

The Case for A Program in Men's Studies
presented by The Men's Studies Committee of
The On-Step Institute

“When we talk of gender, we mean women. If men are discussed at all, it is usually in relation to their

role in advancing women's equality, rather than men's gender issues in and of themselves.”

(from “The Other Half of Gender,” published by The World Bank, 2006)

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A Program in Men's Studies

The creation of the first multi-disciplinary Program in Men's Studies at a major U.S. research university will mark a fundamental shift in the academic landscape. Building on the enormously successful, high-impact model of Women's Studies departments and programs, faculty in the Program in Men's Studies will teach a new generation of scholars while investigating, reporting on and leading an international dialogue regarding the status of men within disciplines including biology, sociology, literature, economics, law, political science, public policy, history, psychology and education.

The Men's Studies Committee

The Men's Studies Committee of the On-Step Institute, a non-profit educational initiative in New York City, was formed in 2005 with a vision of creating a multi-disciplinary program in Men's Studies. Lionel Tiger, the Charles Darwin Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University and a founding member of the Committee, has written that "Gender and not geography is determining the course of the world in the 21st century." The Men's Studies Committee proposes that a leading U.S. university make the study of the status of men part of its investigation of the 21st century world.

A comprehensive program in Men's Studies will address, among the many subjects at hand, the hard science of gender difference, new findings in men's health, implications of developing economies on the domestic and international labor force, trends in education, the role of radical religion, race, and class in gender issues, and legal trends that affect men.

An Emerging Academic Discipline

The law professor Stanley Fish recently wrote in *The New York Times* that "academic freedom is the freedom...to subject any body of material, however unpromising it may seem, to academic interrogation and analysis." The fact that there exists not a single program in Men's Studies at a major research university would suggest that Men, as a subject, as a body of material, are uniquely unworthy of serious academic inquiry. Yet a wide range of scholars and reporters in the academy and the press are researching and publishing the results of their independent inquiries, to great attention. For instance, the recent *Times* cover-story series on "The New Gender Divide" has attracted an enormous readership and ranked at the top of the paper's "Most E-mailed" list. A comprehensive program in Men's Studies at a major research university will immediately serve as an authoritative resource for the emerging and ongoing scholarship regarding the state of men. As Professor Fish wrote in *The Times*, "if...studying this material yields insights into matters of general intellectual interest there is a new topic under the academic sun and a new subject for academic discussion."

The Changing World and Implications for Men

The Science of Gender Difference -- New Research

Simon Baron-Cohen, director of the autism research center at Cambridge University, writing in *The New York Times* in August 2005, reported that "with brain scanning, we can discern physiological differences between the average male and the average female

brain...Psychological tests also reveal patterns of sex difference.” After analyzing the role that prenatal hormones play in determining “what kind of brain you have,” Cohen maps the “extreme male brain” theory of autism: “people with autism,” he argues, “simply match an extreme of the male profile, with a particularly intense drive to systemize and an unusually low drive to empathize.” And furthermore, “when we look at brain activity with magnetic resonance imaging...both mothers and fathers of children with autism show strong male patterns of brain activity.”

Richard Whitmire, in *The New Republic* in January 2006, reported that “the brains of men and women are very different...*Scientific American* summed up the best gender and brain research, including a study demonstrating that women have greater neuron density in the temporal lobe cortex, the region of the brain associated with verbal skills.... [Which means] that girls have genetic advantages that make them better readers, especially early in life. And, now, society is favoring verbal skills. Even in math, the emphasis has shifted away from guy-friendly problems involving quick calculations to word and logic problems.” But despite legitimate research into learning differences, Whitmire notes that 99 percent of education classes in teachers’ colleges fail to offer -- much less *require* -- courses on biological learning differences.

Findings in Men’s Health

A leading women’s health expert wrote in *The New York Times* in June 2006 that “we doctors and researchers may have focused too much on women. What emerges when one studies male biology in a truly evenhanded way is the realization that from the moment of conception on, men are less likely to survive than women...Industrial countries are also witnessing a decline in male to female birth ratios, and we don’t know why....[Boys] are three to four times more likely than girls to have development disorders....Twice as many men die of coronary artery disease...Women also have more vigorous immune systems than men.”

Dr. William Pollack of the Harvard Medical School and Center for Men at McLean Hospital, warned more than seven years ago that “between boys’ suicide rates, dropout rates and homicide rates, and men’s self-destructive behaviors, generally, we have a real crisis in America.”

The *London Free Press* reported in April 2006 the findings of zoologist Louis Guillette, who is at the forefront of studies that link environmental contamination from widespread pesticide overuse to smaller penis size and reduced fertility in males born in areas with higher contamination levels.

In 1997, Dr. Fredrick vom Saal discovered that the polycarbonate bisphenol-A, which mimics the natural sex hormone estrogen, can alter the reproductive development of lab mice at extremely low doses. Male mice exposed to this plastic during fetal development have permanently enlarged prostates and lower sperm counts. The effects occur at doses near those that humans are exposed to each day from sources like food packaging and dental sealants.

The U.S. Labor Force

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported in 2005 that between 1970 and 2004, women increased their labor force participation rate from 43 to 59 percent. At the same time, women advanced their educational attainment. Their earnings as a percent of men’s earnings also increased. According to the Department of Labor, women held half of all management, professional, and related occupations in 2004.

The New York Times reported in July 2006 that “more than one of every eight men age 30 to 54 does not work” and that “men not working tend to be less educated than the

population as a whole and are less likely to be married.”

In a report to the Hewlett Foundation, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (March 2005), scholars from The Urban Institute and Georgetown University Law Center wrote that “As good blue-collar jobs disappeared in large numbers over the past few decades, the wages available to less-educated young men declined. During the 1990s, the number of young black men with criminal records rose dramatically, making many employers reluctant to hire them, and diminishing their own connections to the world of work. Also, changes in the child support system imposed heavy taxes on the already meager earnings of the many young black men who are noncustodial fathers of children.” A solution, the authors propose, would take into account the fact that “non-custodial fathers face fairly steep child support orders, relative to their income. Their obligations are often set in absentia and by judges without any knowledge of their personal earnings capacities. Arrears pile up frequently, especially among those who are incarcerated; and up to 65 percent of earning can be garnished to pay these arrears...Much...of the child support payment is not “passed through” to families by the states, further lessening incentives of low-income men to work in the formal economy and pay these obligations.”

The Female Majority in Higher Education

Women make up the majority of college students in the U.S. today, according to The American Council on Education’s 2006 study, *Gender Equity in Higher Education*:

- 42% of undergraduates in the U.S. are men.
- 44% of White undergraduates are men.
- 36% of African-American undergraduates are men.
- 41% of Hispanic undergraduates are men.
- 46% of Asian-American undergraduates are men.
- 37% of American Indian undergraduates are men.
- 42% of low-income undergraduates are men.
- 42% of undergraduates with foreign-born parents are men.
- 42% of graduate and professional students in the U.S. are men.

The study reports that “significant gender gaps favoring women did not develop within each racial/ethnic group until the mid- to late-1990s.”

Additional Milestones in the Gender Gap

Among 2004 high school graduates, young women were more likely than young men to enroll in college (72 percent versus 61 percent).

58% of American college students are women. Among minorities, the numbers are even more eye opening: 59% of Hispanic college students and 64% of African-American college students are women.

Jennifer Britz, Dean of Admissions at Kenyon College, wrote in *The New York Times* in March 2006 that “Today, two-thirds of colleges and universities report that they get more female than male applicants.”

Richard Whitmire, a fellow at the University of Maryland writing in *The New Republic* in January 2006, reported that “boys are over 50 percent more likely than girls to repeat grades in elementary school, one-third more likely to drop out of high school, and twice as likely to be identified with a learning disability.” Furthermore, “between 1992 and

2002, the gap by which high school girls outperformed boys on tests in both reading and writing -- especially writing -- widened significantly” and “nearly six out of ten bachelor’s degrees awarded will go to women.”

As Erik Eckholm of *The New York Times* reported on March 20, 2006, “black men in the United States face a far more dire situation than is portrayed by common employment and education statistics...and it has worsened in recent years even as an economic boom and a welfare overhaul have brought gains to black women and other groups.” Among the sobering statistics the *Times* collected from recent studies coming out of the Ivy League are these: Half of black men in their 20s were jobless in 2004; by their mid-30s, 6 in 10 black men who dropped out of school had spent time in prison; many of these men grew up fatherless, and they never had good role models; all the negative trends are associated with poor schooling.

Much of Eckholm’s reporting drew on the groundbreaking research of Ron Mincy, Mincy, the Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Welfare Policy and Social Work Practice at Columbia University’s School of Social Work, whose new book, *Black Males Left Behind*, shows that “during the 1990s, the employment rate of 16- to 24-year-old black men with a high school education or less fell from its peak during the 1980s economic expansion. In addition, their labor force participation continued the decline of the 1980s, sliding from 1.03 million in 1979 to 898,000 in 2001 and coinciding with rapid growth in the number who were incarcerated or on parole or probation.” Mincy told *The New York Times*, “We spent \$50 billion in efforts that produced the turnaround for poor women. We are not even beginning to think about men’s problems on similar orders of magnitude.”

In 2002, the New Hampshire legislature became the first and only state to give its legislative mandate to the study of the deteriorating state of men and boys. The Recommendations of the NH Commission on the Status of Men were as follows: “The deteriorating condition of males should be officially recognized as a serious problem by the State of New Hampshire. Much needs to be done in the way of outreach and prevention to reduce both the suicide rates and the mortality rates of men...Programs should be developed to improve the educational prospects of children – especially boys...”

A study published in *Intelligence* (33: 2005), disputed earlier findings that there is “no sex difference in intelligence.” Pursuing a line of inquiry regarding 1000 autopsied brains, re-analysis of earlier studies of SAT scores, magnetic resonance images, and IQ tests, the authors conclude that “while the magnitude of the male-female difference in [mental ability] is not large, it is real and non-trivial.”

In *Why Gender Matters* (2005), L. Sax reports that “researchers at Virginia Tech used sophisticated electrophysiologic imaging of the brain to examine brain development of 508 normal children ranging in age from 2 months to 16 years. These researchers found that...when it comes to learning geometry, the brain of the average 12 year old girl resembles the brain of the average 8 year old boy. When it comes to writing poetry, the brain of the average 12 year old boy resembles the brain of the average 8 year old girl.”

Demographic Shifts across the World

The Futurist reported in 2005 that the world’s population will grow to 9.2 billion by 2050, with the greatest fertility rates in the poorest countries. Between 2000 and 2050, the population of the Palestinian Territory is estimated to increase by 217%, the population of Niger by 205%, the population of Yemen by 168%, the population of Angola by 162%, the Democratic Republic of Congo by 161%, and Uganda by 133%. In contrast to the developing world, fertility rates in industrialized countries will fall below the replacement level. Mass migration and redistribution of the world’s population, combined with higher fertility rates among some immigrant populations will radically

transform the world.

According to the United Nations Development Programs 2005 Human Development Report, the combined gross enrollment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools is markedly higher for females than it is for males in countries ranked at the top of the Human Development index; the opposite is true in countries ranked at the bottom of the same index.

Martin Wolf, writing in the *Financial Times* in March 2006, reports that “the world is indeed suffering a huge [labor] supply shock...This time, it is an expansion in the effective labour supply, which has tripled over the past two decades.

Ten years ago, The International Labour Organization reported that “women have assumed the bulk of the burden...inherent in the great changes provoked by...the globalization of the economy.”

“All signs,” the ILO continued, “indicate that this progress has become irreversible...This trend can be characterized as...the feminization of the labour force and of employment...In Southeast Asia, women represent up to 80% of the labour force in export processing zones... In sub-Saharan Africa, women constitute as much as 80% of food producers in some countries.”

Economics

In a landmark new collection of studies, *The Other Half of Gender*, published by The World Bank in 2006, Joyce P. Jacobsen, a Professor of Economics at Wesleyan University, notes in an essay that “early gender-in-development approaches were in some cases openly hostile to men.”

Among her additional conclusions:

- 1 The presence of a large number of female-headed households in a society implies that a large number of men have migrated in search of work or are imprisoned, single, or deceased.
- 2 Much of the focus on gender inequality in contemporary societies comes from comparing the alpha, or “winner” males, with the situation of women....This focus on winning and losing men leads one to question whether there is a single concept of maleness or masculinity.

The collection’s editors, summarizing Jacobsen’s work, note that “men’s ‘human capital’ -- defined as anything increasing a person’s potential to be a capable, productive member of society -- is already endangered by higher (vis a vis women) rates of infant mortality, violence (of which men account for the vast majority of victims and perpetrators), substance abuse, and addiction.”

Family Law, Divorce and Child Custody

Tamar Lewin, writing in *The New York Times* in March 2006, reported that “although in one in every three American babies has unwed parents, birth fathers’ rights remain an unsettled area, a delicate balancing act between the importance of biological ties and the undisrupted placement of babies whose mothers relinquish them for adoption. While women have the right to get an abortion, or to have and raise a child, without informing the father, courts have increasingly found that when birth mothers choose adoption, fathers who have shown a desire for involvement have rights, too.”

Journalist Stephen Perrine, writing in *The New York Times* in June 2006, reports that

“since 1998, the federal government has provided matching funds based on a percentage of money the states collect in child support -- a powerful financial incentive for states to mandate and maximize support payments. As a result, parents are discouraged from negotiating a settlement: only 17 percent of current support agreements deviate from state-imposed guidelines, even though studies show that when couples set their own support figure, it’s more likely to be paid (and tends to be higher than the state’s figure)...Some fatherhood advocates argue that when mothers fail to carry through on a child custody ruling, they should face fines and imprisonments, just like fathers do....It’s estimated that one in five children of divorce has not seen his or her father in the past year.”

Radical Religious Governments

Extremist governments in overpopulated countries such as Sudan and Iran have immense populations of young, unemployed men who are frequently attracted to radical religious movements. Upon the death of King Fahd, who heads the Saudi regime, forecasters predict the oil-rich state will be taken over by a fundamentalist regime.

Industrialization

The Futurist reported in 2005 that industrialization, as evidenced by the transformation of India over the last five years, “raises educational levels, changes attitudes toward authority, reduces fertility, alters gender roles, and encourages broader political participation.”

Popular Culture

New Line Cinema is currently developing a feature film based on the widely acclaimed cult comic book, *Y: The Last Man* by Brian Vaughn. As reported in *The New York Times* in June 2006, “the treatment for the film begins with shots of all the world’s men — presidents, airline pilots, farmers, doctors and the rest — dropping dead for an unknown reason. All except one, a slacker who spends the rest of the movie chasing a ticking clock as he hunts down the reason for the genetic apocalypse while trying to adjust to being the only man left with billions of women.

“There are 15 of these ‘last man left’ stories going around the town, but they’re all comedies,” said Richard Brener, senior executive vice president for production at New Line. “This is a thriller and a love story. It could work.”

War

Economist Joyce Jacobsen, in *The Other Half of Gender*, points out that discussions of “topics such as how to demobilize soldiers effectively and how to reintegrate conflict participants (the majority of whom are men) into society until very recently did not include gender dimensions. Much of the gender-related literature on postconflict issues has focused on women’s roles, or on children qua children, without gender differentiations.”

Comprehensive Outreach

The highest impact for Men’s Studies will come from the creation of a true multi-disciplinary program at a top-tier U.S. research university. But the Men’s Studies Committee has undertaken a program of comprehensive outreach to understand the current state of Men’s Studies scholarship.

The Committee has begun strategic outreach to the heads of departments of Family Studies, Gender Studies, Women's Studies, Family Law, Social Work, Education, and Liberal Arts in a wide range of colleges and universities.

Members of the Committee presented an overview of the need for a Men's Study curriculum at the American Men's Studies Association Conference in 2006.

The Case for Men's Studies

In the U.S., there are over 300 Women's Study departments with 78 degree granting programs. Thirteen of them confer PhDs. These programs educate thousands of men and women who understand women's issues and who are taking their places in government and business. These programs gather years of scholarship under one umbrella. They organize all the disparate studies, histories and statistical surveys. With this organization, come exponential increases in influence.

Women's Studies, an organized academic discipline, reverberates outside the academy. Students and professors spearhead enormously powerful federal programs such as VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), and WHI (Women's Health Initiative). The scholarship and organizational influence of Women's Studies programs helped to enact Title IX, which, tellingly, will now be needed to enforce affirmative action to keep men at 40% of the student body at some institutions

The study of men, with an emphasis on men's psychologies, health status, complex place in the labor force of the future, roles in war, peace and the family, should be academia's next logical area of growth.

Right now, Men's Study courses are equal to less than 1% of the courses devoted to gender studies, even as men's academic achievement and life expectancy are declining when compared to women on a world wide basis.

The important work that is currently being done in the field of Men's Studies, with scholarship taking place at far-flung schools in multiple disciplines, requires a central organizing entity, a home in a top-ranked research university where scholars from across the philosophical, political, and scientific spectrum can come together, as an endowed entity, to teach the next generations a gender inclusive concept of the species.

The initial phase of such a program will be the recruitment of social science, economics, education, and biology faculty to create a landmark comprehensive, multi-disciplinary Program in Men's Studies. The Program, free of ideological bias, will be a model of academic freedom, a home for top-tier, wide-ranging academic inquiry. Emerging scholarship from across the academic community will be rigorously examined, established leaders in the field will collaborate on authoritative studies, and the Program will be the definitive voice in Men's Studies.

Men's Studies Committee, On Step Institute

Dr. Edward Stephens, Chair, is a general psychiatrist with expertise in men's mental health issues, is the originator of the concept of the Paternal Instinct and the Lace Ceiling. He is a board-certified psychiatrist, a member of the American Psychiatric Association, a member of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Director of the American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists.

Honorable David Bickford, New Hampshire state representative, member of the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men.

Richard Elfenbein, public relations consultant.

Warren Farrell, PhD, author, lecturer. Farrell is the only man in the US ever elected three times to the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in New York City.

Gordon Finley, PhD, Professor of Psychology at Florida International University. Finley has served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology and the International Journal of Intercultural Relations as well as Behavioral and Brain Sciences.

David Greene, Senior Options Coordinator, Scarsdale High School.

Ron Henry, Esq., co-founder, Calvert Institute for Policy Research. Henry serves on the American Law Institute Family Law Project and the American Bar Association Custody Committee.

Robert Morris, MD, is the retired Chief of Obstetrics at NYU Medical Center's Tisch Hospital, a position he held for thirty five years. He was Associate Professor of Obstetrics

and Gynecology at NYU School of Medicine. Dr. Morris was instrumental in establishing the first Obstetrical service which allowed husbands into both the delivery and Cesarean sections rooms. As director of Women's Health Services, Dr. Morris established the first facility where women were able to have all necessary testing done at one site on the same day.

David Osman, LCSW, clinical services supervisor for the Lorge School.

Arnold Robbins, MD, past Chair of the Massachusetts Medical Society Public Health Committee and current Chair of the Men's Health Committee.

Ona Robinson, PhD, is a licensed psychologist and certified psychotherapist whose work with women in the highly competitive arena of Wall Street has helped her to define the ways in which female and male competition differ.

Lionel Tiger is the Charles Darwin Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University. His title reflects his pioneering role in introducing biosocial data into the social sciences. Since the mid-1960's he has been deeply involved in bridging the gap between the natural and social sciences. Tiger is a teacher and author of books and articles, including the landmark *Men in Groups* and *The Decline of Males*, which have been widely published and translated. He is co-Research Director of the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation.

Arthur Weider, PhD, has held academic posts at Hunter College, Long Island University, Cornell University Medical College, Bradley University (in Illinois), and the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He completed a 15 year-tenure of teaching as Professor of Behavioral Sciences at Bellevue School of Nursing. Dr. Weider is a Life-Fellow of the American Psychological Association, Life-Fellow of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the American Association For The Advancement of Science, and the World Federation for Mental Health.