

A Brief for  
The Commission on Post-Secondary Education

Women in Post-Secondary Education

Submitted by  
The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

1972

This brief is presented by the following individuals on behalf of The Ontario  
Committee on the Status of Women:

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women was formed last year to urge the Government of Ontario to implement the relevant sections of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. We are affiliated with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, a much larger organization which seeks the same goals at the federal level. We shall soon be presenting to Premier Davis a series of recommendations about primary and secondary education, health, welfare, labour, and the role of women in the provincial government.

Welcoming many of the principles stated by the Commission on Post-Secondary Education, we must register here our disappointment with the recommendations made by the Commission in respect to the status of women in post-secondary education. These recommendations are little more than pious hopes, either vague or unrealistic, and without any machinery for implementation. As academics, many of us have serious objections to other features of the Commission's Draft Report; these points, however, are dealt with in other briefs, and we shall restrict ourselves here to the subject of the status of women. We shall state below our limited area of agreement with the Report, our bases for dissatisfaction with the very few specific recommendations made in it, and our own recommendations, which include procedures for implementation. First, however, we shall examine the current, unsatisfactory status of women in Canada, as it relates to post-secondary education.

### I. The Status of Women

Women today wish to participate more fully in the life of the community outside the family, and they are doing so in increasing numbers. Their opportunities for the more stimulating, creative, and remunerative activities however, are still very limited, and show no signs of expanding. Women are increasingly entering the paid labour force (and Ontario has the highest participation rate in Canada) but under disadvantageous conditions. At the same time, the proportion of women in graduate education and in some of the professions has failed to increase, and in some cases is now actually lower than in the 1930's. The more important of these trends are noted and documented in the accompanying tables and charts. We have used figures for Ontario where available and relied otherwise on the very similar Canadian figures.

1. The participation of women in full-time study in Canadian universities has increased only slightly in the last fifty years. In 1921, 17% of the undergraduates were women; in 1931, 24% were; and at present women make up only 35% of the undergraduates at Canadian universities. The projections to 1980-81 show no significant further increases. (Table 1, chart A). Furthermore, a far lower percentage of women than of men of "college" age are enrolled in post-secondary education. In 1921, for the age group 20-24, 5.5% of the men were at universities or college, only 1.1% of the women. Fifty years later, in 1970, 22.7% of the men of this age group were students, but only 11.8% of the women (Canada Year Books, Survey of Higher Education).
2. Women's participation in the paid labour force has increased enormously over the past fifty years, particularly in the "college" age groups. In 1960 27.9% of all Canadian women over the age of 14 held paying jobs, and by 1970, 38.1%. More important, women at the ages when household cares and child-rearing would be expected to interfere most with work outside the household were the ones who moved most actively into the labour force. By 1961, 47.9% of all Canadian women between the ages of 20 to 24 were working at paid jobs; by 1970 the figure was up

to 58.8%. This suggests strongly that the low participation of women in higher education cannot be attributed to reluctance or inability on the part of women to move outside the family. (Table 2).

3. The participation of women in graduate education in Canada is less than it was fifty years ago. In 1919-20, women held 26% of the places in graduate schools, while by 1954-55 the figure was down to 13% and today it has settled at just under 20%. Evidently, neither the modest expansion of graduate work in the 1950's nor the enormous expansion of the 1960's has been to the advantage of women. (Table 3, Chart B). The proportion of M.A.'s awarded to women dropped from 31% in 1931 to 24% in 1965, while the proportion of Ph.D.'s went from 25% in 1931 to a low of 5% in 1951 and 1961, settling in at around 10% for the years 1968 and 1969. These facts are particularly striking since this was also a period marked by an unprecedented expansion of university and college facilities, along with relatively generous grant and loan schemes. Furthermore, average family size declined throughout this period, while numerous technological and other innovations contributed to lightening the burden of women's traditional role in the family.

(Tables 4 and 5, Charts C and D).

4. The proportion of women on the teaching staff of Ontario universities has not increased substantially over what it was forty years ago. In 1931, 11% of the full-time teaching staff were women, and by 1961 and 1966 the figure was still only 12%. This does not include the very large number of women qualified for full-time work who are working part-time in positions with inferior pay and status. (Table 6, Chart E).

5. In Ontario women hold an even lower proportion of places in colleges of arts and technology than they do in universities. The relative lack of participation of women in university education is not compensated for by greater participation in other post-secondary institutions. (Commission on Post-Secondary Education, 1972).

6. The proportion of women in the senior professions has not increased significantly from what it was forty years ago. For example, in Ontario in 1931 no judges were women, 1% of all lawyers and dentists were women, and 3% of all doctors were women. In 1961, 4% of the judges, 5% of the lawyers and dentists, and 8% of the doctors were women. (Table 7).

7. Professions in which women have been predominant are now being increasingly entered by men, particularly in the administrative and policy-making positions. For example, while in 1931 77% of all Canadian school teachers were women, only 68% were in 1961. In the same period, the percentage of women among social welfare workers dropped from 70% (1931) to only 56% in 1961. (Table 7).

8. The gross differences in wages and salaries paid to men and women are enormous. Women in full-time employment in Canada earn on the average 46% less than men. The disparities have remained approximately the same since the 1920's.

9. Despite laws requiring equal pay for equal work, in most industries at most levels far lower wages and salaries are paid to women than to men. Within occupations whose work is similarly described, variation of pay gives men an advantage in the vast majority of cases. For example, a recent study of 56

occupations found women earning more than men for only two of the jobs (advantages of 5% and 10%) while men were paid more in the remaining 54, in half of them at least 25% more and in a quarter of them 40% more. (Canada Department of Labour, 1921). Similarly, a study of the federal civil service showed that although women had better qualifications than men, they were paid less on every level. (Archibald, 1971).

10. Sex-typing of jobs -- job segregation on grounds of sex -- is not decreasing. Occupations, and the training and courses which lead into them, are still thought of as either women's work (usually the less remunerative jobs) or men's work. Though there have been shifts over the years, the extend of sex-typing, as measured by the job segregation index, has remained constant. (Atack, 1971).

These facts and figures make it clear that the barriers to women's full participation in society are much greater than is commonly realized. Contrary to what might be expected, major social forces have on the whole not substantially improved the situation of women. Furthermore, educational authorities have done little that is constructive; indeed, they have not even commented on the declining participation of women where it has occurred. Yet the data we reported were all drawn from published sources, most of them government documents. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada discussed numerous aspects of these and related problems in its Report. Several briefs explicitly directed to these issues were submitted to this Committee.

In the light of these documented results of social trends, and of the inaction of educational authorities, we cannot accept the Commission's reliance on these same social trends and educational authorities to solve the problems relating to women in post-secondary education.

## II Draft Report of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education

As we have shown, women constitute the great majority of persons who have not benefitted from post-secondary education, and who are in need of it for up-grading skills, and for training for entry or re-entry into the paid labour force. Consequently, we support in principle all recommendations designed to increase flexibility and ease of access to post-secondary education, comprising the following:

1. Recommendations 3, 9, 22, and 23 - concerning part-time education.
2. Recommendations 24 and 25 - concerning flexibility of education.
3. Recommendations 7, 12, and 29 - designed to provide more realistic access to education.
4. Recommendations 5 and 6, and 35, 36, and 37 - concerning the integration of education and work.
5. Recommendation 64 - about forgivable student loans, (though we are not happy with the assumption that house-wives' contributions of services to the family are not calculable in terms equivalent to those used to calculate any other individual's contributions to the production of society).

We also support the recommendations explicitly objecting to discrimination in respect to access to public facilities and institutions (recommendations 33 and 38). Finally, we support the recommendation recognizing the implications of the biological nature of women (recommendation 44) and the recommendation recognizing problems presented by the current allocation of child rearing responsibilities (recommendation 45).

We cannot, however, support the Commission's recommendations setting specific goals for the participation of women in the instructional aspects of post-secondary education (recommendations 39, 40, and 41). We agree with the Commission that the substantial increase of such participation by women is crucial to the whole problem of their status in post-secondary education and indeed in society as a whole. Yet we feel that these few brief recommendations reveal misunderstanding and evasion of the issues involved, for the following reasons.

First, these recommendations set goals based on the current level of participation in post-secondary education, levels the Commission itself admits to be unacceptably low. Thus, women are to be brought to proportions in the universities equivalent to the levels of doctorates awarded to women in the ten years ending in 1981--but these doctorate recipients are the sparse if hardy remnants who survived conditions of discouragement and discrimination. Similarly, five years from now as high a percentage of women should hold tenured positions as now hold untenured--when the level of untenured women faculty is intolerably low at the present. And, as our data show, the goal for 1981 is 10% women on the faculties "at each level;" how much improvement will this be on the current 12%\* at all levels? and how adequate a goal is it for a group comprising half the population? \*1966

Second, the recommendations are based on a discussion of all the universities of Ontario, obscuring the need to consider conditions in terms of institutions, specialties, and departments that have a particularly low level of participating women.

Third, these recommendations do not even consider procedures for dealing with the individual cases of discriminatory treatment which are not adequately covered by the existing legislation. These, after all, are to some extent the reason for the aggregate low levels of women's participation in post-secondary education. What is to be done when a particular department fails to hire, promote, or in general



treat equally a particular qualified woman? Yet tenure and the end of expansion of departments both cut down on the jobs available to any new applicants, however qualified. The felt need to hire specialists in certain narrowly defined scholarly areas again limits access for such a small group as the women with doctorates. Less tangible felt priorities, as for convivial colleagues or individuals with families and "roots in the community" reduce still further the openings available for women. Under such conditions, deliberate efforts will be necessary to induce the departments to hire additional staff, and to make these appointments to women. At the very least, funds will have to be provided for these additional appointments, and procedures established to demonstrate their necessity. None of these are even discussed by the Commission.

The problem of the participation of women involves a vicious circle, and it is not obvious where intervention will be the more effective. Without faculty in areas traditionally closed to women, it is difficult to encourage the enrollment of women students; without women students entering these areas, who can be recruited to fill the faculty positions? How can institutions of post-secondary education recruit women students if potential students are discouraged at an early age from aspirations for higher education and academic or professional careers? Yet how can parents and school teachers encourage young girls to aspire to develop all their abilities only to face discrimination at later stages? Clearly, the subtle barriers are numerous and deeply entrenched, and can not be fully eradicated at the post-secondary level. However, at this level faculty participation seems to us, as indeed to the Commission, to be a crucial area, an obvious point of intervention.

The influence of teachers as examples to students is extremely important. Male students have the benefit of the example of men with whom they can identify at all stages of their academic careers--as graduate students all the way up to full professors and deans. Women students, who may encounter women graduate students in some areas, must wonder what becomes of them, since they seldom see women academics at more than junior levels. If women students are to be given equal educational opportunities with men there must be female faculty members at all levels of the university to act as examples for them and to encourage them to pursue serious educational objectives.

We cannot agree with the Commission's implicit assumption that the participation of women in post-secondary education will increase of itself if guidelines are stated and certain formal barriers removed. Experience tells us that we can not reasonably expect voluntary action on the part of individual educational institutions even when the problems are pointed out to them and they are urged to act. For instance, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada specifically recommended in September, 1970, that the University of Toronto Schools be opened to girls. (Royal Commission Report, 1970). This school is used to train teachers for secondary schools, its staff is part of the College of Education and it is financed largely from public funds. Yet as of February, 1972, Dean Dadson of the College of Education seemed unaware of The Royal Commission's recommendation, and informed us that no plan for a move to co-education was being considered, nor any plan for the employment of women instructors. Similarly, the first group formed to press for equal treatment of women in an Ontario university,--the Group for Equal Rights at McMaster University--has had a disappointing response to its efforts, resolutions about principles but no jobs. (See the brief of this group to be presented before the Commission.)

We are reluctant to recommend further governmental regulation of individual educational institutions, but we would prefer that course of action to none at all. We therefore suggest that individual institutions be given appropriate financial incentives to work out their own means for increasing the participation of women. But where the institutions are negligent or unduly slow to respond, we expect the Government to act. Our recommendations will indicate the sorts of action we feel are needed, from the institutions and from the Government.

### III. Recommendations to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education

We propose the following principles to be enacted in law to serve as guidelines for specific measures such as the ones we outline below.

Principle I. Acceptance of public funds commits an institution to making its services, facilities, rewards, and privileged positions available to citizens without regard to any ascribed characteristics such as sex.

Recommendation 1: Citizens with grievances or complaints about discriminatory exclusion should have access to the courts, with machinery provided for the finding of fact, injunctions ordering redress, and as sanctions the withholding of an appropriate fraction of public funds.

Recommendation 2: The courts should be empowered, on the application of citizens or citizens' groups, to require institutions to develop plans to correct conditions of inequality, with the same sanction of the withholding of a portion of public funds.

Principle II. Equal treatment of citizens requires equal representation in the institutions that make the important decisions, particularly on the allocation of public funds.

Recommendation 3: Whenever appointments are made to governing bodies in post-secondary education, women's groups should be among the organizations making nominations.

Recommendation 4: Individual appointments to governing bodies in post-secondary education should be made equally to men and women.

Principle III. The Government of Ontario has the obligation to seek actively to make education equally available to all citizens without regard to any ascribed characteristic such as sex.

Recommendation 5. The Department responsible for Post-Secondary Education should establish a provincial Committee on the status of women in Post-Secondary Education. This Committee's broad task would be to implement measures to improve the participation of women.

Recommendation 6. The Committee should commission research, and make available funds supporting research on the education of women, including experimental programmes for improving access on the part of women.

Recommendation 7. The Committee should be charged with the task of co-ordinating relevant activities of its own and other provincial governmental departments, including overseeing a programme for increasing the representation of women at all levels within the Department.

Recommendation 8. The Committee should regularly examine and report on the level of participation of women within individual institutions and departments of post-secondary education.

Recommendation 9. The Committee should have substantial funds made available to allow for expansion in static university or college departments that would otherwise be unable to hire qualified women.



Recommendation 10. The Committee should be empowered to issue incentive scholarships to facilitate the entry of women students into fields traditionally inhospitable to them, such as engineering, science, business, law, medicine, and certain technical fields.

Recommendation 11. The Committee should establish a Search Committee to search out actively and make available to hiring committees the names of qualified women for appointments to the staffs of institutions of post-secondary education.

Principle 1V. Institutions of post-secondary education have the obligation to seek actively to make participation in all their facilities and programmes equally available for all citizens without regard to any ascribed characteristic such as sex.

Recommendation 12. Each institution of post-secondary education should establish a Committee charged with the responsibility of developing opportunities for women in that institution, bearing in mind the particular conditions and history of the institution and the particular needs of women in the community the institution serves.

Recommendation 13. Each institution should make available to its Committee on the status of women substantial funds for special projects to encourage the participation of women students at all levels, to develop counselling services for women students, and to provide for the appointment of women in areas where qualified women could not otherwise obtain appointments.

Recommendation 14. Since institutions of post-secondary education can make their most distinctive contribution to improving the status of women through their normal academic functions of teaching and research, high priority should be given to research and teaching in areas related to the status of women, particularly in the social sciences, life sciences, and humanities, both through the extension of existing programmes and through the creation of new ones. Special attention should be paid to the implications, for society and for the individual, of changing sex roles and family structures.

These principles and recommendations are directed at the sectors of post-secondary education where changes must be made if the participation of women is to be brought to an acceptable level. The principles seem to us to be reasonable for a society committed to equal treatment of all its citizens. The recommendations are for the most part temporary provisions, special arrangements intended to compensate for the results of a long period of differential treatment. The speed with which they become obsolete will depend upon their success.

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- OSTRY, Sylvia                The Female Worker in Canada.   Ottawa, Queen's  
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- REPORT ON THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CANADA.  
Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1970.

TABLE 1

Full-Time Enrollment in Canadian Universities

	Total		Female	% Female		Total		Female	% Female
1919-20	22,252	b	3,269	b 15	1948-49	80,164	a	15,539	b 19
21	23,139	a	3,824	b 17	50	74,273	a	15,210	b 21
22	24,672		4,563	b 19	51	68,306		14,568	a 21
23	25,926		4,817	b 19	52	63,509		13,778	a 22
24	25,381		4,974	b 20	53	62,643		13,419	a 22
25	25,678		5,457	b 21	54	63,800		13,790	a 22
26	25,698	a	5,493	b 21	55	68,320		14,442	a 21
27	26,663		6,039	b 23	56	72,737		15,222	a 21
28	27,971		6,398	b 23	57	78,511		16,838	a 22
29	29,316		6,761	b 23	58	86,814		19,039	a 22
30	31,346		7,431	b 24	59	95,004		21,239	a 22
31	32,926	a	7,780	b 24	60	101,934		23,504	a 23
32	34,431		8,227	b 24	61	113,864		27,253	a 24
33	34,864		7,963	b 23	62	128,894		33,123	a 26
34	34,283		7,634	b 23	63	141,388		38,231	a 27
35	34,584		7,774	b 23	64	158,388		44,763	a 28
36	35,108	a	7,882	b 23	65	178,238		53,015	a 30
37	35,553		7,980	b 23	66	205,888		64,980	a 32
38	36,000		7,879	b 22	67	232,672		75,526	a 33
39	36,714		8,005	b 22	68	261,207		85,846	a 33
40	37,504		8,509	b 23	69	270,093		105,860	a 39
41	36,319	a	8,433	b 23	70	298,450		102,890	a 35
42	36,286		8,453	b 23					
43	36,919		8,710	b 24					
44	36,524		9,315	b 26					
45	39,985	a	11,423	b 29					
46	63,550	a	13,500	b 21					
47	79,553	a	15,250	b 20					
48	83,150	a	15,482	b 19					
					<hr/>				
					Projected				
					1980-81	750,000	295,150	39	

- a. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1969-70 p.18  
 b. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1952-54 p.62

TABLE 2

RATE OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PAID LABOUR FORCE (%)

<u>age group</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
14-19	32.6	30.4
* 20-24	47.9	58.8
25-34	27.3	39.0
35-44	29.3	40.2
45-54	30.4	40.6
55-64	21.3	29.8
65 and over	5.6	5.0
average	27.9	35.0

\* = "college" age

D.B.S. Women in Labour.

TABLE 3

ENROLLMENT IN GRADUATE EDUCATION. CANADA  
IN REGULAR SESSIONS (EXCLUDING THEOLOGY)

	Total	Female	Female %		Total	Female	Female %
1919-20	383	99	26	1947-48	4,139	867	21
21	423	108	26	49	4,857	1124	23
22	558	158	28	50	5,262	1127	22
23	714	195	27	51	4,559	702	15
24	851	221	26	52	4,302	663	15
25	873	228	26	53	4,387	615	14
26	846	221	26	54	4,709	785	17
27	929	252	27	55	3,427	457	16
28	1039	291	28	56			16
29	1010	269	27	57			18
30	1137	318	28	58			17
31	1350	352	26	59			17
32	1569	402	26	60	5,244	757	19
33	1698	398	24	61	6,518	986	19
34	1687	424	25	62	7,341	1205	19
35	1533	399	26	63	8,436	1276	16
36	1586	388	25	64	14,133	1799	17
37	1635	398	24	65	13,797	2320	18
38	1540	332	22	66	17,196	3135	19
39	1550	341	22	67	19,719	3343	21
40	1601	354	22	68	24,187	4676	21
41	1569	326	21	69	26,120	4861	19
42	1406	312	22				
43	1227	287	23				
44	1392	404	29				
45	1689	428	25				
46	2870	630	22				
47	3674	719	20				

D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1919-1954  
D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1952-1954 p. 62  
D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1961-1962 p. 31  
D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1962-1963 p. 31  
D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1965-1966 p. 33  
D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1967-1968 p. 35  
D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1968-1969 p. 15



TABLE 4

M.A. DEGREES. ONTARIO

	Total	Female	% Female	
1931	137	43	31	a
36	141	33	23	a
41	115	28	24	a
46	209	40	19	a
51	347	60	17	a
56	406	97	24	b
61	635	126	20	b
65	1145	279	24	b

- a. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1952-54 p. 63  
b. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1964-65 p. 51

TABLE 5

DOCTORATE DEGREES. ONTARIO

	Total	Female		% Female
1931	24	6	a	25
36	39	3	a	07
41	45	5	a	11
46	50	5	a	10
51	98	5	a	05
56	127	9	b	07
61	145	7	c	05
62	144	15	c	11
63	184	16	c	09
64	190	16	c	09
65	233	25	c	11
66	316	38	d	12
67	333	23	d	07
68	485	49	e	10
69	584	56	f	6
70				9

- a. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1952-54 p. 63  
 b. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1964-65 p. 52  
 c. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1964-65 p. 51  
 d. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1966-67 p. 51  
 e. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1968-69 p. 51  
 f. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education 1969-70 p. 82

TABLE 6

Teaching Staffs in Ontario Universities

Full-time (arts, letters, science and professional faculty)

	Males	Females	Total	% Female	
1921	746	56	802	7	a
26	738	85	823	10	a
31	880	112	992	11	a
36	890	131	1,021	13	a
41	1,110	174	1,284	14	b
46	1,313	161	1,474	11	b
51	1,640	164	1,804	9	b
54	2,231	208	2,439	9	b
61	11,365	1,740	13,105	11	c
66	18,505	2,775	21,280	12	c

- a. D.B.S. Higher Education in Canada. 1936-38. p.98
- b. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education. p.73
- c. D.B.S. Survey of Higher Education part II. 1964-65. p.19

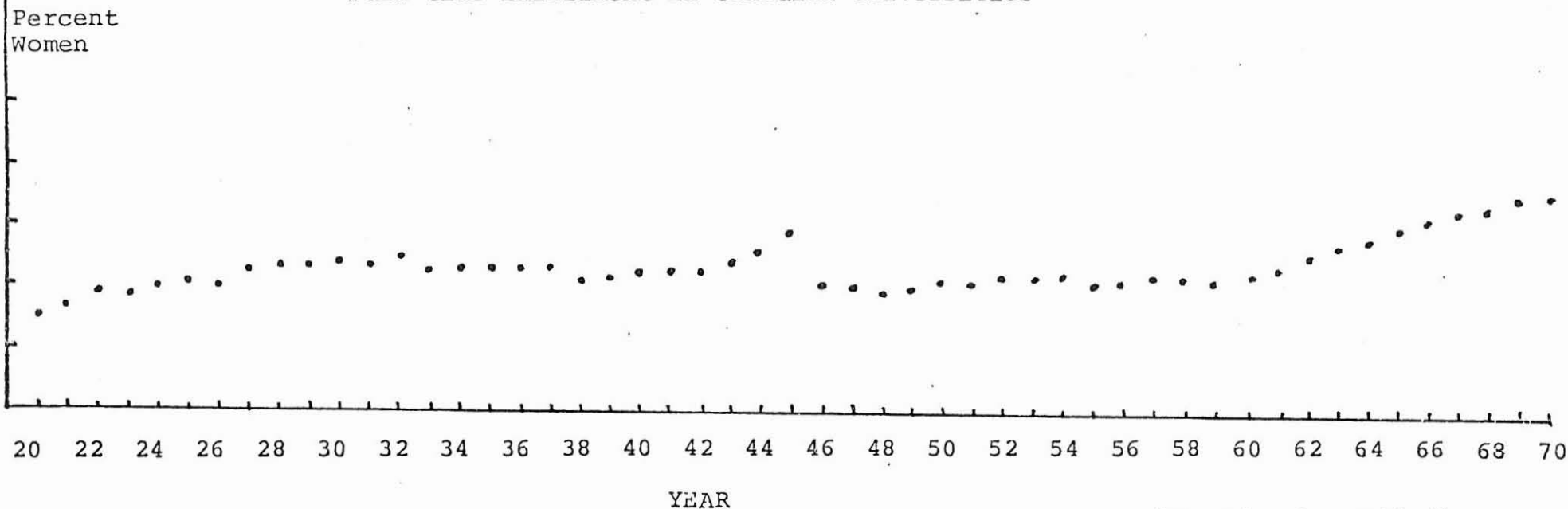
TABLE 7

PERCENT WOMAN IN SELECTED PROFESSIONS IN ONTARIO.

	Physicians & Surgeons	Lawyer & Notaries	Judges & Magistrates	Dentists	Social Welfare Workers	School Teachers
1931	03	01	00	01	70	77
1941	13	04	01	10	67	(57)
1951	06	03	03	02	67	(57)
1961	08	03	04	05	56	68

CHART A

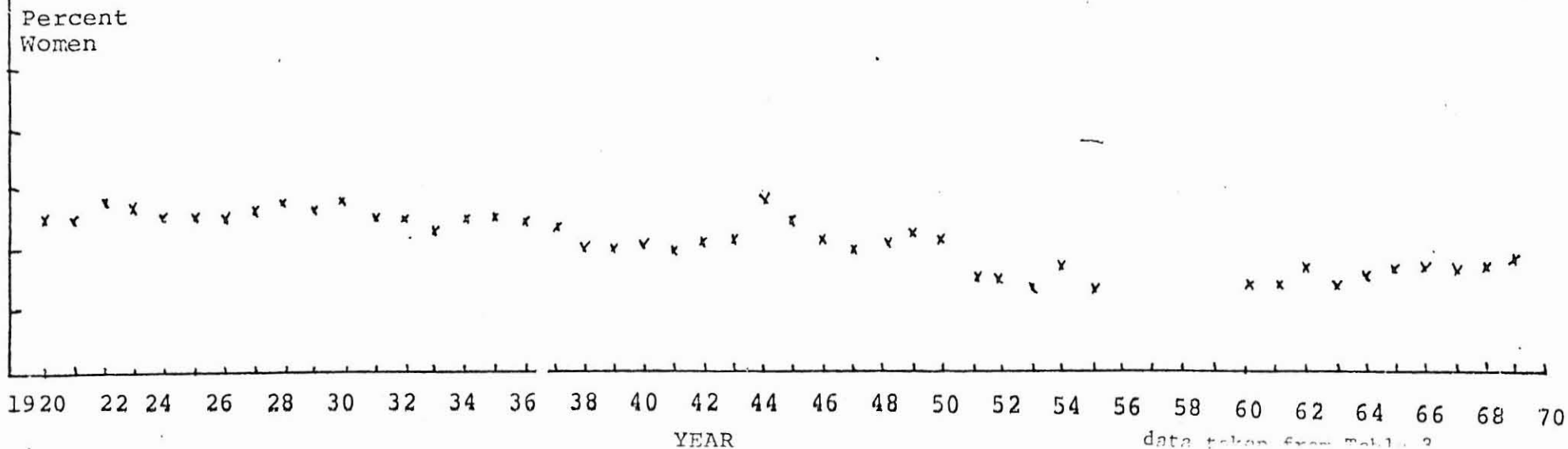
Full-time Enrollment in Canadian Universities



data taken from Table 1.

CHART B

Enrollment in graduate education. Canada  
in regular sessions (excluding theology)

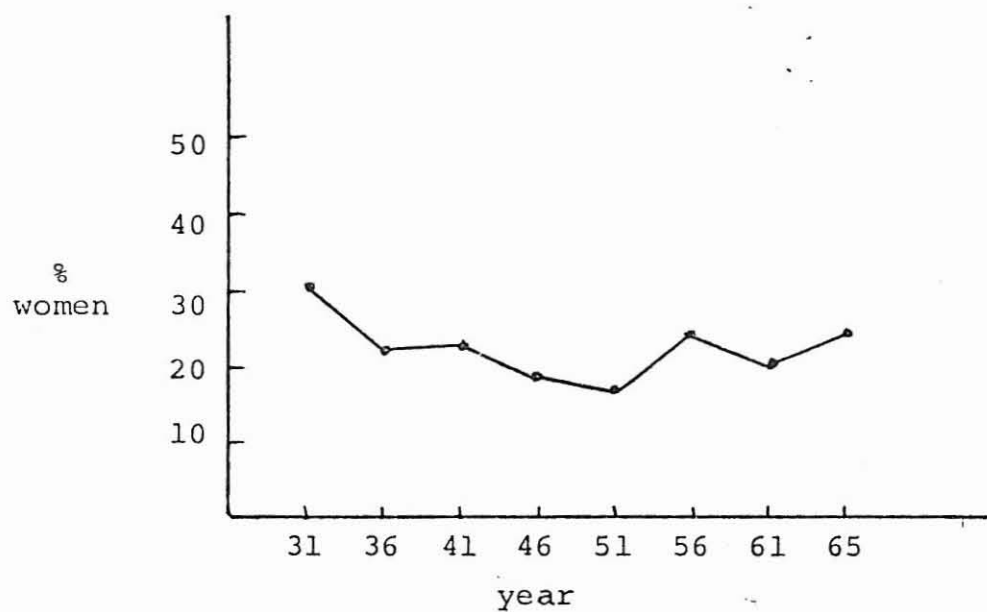


data taken from Table 2



Chart C

M.A. Degrees, Ontario

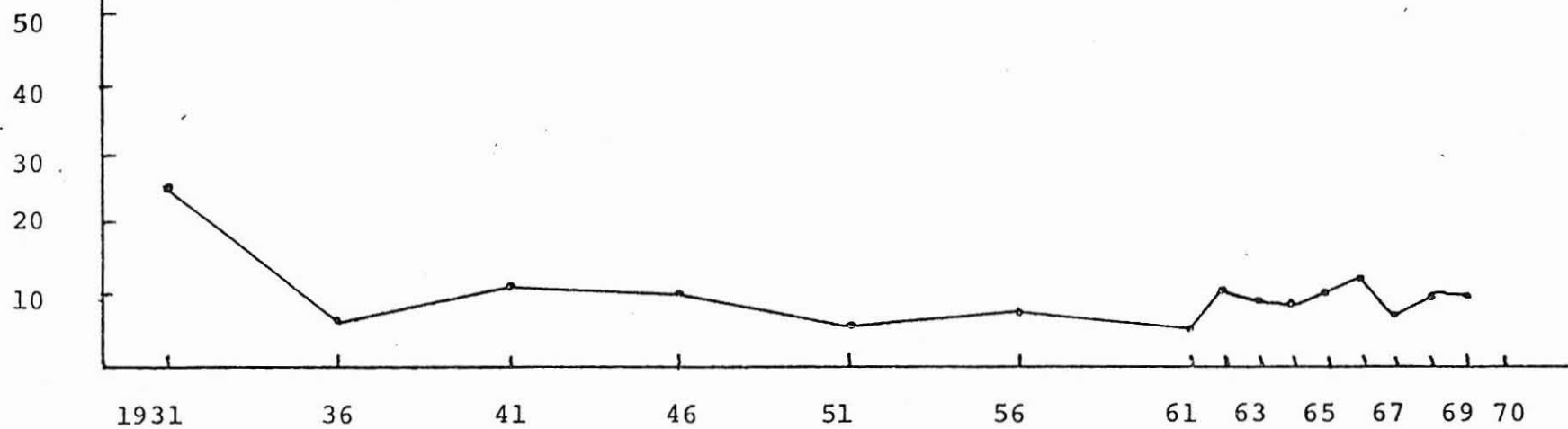


data taken from Table 4.

CHART D

Doctorate Degrees. Ontario.

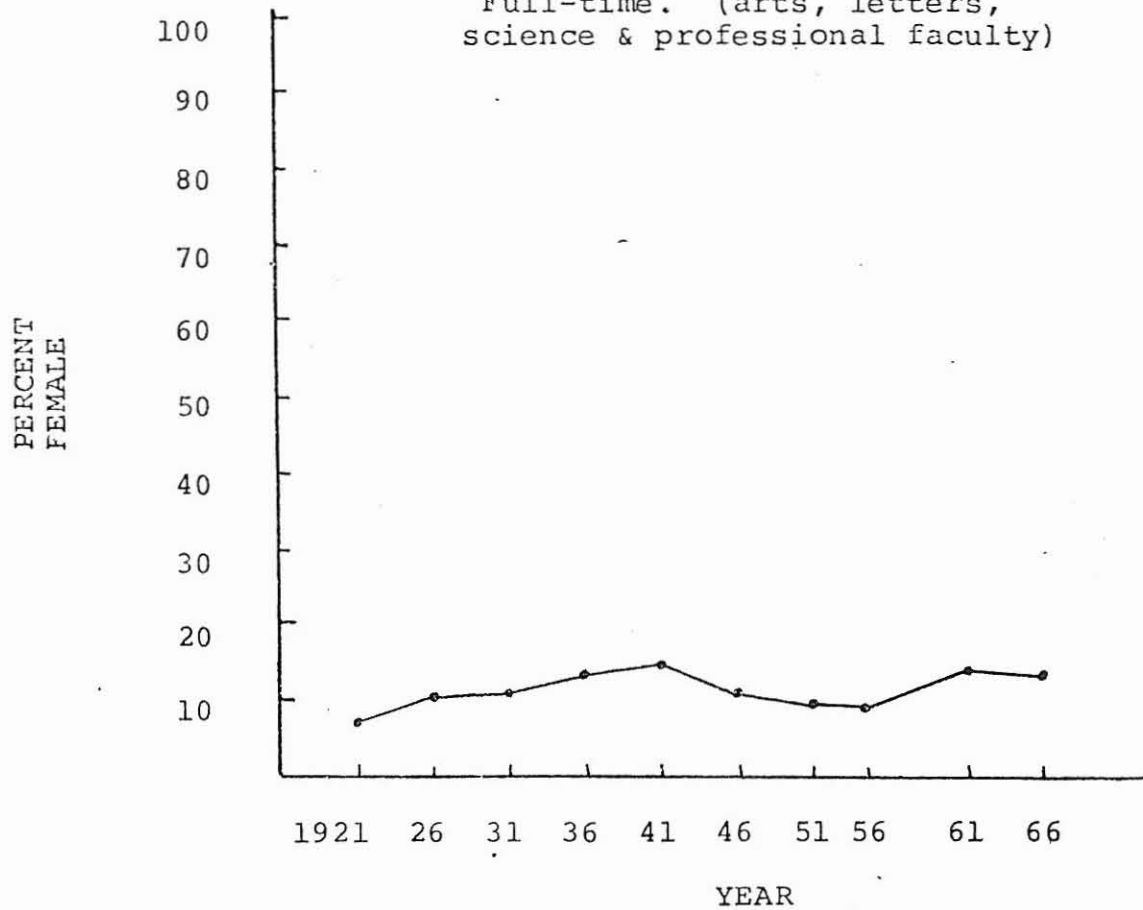
Percent  
Women



data taken from Table 5

CHART E

Teaching staff in Ontario Universities  
Full-time. (arts, letters,  
science & professional faculty)



data taken from Table 6.