons; but I was pleased to see some members of the College finally addressing themselves to the subject of assessment, albeit in a rather indirect way. In any case the summons provided the extra incentive necessary for me to organize my thoughts on the

The second page of the report provides some interesting data on the 1971 relative salaries of male and female students after graduation. Men in general held jobs that earned a higher salaries than their female counterparts.(M. Bradshaw 1973, 2)

just mentors, but allies and sponsors, people who would say your name when you're not in the room, people who suggest you for roles that are of this type, this more interesting type." (Andrade, Maydianne 2020)

Representation was more than just gender for our participants, stories and conversations were not without the consideration of the intersecting aspects of gender, race and ethnicity. In terms of that important sense of belonging and finding others who share your same experiences, participants shared their sense of the importance of the racially, ethnically diverse nature of our student body and their experiences as women of colour coming to campus and finding others who "looked like me." One student described her experience in first year (2010): "I remember thinking in first year, that "Wow like," walking into a classroom I've never been a majority, part of the majority population within a specific space, and to think how kind of like what a shift that was like I didn't even know how to really understand and grapple with that."(Ma, Roxanne 2015) While others expressed their concern about the absence of the same degree of representation in the faculty. "we need to be able to have faculty members who look like the student body. Part of the challenge is with not having that perspective from the faculty side of things is that when we tell our stories, our stories are sometimes not validated, from that faculty member or that perspective's not, not valued by that faculty member." (Kimberley 2015)

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## Shirley Criscione

*A retired elementary school teacher, Shirley was a student in the first graduating class at Scarborough College, 1968*

"So, I'm sitting in the algebra class, and just a comment by the teacher: 'If you're sitting in this class, you should have all of your stuff ready now and be sending it off to university. Because you should be going to university if you're sitting in this class.' So I had never, ever thought to go to university. At the end of class, I went to the teacher, and I said, 'Did you mean me? That I should be going to university?' He said, 'Absolutely. If you're sitting in this class, you should be heading to university.' And I had never thought that before.... but really, there wasn't a big pitch, there wasn't- I guess because a lot of people didn't go to university, quite frankly. You graduated from high school, and then, for a woman, for instance, there were not a lot of options. So, women were teachers, women were nurses, women were secretaries, or you worked as a cashier in the store or worked in retail. There weren't a lot of options for women. So, it's kind of outside the box to think of going to university, but there were a lot of my friends who went on to university, because as I told you, we were streamed<sup>5</sup> and so, other people had

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<sup>5</sup> High school classes in Ontario were streamed with the intent to prepared students for life after graduation: basic or workplace; general or apprenticeship or college; or advanced or university. Students would make their choice of stream in grade 8. Once in a stream a student could not

never thought anything of not going to university, whereas I had never thought about going to university, until that comment, so. ... My thoughts were always, go to teachers college and teach. That's what I was going to do, so. And in those days, once you had children, you stayed home. ... So, I was- I taught for five years and then I stayed home with my children, for 14 years. So, it's just what you did. 'Cause it- people didn't think of anything else. There were- Ryerson used to be a technical college, so people would go to Ryerson to further their education to become a, well a secretary, now they don't call them secretaries anymore, but that's what they were called then. So you would go, or they had things like, Shaw Business School, for instance. So if you graduated from grade 12, you might go to Shaw Business School and learn, typing and shorthand. I don't even think they do shorthand anymore, but that kind of thing, to run an office, or not even, not- just work in an office, so. There were no computers. That's a new thing. Mhm. We lived in the non-computer age, yes."(Criscione, Shirley 2019)

*Listen to more of Shirley's story here:*



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## **Clare Hasenkampf**

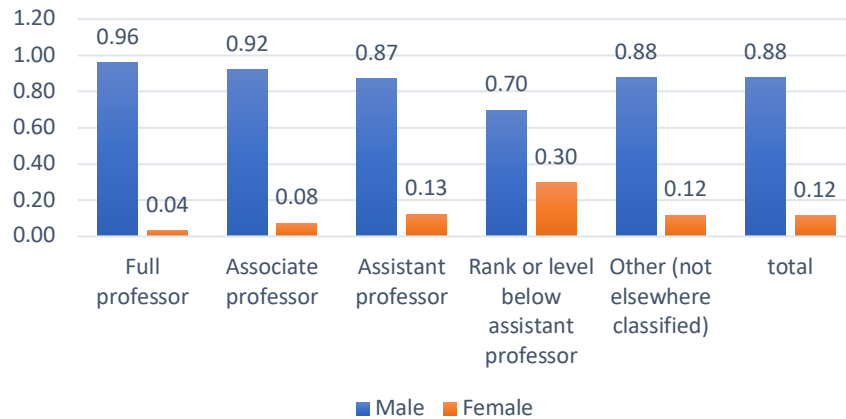
*Clare began her academic life in New Orleans, Louisiana. A full professor in Biology at UTSC, Associate Dean, Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Clare joined Scarborough College(UTSC) in 1989. In addition to her experiences at Scarborough College, Clare recounts her experiences as a graduate student and post doc beginning in the 1970s, before coming to Scarborough College.*

You were almost genderless as a postdoc. You're this brain and in biology, a set of hands and I cannot say I felt like there was any kind of stress there. It really wasn't until you make it known that you wanna be in the ranks of the faculty that it starts getting tougher and people start saying, "Oh yeah, I had a postdoc and she worked so hard and I really felt sorry for her kids." And they think they're being I don't know what, open minded or something, but they're getting in the fact that gee, your kids must be being neglected if you're pursuing this high-end profession or this kind of thing. So it gets a little more jabby, you know.

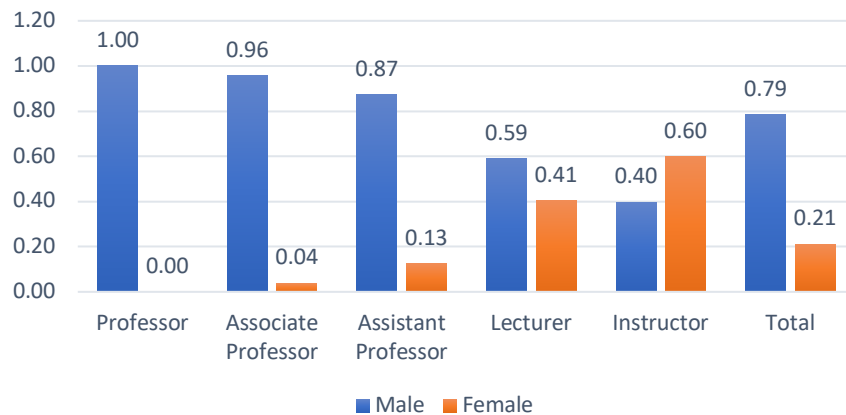
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advance to another stream but could be reduced to a lower stream if their performance was deemed inadequate for success. This policy was in place until 1999, when the first attempts at de-streaming were initiated and failed. (Coalition for Alternatives for Streaming in Education nd) The practice of streaming was found to be biased in terms of race and socioeconomic backgrounds and was terminated in the summer of 2020. (Powers, Lucas 2020)

### % Ontario Faculty by Rank and Gender 1970/71 n=8202(m); 1101(f)



### % Scarborough College Faculty by Rank and Gender 1969/70 n=103(m);28(f)



Source: Statistics Canada,  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/191125/dq191125b-eng.htm>

Source: Scarborough College/University of Toronto/1969-70 Calendar, UTSC Office of the Registrar,  
[https://utsc.calendar.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/PDFs/1969-79/UTSC\\_Calendar\\_1969-1970.pdf](https://utsc.calendar.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/PDFs/1969-79/UTSC_Calendar_1969-1970.pdf)



... my sense is that guys will wait patiently for their turn to talk, but then they'll just have a speech, a long speech or something. Whereas women will just wanna kind of, maybe I shouldn't say women, me, would rather like just come in with a little comment here or there. So I found that higher level of I don't know what you call it, conversation or dialogue somewhat strenuous on me personally. I felt like that was the first time in a faculty position that I had to kind of rein in who I really was a little bit and engage in what was more the academic kind of dialogue. That still wasn't too bad, you know what I mean?

And the [UTSC] biology department I have to say was a little bit... Well, maybe the whole campus was like that 'cause this was... we came to the campus in 1989. And so most of the faculty who were there had been there the whole time... And so it was a very established group, ... That was about the time that I felt like it was a bit hardest to feel like I was fitting in, right.

... that's 20 years where like some people might have come in as a faculty member 'cause people started younger then because you get your PhD, you got a faculty position, right. So these people might still only be 50 and have been there for 20 years and been engaging with each other for 20 years. So not all that was about being a woman. A lot of that was just about being one of the few new faculty at that time period or that type of thing. I don't wanna leave you with the wrong impression. I still felt like my opinion was respected. ... It was more the kind of style of the dialogue I guess you would say that I found more difficult to rein myself in and to be effective to adopt this persona that was not quite who I was.

...

So we had two women [in the department] I would say. Julie Silver and Czesia Nalewajko and I believe that was it. And then there was probably about 10 men. I don't know that I could name them all, but yeah, 10 or 12 men. So yeah, we were in a pretty strong minority.

...I'm pretty sure chemistry had no women, except for... Well I mean, what were they called back then? Tutors, I guess, senior tutors. ...<sup>6</sup> Yeah, we probably were a little bit better a few years ago 'cause most of the recent appointments have been men. But yeah, and we're catching up a little bit in terms of full professors, right, but we were definitely desperately behind for a while, but now we seem to be doing somewhat better in that department.

... I don't feel like I was actively discriminated against. It's just women's styles were not as acceptable.

*Listen to more of Clare's story here:*

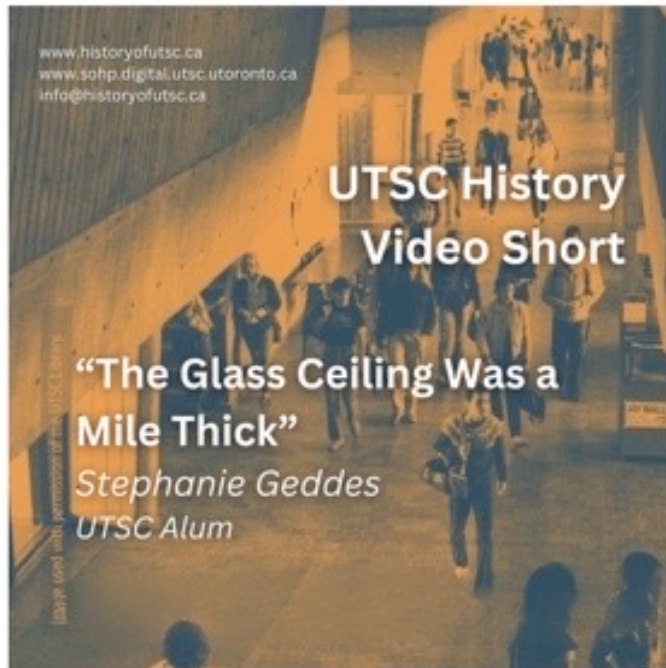


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<sup>6</sup> Teaching Stream faculty first held the title of tutor, which was replaced with Lecturer and finally more recently replaced with Assistant, Associate or Professor, Teaching Stream.

## The Glass Ceiling was a Mile Thick

Stephanie Geddes, who was a part of the first graduating class of UTSC in 1968, here speaks about her experience as a woman student at Hart House, a popular student centre at the St. George campus.



**Listen to more from Stephanie here:**



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## Kimberley

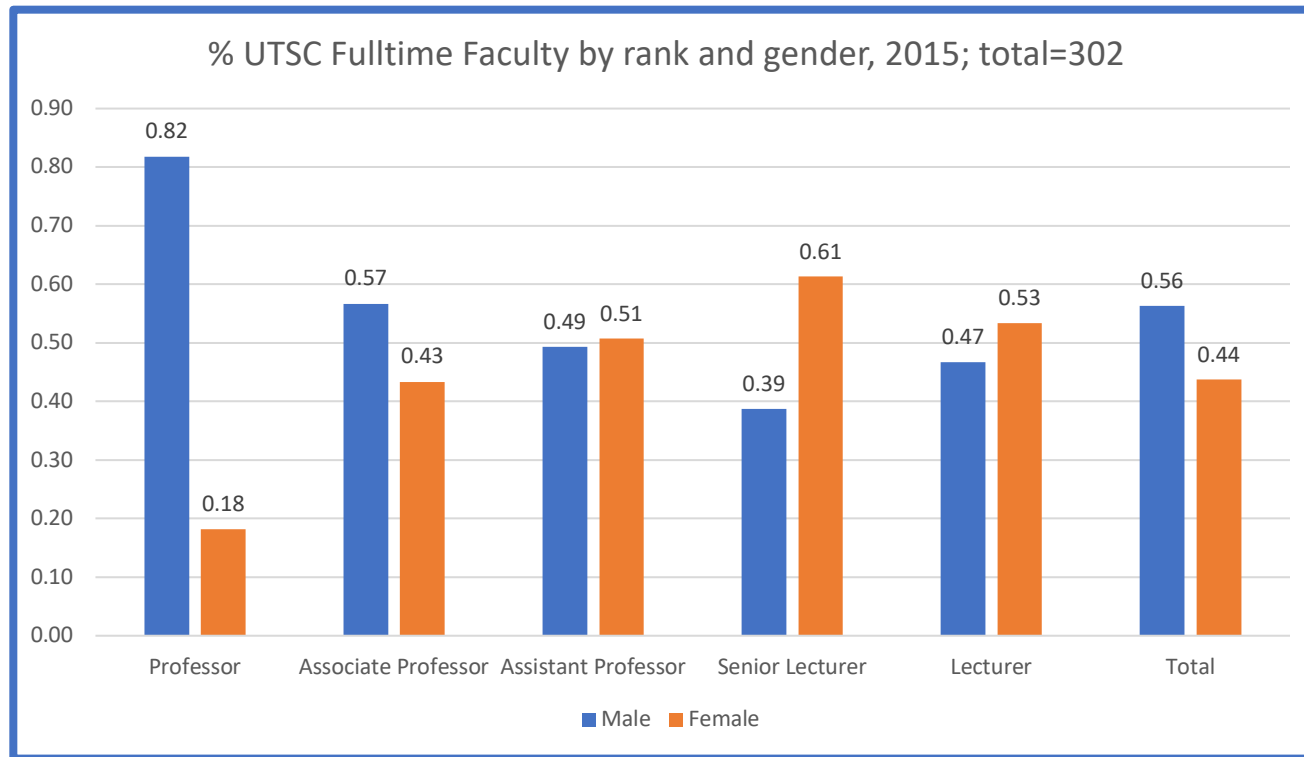
*Kimberley came to UTSC as an undergraduate student in the late 90s and at the time of her interview she was the UTSC Manager of Community Development and Engagement.*

My dad and I came here for a visit [late 1990s] and it was the place I was the most comfortable at. And it was great looking around and seeing people who look like me, who thought like me, who, who, who enjoy similar things as me and it was close to home.

.....  
As a student, there's nobody that looked like me in the administration that I saw. And I can only speak for the people I saw and interacted with on the administrative side and I didn't really interact with a lot of people on the administrative side; it was go to the registrar's office when you want to graduate, or you need a course change or something, if you can do it online over phone, I'd rather do that. And the faculty, I don't-I went through my entire academic career without seeing someone who was, who was a racialized body. I don't think I had any faculty... And I had two, maybe three, faculty members who were women. (chuckles) And yeah, so over 20 courses, three, and they were all in my last year. That's a lie, four. Because, Professor Teichman was um, and she's still here, and she was yeah, she was teaching Latin American studies or something along that line. ... Now [2015], there's so many more women faculty members which is wonderful. I think we're still trying to work through faculty members of color, and I think that's the critical thing: I think we have such a diverse campus. One of the most diverse campuses in North America. And for us, we need to be able to have faculty members who look like the student body. Part of the challenge is with not having that perspective from the faculty side of things is that when we tell our stories, our stories are sometimes not validated, from that faculty member or that perspective's not, not valued by that faculty member. I'm speaking from my own experience. I just finished I finished my Master's a few years ago and remember writing an article about women, about black women and the smear campaign and the faculty member who happened to be a white woman wrote on my paper "this is the easy topic for you, challenge yourself." and I'm like why is it that when I speak about my perspective it's considered easy and it's not a challenge but this is something that needs to be looked at and I think that sometimes happens when you when you bring a different perspective. We have such a Eurocentric way of thinking and teaching and learning that we bring a different perspective to the table. It's sometimes not seen in the same kind of light and valued in the same kind of way so I think there's work to do. There's work to definitely get faculty members that look more like the student population..."(Kimberley 2015)



*Listen to more of Kimberley's story here:*



All ranks other than lecturer, refer to tenure or research track appointments. The rank of Senior Lecturer and Lecturer refer to the faculty appointed in the Teaching Stream. The titles changes to Associate Professor and Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream in 2016. The rank of Professor, Teaching Stream was added in 2019. When we compare the 2015 figures with those in the 1969/70 chart above, the number of female faculty members was lower than their male counterparts in all but the instructor rank in 1969/70. By 2015, female faculty members outnumber their male colleagues in the ranks of Assistant Professor, Senior Lecturer, and Lecturer, but still lag behind significantly in the senior ranks of Professor and Associate Professor.

Source: UTSC Human Resources Services, HRIS Monthly Downloads, October 2019.

## ***Dealing with the legacy of an institution historically designed by and for men...***

Again, it is not hard for us to imagine the conditions faced by female students, faculty and staff in the early days of our campus (1960s/70s) when the numbers in terms of faculty were overwhelming male and the broader environment of higher education actively discouraged female participation at all levels. It is however, harder to understand the persistence of inequity in more recent decades despite policy statements intended to level the playing field both in terms of gender and racial equity. As previously mentioned, female students surpassed their male counterparts in number by 19??; female staff have outnumbered their male counterparts since 19??; the number of female faculty and women in leadership roles continue to lag behind.

Our participants describe their experiences in a variety of ways. At a very basic level they spoke about their experience of being one of only a few women in male dominated classes and disciplines, as faculty, students and staff. They describe being judged by their male peers in ways that had little if anything to do with their knowledge, skills and abilities - by their appearance, on preconceived notions of what constitutes appropriate female behaviour - patterns of differential treatment and judgement not applied to their male counterparts in the same way.(Restivo, Wanda 2015) In the words of one TA talking about student comments on the TA evaluation: "The rest of the evaluation was saying, this is a good TA, the class was fine, ... And at the end it would say, "Do you have anything you wanna tell your TA?" And they would write, "Smile." Just one word, or smile, or smile more. Over and over, not just one person, but other people.... Would they tell a white male professor to smile more? I don't think so... It goes to their bias that if you're not smiling, then you're a bitch, right?... But that kind of comment of being told to smile, I think, is a gendered comment, right? It is rooted in how we perceive women should act, right?" (Alfonso, Rowena 2015)

They talk about how it was and is often hard to be their authentic selves, conforming instead to external expectations. According to one participant, a faculty member and member of the leadership team, external expectations have an even greater impact when combined with an undervaluing of our own abilities and accomplishments: "I keep reminding people, a lot of us have imposter syndrome, which is undervaluing your own abilities and accomplishments. But if you are being reinforced in your unfair assessment of yourself, by unfair external assessment, that's not independent, right? That is crushing your self-confidence and crushing your ability to innovate." (Andrade, Maydianne 2020)

Others share stories of inspiration and advocacy that came from strong female and male mentors. In the words of one undergraduate: "I guess what I really learned here and what I really hear a lot of the other powerful women say here is that your existence is resistance because these places weren't made for us."(Hill, Diane 2015) Still others celebrate the more recent positive changes that place UTSC ahead of comparable organizations in terms of gender and racial inclusiveness. As one colleague shares: "If you look at our institutional leaders, we are far more diverse. Far more diverse than the statistics. For

example, downtown, in terms of the representation of women, people of colour and people of inter-sectional identity, which is really quite amazing.", (Andrade, Maydianne 2020)

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## Wanda Restivo

*Wanda grew up in East Africa and came to Canada in.... She was a student at Scarborough College in the 1970s and returned to teach as a full-time sessional instructor in 1982. She retired in 2019 as an Associate Professor, Teaching.<sup>7</sup>*

" when I went to a physical chemistry course in third year, I was the only female in the program. I was the only female in the course. And I had done problems that I had- my friend who is brilliant in physical chemistry, he's a forensic scientist now, but he would do a problem set it would take me a little longer. My math skills were not quite as good as his and I would get like a zero on this problem set, and you'd go to the TA, who was this guy with the beard and always had a cigarette pack rolled up in his T-shirt, kind of like, you know, anyway. And I would say like "Can you, like what, like zero, really, zero?" It took me an extra page but it's right, the logic is there. For me, the logic is there. He said "So you gotta go talk to the Prof." So I went to the professor and I knocked on the door, open- doors were never open, so walked in, didn't even look, didn't listen to my question. Just said "You need to go back and be a waitress."

That was my third-year physical chemistry experience, and I kind of saw, I thought, you know, I came from, you know, you respect everybody, these professors are gods, you know. I mean, you just, you know, "Hello, hello sir," you know this kind of thing.... I had never been a waitress. I don't know how to be a waitress. I was like, I- floored because A) it was like, he's not even listening to me. But I was so timid. I was not like, now it would be "I'm sorry, excuse me?" But I'm older right? But I mean at that time it was like I just stood in the doorway, I remember just being stunned, and saying, okay, well, you know it was just- okay, it was a dismissal because girls did not belong here. And I went "Wow. okay." So that was a very clear message and it was, that was my first real inkling of discrimination cause it was like, and I didn't know what to think about that. It was like "What are you talking about?" (chuckles)

.....

there were always instructors who were really good instructors and others who were not so good. We did have one in a fourth-year course downtown that was an alcoholic. And everybody knew that he was an alcoholic. The exams made no sense.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.utoronto.ca/physsci/sites/utoronto.ca/physsci/files/u35/DPES%20June%202019%20Newsletter1.pdf>

Questions made no sense. And they just let it go. And we complained and said like I mean, even our final exams. It was like "Okay. We never even talked about any of this, how are we supposed to know this?" And the department just, they just, It was like "You can't. We can't have another professor making decisions on another professor." It was this very kind of hierarchical, patriarchal kind of society there, and I only had one female instructor, my entire undergraduate...So, two out of two. I'm lying, I had two. One was a senior lecturer, and one was a professor.



*Listen to more of Wanda's story here:*

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## **Rowena Alfonso**

*Rowena was a Graduate Student in the History Department on the St. George campus from 2008 to 2015 and a Teaching Assistant at UTSC. She had been a resident of Scarborough since 1988.*

*On what's it like to be a female graduate student in academia generally and in the history department specifically:*

There are times when it's difficult. There are times when it's difficult, and there are times when it's very challenging. Mostly because of the way the things are structured. So as I was saying before, being a single mother, I have to think about certain financial disadvantages, right? That someone wouldn't have to. And part of that is, that's part of what it means to be a woman, right? There are certain things I think about that other people wouldn't have to, right? Or like, I just saw this recently, because I was looking through old evaluations from students. And some of them said, is there something you want to tell your TA? It was at the bottom of the questionnaire. And the questionnaire was, the evaluation was fine. The rest of the evaluation was saying, this is a good TA, the class was fine, it was good, you know. And at the end it would say, "Do you have anything you wanna tell your TA?" And they would write, "Smile." Just one word, or smile, or smile more. Over and over, not just one person, but other people. And fine, well, you can look at that objectively and say, okay, maybe I could smile more, that's fine. That's a good note. Would they tell a white male professor to smile more? I don't think so.

I think it's a gendered suggestion, right? It goes to their bias that if you're not smiling, then you're a bitch, right? If you're in class, you should be giving your lecture and smiling, right? Whereas they wouldn't have that expectation of a male professor, right? Because the idea is, okay he's in control, he's in power, and he can teach me without, I guess, having all this kind of stereotypical baggage of how he should act, right? And that's unconscious. I don't think that students were being malicious, or

## Gudrin Curri: A Pathbreaking Career

Dr. Gudrun Curri was University of Toronto Scarborough's first female non-academic Registrar. After departing Scarborough College in the late 1980s, Dr. Curri pursued graduate studies and joined the Management faculty at Dalhousie. She passed in September 2022. In 1973, Gudrun Curri was working as an administrator in Simcoe Hall when she was approached to apply [...]



Dr. Gudrun Curri was the first non-academic Registrar at UTSC, from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. In her oral history Gudrin talks about not only what it meant to be a woman in her field but also to be a non-academic at a time when most administrative appointments were held by academics.

You can read more about Gudrin here:



Or listen to her full story here:





anything, I never think about that. But they come also to the class with their own biases, right, and we have to try to navigate [our] own biases with their own, and how to navigate through that. That's part of the difficulty. ... But that kind of comment of being told to smile, I think, is a gendered comment, right? It is rooted in how we perceive women should act, right?

*And as a woman dealing with faculty? Is there similar bias?*

No, I think the faculty pretty much does a good job when it comes to gender, and they treat women the same way as they would treat male faculty. So that's definitely a plus. But in my undergraduate, when I was doing undergraduate degree, I didn't feel that that was so. Especially in the higher levels, at four, third year, fourth year, when you get into smaller seminars with. I had heard a lot of talk from female students, who have been sexually harassed by professors, by male professors, right? Or even just paternalistic. I had a male professor who was white, and it was an older gentleman, maybe 50s or 60s at the time, who patted my head, just. I was sitting down and he patted my head. I guess because I'm small in stature, because I'm Asian. I don't know what kind of stereotypes made him think it was okay, but he meant it in a nice way. And I was just shocked. I was sitting, and he had passed behind me in the class, and just patted my head, and "Hello, nice day," kind of thing.

So you know. In recent research they call these things micro-aggressions, right? I try not to see it so harshly, but I do understand it within the context of yes, this is also white supremacy at play, right? And this is also sexism at play, right?

.....

Even though there are more women in graduate school than men, in general, right? It shows that there is definitely sexism and patriarchy at work, when even though there are more graduate students that are female, their rates of being employed as tenure track faculty are very low, right, just across the board. But I think more so in specific disciplines, yes.

*Listen to more of Rowena's story here:*



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## **Maydianne Andrade**

*Maydianne was born in Jamaica and came to Canada in..... She lived in Vancouver for most of her growing up years. She came to the UTSC Department of Life Sciences in 2000. During her tenure at UTSC she has held the administrative positions of Special Advisor to the Dean, Vice Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity and as Acting Vice-Principal Academic and Dean.*

"so when you talk to people about why women go forward for promotion at a lower rate, there's a variety of reasons. And some of them are resident in what I would call institutional sexism.

We talk a lot about institutional racism these days, but structural sexism. In the sense that the types of service work that women do is not necessarily valued in the same way. And I'm not saying women as a monolith, but rather that women tend to get tapped to do. Tends to be surface work that's less visible, that's less prominent, that's less related to decision-making and that doesn't receive as much credit on PTR, or when it comes time for promotion, isn't seen as academic leadership, that that would help promote you as well. And the same is true for people of colour. And then there's all this off-the-side-of-your-desk work. Like I've been telling people, and I've been doing this since quite early on, I write down the number of letters of recommendation I write for students. That is work that a department has to do. And that disproportionately tends to fall on women and people of colour. And it's time that we start crediting it. You know?

.....

And then the same is true, to get back to the question about women being promoted, when you talk to people about it, they'll kind of say, "Sure, there's a piece of it that is maybe being, not encouraged enough or not mentored enough. And then there's a piece of it that's women having imposter syndrome and women needing to have 90% of what they think, you know, being less risk, be more risk averse." And people talk about those like they're separate things. And I keep reminding people, a lot of us have imposter syndrome, which is undervaluing your own abilities and accomplishments. But if you are being reinforced in your unfair assessment of yourself, by unfair external assessment, that's not independent, right? That is crushing your self-confidence and crushing your ability to innovate because, you're, you know, there's talk even about how some people say, well, women aren't assertive enough when they describe their accomplishments. And I'll say "I've written papers where I claim innovation" and et cetera, and the reviewers jump all over it. Right? And there's some evidence in the literature, but that doesn't happen if you're a man. You can claim these big claims and not be penalized for it. And that's not the case if you're a woman or a person of colour. So those things are not independent. (laughs) It's not just that women are socialized to be risk averse. It's that we're also punished for being risk-takers, I think. I'll leave that as it is."

*Listen to more of Maydianne's story here:*



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## Diane Hill

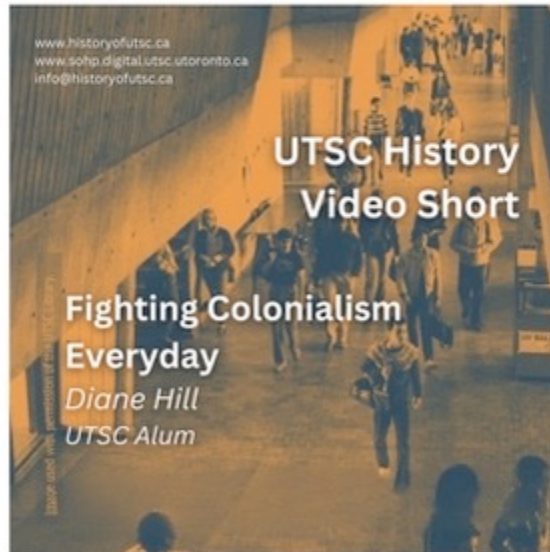
*Diane was an undergraduate student at UTSC in the 2010s. She was raised on Oneida Nation of the Thames, which is a First Nations community outside of London, Ontario.*

"when I first entered UTSC I was a specialist in computer science, so that was really different. I think I more so gravitated towards that because of the type of courses I took in high school and one thing I didn't really realize when I first entered the program was how male dominated the program was and that was really, that was really overwhelming, I thought. And especially too because even the department itself is very male dominated. So as a woman, not only a young woman but an Aboriginal woman you know or even a woman of colour, you feel pretty, you know, pretty marginalized in classes like that.

... And coming here, I feel, not necessarily UTSC, but coming to an institution like U of T that was built for rich white men, is that you can feel the institutionalized racism. You can feel it almost in the air sometimes. And that was really hard to deal with because as, well, I think as all young people you don't know who you are, you know? You don't know, like, are you a young woman? Are you a young Aboriginal person? Are you a young Aboriginal woman? Are you, like, what are you? Are you a daughter, are you an adult, are you a kid, are you? And you're figuring out all these things but at the same time, you're trying to grow in an institution that is telling you certain things, and I guess that's one thing that I really learned over the past couple of years too is that, for example, in other countries, there's wars and there's violence that is literally keeping people from doing things. But the scary thing that I find here is that it's very hidden, and it's very subtle. These types of things are federally legislated to keep us down, you know. And when you think about the Indian Act, how we weren't even allowed to leave the communities, we weren't even allowed to go to schools and I guess what I really learned here and what I really hear a lot of the other powerful women say here is that your existence is resistance because these places weren't made for us. They weren't, 'cause, you know, like, they're trying to keep us out. And that's one thing that I learned too is that like people I went to high school with and people that I see here that don't, aren't necessarily successful by societal or Euro-westernized standards, they're not drop outs, they're not losers. They're push-outs, because these places don't want us here. So they want us to leave, and I guess that's also really hard to deal with because sometimes I feel like, well especially when I'm in school is I wake up every day and it's like I have to fight colonialism, but it's like, I'm in it, I'm swimming in it. You know? And so, trying to keep my roots intact and trying to stay connected to my people and my family and my culture is, you know, that's really important because we didn't have that before, but now we do. We have, we do, to some extent, have that now and I guess that's one thing that my mom always told me that her parents taught her is that, you know, the white man basically took everything away from us. He took our land, he took our culture and he took our language and he took our children. But, he can't take our minds, so

## Fighting Colonialism Everyday

Diane Hill, who is from the Oneida Nation of the Thames in southwestern Ontario, talks about the barriers she faced as an Indigenous student while attending UTSC. Diane reflects on how the history of Indigenous peoples and their education has shaped her peers and her own experiences with education.



**Listen to more from Diane here:**



you have to use your mind as much as possible. So, that's things like education. That's things like getting experience. That's things like talking to people. So that's what I try to do every day, yeah."(Hill, Diane 2015)

*Listen to more of Diane's story here:*



## ***Violence and personal safety***

Violence against women and personal safety on university campuses are issues much more on the public mind in recent years. Our campus is certainly no different than any other in that regard and the stories told here are consistent with the larger historical context of their time.<sup>8</sup> The experiences of violence and feelings of insecurity expressed by our participants are wide ranging, from feeling insecure walking at night on campus, the feelings of insecurity associated with being in a strange new place and community where people may not look the same or share the same cultural practices, through to sexual harassment and domestic violence. As one participant so aptly stated: "Perception is reality. So one person's experience around safety is not someone else's."(Mathai, Marie 2015)

In discussing issues of violence and personal safety, a number of participants described in previous sections, dismissive and degrading attitudes directed by male faculty towards female students - being told by a male professor to "just go back and be a waitress" or patted on the head by a male professor in a manner that felt very demeaning and infantilizing. (Restivo, Wanda 2015)(Alfonso, Rowena 2015) One participant described, "that flirtatious thing, sometimes with professors and students" or inappropriate advances made by male faculty towards female students. (Restivo, Wanda 2015)(Connie Guberman et al. 2020) The stories relayed by staff who perform support roles on campus include the retelling of the experiences of students living in residence and members of our campus community who were reporting incidence of violence or in need of assistance in safety

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<sup>8</sup> The first institutional policies responding to sexual harassment were put in place at the University of Toronto in 1987 in response to growing awareness of the extent of sexist attitudes and harassment on campuses and pressure from the feminist groups. (file:///Users/christineberkowitz%201/Downloads/4895-Other-11779-2-10-20210510-2.pdf) The first University of Toronto Sexual Harassment Hearing panel charged to hear complaints was chaired by Helen Rosenthal, Senior Tutor in Mathematics at Scarborough College. <https://archive.org/details/spectrum08scar/page/n25/mode/2up/p26> In recent years, we've seen institutional policies that respond to sexual violence and harassment put in place, old policies being reviewed and general codes of conduct established(2019). It is notable that a review of the University of Toronto Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment was completed in 2022, triggered by an event that took place in 2017. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/19/oxford-professors-abused-position-with-sexist-and-drunken-conduct>

planning. Although there are many negative stereotypes that are shared about Scarborough and the Scarborough campus by members outside of our community, the generally held perception from these participants is that the Scarborough campus is as safe or safer than the St. George or UTM campuses.

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## Connie Guberman

*Connie came to UTSC in the mid-1980s as a TA from the graduate program in the Department of Political Economy on the St. George Campus and is currently an Associate Professor, Teaching Stream in Women's and Gender Studies. She has an extensive career as an activist and scholar in the field of women's studies and served as the UOFT Status of Women Officer in the early 2000s.*

"So one of the things that has changed is an acknowledgement that violence against women students, staff, and faculty happens, and we could look at the movements around looking at date rape, for example, and the challenges for universities to address student behavior and develop codes of conduct. Universities haven't developed an equivalent around issues such as around inappropriate racial conduct, holding people accountable.

But one of the things that still exists and still is problematic is that in the rest of the world studies have shown that violence against women happens. Fifty percent of girls and women over the age of 16 will experience a sexual assault, yet universities aren't dealing with the experience of vulnerability or harm that women students come with to campus. And that hasn't changed. And so there are many ways that inequity still plays out among our students, that the numbers don't tell the true story of."(Connie Guberman et al. 2020)

*Listen to the Roundtable conversation here:*



*or listen to more of Connie's story here:*



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## Franca Iacovetta

*Franca joined the History Program in the Division of Humanities at UTSC in 1990. She was the first hire in 13 years and only the second woman to be hired in the program. Franca is now a retired preeminent scholar or immigration and women's history.*

"At night, I don't drive, it was not easy to get back and forth between Kennedy Station. I would finish my class at 10:00, go back to my office, it'd be 10:20 by the time I was out there, and then I'd think, how the hell am I going to get to Kennedy Station? I don't even know how, and it was nerve-wracking. And I didn't... I did not say to my colleagues, as a woman... In 1990, it was dark on the Scarborough campus, right, and I didn't have... I didn't feel that I had the confidence to say, "Look, guys, I'm doing a lot of what you want me to do, but I do not want to teach night courses until there's an easier way to get to Kennedy Station."

And I know at one point my own partner said, "Why don't you ask one of the students who have cars, anybody going to Kennedy Station?" And I said, "No way," because I thought that was an issue of authority, you know, authority in the classroom, right? How am I going to stand in the classroom and sound authoritative about subjects that I don't necessarily know a whole lot about... I learned a lot in the course of teaching, but how was I going to end that two-hour ordeal, which is how I saw it in the early years, by saying, "Hey, can I bum a ride by somebody in the classroom?"

Those were real issues, because I thought, I'm not being myself, and there was something about being newly hired, first tenure-stream job, primarily male historians as colleagues... I didn't know how to navigate that. I didn't navigate that very well at all in the early years." (Connie Guberman et al. 2020)

*Listen to the Roundtable conversation here:*



*or listen to more of Franca's story here:*



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## Marie Mathai

*Marie was a Case Worker in the UTSC Community Safety Office beginning in 2008 until the time of this interview in 2015.*

I knew people that lived on the outskirts of Scarborough. I did sometimes hear some cautionary tales, like about me going to Scarborough. And that might be from people at other campuses saying it's not as safe, or the perception was that it's not as safe or they had compassion for me saying, "oh, you have to go there because of safety, not because of the calibre of the campus." This wasn't about academic judgement, it was about safety because there's this perception that it's far more unsafe than say UTM, which is where my husband studied, or St. George. There's a perception that it's more unsafe. That's not my experience but that certainly was what people cautioned me on.

....

I haven't had, I haven't had a personal safety concern. I've had more personal safety concerns downtown on the TTC, than, more than one, and that's not about being brown, that's just about being a woman. That's about some mental health crises, that's about psychosis, that's about urban living, that's about crowds, crowding. There's a lot of things but if I had incidences it's not here, it's actually being downtown... So I actually find the whole thing ironic. Do I safety plan though when I'm here? Yes, I do. Not about walking on campus but when I walk to my car at night, right? But I always do that, that doesn't matter where I park but this is the only place that I park in an external lot. So I do think about my safety all the time as a woman and I do think of it as a brown woman and I do think about it walking at night to my car.

.....

Advocacy can only go so far and there's limits around that. We're really mindful how we use our voice 'cause as we know, for women, if we express ourselves too loud or too whatever, we might be perceived as hysterical or overreacting or whatever. So if I want to be heard around a student case, I have to, the biggest challenge is trying to do that in a way that I can be heard and at the same time, not minimize the client's experience.

.....

the experience of women and experience of men are not the same and that's just the truth. It is not the same and never has been the same. Both are subject and harmed in different relationships but the experiences are different. And so what we find is women are more comfortable talking about those experiences with all women. And also, most harm is not by strangers. It's not stranger danger, it is in relationships. It's in dating, it's in family, it's in friendships. Relationships are where women are being harmed.

*In response to a question of whether race, ethnicity or religion as well as gender play a role in personal safety...*



I think it always does. I think everywhere we are, I think there is an awareness about being a marginalized group, right? I am aware but I've been aware. I left England, my parents and I left England because of racism. So that's imprinted on my mind, right? So that's a young memory that I brought to Canada. We left a whole country because of racism. And so that will never leave me.... That's not specific to Scarborough, that's just about my own awareness as a brown woman. My husband is white, he does not have half the issues. I must tell you, as a man and as a white man, he does not have half of the issues. It's not that I feel picked on or actively harmed. I'm not walking around hypervigilant and scared all the time but I'm more aware, he doesn't even think about his safety. It never even occurs to him to think about it. Whereas I do think about it, right? It's just a part of my being. I don't want it to become debilitating or one that'll cause us paralysis, but I do, I'm mindful, I'm mindful of it.

....

Perception is reality. So one person's experience around safety is not someone else's. What we wanna do is value people where they're at and their perception of safety. And so I think it's so important when we listen to people not to minimize their experience, even if we in that same circumstance or situation, would not even perceive it as a safety issue. People tell each other all these things about that's not a big deal. I have women telling women at the university, that that rape was not a rape. That's just a guy being a guy. Their friends giving them feedback like that, oh, men are just like that, they just take what they want. This is not helpful. So this is what I say to women about how we support one another, let's not normalize sexual assaults or relationships. Let's not normalize that. (Mathai, Marie 2015)

*Listen to more of Marie's story here:*



### ***How long must we wait and activism?***

This chapter opened with a fictional story of a female student who was refused admission to UofT in the 1880s but accomplished her goal of attaining a university degree by dressing and presenting herself as male. The excerpts of stories presented here provide evidence of the persistence of a resistance to change with respect to inequities faced by women as students, faculty and staff at UTSC. There is a clear recognition that changes have occurred but as one Round Table participant remarked, we have a tendency to celebrate the "numbers" and declare progress rather than to look more closely at the lived experience of the members of our community.(Connie Guberman et al. 2020) And despite the significant advocacy of the women's movement throughout the decades, public policy changes in the 1980s intended to elevate the position of women economically and socially, and measures within the university to effect change, the question of how long must we wait is legitimate.(questionnaire) The excerpts below present a variety of viewpoints on the cause of the slow rate of change including the loss of female identified candidates from graduate school graduation to faculty positions, the lack of a pool of

qualified women to draw from and the realities of the peculiar employment environment of the university that presents barriers to timely change.

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## **Aarshi Ashok**

*Aarshi came to the Department of Biological Sciences as a lecturer in the teaching stream in 2009 and is now a full Professor, Teaching Stream.*

"Certainly in the sciences, we've talked about a leaky pipeline<sup>9</sup> being the reason why we do not have as many women staying around, even for higher levels of training, even for post-doctoral research, never mind a faculty position. We've talked about that leaky pipeline for the entire decade that I was in training, and the entire decade that I've been a faculty member. And we've done nothing about it. So the sense of urgency that we mentioned, the sense of being impatient and making something happen now, because we've heard the story of "Change will come" long enough, I think is definitely something that resonates for me.

The other point about the university listening to these things... So simple suggestions of our graduate students and post-docs in our department also having access to the campus daycare, and having priority access to the campus daycare, it's a simple step, it's something that the university can listen to and advocate for. It's something that I think can make a difference in this urgency of the leaky pipeline.

And then thirdly, the point about role models. I think until somebody's willing to take on that political act and that advocacy angle, none of this can actually be realized. So we need all aspects of those things, I think, if we are to pick a problem in our respective disciplines, in our area, to make a difference."(Connie Guberman et al. 2020)

*Listen to the Roundtable conversation here:*



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<sup>9</sup> The "leaky pipeline" refers to the diminishing numbers of women in every stage of academic advancement, from graduate student through to senior professorial ranks.

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## William (Bill) Gough

*William (Bill) Gough joined the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences in 1993 at UTSC and has since served in a number of administrative positions as well including as the Vice Principal Academic and Dean.*

"Well, the biggest change is among the staff. So there's been a concerted effort, or maybe the candidate pools have been reflective of the Scarborough community, and staff tend to live closer to the campus than faculty.... And so I think our staff are reflective of our community. (add not about where this study came from) There's also greater turnover. And so one can do that more easily. I would say the biggest difference among faculty is we're approaching gender parity, not at the senior ranks, but certainly at the junior ranks. So we are now hiring 50-50 when it comes to assistant professors. I'm not sure what the updated values are now, but when I did the analysis a couple years ago it was 46%, no, 44% of associates were women, and 56 were men, but it was 20-80 at the full professor level. And at that stage there were 13 women on campus that were full professors and I could name them. ... We have moved, and while I've been Dean we're up to 20, which isn't, I mean, it's the right direction, and the percentages have shifted, but it's gonna take a while for the body of associate professors to move up. We've done some senior hiring, but not a huge amount, but that said that depressing story, 'cause it's reflective of when I was hired, when I was hired there were as I mentioned, two positions, and the other one went to a woman, and she was the first woman professor in that area of physical science. ... in 1993. And now I think there's gender parity among the environmental scientists. There is stratification among our chemists that there are more women that are in the teaching stream, and more men in the tenure stream, even though the overall numbers are probably equitable. And that's reflective, a number of very important issues that we need to consider as an academy in terms of timing for women, especially women that want to have a family. And that the teaching stream is perceived anyways by some as being a little bit more flexible to allow that kind of thing. There may be other underlying systematic biases there, too, that still need to be routed out. We still have gender parity among physics and astrophysics. That's across the world in that discipline, but yes. And the student body, we're in 60% women now and 40% men. I think the pendulum may have swung a little too far. We need to know why the young men are not coming to university, or importantly why they're not finishing. We know that there's a lot of students in good standing that have not finished and the majority of them are men. Now maybe they're getting jobs. Maybe the women aren't leaving because no one's offering them jobs. So there may be still gendered issues that need to be addressed, or there may be other reasons that men are not finding university a good destination, that's worrisome."(Gough, William 2019)

*Listen to more of Bill's story here:*



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## Toni De Mello

*Toni was born in the United Arab Emirates and moved to Canada at the age of four, first to Montreal and then to the GTA. She has a Master's of Urban Planning and a Master's of Public Policy from Princeton and a law degree from McGill. Toni has a background in international consulting and she worked for the United Nations in Senegal, Geneva and Columbia. In 2013 she came to UTSC as the Diversity and Equity Officer.*

*Reflecting on the "process of change and why it takes so long..."*

"I think diversity means difference, and to say difference means that we're not all the same. And I think there are definitely systemic realities that are entrenched, where we have a notion of a norm, in quotations, of this is what it means to be a foreign student. This is what it means to be a Canadian-born student. This is what it means to be straight. This is what it means to be gay. And we bring to those kinds of norms, or categories, I should say, some prejudices and some biases. We all do. It's not one group versus another. It's not the establishment against the rest. But I think we all have adopted and absorbed certain pre-judgments that we have about things. And I think when we are in positions where we are considered, quote-unquote, the norm, or we're in positions of power, it's easy to say we don't want to see difference. We want to see things the way they are, or the way that we've known them to be. So I think that can be a challenge.

I think there's also a legitimate challenge from things that aren't even, sort of, this notion of one community trying to exclude another, but rather competing interests and competing priorities. So very many times I see, you know, you'll have two students from the same background, the same culture, the same religion, the same socioeconomic status, that differ widely on the way they see the world. And so, what do you do when you have a clash of opinions, or a clash of values, or a clash of priorities? What do you do if my office, which is just as important as another office, such as Facilities, or the Chief Administrative Office, or Human Resources, these are all important offices, but we have different mandates and different things that are important, and we clash? And so, I think that that's part of the problem.

I think another part of the problem with diversity is in order to acknowledge the fact that there is an inequality that results from difference of race, sex, gender expression, religion, creed, citizenship, the way you sound in terms of your accent, all of those things, once you acknowledge them, you're basically categorising people into groups, and people get afraid. There is a fear that people have of a change that might affect them negatively. There is a fear that people may have of something they've read, but they don't know because they've never experienced it, but it may have influenced them. And again, this goes across the board. I

think sometimes we think it's just white people that experience this against people of colour, but I've seen in every group prejudice exists. In every group, people fear something that's unknown or different. And I think we're living in a global society, where the pace of change seems to be just dramatically speeding up, and I think that's hard to adjust to quickly." (De Mello Toni 2015)

*Listen to more of Toni's story here:*



## **Conclusion**

We can tell the story of the growth or progress by the numbers but, as one colleague pointed out, the truth is in the lived experience. (Connie Guberman et al. 2020) What is that truth? That while much has changed much has also stayed the same. The experiences of our participants are complex and varied and tell the story of the struggles for gender equity at all levels from very different and personal perspectives. The slow pace of change is a frustration for some but can be explained by others as part of the historic hiring and promotion processes. The evidence of the value of mentorship to support women's advancement at all levels is hampered by the slow growth in female representation at higher levels. The evidence that women's experience is as Joan Foley stated in 1987, "different" and that that difference needs to be recognized and incorporated into institutional processes in order for appropriate responses to be developed to change a system that historically responds best to the experience and needs of men. Women describe their experience differently from men, that description includes their vulnerability and their struggles to be heard and seen and included in meaningful ways.

While growth is often considered an indicator of progress and can be perceived as an indicator of the continued relevance of the institution itself, we can use the language of progress to hide, intentionally or unintentionally, those conditions or circumstances that are the most resistant to change. In the words of our participant, Aarthi Ashok, there is a "sense of urgency" of "being impatient" and needing "to mak[e] something happen now, because we've heard the story of 'Change will come' long enough." (Connie Guberman et al. 2020) The evidence can be found in the persistence of challenges that first appeared in the earliest days of life on our campus and continue to be an issue today despite changes in the way in which they are perceived or reported or modifications in policy or statements made regarding the intent to make change.

Almost one hundred and forty years after the admission of the first female student to UofT, it is ironic that the women participating in our Round Table discussion and many more who have generously shared their stories still express the need to adapt to an organizational culture that historically was designed by and for men. While it is certainly no longer necessary to conceal one's identity in men's clothing as Kate Bloggs did in Sarah Anne Curzon's 1882 play, it's fair to say that our round

table participants and many of those who participated in our larger collection of stories would argue that the lived experience of women in our institution continues to be a struggle for identity both collectively and individually. That they feel compelled to continue to assert their identity as women, trans women, women of colour, women as students, as faculty and as staff faced with resistance in an environment slow to embrace change.

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