# Does the Gender Wage Gap Exist at Riverside Community College District?

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The gender wage gap in the United States is a well-documented social and economic phenomenon. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 has done little to bring parity between men's and women's wages. Existing data show a relationship between race, age, geography, immigration, education, and women's pay status. This study analyzes wage disparity within higher education, specifically among the faculty at Riverside City College in Riverside, California. A transparent hiring process and salary schedule have reduced the gender wage gap to 1% at Riverside City College, compared to the 6-14% reported national average among faculty in higher education. Even though the gender wage gap is small, gender discrimination and gender bias are evident when the number of women in positions of authority is examined. Another indicator of gender inequity at Riverside City College is the high percentage of men teaching in STEM disciplines compared to women teaching in those disciplines.

**History and Literature Review: The Economic Status of Women in the United States**

Gender equality remains a social issue in the United States, even though women have gained ground toward equity. Organized women's groups rallied in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention to spotlight the unequal treatment of women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott drafted a Declaration of Sentiments that began with a preamble fashioned after the U.S. Declaration of Independence -- "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights…" (Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, 1887). This document inspired the suffrage movement in the United States, which culminated with the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution being signed into law on August 26, 1920. Granting women suffrage mollified them for a time. But history illustrates that women's equal status with men in the United States was still a long way off (National Equal Pay Task Force, The White House, June 2013).

By 1941, due to the scarcity of labor caused by World War II, women were taking jobs previously held by men. Women entering the workforce was essential to the U.S. economy and the war effort. At this point, the question of equal pay for women was once again raised since women were filling positions formerly held by men. In order to reduce the wages paid to women, employers were quick to reclassify positions formerly designated as "male positions" to "female positions" (Massachusetts AFL-CIO). After the war, those jobs were again reclassified to "male positions" at a higher wage rate upon the return of the male veterans.

Women's restlessness with second class citizenship grew over the decade of the 1950s and erupted into a full-fledged social movement during the 1960s (Friedan, 1963). Equal pay for equal work became one of many social issues women took up to gain equal status with men (Billitteri, 2008; Deckard, 1979). Political and social pressure notwithstanding, John Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act on June 10, 1963, guaranteeing equal pay for women:

> No employer having employees subject to any provisions of this section shall discriminate, within any establishment in which such employees are employed, between employees on the basis of sex by paying wages to employees in such establishment at a rate less than the rate at which he pays wages to employees of the opposite sex in such establishment for equal work on jobs the performance of which requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions…" (Equal Pay Act, 1963).

The passage of this act of Congress begs the question: Why does a gender based wage gap still exist in 2015?

Social scientists have grappled with the gender wage gap question and offer a myriad of theories. One theory suggests that women choose lower paying jobs. "Decisions about field of study, occupation and time in the work force can lead to lower compensation…" (Johnson, 2013).

> Predominantly male jobs, particularly at the higher educated level, tend to pay much more than the female dominated jobs," says Hegewisch, of the Institute for Women's Policy Research. "I think the solution to this is not just to say, "OK, all women should become engineers now. It's also how we can more equitably fund and pay for the jobs that are done primarily by women. We do need librarians and teachers and psychologists and social workers. So it's not just saying women are wrong to go in for those jobs. Neither is there evidence that as soon as men move in, the wages will go up (Johnson, 2013).

Moreover, "Plenty of evidence suggests that women encounter systemic barriers on their way up the career ladder — and that they also may impose career limits on themselves, sometimes for the sake of juggling family and professional responsibilities" (Johnson, 2013).

Research suggests that some of the gender pay gap can be attributed to choice of occupations by women. Women are more likely than men to go into occupations that will allow them to work part time, and typically part time occupations don't pay as well (Billitteri, 2008). Warren Farrell, who in the 1970s served on the board of the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women, argues that women pay an economic price by seeking careers that are more fulfilling, flexible and safe. With a stated goal of helping women gain higher pay, Farrell advises women to work longer hours, be willing to relocate, require less security and produce more, among other things (Farrell, 2005). The presumption seems to be that women must work harder than men to achieve pay parity.

Analysis of "Status of Women in the States: 2015" (IWPR, 2015) shows a complex relationship between race, age, geography, immigration, and women's pay status. Indeed, there is no "one size fits all" solution to pay disparity. Solutions will require "deeper explorations of regional and national factors at play, and within a variety of demographics" (Cole, 2015; IWPR, 2015)). Data show that in 2015 American women earn, on average, seventy-eight cents for every one dollar men earn. Based on data from 1960, the ratio of women's and men's earning was 60%. By 2013, the ratio had increased to 78.3%. Over the past fifty-three year period women's wages, when compared to that of men, rose only 18.3%, leaving 21.7% wage increase to bring women to parity with their male counterparts. Progress toward parity is evident. However, women have been waiting for fifty two years to realize pay equity that was promised in the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Projections by the Institute for Women's Policy Research predicts that women's earnings will be equal to that of their male counterparts in 2058, increasing the waiting time by another forty three years (IWPR, 2015).

Today woman are gaining ground in a number of states. Women in Washington, D.C. are earning 91% of the men's wage. On average, women in New York earn 86%, in Maryland 85%, in Florida 84% and in California 84%. Pay disparity is highest in West Virginia (69%), Wyoming (69%), and in Louisiana (66%) according to data gathered by the America Association of University Women. In states where women earn comparable wages to men, they tend to be young (under 35 years of age), single, childless, and employed in technological fields (AAUW, 2014). But, overall, women continue to lose income at astounding rates. The non-college educated working woman in the United States has lost more than $500,000 over the course of her lifetime as a result of the gender wage gap. Among college educated women the loss is $800,000 (IWPR, 2015).

**Women's Educational Attainment**

Higher educational attainment often commands opportunities for higher paying jobs. Are women as successful at attaining doctorate degrees as men and affording themselves opportunities as faculty in institutions of higher education? The Institute of Educational Sciences reports a 63% increase in the overall number of doctorate degrees awarded to women during the period between 1998 and 2011. The Institute projects an increase of only 22% in the number of doctorate degrees awarded to women between 2011 and 2023 (Hussar and Baily, 2014).

Men earn the majority of doctoral degrees in most disciplines and this is especially true in STEM fields. The ratio of doctorate degrees awarded to women in STEM fields compared to men is highly disparate. Between 1993 and 2002 in the U.S., women received 31% of doctorates in Chemistry, 13% of doctorates awarded in Physics, and 48% of doctorates in Biology. In engineering fields the number of women earning Ph.D.'s also lagged behind men. In Chemical Engineering only 22% of doctorate degrees went to women, 19% in Civil Engineering, 12% in Electrical Engineering, and 10% in Mechanical Engineering. Women in Mathematics earned 27% of doctorate degrees in that discipline, but comprise only 8% of faculty in U.S. colleges and universities. Similarly, women are underrepresented among faculty in all STEM areas at the college level. In disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, and Political Science, women are faring somewhat better. Between 1993 and 2002, women earned 59% of Sociology doctorates, 66% of Psychology doctorates, and 37% of Political Science doctorates. Even with higher percentages of earned Ph.Ds. women represented approximately one third of faculty in those disciplines (Nelson, 2005).

Explanations for higher completion rates at the doctoral level range from biological based theories of brain differences in males and females, to hormonal based theories focused on women's need to reproduce and nurture children, to social theories of gender discrimination in the classroom discouraging girls from pursuing higher education and specific subjects, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Glazer, 2005).

**Women within Higher Education**

Do women working in American higher education face a similar wage gap? Nationally, there is a male bias in terms of positions with 58.2% of full time faculty being men. Seventy-two percent of full time professors are men, while only 28% of full time professors are women. Men comprise 48.6% of full-time tenured faculties. The wage gap among college faculty is far less than the national average of 22%. Data show the wage gap within higher education faculty to be between 6-14% (Curtis, 2011). When examined more closely a trend appears; the casualization of female professors. Women tend to fill part-time or adjunct positions (55.5%) while men clearly dominate the full-time positions.

This trend is similar at Riverside Community College District (RCCD). Data indicates that males dominate all full time faculty positions. Women comprise the majority of part time faculty positions.

| Position | % Males | % Females |
|---|---|---|
| Full Professor | 72 | 28 |
| Tenured Faculty | 48.6 | 34.6 |
| Non-tenured Faculty | 44.3 | 33.4 |
| Part-time Faculty | 46.9 | 55.5 |

**Hiring, Evaluation, Title, and Salary at Riverside City College**

The gender wage gap at Riverside City College is likely smaller than other academic institutions due to the fact that hiring, evaluation, a faculty member's title, and salary are distinct. Faculty are chosen for employment by a search committee comprised of five faculty members. Applicants must meet minimum educational qualifications (master's degree in discipline) and exhibit teaching experience. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated annually for the first four years of their employment for quality of teaching and adequate institutional service. Faculty are granted tenure after four years. After receiving tenure, faculty are evaluated once every three years for teaching quality and institutional service. A committee of three individuals evaluate the faculty member. The committee is comprised of the area Dean, Department Chair, and one faculty member chosen by the person being evaluated. The committee will conduct classroom visits, perform student evaluations, and meet to discuss service with the faculty member. At the end of the evaluation, a letter is written by the committee and placed in the faculty member's human resource file. At RCCD since 2008, seven faculty members have been released from their duties as a result of evaluation; five female and two males and only five faculty members have not received tenure; four females and one male.

Faculty typically begin their career as an Assistant Professor. After they gain tenure, they automatically become an Associate Professor in the next academic year. Faculty are eligible to apply for the title of Full Professor after serving 10 years in the District. Applicants for Full Professorship must exhibit a combination of exceptional service to the District, community activism, excellence in teaching and record of publication. Currently, 72% of the Full Professors are male and 28% of Full Professors are female.

Salary is determined at the time of employment and then adjusts for longevity annually according to the salary schedule. It is important to note that evaluation is not linked to one's salary. Therefore, one's teaching and service is evaluated every three years but a faculty member's salary will increase every September according to the pre-determined salary schedule. This is an important convention for female faculty members who may not receive pay increases due to her perspective, which is different from her male evaluators. A recent government study found that by choosing a female to chair evaluation committees and mentor females can have a dramatic increase in her tenure and ability to receive grants. (Katharine Harmon, Scientific American, 2013). Additionally, it was found that when women employ quantitative, or masculine, research techniques, her work is more likely to be published and she is more likely to receive tenure. (Hancock and Baum, 2010). This lends credence to the supposition that male editors view quantitative research as superior to qualitative research and are thus, less likely to publish her work.

Column H, Step 6 is the highest salary that a new faculty member can be hired into. Further, Step 22 is the highest income that a faculty member can earn. Once Column H, Step 22 is reached, a faculty member will no longer receive salary increases. Although Column H, Step 6 is the highest salary that a faculty member can be hired into, it is a little known fact that faculty may negotiate above this step since they have already been hired when the salary is negotiated. It may be that male faculty are more likely to negotiate this rate than female faculty. Thus, males may start their careers earning larger salaries than females, thus, reaching the highest salary step (Step 22) sooner and earning more over the course of his career.

**RCC Faculty Salary Data**

In the state of California, the salaries of public employees are a matter of public record. Given this state regulation and the willingness of RCCD to provide salary, gender, and hire date data, the gender wage gap was determined to be 1% in the Riverside Community College District (RCCD). In order to control for education and gender, we examined faculty who earned their doctorate and therefore were being paid according to Column H salary scale. Of the 358 full time faculty in the district, 116 or 32% of faculty members are paid on column H; 56.9% (66) were female and 43.1% (50) were male.

**RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

**2014-2015 FACULTY SALARY SCHEDULE**
**Effective July 1, 2014**

| Step | B AB | C MA or BA+30 Incl MA | D MA+15 or BA+45 Incl MA | E MA+30 or BA+60 Incl MA | F MA+45 or BA+75 Incl MA | G MA+60 or BA+90 Incl MA | H Doctorate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 52,286 | 55,649 | 59,006 | 62,359 | 65,710 | 69,076 | 72,440 |
| 2 | 54,953 | 58,312 | 61,675 | 65,030 | 68,382 | 71,740 | 75,097 |
| 3 | 57,618 | 60,968 | 64,324 | 67,675 | 71,037 | 74,397 | 77,762 |
| 4 | 60,271 | 63,625 | 66,986 | 70,339 | 73,690 | 77,051 | 80,417 |
| 5 | 62,923 | 66,274 | 69,637 | 73,000 | 76,352 | 79,705 | 83,065 |
| 6 | 65,592 | 68,939 | 72,292 | 75,645 | 79,005 | 82,369 | 85,740 |
| 7 | 68,240 | 71,594 | 74,944 | 78,313 | 81,666 | 85,024 | 88,381 |
| 8 | 70,906 | 74,257 | 77,612 | 80,971 | 84,324 | 87,685 | 91,039 |
| 9 | 73,548 | 76,912 | 80,262 | 83,615 | 86,979 | 90,341 | 93,693 |
| 10 | 76,211 | 79,567 | 82,923 | 86,288 | 89,631 | 92,993 | 96,346 |
| 11 | 76,211 | 82,230 | 85,578 | 88,946 | 92,286 | 95,655 | 99,018 |
| 12 | 76,211 | 82,230 | 85,578 | 91,595 | 94,957 | 98,309 | 101,657 |
| 13 | 76,211 | 82,230 | 85,578 | 91,595 | 97,614 | 100,960 | 104,314 |
| 15 | 77,165 | 83,255 | 86,648 | 92,738 | 98,831 | 102,226 | 105,618 |
| 16 | 78,119 | 84,277 | 87,716 | 93,881 | 100,048 | 103,487 | 106,926 |
| 19 | 80,018 | 86,337 | 89,849 | 96,183 | 102,489 | 106,013 | 109,539 |
| 22 | 81,930 | 88,388 | 92,002 | 98,471 | 104,925 | 108,537 | 112,145 |

Do women earn less over their careers? After closer examination it was determined that females earned on average $104,218 while males earned on average $105,200; a difference of $982 or a 1% wage gap. It was also determined that 24% of the male faculty had reached Step 22 while only 15% of female faculty had done so. In the last 15 years, the RCCD has hired more females into Column H than males. Therefore, it seems that the gender wage gap may close in the near future. However, of the two new faculty hired in this past year, one was a male and one was a female. The male faculty member was hired on Step 6 and the female was hired on Step 5.

**Gender Discrimination at Riverside City College**

Although RCCD has made great strides in narrowing the gender wage gap through its distinct hiring, evaluation, title, and salary processes, gender discrimination manifests in ways that wages do not fully reflect. Fewer females hold position of authority, fewer female faculty are represented in the STEM fields, and more females comprise the majority of traditional female roles.

*Females in Positions of Authority*

In the 99 years of Riverside City College's history there have been only five (5) years when a female held the position of College President. There were three (3) females that held that position in those years. This is an abysmal showing given that in 2006, 29% of U.S. Community College Presidents were female (Cook and Kim, 2012). The District became a three college District ten years ago. During those ten years, only 10% of the time did a female hold the Chancellor position, and she was only an interim until the permanent male Chancellor was be hired.

| **Position** | **% female** | **# of years**[1] |
|---|---|---|
| VP of Academic Affairs | 20.00% | 15 |
| VP of Business Services | 20.00% | 15 |
| VP of Student Services | 25.00% | 12 |
| Dean of Instruction | 90.00% | 21 |
| Chancellor of District | 10.00% | 10 |

In the college structure there are other positions of authority such as Vice Presidents and Deans. In the past 15 years, only 20% of the time females held the position of VP of Academic Affairs or VP of Business Services. In the past 12 years, 25% of the time females held the VP of Student Services position. However, the position of Dean is more commonly viewed as female role in the college. This belief is illustrated by the data at RCC. In the past twenty-one (21) years, 90% of the time Deans of Instruction were female.

There are important faculty leadership positions such as Academic Senate Presidents and Faculty Union Presidents. Academic Senates in California Community Colleges have authority over important decisions regarding teaching and learning. In the past twenty years, there have been male senate presidents in all but four and one-half years (Fall 2001-January 2006). Faculty unions play an important role in ensuring high quality working conditions, salaries and benefits for faculty. Over the past 19 years, the faculty union has elected the union president[2]. During those 19 years, there have been male presidents in all but 4 years (Fall 2004-Fall 2008). It should be no surprise then that well-baby exams, and annual exams for women were not covered under the medical plan until 2011 in preparation for the Affordable Care Act. Similarly, there is currently no medical leave assistance for childbearing.

*Discipline by Gender*

Traditionally male dominated disciplines are similarly male dominated at RCC. In math and science disciplines approximately 70% of faculty are male. In Technology disciplines, the percentage of male faculty is overwhelmingly male, with approximately 88% of faculty being male. In the Business discipline at RCC females fare slightly better, comprising 40% of faculty.

| **Discipline** | **% Male Faculty** | **% Female Faculty** |
|---|---|---|
| Science (n=30) | 70.00% | 30.00% |
| Math (n=34) | 67.65% | 32.35% |
| Technology (n=16) | 87.50% | 12.50% |
| Business (n=30) | 60.00% | 40.00% |

[1] Consistent data was not collected on administrators by length of service, position, gender, or name. Therefore, we relied upon the collective memory of the human resources staff and reported only known data.

[2] Before that time, the union board was elected by faculty and the board then appointed the union president.

Traditionally female dominated disciplines are also female dominated at RCC. In the English discipline nearly 60% of the faculty are female, in Early Childhood Education 100% of the faculty are female, in Nursing, 88% of the faculty are female, and in Cosmetology 67% of the faculty are female.

| Discipline | % Male Faculty | % Female Faculty |
|---|---|---|
| English (n=47) | 40.43% | 59.57% |
| Early Childhood Education (n=5) | 0.00% | 100.00% |
| Nursing (n=24) | 12.50% | 87.50% |
| Cosmetology (n=6) | 33.33% | 66.67% |

*Traditional Female/Male Work*

Gender bias in non-faculty positions is apparent at Riverside City College. When examining non-faculty positions that have historically been male dominated occupations we discovered that 100% of groundskeepers were male. Moreover, 100% of department secretaries, a traditionally female dominated occupation, were in fact female.

| Position | % Males | % Females |
|---|---|---|
| Groundskeeper (n=14) | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| Custodian (n=36) | 77.78% | 22.22% |
| Department Secretary (n=17) | 0.00% | 100.00% |

**Conclusion**

The faculty at Riverside City College do not face a gender wage gap to the extent that national figures indicate for other institutions of higher education. The gender wage gap among faculty at RCCD is merely 1%. Even so, concern remains that a measurable wage gap exists at all. Transparency in hiring practices, evaluation processes, and salary scales have reduced the wage gap, but have not eliminated gender bias. Data indicate that gender bias remains apparent within certain disciplines and among non-faculty personnel. Further research is needed to assess the existence of a gender wage gap among non-faculty personnel to better determine and assess the extent of a campus wide gender wage gap at Riverside City College.

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