
Report of the School of Science

(2002 update, 1999 report)

Reports of the Committees on the
Status of Women Faculty

March 2002

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Comments from Professor Robert J. Silbey, Dean of the School of Science

The 1999 report of the Women Faculty in the School of Science was a “wake-up call” to the faculty of MIT and has had a number of positive effects since its publication. The report found an unequal distribution of resources between male and female faculty in every variable that was measured: lab space, salaries, proportion of funding from the Institute, and nominations for prizes. Once this was recognized, Dean Birgeneau was able to effect changes mitigating most of these problems. However, the issue of the marginalization, experienced by almost every woman faculty member, is a more difficult problem but one which we are working to remedy.

Marginalization is, in part, a consequence of the absence of women from the “corridors of power”, e.g. the School Council, important committees in the departments, and directorships etc. Since 1999, there has been a concerted effort to change this situation. In 1994, there were no women administrators; there are now six women occupying important administrative positions in the School of Science: Professor Susan Lindquist is the Director of the Whitehead Institute for Biological Research. Professor Nancy Hopkins is a member of the Academic Council, the highest academic committee on campus and the Co-chair of the Council on Diversity. The Directors of the two largest research laboratories in the School, the Laboratory of Nuclear Science (LNS) and the Center for Space Research (CSR) are Professor June Matthews and Professor Jacqueline Hewitt, respectively. Professor Tania Baker is the Associate Head of the Department of Biology, and Professor Jacqueline Lees is Associate Director of the Center for Cancer Research. These women are excellent scholars, teachers and administrators, in the best tradition of MIT. Their voices are being heard.

Marginalization is also a numerical issue that becomes a social and professional problem: the small number of women faculty often leads to a more restricted network of interactions for those women. The School of Science is committed to a sustained effort to increase this number. We increased the number of women faculty, but more slowly than we had hoped. As of 2002, there were 22 tenured and 11 untenured women faculty members out of a total of about 265. We will work to increase this number substantially in the coming years.

As Dean Birgeneau said in the introduction to the 1999 report, these are attempts to reverse the effects of decades of discrimination, but we still have a great deal more to accomplish before true equality and equal treatment will be achieved. The energy and commitment of our women faculty, and as importantly their willingness to pursue what was at the time a difficult and unpopular position, initiated fundamental changes in the School of Science. To honor their bravery and tenacity, we must pursue with equal energy and determination the unfinished agenda.

Number of Women in the School of Science, MIT

	<u>Tenured Faculty</u>		<u>Untenured Faculty</u>		<u>Administration</u>	
	1994	2001	1994	2001	1994	2001
Biology	5	9	3	2	0	4
Brain and Cog	4	4	0	2	0	0
Chemistry	2	3	0	1	0	0
EAPS	3	3	1	0	0	0
Math	0	1	1	2	0	0
Physics	1	2	2	3	0	2
Total	15	22	7	10	0	6