



**MICHIGAN
AGENDA
FOR WOMEN**

Toward a Full & Equal Partnership

*A Report from the President
1995*





Introduction

One year ago, I introduced a major new initiative for the University of Michigan, the Michigan Agenda for Women. The Agenda is the result of years of hard work by women leaders who have pulled, pushed, and sometimes dragged the institution along the path toward equality for women. It represents the beginning of renewed efforts to make women full and equal partners at the University of Michigan. In the year since that announcement, I have discussed the Agenda with numerous groups and have listened and learned from women who work and study in all areas of the University. This has been a tremendous personal education for me, deepening my commitment to the Agenda and confirming my belief that gender equity is imperative if we are to excel in the coming decades. The Michigan Agenda for Women is a broadly based and evolving collection of efforts that will change this University in profound and permanent ways. I would like to take this opportunity to describe some of the most significant aspects of the last year's discussions and to outline some of the new programs we have initiated in response.

Sincerely,

James J. Duderstadt, President



Our history and our heritage

The University of Michigan has long been one of the most faithful realizations of the Jeffersonian concept of a public university—the ideal of developing educated leaders who are well prepared to help shape the future of the nation. It has responded to the needs of the people who founded and supported it even as it sought to achieve quality equal to that of the most distinguished private institutions. Over the past two decades, the University of Michigan has taken a number of steps designed to ensure that underrepresented groups participate fully in the life of the institution. These actions could be classified into three

categories: a commitment of financial resources, the development of administrative structures to support affirmative action and equal opportunity, and the development of an array of recruiting and retention programs. Despite our earlier efforts, it is clear that we need to do more. The University must change dramatically if it is to remain faithful to its heritage—to provide “an uncommon education for all with the ability to succeed and the will to lead.”

We accelerated efforts seven years ago to bring all racial and ethnic groups more fully into the life of the University. This transformation process was guided by our strategic plan known as the Michigan Mandate. The fundamental vision of the Mandate was that the University of Michigan would

become a leader in creating a multicultural community, a leader in achieving racial and ethnic diversity among faculty, students, and staff.

Drawing upon the experience gained through the Michigan Mandate, we have renewed our commitment to gender equity, which—while accepted as an important principle by most—nevertheless remains an elusive goal. The University has not made adequate progress toward its obligation of providing full participation and opportunity for women. Women at the University of Michigan are an incredibly diverse group in terms of race, age, educational background, sexual orientation, and many other characteristics. The Michigan Agenda for Women is an inclusive plan that augments the Michigan Mandate. It is a series of strategic actions aimed not only at gender equity, but also at creating an institution that fosters the success of all women in all facets of University life. Our goal is that by the year 2000, the University of Michigan will become the

leader among American universities in promoting and achieving the success of women of diverse backgrounds as faculty, students, and staff.

During the inaugural year of the Agenda, I met with literally thousands of women from every facet of our University. Participants in these meetings, which ranged from a few individuals to groups of over six hundred women, expressed a series of concerns that create a revealing mosaic of the accomplishments and challenges faced by women at Michigan. Predictably, priorities differ among faculty, staff, and students. Yet, a surprising number of issues emerged that are critical to all women on campus. The following is a brief summary of those issues.



Building a safe environment

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Safety concerns emerged as a high priority among all women on campus. Students, in particular, urged that greater action be taken to ensure their safety. Violence against women on campus is a serious problem that interferes with students' ability to fully utilize the resources of the University and with faculty and staff members' ability to contribute fully. Concerns were expressed about violence within family housing, in the workplace, and about a violent culture in fraternities and athletics. The need to provide timely and accurate information regarding assaults and incidents was noted. More frequent and earlier Night Owl rides were suggested, as was better lighting on campus. Faculty, staff, and students also shared concerns about security within campus buildings.

Parking regulations have been modified to increase the availability of nighttime parking on campus, and the Regents recently approved a

\$2.5-million project to improve campus safety through increased lighting. A round-table discussion with campus leaders was held last fall, and the new President's Task Force on Violence against Women on Campus has issued its preliminary recommendations. A Human Resources/Affirmative Action task force on violence in the workplace held public hearings across campus during the year. As a result, a set of interim guidelines has been developed and discussed with the executive officers of the University and has been issued by the Office of Human Resources and Affirmative Action. Two new training programs for supervisors and employees regarding workplace violence are being offered by Human Resource Development: A program for supervisors about the interim guidelines and how to deal with workplace violence, and an employee awareness program covering safety issues.

In addition, the 1997 edition of the English Composition Board-sponsored publication PRISM will focus on violence against women. PRISM features writings by faculty, staff, and students from throughout the University. The publication will provide an excellent stimulus for widespread discussion and education about this important subject.

Promoting flexibility and meeting dependent care needs

The ability to provide dependent care for children or other family members while remaining a productive staff member, faculty member, or student is of enormous importance to Michigan women. Accessible, affordable daycare facilities are a necessity. For many of our students, daycare costs exceed tuition.

Staff women, in particular, cited the need for greater flexibility in work schedules and structures. Faculty also would benefit from greater flexibility in appointment models. Students noted that many programs will not accept part-time students, limiting access to graduate education for those who cannot afford to quit their jobs and those with dependent care needs. Faculty and staff women would like the option of reducing their appointments to part-time without severely diminishing future career opportunities. We need to more carefully



examine split or shared appointments. The creation of more part-time tenure-track positions, both at pre-tenure and post-tenure stages, was recommended.

Proposals to modify policies related to dependent care and work schedules will be presented to the executive officers this academic year. Units are being asked to explore various flexible scheduling options. I have sent a communication to 3,000 supervisors, encouraging them to give greater attention to staff issues and flexibility in work scheduling.

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Dealing with double jeopardy

Women of color face particular challenges in nearly every aspect of their University lives; they are affected by prejudicial attitudes based both on race and gender. The President's Advisory Commission on Women's Issues and the Council on a Multicultural University have been charged to develop specific goals and

recommendations to address these issues.

The Women of Color in the Academy Project, under the aegis of the Center for the Education of Women and the Women's Studies Program, was funded by the Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives and the Office of the Vice President for Research

(OVPR). The three-year project has conducted focus groups of women of color faculty and graduate students and has launched a network for women faculty of color aimed at reducing isolation and building community. In 1995-96, the project will sponsor a speakers series and a research conference on "Women of Color in the University and the Community We Serve."

I also met several times with members of the Women of Color Task Force for a series of discussions that focused on issues of concern to staff women.

The Faculty Awards Program sponsored by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Multicultural Affairs and OVPR supports the intellectual, professional, and scholarly pursuits of African American, Asian American, Latino/a American, and Native American faculty. It is part of our effort to increase the presence and participation of women faculty of color on campus. The program provides tenured and tenure-track faculty financial support to enable them to spend uninterrupted time pursuing research interests or independent study. Of the forty-three grants awarded through the Faculty Awards Program in 1994-95, two-thirds were to women of color.



Women as leaders



"Faculty and staff women would like more opportunities for professional development."

Many campus women cited a need for a greater proportion of women in leadership positions at the University. During the past year, four women were hired for senior level positions:

- **Nancy Cantor**, chair of the Department of Psychology at Princeton University, will join the University as vice provost for academic affairs-graduate studies and dean of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies in July 1996.
- **Noreen M. Clark**, the Marshall H. Becker Collegiate Professor of Public Health, became dean of the School of Public Health in September.

With Professor Clark's appointment, five of our eighteen deans are women.

- **Roberta Palmer** was named secretary of the University in April, increasing the proportion of executive officers who are women from 18 percent to 27 percent.
- **Cynthia H. Wilbanks** joined the University in June as associate vice president for university relations.

Faculty and staff women would like more opportunities for professional development. Citing difficulties in receiving appropriate mentorship, faculty women want better access to academic leadership training. Junior faculty need more accurate and complete information about the tenure and promotion process. It was suggested that the entire tenure system should be reexamined.

The development of a leadership institute for faculty and staff at lower and upper level positions was suggested.

Managing our greatest asset: People

Faculty and staff women called for improved management training for new deans, directors, department heads, and managers—a possibility being explored by the Human Resources/Affirmative Action office. Lack of human resource education often results in unnecessary personal costs to individuals in those units and in less than optimal performance of the unit and the University.

Staff women cited a need for supervisors to encourage more professional development for their staff members. Improvements in the University's tuition reimbursement program were suggested because presently many staff cannot afford to attend the University as students. Staff also would benefit from more information about career development; suggestions include expanding the Gopherblue information system, creating a career planning and placement service for staff members, and sponsoring University-wide departmental career fairs.

Internal and external reviews of the Human Resources

Development Program have been completed; the program will be modified to better meet the needs of faculty and staff.

Faculty and staff women share major concerns about salary equity. Studies of both faculty and staff salaries were recommended.



Resolving disputes, ending sexual harassment

Staff women cited a need for an alternative to the existing staff grievance procedure and requested alternate means of dispute resolution. In response, the Consultation and Conciliation Service has been established and is available for use by faculty and staff members who desire an alternative to the formal grievance process.

Another ubiquitous challenge for women on campus is that of sexual harassment. Women called for greater educational efforts, more

knowledgeable personnel to receive allegations, and a more visible commitment to ending harassment on campus.

Responsibility for implementing the sexual harassment policy has been centralized in the Human Resources and Affirmative Action office. Two new full-time staff members have been hired to educate the community and to investigate reports of sexual harassment.

Hiring, retaining faculty women

Students and junior faculty women noted the tremendous paucity of senior faculty women available as role models. Men and women both would benefit from larger numbers of senior faculty women. Women comprise roughly half of our undergraduate student population, yet only one in ten full professors are women.

Central funding is being provided to those units that recruit outstanding senior women to their faculties, and six senior scholars have been hired with this support in recent months.

A number of faculty women reported that they are expected to perform a dispropor-

tionate amount of University service, including student advising, informal counseling, and committee work. In recognition of disproportionate service responsibilities expected of some women faculty members, faculty career development awards of \$5,000 each have been created specifically for women. The first forty awards were given during the 1994-95 academic year, and forty additional awards will be presented this year. The awards have been used in a wide variety of ways to enhance the professional development of faculty women.



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Equal opportunities for student women



"Many women students do not feel they have access to the same opportunities and resources as their male counterparts."

Many women students do not feel they have access to the same opportunities and resources as their male counterparts. This situation can result from safety concerns when travelling to and from campus resources, from discouraging attitudes expressed by faculty and other students, from limited access to affordable childcare facilities, from lack of financial aid for part-time study, or from any other situation that limits access. This is a very difficult but important issue—it is imperative that we create an environment of truly equal opportunity. In addition to initiatives described throughout

this report, we have made a commitment to achieve true gender equity for varsity athletic competition for male and female students. Our goal is to reach gender equity by 1996.

Another step we have taken is to expand our Women in Science and Engineering Residence Program, housed in Couzens Hall, from 50 to 110 students.

Also, increasing numbers of women students are honing their leadership skills through Leadership 2017 and LeaderShape, advanced leadership programs for student leaders—women and men—offered by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Creating the Institute for Research on Women and Gender

Faculty members recommended we create a new institute or center for the study of women's issues. In response, we have created the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. The Institute will serve three key functions: provide an institutional umbrella for ongoing faculty

research efforts focusing on women and gender; offer coordination, stimulation, and support for effective interdisciplinary research; and heighten Michigan's national profile as a major source of knowledge about women and gender.

The Institute will have a strong focus on multicultural

and international issues as they relate to women and gender. It will capitalize on the strong links that exist and can be forged between the liberal arts and the professional schools and will emphasize effective communication of scholarship about women and gender to the public and policy-makers.



"I would like to thank the hundreds of individuals who have contributed through insights, ideas, suggestions, and program development and implementation."

Expanding awareness

During the numerous town hall discussions we conducted last year it became clear that many men on campus are unaware of the gender-based inequities experienced by women.

Efforts will be made during the



next year to better inform men on campus about these issues and to increase their participation and commitment to the goals of the Agenda.

This progress report includes, of course, only a partial list of challenges faced and accomplishments achieved during this first year of the Michigan Agenda for Women. I would like to thank the hundreds of individuals who have contributed to the Agenda this year through insights, ideas, suggestions, and program development and implementation. I invite all members of the University community to participate in this important initiative.



The Regents of the University

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