Stereotyping impedes women

(Continued from page 5)

The report identifies secondary schools and employers as institutions that can do the most to help eliminate the stereotyped view of "women's work" that prevails, and offers several suggestions to these institutions to facilitate this change.

Employers could take several steps to aid women, the report says, including:

- Broadening of recruitment of women for technical jobs, especially among women who want to get out of traditional "Women's jobs" and who are entering the labor force after withdrawing from school for a time.
- Improving orientation programs for women that are hired, and ensuring that they cover topics such as equal employment legislation, grievance procedures, and benefit programs.
- Clarifying the definition of equal work "so that 'substantially equal work' does in fact mean essentially equal work' does in fact mean essentially equal work so that 'substantially equal work' does in fact mean essentially equal work so that 'substantially equal work' does in fact mean essentially equal work.
- Offering financial aid programs to aid training and/or retraining of women for technical careers. Programs should be equivalent to those offered to men.

Secondary school

In educating students for citizenship, the education system needs to communicate to all young men and women the centrality of science and technology in contemporary life as well as the ramifications of this fact," the report says. An "increasing attachment of women to the labor force" is one of these ramifications, and needs to be dealt with, according to the Workshop participants.

Difficulty with mathematics is one of the major problems faced by women who wish to enter technical fields. Educators "can and must consciously and actively encourage girls to challenge the widespread and ill-founded belief that they can not or need not learn to work with numbers.

The report urged secondary school officials to:

- Hold principals and staffs accountable to school superintendents for providing equal opportunity for girls.
- Undertake collective thought, throughout the educational system, about circular changes that will help girls "understand at an early age how the study of science, mathematics, and technical courses can affect their future life choices.
- Schools should experiment with methods to encourage girls to consider technical courses and careers, the report says.
- Avoid sex-stereotyping in hiring of school officials and staff. "Nurses, bus drivers, office personnel, cafeteria workers -- the entire group of men and women who comprise the school staff -- are role models for the students.
- Decrease the workplace of guidance counselors, and in doing so create the counselors' familiarity with the world of work, in order to make the counselors available for "early counsel and support for all girls who might be candidates for technical or scientific careers.'

Impatience

The report was traced by President Jerome Winner as "a document that shows how disparate segments of society can interact to bring about improved opportunities for women," but the Workshop participants realized that the changes had not yet been made, and would not be simple.

Minutes of Workshop sessions on education stressed that "participants were acutely aware of the "marvelous complexities" of schools and the myriad steps necessary to change attitudes and behavior.

But, nonetheless, "Women who were keenly aware of the obstacles in their scientific and technical careers tended to feel extremely impatient at the pace at which educational and employment systems could permit change, even in optimal circumstances," the report says.

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