

II UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA PLAN FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

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UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA



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PLAN FOR EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN
WOMEN AND MEN**

While in session on April 12, 2011, the Governing Council gave a unanimous vote of approval to the Second University of Barcelona Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men.

Written by the Gender Equality Unit, University of Barcelona

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PROLOGUE

As its Statute shows, the University of Barcelona is an arena for learning, respect and tolerance and the stage on which different individuals and bodies seek to live side by side. This Second [University of Barcelona] Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men reflects our desire to defend those shared values.

Coordinated by the members of the Gender Equality Unit, the efforts of the various committees working in our University's faculties and its School of Nursing have served us well, and the commitment shown by one and all have enabled us to draft an ambitious and truly cross-disciplinary plan. Our hope is that this Plan can be a benchmark for the university community as a whole and we intend to implement it in every way that we must.

Indeed, the Second Plan is the result of work conducted over a series of years by different collectives in the university community to bring the concept of gender equality closer to the areas of management, research and teaching. For some time now we have been working to renew our scientific communities and academic institutions so that the question of gender is not left unattended.

With this document, we wish to place ourselves fairly and squarely on the line, strengthen the measures that it describes and encourage all our community to make of the Plan a wholly shared initiative and a living text. For without that community's unanimous support, it will be difficult to make the document as effective and as meaningful as it must be.

Our common objective is to implement positive actions that can eliminate gender discrimination in all parts of our University, from the operation of our institutions and governing bodies to the fulfillment of our professional responsibilities. If we are to guarantee a level of excellence in how we share that stage of ours, then every woman and man must play their part. And the document you are now holding, the Second [University of Barcelona] Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, must be the text we use to do that.

DÍDAC RAMÍREZ
Rector

SECOND UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA PLAN FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

I. THE JUSTIFICATION AND NEED FOR AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

When we look back at the history of our university, we see that the first woman to graduate from the University of Barcelona was awarded her degree in the year 1882, and that it's been just over one hundred years since the time when, under the reign of Alfonso XIII, women were first allowed access to education without official authorization or special permission.

Considering that in such recent history women were so completely excluded, it is quite extraordinary to consider the cultural, social and political changes that have occurred in regard to total equality of rights between women and men and the integration of women into all spheres of public life. In this ongoing process, feminist social movements and ideologies have played a decisive role.

There is now a regular presence of women participating fully in the scientific and academic communities at the University of Barcelona, as students, teaching and research staff, and administration and services staff. And, indeed, at a national level there is now a higher proportion of women with university qualifications than men.

Furthermore, the recognition of equality, prohibition of discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities between women and men is now regulated by international, European, Spanish and Catalan laws, which are cited in the Appendix to this report.

As the preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women says, «...the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields» .¹

Both Organic Law 3/2007 of March 22 for effective equality between women and men ('Llei orgànica d'igualtat', hereafter LOI) and the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, 2006 ('Estatut d'autonomia de Catalunya', here-

1. Approved by the UN General Assembly, December 18, 1979.

after EAC), require public authorities to guarantee mainstreaming of the gender perspective in public policies and recognition of the roles of women in culture, history, society and the economy (LOI Articles 15 and 41; EAC Article 41).²

Under these regulations, the actions of public authorities should be guided by a series of principles, including the following: the adoption of necessary measures to prevent and eradicate gender violence and all forms of sexual harassment and harassment based on sex; the protection of motherhood, so that society assimilates and supports the effects of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding; the establishment of measures that ensure the reconciliation of work with the personal and family lives of women; and the promotion of co-responsibility for domestic tasks and caring for the family (LOI Article 14).

With regard to higher education, the University must promote teaching and research on the meaning and scope of equality between women and men (LOI Article 25.1), in order to transmit the values of equality. In addition, the values of equality and the need to combat social stereotypes and sexist behaviours that produce inequalities between women and men should be included in university curricula and training activities, as described by LOI Article 24.1, as well as Article 17 of Law 5/2008, April 24, the right of women to eradicate gender violence.

In accordance with this legislation, the University of Barcelona Statutes ensure equal opportunities for women and men of the University of Barcelona, and that they will not be subject to any kind of discrimination: «la igualtat d'oportunitats entre dones i homes de la Universitat de Barcelona, que no poden ser objecte de cap tipus de discriminació» ('the equality of opportunities between women and men at the University of Barcelona, which cannot become the object of any form of discrimination').

However, just as in other social and cultural areas, there continue to be situations at the University that are discriminatory towards women. It could be argued that women have been under-represented and undervalued in terms of producing and transmitting knowledge, and in certain areas this is still the case.

Given this, the mechanism that has allowed the promotion of measures to rectify these inequalities has been the First Plan for Equal Opportunities that the University produced for the biennium 2008-2009. Now, the main situations of imbalance between women and men are identified

2. The principle of gender mainstreaming is outlined in Article 8 of the current Treaty of the functioning of the European Union.

and reflected by statistics that can be found at the webpage www.ub.edu/genere/diagnosi.html.

In summary, these are the main problems yet to be overcome, demonstrating a clear need for support of this Second Plan for Equal Opportunities at the University of Barcelona:

- a) Women are still under-represented in university governing bodies, in the representation of universities, and at various levels of university decision-making. As regards the established laws, the LOI provides that public authorities must ensure a balanced presence of women and men in positions of responsibility for effective equality between women and men (Article 16); Law 6/2001 of December 21³ states that the University of Barcelona Statutes should encourage a balanced presence of women and men in university governing bodies by means of electoral rules (Article 13); and Law 7/2007 of April 12 regulates the basic statutes for public employees, defining that the composition of committees accessible to public employment must ensure parity between women and men (Article 60.1).
- b) Traditionally, areas of knowledge and fields of research with a majority presence of women have not been accorded the same recognition as others, and fields focusing on gender issues have remained outside the circle of academic recognition altogether. This lack of visibility of gender issues has also occurred in general study curricula and educational content.

To date, the progress made in science and research policy designed to encourage gender mainstreaming could be considered inadequate. In the scientific field there are few women who lead research projects that appear in the top rankings, even in fields with a traditionally higher presence of women.⁴ In this respect, Organic Law 6/2001 of December 21 states that we should encourage research teams to advance their professional endeavours by promoting a balanced presence of women and men in all areas: «s'ha de promoure que els equips de recerca desenvolupin la seva carrera professional fomentant una presència equilibrada entre dones i homes en tots els seus àmbits» ('Research teams must be

3. Based on wording of Organic Law 7/2004 of April 12 (BOE, April 12, 2007).

4. The European Commission recognizes that the evaluation criteria for scientific excellence are not neutral from a gender perspective. Commission of the European Communities (2005), March 11, 2005, Women and Science: Excellence and Innovation. Gender Equality in Science.

encouraged to promote the equal presence of women and men in all areas of research activity').⁵

- c) Gender stereotyping, often internalized by women, and the difficulties of combining a career with caring activities make the path towards professional stability and career advancement more difficult for women in general, especially when they are mothers.

Furthermore, initial job insecurity together with the length of time required to achieve qualifications and decent work conditions means that many women who want to pursue university studies feel obliged to give up motherhood or postpone it indefinitely.

- d) Another significant problem is gender violence, which is present in all spheres of social life and in the university community itself. A research project on gender violence in universities carried out by researchers from Catalan universities revealed that 14% of the students surveyed knew of a situation of gender violence that had occurred at the University or between members of the university community.⁶ In contrast, 98% of the women surveyed did not know if their University had a support service for victims of gender violence.

Accordingly, the University of Barcelona has a commitment to correct these issues, and to build a university free of inequalities between women and men.

There is evidently a need to create areas of interaction and action involving all members of the university community. In an androcentric context, taking into account only the male archetype, we need to be aware of the different backgrounds, situations and needs of women and men. As a starting point this would help us analyse methods of action and develop the academic, research, management and work policies necessary to change this real situation of inequality and discrimination.

As such, it is essential that everyone is aware of the actions and requirements outlined in this Second University of Barcelona Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, and fully understands them.

The 2008-2009 Plan incorporated the gender perspective into various elements and initiatives. Along these lines, and following the institution of the University of Barcelona's Gender Equality Committee on 8 March 2007,

5. Based on wording of Organic Law 7/2004 of April 12 (BOE, April 12, 2007).

6. Paper *Violències de gènere en l'àmbit universitari? Realitats, formes i superació*. Head researcher: Dr. Rosa Valls (<http://creaub.info/cat/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Violencia-de-Genere-Universitats-Catalanes.pdf>).