

Campuses of colleges



A century ago, the campuses of colleges and universities across the United States might as well have hung out a sign that read "Men Molasses's all of the students and faculty were male. There were a small number of women's colleges, but many more schools-including some of the best known U. S. Universities such as Yale, Harvard, and Princeton-barred women outright. Since then, women have won greater socialequality. By 1 980, the number of women enrolled at u. . Colleges finally matched the number of men. In a surprising trend, however, the share of women on campus has continued to increase. As a result, In 2005, men accounted for only percent of all u. s. Undergraduates. The gender gap is evident in all racial and ethnic categories and at all class levels. Among African Americans on campus, only 33 percent are men. The lower the income level, the greater the gender gap in college attendance.

Meg Delano noticed the gender imbalance right away when she moved into her dorm at the university of Georgia at Athens; she soon learned that just 39 percent of her first-year classmates were men. In some classes, there were few men, and women usually dominated discussions. Out of class, Delano and many other women soon complained that having so few men on campus hurt their social life. Not surprisingly, most of the men felt otherwise. What accounts for the shifting gender balance on U. S. Campuses?

One theory is that many young men are drawn away from college by the lure of jobs, especially in high technology. This pattern is sometimes termed the "Bill Gates syndrome," after the man who dropped out of college and soon became the world's richest person by helping to found Microsoft. Thus, many boys have unrealistic expectations about their earning power if they don't

have an education. In addition, analysts point to an anti-intellectual male culture. More young women are drawn to learning and seek to do well in school, whereas some young men attach less importance to studying.

According to Judith Kimmel, in the Journal Gender Issues, stereotyping is also holding boys back. Because girls generally have more polished social skills and are better behaved than boys, they perform better in school, which then prepares them for college. Boys, on the other hand, are often labeled as less cooperative and more likely to act out in classrooms, which can affect their grades. Rightly or wrongly, more men seem to think they can get a good job without investing years of their lives and a considerable amount of money in getting a college degree.

Many college officials are concerned about the lack of men on campus. In an effort to attract more balanced enrollments, some colleges are adopting what amounts to affirmative action programs for males. But courts in several states have already ruled such policies illegal. Many colleges, therefore, are turning to more active recruitment; admissions officers are paying special attention to male applicants stressing a college's strength in mathematics and science areas striving to increase their share of minority students, the hope is that they can also succeed in attracting a larger share of men.