

local news

▼ HIGHER LEARNING

Men lagging behind women when it comes to education

In the United States, many research dollars are spent trying to understand the challenges minority students, such as African American and Hispanic students, face as they complete a post-secondary credential.

And in Canada, both levels of government have spent a considerable amount of effort researching ways to help aboriginal students transition into higher learning.

In both countries, women get slotted into this same group and are often referred to as a minority group.

I don't know why this still happens, at most college and university campuses today, women are the majority.

In 2007, 53.4 per cent of the student population at Okanagan College was female.

That same year at SFU 56.6 per cent of the students were women and at UVIC the

female gender came in at 59.9 per cent. BCIT (a technical school) had more women than men at 52 per cent, which is surprising given the nature of their programs.

Today in Canada, 33 per cent of young women hold a degree whereas only 25 per cent of young men do.

Although women have been attending colleges and universities for a number of years, the most significant change is that they are no longer enrolling in traditionally female-dominated programs such as nursing and teaching—many are opting for careers in trades, engineering and science.

Women are now sitting in classes that years ago were only filled by men.

At Okanagan College in 2007, there were more women than men in our business administration, science and health programs. There has also been significant growth in female enrolments in our civil engineering, and

recreational vehicle technician and welding.

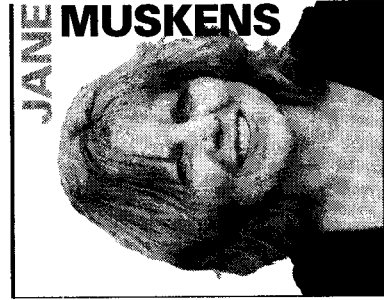
In the apprenticeship programs there were a large number of female students in automotive service technician (auto mechanics), carpentry and the culinary arts programs.

A recent study by the Canadian Education Council showed that when the economy is poor, both women and men will go back to school.

When the economy is good, especially the job market, most men will opt out of post-secondary education, where female enrolments remain the same.

Women tend to go to school regardless of the job opportunities.

This may be because women are traditionally underpaid and the only way they can receive a higher wage is through education, whereas men, with or without a high school diploma, can find high paying work in a number of fields. The tar



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School's In

water quality and environmental engineering technology diplomas.

Overall in the trades programs, 16.4 per cent of the students enrolled in either pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs were female. All of the pre-apprenticeship programs have some women in their classes with the highest enrolments in culinary arts, automotive paint and refinishing, joinery,

sands in northern Alberta are a perfect example of an industry that attracts young men without an education or training to well-paying jobs.

Women with a post-secondary credential have the ability to make a major impact on both our society and economy.

Today and in the future, I am confident that women will change the face of the workplace and will have the ability to support their children no matter what the circumstances.

Saturday is International Woman's Day. Women need to celebrate this day to understand how far they have gone and why they should no longer be considered a minority in any research or study on women and education.

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