

# MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN: THE PROGRAM AT GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

*Teresa Karolewski and June Kingshott*

*Il y a eu peu d'études faites des femmes en gestion et en administration, à cette date. L'étude du secteur public canadien a porté attention aux programmes d'action positive en tant que méthodes menant les femmes à des postes administratifs.*

*En 1985, un projet-pilote pour le développement administratif pour femmes fut initié au collège George Brown à Toronto. Dans cet article, Teresa Karolewski, économiste qui fait de la recherche au collège, et June Kingshott, coordinatrice du comité consultatif d'action positive du collège, décrivent le projet et les ingrédients de base nécessaires pour l'initier.*

Women as managers has been a hotly discussed topic in recent years. Survey research in this area has focussed primarily on the private sector; many American studies examine the role of women executives at the senior corporate level. Few similar studies exist in Canada. In the analysis of the Canadian public sector, attention has been given to affirmative action programs as methods of encouraging women into management.

At Toronto's George Brown College, a successful pilot program on management development for women has been implemented under the direction of the College's Affirmative Action Advisory Committee (AAAC). The program provides two important aspects of management training – the theoretical and the often neglected practical. The theoretical component is provided in classroom instruction with case studies, role plays and discussion. The practical component is the actual placement of women in either six-month internships or a 4-5 week project team assignment in the College. Outlined below is a description of the project and the basic ingredients for successful implementation.

## THE PROJECT

The management development program was offered in 1985 to twenty-five support staff women of the College.

(Support staff in the Ontario community college system are unionized and can be found in jobs as diverse as bus drivers, clerks, technicians and stationary engineers). The program was unique in that it was not targeted at the traditional junior management group nor at the faculty. The twenty-five women were interviewed prior to acceptance into the program. Interviewing by a two-person team helped determine how the individual woman's career goals would be enhanced by the program. Further, the interview session provided the women with the opportunity to discuss the details of the program and allowed the interviewing team to explain the expected commitments of participants.

The twenty-four hour classroom portion of the program, taught by an outside consultant, occurred on two Saturday sessions and on a succession of 3:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Wednesday afternoon time slots. The timing of the classroom periods was deliberate: the personal time requirements, as well as the College's release time for the Wednesday afternoons, indicated that development is a twofold commitment recognized both by the individual and the organization.

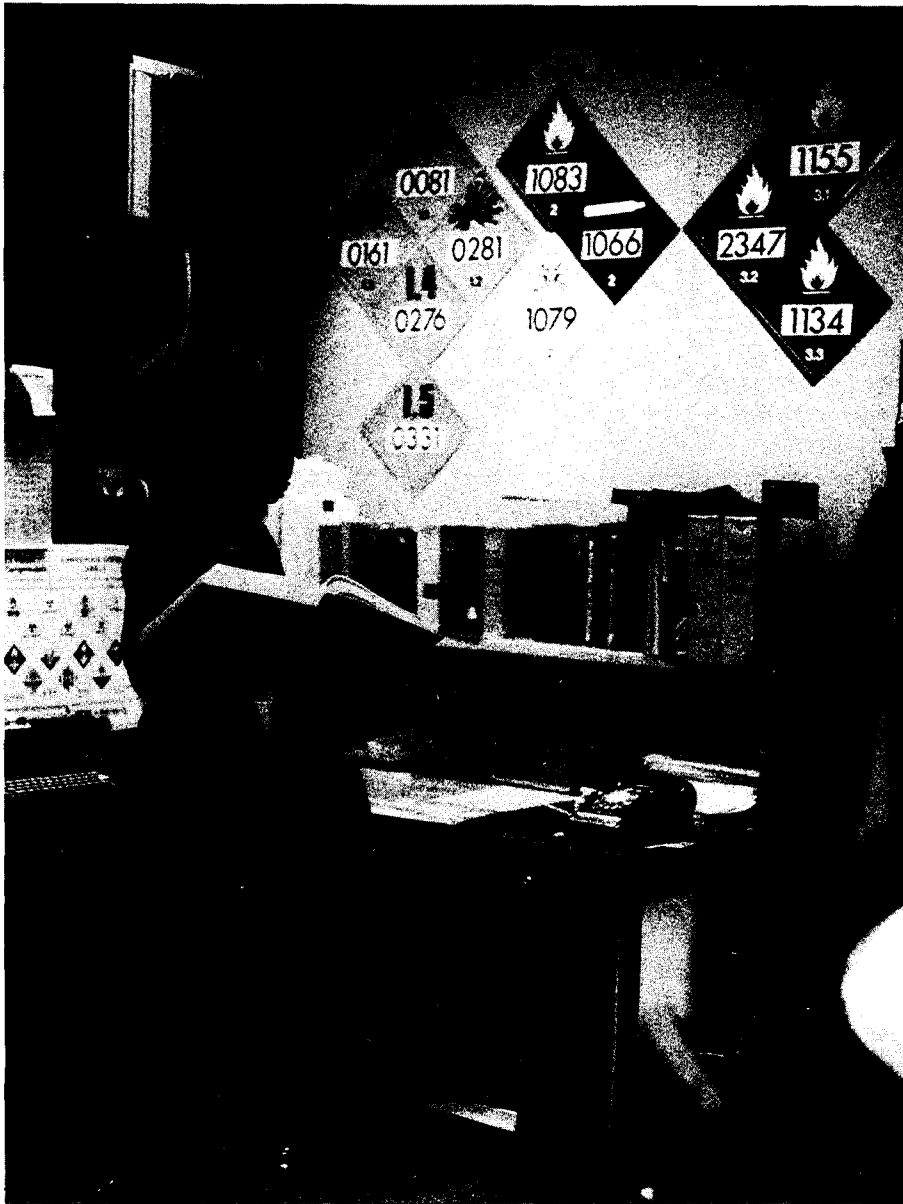
The College is further indicating its serious concern for the career development of these women by supporting the program's practical component. Three women from the original class have become interns, each assigned to a manager in the College. The purpose of the internships is to have a College manager act as mentor, guide and role model to the intern. Interns are expected to undertake management tasks that would be a normal part of the manager's work schedule. By the end of the six month period, the interns should be demonstrating the full range of management skills learned in the classroom session, and experiencing the accountability associated with management.

The internships cover a broad spectrum of College functions. The focus is on the academic, the financial and the community itself. One intern will be working with

a woman chairperson of one of the continuing education departments. Her internship function will include development and implementation of new courses to meet student needs. This intern will be utilizing all resources normally available to a department chair. A manager in the Finance Department has created a project to assess the College's forms management system. The intern on the project will manage the task as it takes her across all management levels of the College. She will also supervise five of her own classmates from the program who will be assisting her. The other intern will be working with the Dean of Research and Programme Development in his new community outreach function. The intern will manage a project associated with a United Way agency. In all cases, the interns will be returning to their regular positions at the end of their internship. No salary differences will be experienced during their internship.

The other twenty-two women graduating from the program have been assigned to various short-term projects lasting from three to four weeks. These women will have the opportunity of working in different parts of the College on a project team consisting of fellow classmates. Project ideas were volunteered by senior managers in the College. The projects require concentrated energy, enthusiasm and personnel capable of working independently on the task. Again the women are expected to effectively translate theoretical management concepts into practical applications. The team concept also instills the idea of interdependence and develops both leadership and the necessary organizational skills. Projects included the development of a computerized timetabling system; a research study of college and university bookstores; development of a staff summer computer camp; and assessment of support staff development needs in the Registrar's Department.

Internships and projects are supported by the College through staff development funds and the College's New Initiatives fund. Obviously the women participating



Credit: Transport Canada photo by Bev Pearl

in these internships and projects must be given leave of absence from their current jobs. The intention of the practical component of the program was not to cause conflict in the individual woman's work setting. The woman would not be forced to cover both current job responsibilities and the challenge of a project – temporary help would be hired to cover her job if necessary. Salary costs for replacements were covered the department's staff development funds. The internship placements were of a much longer duration and thus could cause difficulty in the work setting. The associated salary costs were also quite high. The AAAC submitted a request for funding through the College's internal planning process. This process includes the setting aside of funds known as New Initiative Funds which encourages departments and divisions to

undertake new activities. Following the screening of the request through a College advisory committee, the AAAC successfully received the funding required.

At this time, the internships are about to start. One project team has completed its task and another is mid-way to completion. The projects have been staggered throughout the year to accommodate the needs of the senior managers who initiated them as well as to consider the vacation periods and busy work schedules of the women participants. By the end of the fiscal year 1985-86, the entire class of the pilot program will have completed the projects and internships.

During the fall 1985 period, informal meetings of participants will be set up to continue the evaluative process as well as to encourage the networking aspect of the program. A preliminary evaluation of the

classroom portion of the management development program was completed in May. All comments were extremely positive. Further evaluation will be necessary after the participants have had time to assess their practical management experience and to reflect on the impact the program has had on their careers. The AAAC is planning to undertake a longitudinal study of the pilot group of women to follow their career development.

With the very supportive response received from the pilot program, the AAAC will offer the program again. The results of the various evaluations will be used to refine the process for the next group of women. All women – support staff, faculty and management – will be encouraged to apply.

#### WHAT MADE THE PROJECT A SUCCESS?

##### *Mandate*

The project was aided by a clearly defined mandate which reflected a very real College need. A brief background of the AAAC of George Brown College may be necessary. The AAAC follows operational objectives established by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities. One of these provincial objectives, which currently are directed only at women in the college system, is "to raise and diversify the occupational distribution of women employed in the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology."

An analysis of statistics of George Brown staff for the period 1980 to 1984 revealed little increase in the number of women in management positions, especially at the middle and senior levels. In 1984, of the 1,245 full-time staff employed by the College, 40% were women. Only 9% of senior managers were women. In total, women comprised 27% of managerial categories (excluding the executive secretary category). An additional 227 women, or 45% of full-time female staff, were found in the support staff category. Given the mandate, the statistics and the few staff development programs addressing managerial needs of female support staff, the AAAC felt it had a clear and valid mandate to proceed. An effective management development program would *increase the number of qualified women* who could apply for managerial vacancies when they occur in the College. The program would not, however, *guarantee* a management position to a woman participating in the program.

### *Senior Management Support*

Commitment to affirmative action activities at the College has been evident by the enthusiastic support received from the President, Doug Light. For this management project, Mr. Light offered guidance from the project's inception. He recommended the hiring of an outside consultant to teach the classroom portion of the program. To advertise it, he called a meeting of managers to discuss the program details. In this forum questions, concerns and suggestions were aired. Additional informal meetings helped in encouraging managers to persuade their own staff to apply for the program. Further support and advertisement was established in the President's column in the College's staff newsletter, *City College News*. Such support from senior levels certainly eased administrative details and provided a supportive emotional base to the committee working on mounting the program.

### *Management Development Precedents*

The George Brown College program is not unique. St. Lawrence College with campuses in Kingston, Brockville and Cornwall had initiated a similar program in 1983. The focus was on management development of women staff with both a classroom portion and a practical internship component. However the internships were to be offered to only three women; no other practical experience component was available to other women participants. The course was taught by College managers.

The George Brown AAAC, while impressed with the St. Lawrence experience, felt that a program offered at George Brown had to reflect the unique characteristics found at George Brown. To that end, the program was targeted to support staff women only. In fact, George Brown may be one of the few organizations that has dedicated so many resources into a management development program for persons below the supervisory or professional level. The other concern was to lessen the inevitable "let down" feeling of participants who were enthusiastic about the attention they received in the program and eager to practise their new skills but who, perhaps, did not have the opportunity to do so. To alleviate that problem, the project team concept was developed to allow all women to participate in the practical component. George Brown also hired an outside consultant to teach the

program, thus alleviating the administrative work in co-ordinating College managers to teach various segments of the program. Recognition was also given to the fact that managerial work schedules would have precluded the participation of certain College managers. In the final analysis, the classroom evaluation of the program indicated that the participants preferred the objectivity of the woman consultant who herself had worked her way from the secretarial pool to management.

The value of researching precedents is extremely useful because it alerts one to potential mistakes and allows one to address certain administrative details. Acting upon the recommendation of St. Lawrence, the George Brown AAAC submitted a request to the Ontario Human Rights Commission requesting the granting of special project status to the management development program. The special status designation under Section 13 of the Ontario Human Rights Code allows programs to be targeted or offered to groups which are demonstrably under-represented in certain fields of activity. George Brown did not wish to violate provincial human rights legislation.

### *The Working Committee Mounting the Program*

The success of the program is greatly attributable to the dedicated members of the AAAC subcommittee who developed the concept and implemented the associated administrative tasks. All AAAC activities at the College are undertaken by *volunteers*. The volunteer subcommittee consisted of Lorraine Blanchard, a support staff member in the Registrar's Department; Robert Gwilliam, Dean of Research and Programme Development; and June Kingshott, a faculty member who is also executive co-ordinator of the AAAC. The subcommittee was chaired by Teresa Karolewski, a member of the management group.

Key to the success of the committee was its representation of all staff groups at the College. In addition, the inclusion of the Dean as a senior manager in the committee allowed him to easily undertake formal and informal networking at the upper levels of management. The networking was valuable in further advertising the program to senior management levels and in alleviating administrative bottlenecks. One crucial support service to administering the program cannot be

overlooked: clerical and secretarial support are essential. Another fortunate circumstance related to the subcommittee membership occurred when the Dean "volunteered" his secretary, Ruth Harrison, to provide the secretarial assistance to the project. Lorraine Blanchard, through the normal selection procedures for the program, became one of the group of twenty-five women. Her participation as both committee member and "student" offered advantages and disadvantages. She was able to provide instant feedback about classroom activities and frequently acted as liaison among the committee, the consultant and her fellow classmates. However, concern was expressed regarding her responsibilities associated with these various tasks, and her ability to maintain the separation of the dual roles as student and committee member.

### *Tailoring the Program to the College*

Any staff development program will succeed only if it fits into the organization's culture and if it satisfies real needs. The AAAC recognized the need to meet the funding requirements of internships through normal College channels and to include College managers in all aspects of the process. Funding for replacement of staff during project assignments was covered by the departmental or divisional staff development budgets. However, support went beyond the budgetary considerations.

As part of the application process, the managers of the potential women participants were requested to submit curriculum topics that they felt should be covered in the classroom sessions to help their staff. To enhance the women's skills and to develop new skill areas, the AAAC subcommittee and the outside consultant needed to know where emphasis was necessary. This process automatically aided curriculum development and personally involved managers in the staff development of these women.

Managerial support extended beyond the involvement of managers whose staff were to be participants. In his meeting with managers, Mr. Light encouraged them to develop short-term projects that could be addressed by project teams or to offer internship positions. The base of manager involvement widened. Over ten project ideas were submitted. Managers whose projects were accepted committed themselves to further developing and managing the projects. The three mana-



*Credit: Courtesy of Molly Ferguson*

gers with interns will become extensively involved in the career developments of their interns.

Tangible benefits to the College are readily evident. With staff development funds being directed to support staff in such an innovative way, projects normally not having financial support are now being assisted. While the interns are off on assignment, a further ripple effect in staff development is evident. Job postings for six month secondments to the temporarily vacant positions offer other staff in the College the opportunity to apply for these jobs and, if accepted, to expand their skills and career horizons.

The AAAC also recognized the need to involve the support staff union in the program. A formal meeting of the AAAC working committee and the union local executive provided an opportunity for an open discussion of the goals and proposed methodology of the program. The union also made suggestions about the criteria for the selection of participants.

The union was invited to send a representative to sit on the selection interviewing team.

The advertising of the program and selection process of participants was a mixed success in terms of integration into the organization. Promotion of the program initially occurred informally through word-of-mouth, followed by a formal advertisement in the City College News newsletter. Applicants were interviewed for reasons already indicated; a "first come, first served" rationale would have been unfair to those women who had heard about the program informally. Although sixty women inquired about the program, thirty-eight applicants were actually interviewed. Some concern was expressed that interviewing was not necessary and that women not accepted would be disappointed. To alleviate some of these concerns, the subcommittee stressed that the project was pilot in nature and mentioned the possibility of another offering. In addition, the AAAC

offered more concrete action by sponsoring career planning workshops initially for the women not accepted into the pilot program and then to all other interested women in the College. The subcommittee had felt that some women were not sure of their own career goals; a management career in fact might not be their aspiration. The career planning workshop would act as an exercise in self-evaluation and then realistic goal-setting.

The formal advertising of the program in the College newsletter failed to reach all potential applicants and all levels of management. Future promotional material should be mailed earlier to all staff. All managers will be formally or informally contacted in order to outline to them details of the program. In spite of networking efforts of the subcommittee and the formal meeting held by the President, some managers still had concerns and misconceptions related to the program. All possible avenues of communications in the College – indeed in any organiza-

tion - should be fully utilized when such a program is mounted.

The success of the program really rests on the twenty-five women who participated. One criterion of success could be the fact that no women dropped out of the classroom portion of the program. The working committee had anticipated some attrition from an original class size of twenty-five to perhaps twenty. Now the enthusiasm and commitment of these women should be filtering through the College.

The program offered networking possibilities for the women. In the evaluation of the classroom session, all women indicated that they were able to learn from others in the group. The program had been specifically designed to include participant representation from all areas of the College: the working committee felt that the women would benefit from meeting other women from different parts of the College and gain insight both into these women and into the College itself. Many women in the selection interviews had also voiced their desire to get to know more about other College operations. The assignment of women to project teams took this desire one step further. The participants were placed with women outside their work setting and in projects outside their experience. The tangible benefit will be the participants' greater awareness of and sensitivity to College operations.

The program also focussed on the skills and job tenure of the women in the group. One of the selection criteria used in the interviewing sessions was extra-curricular participation in community activities. Activities associated with ethnic, sports or other community-related organizations helped to establish that women already had planning and organizational skills that could help them in the program. Many of the women had over five years seniority with the College. The consultant used this effectively to mix younger women with those having more job experience.

The program has helped twenty-five women evaluate their career goals. Of the twenty-two participants who responded to the formal evaluation of the classroom component, seventeen women indicated they would pursue a career in management. For the five who would not, this self-evaluation could be used positively in their future career development. All women indicated that the program had met their objectives and that the material covered could be used in present and

future job situations. Of most value to the women were sessions on planning and organizing, interpersonal skills, personal evaluation and objective setting. Comments included the following: "This course is a great morale builder;" this program has helped immensely not just for the business world but also in personal decisions. I can see sequence in the development of events and thus have more control;" and "the College must be able to cope with the challenges that may arise from staff who have completed this training."

The program is an evolutionary process. Real organizational change in the male/female management ratio will occur only in the longer term. A woman's management potential will have to be measured by participation in the program and by her education, job and life skills. By focussing on the often neglected support staff group, the AAAC and the College have recognized the potential of these women, a potential which cannot be ignored.

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#### FURTHER READING

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Wente, Margaret. "The Woman Who Never Was." *Canadian Business 500*, Vol. 58, No. 6 (June 1985).

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### I WANT A STUD FOR A WEEK

I WANT  
some bucking stallion  
who has been prancing around  
his isolated paddock  
with only a whiff  
each hourly breeze  
of the neighing mares  
from fields far away  
to whet his appetite,  
give us our green pastures  
to romp in 'au naturel'

I WANT  
a stud so in heat  
that his semen is white hot  
searing enough to match my desire,  
no gentle, perfumed caresses

I WANT  
to be mounted, and rammed  
past the oozing moisture stage  
to the tearing of burning dry tissue,  
let the lips of my vagina  
rasp off skin until blood

is our only lubricant,  
rearing and thrusting  
past climax after summit,  
past need, and beyond  
to the burn-out of emotion and flesh,  
hormones to ash,  
all nerve-endings dead

I WANT  
to be finally spent  
then let wounds heal,  
seal together, the jagged edges  
forming into one black  
impenetrable scar mass

I WANT  
to be done with sex,  
passion once buried  
letting me be  
free to go on

**Bernice Lever**  
Richmond Hill, Ontario