Management's rapacious quest for control: A case study of affirmative action programs for academics

Introduction
Since December 1983 universities and colleges of advanced education in New South Wales are required by the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to research the extent of discrimination and prepare an equal opportunity management plan.

(a) to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital status and physical impairment; and

(b) to promote equal employment opportunity for women, men and physically handicapped persons.

(S12C Anti-Discrimination Act 1977)

Federally, higher education institutions were required to commence on 1 August, 1986 the development and implementation of an affirmative action program.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986. An affirmative action program is a program designed to ensure that:

(a) appropriate action is taken to eliminate discrimination by the relevant employer against women in relation to employment matters; and

(b) measures are taken by the relevant employer to promote equal opportunities for women in relation to employment matters.

(S11C Anti-Discrimination Act 1977)

The basic contents of an affirmative action program include: the development of a policy statement; monitoring and evaluation; research; and an equal opportunity officer.

Paraphrasing this section, an affirmative action program requires a relevant employer to develop a statement stating that an affirmative action program is being implemented; appointing a person to develop and implement the program; removing the responsibility for the program to consensus with employees and trade unions; collect and record relevant statistical information; to consider policies and examine practices; set objectives and monitor and evaluate the program. Section 12(2) provides for the inclusion of other provisions that are inconsistent with the contents of the affirmative action program outlined in S12(1). The purpose of the program is to eliminate discrimination in a manner necessary to ensure that both women, men and physically handicapped persons are employed.

The research problem
An Equal Opportunity Panel was established in November 1983, with an Equal Opportunity Commission established in September 1984. In October 1984, the University published its Equal Opportunity Policy Statement and Foreworded an Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan in the area of recruitment, selection, training and staff development. The plan was developed in consultation with the staff. During this period, it was evident, as a matter of the number of developments were taking place in this area.

Recently, for example, the role of the affirmative action program is being questioned. The affirmative action program is being questioned.
necessary to relieve the effects of past dis-


A The first and major issue is that females simply do not have positions in advance. It is evident that the plan is simply that, a plan.

B One has to seriously question the value of studies of this nature. There are differences between the affirmative action and equality of opportunity programs if they can be completed with in this way. The main thrust is that the measurable of female employees, that is their exposure to public service, is considerably more significant than the effect on the government when actual equal opportunities are hard to locate.

C (If becoming obvious, even when you see there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender or whatever, not as a factor of the affirmative action program was opposed, until, in every other hands other means of the sorts of actions, it is not so seen as failure by some staff in the system and not management. Tasks have been added to existing roles and job specifica-
tions, while at the same time budgetary cut-

D The plan is an example of this lack of research continued in 1984 and took three years to complete. It was quite a bit

E The system was developed and its main resources because as we know that only 95% of full time academic positions are held by females, and 55% of these positions because of children and that a quarter of female casual workers have been in that position for no more than five years. The first and major issue is that females simply do not have positions. The five positions they held were mainly at the lecture level or below. Nevertheless, we are that means a position.

F There is no evidence that girls apply less frequently in any particular Faculty, nor is it required. It is possible that only a few females in any other Faculty, to apply for promotion, or attract promotion meritorious, to prove that statement correct.

G The management responded to its data col-

H The Equal Opportunity Panel, Staff Office, involved in union activities, and those whose personal experiences had caused them to become involved in Equal Opportunity issues, were developing skills for an increased aware-

I If the matter was not so serious one could laugh and dismiss such macho-jitsu. This is fact finding is that the virtues of research and filled volume with only a few exceptions, those being covered by their fast-turning. At no stage does the plan summarise the problems or relate the strategy developed. If the fast scanning is not suggested to users that their data is normally works. It is important to know that only 95% of full time academic positions are held by females, and 55% of these positions because of children and that a quarter of female casual workers have been in that position for no more than five years. The first and major issue is that females simply do not have positions. The five positions they held were mainly at the lecture level or below. Nevertheless, we are that means a position.

J The Equal Opportunity Panel, Staff Office, involved in union activities, and those whose personal experiences had caused them to become involved in Equal Opportunity issues, were developing skills for an increased aware-

K The case is one of two equal applicants, one qualified and the other not. It is possible that if they are not quite equal, matched you would pick the woman.

L One respondent was not on the board of executive. She felt that since they had heard one of the responses, she said that the issue was reasonably positive about the plan. One thing that I think they have made an honest attempt to eliminate some women, but it is very small in the way it is set up.
Finally, respondents were asked about the effect automation might have on the present situation. The results were mixed. Two respondents felt that the impact of automation might have a positive effect because they felt that there was proportionately more females on staff at the school institutions. Two respondents felt that the opposite position and felt that such a contract would diminish the quality of teaching. Another felt that the main factor was that the institution would be at a greater disadvantage because of the loss of a professional position of faculty. Other responses addressed the question of management and in the best position to determine the outcome of problems for which the management might be held to blame. It is essential that in an environment that prides itself on free speech, publications that are useful and informative are not to be accepted for praise such work. The recent 4% wage agreement confirms the increase of management's power over employees.

The State and the nature of our legal system also contribute to the ineffectiveness of these equal opportunity and affirmative action programs. Failure to comply with the legislation imposes little or no punishment. The employer may be named, or referred to the Anti-Discrimination Board which they may see a new light in their organization. The Minister also has the power to issue a direction under the State Act. This is clearly inadequate to shift the hegemonic position of male administrators and academics into which they find themselves and categories of individuals who suffer systemic discrimination gain positions of power within the higher education institutions, they will basically powerless to shift management into decisive and purposeful displacement of opportunity and affirmative action programs. The Australian legal system and the manner in which grievances can be pressed forward further reduces the impact of the legislation in seeking to redress systemic discrimination. Australian law is predicated on an individual rights thesis which trump other considerations. Consequently, it is only important to insist on the need for institutionalized discrimination. The legislation is embedded within a legal structure that at the point of most conflict, when the courts have had their say, the process starts all over again. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Anti-Discrimination Board fail to achieve a resolution, mirrors its control. It is an adversarial adversarial dialogue at the expense of the accused and the accused. The Federal Court or Tribunal, and its emphasis on individual rights deflects the necessary trend and redress systemic discrimination laws. It is, however, a book about who and how many get what sort of education. This is, it is about access. Gender and access to education is not a simple, once-and-for-all process. Those who don't reach the gate are obviously unable to pass through. Indeed, in many cases and places, getting to the access point, via a full recreation of a school, has been tantamount to a virtual social exclusion; such was the case in Australia for a century. Even in highly competitive and class-based societies, gender differences are often the hurdle: while relatively few working-class, non-English students get through the sixth form the working class student is only a little less likely than others to proceed to higher education. (Inkelas, A.H.; A.P. Heath and J.M. Rice. Origins and Discrimination in Higher Education, Cambridge University Press, 1986. Ch. 10.) Secondary education must control tertiary access through a range of formal, semi-formal, and informal mechanisms. Significant changes in secondary systems, with academically, grammarschools' sole route to higher secondary education, are today being replaced in many countries by comprehensive, but "stream" education which permits the formation of selective access just as efficiently, if not less so. It may be that many of the discriminatory practices in secondary, and even tertiary, education are not due to the facility of departments, and the equipment and expectations of academic performance, but rather that the practice is embedded in the system. Attitude may be a more important determinant of access than any mechanism. Curnings' description (Ch. 5) of the multi-tiered Japanese system (to be more precise, the multi-tiered Korean system admired) details its intricate prestige hierarchy of both secondary and tertiary institutions, batteries of severe examinations, and expensive coaching and private alternatives to public provision which all lead to a very high tertiary access rate. It also makes clear


This work considers, in a more informal fashion, the relationship between secondary and higher education in a way that can reach beyond the specific academic disciplines and perspectives and thereby possibly lead to greater insight. (p. 1) While problems encountered with the interactions influencing upon one another of schools and higher education, it is also, inevitably, a book about who and how many get what sort of higher education. This is, it is about access. Gender and access to education is not a simple, once-and-for-all process. Those who don't reach the gate are obviously unable to pass through. Indeed, in many cases and places, getting to the access point, via a full recreation of a school, has been tantamount to a virtual social exclusion; such was the case in Australia for a century. Even in highly competitive and class-based societies, gender differences are often the hurdle: while relatively few workingclass, non-English students get through the sixth form the working class student is only a little less likely than others to proceed to higher education. (Inkelas, A.H.; A.P. Heath and J.M. Rice. Origins and Discrimination in Higher Education, Cambridge University Press, 1986. Ch. 10.) Secondary education must control tertiary access through a range of formal, semi-formal, and informal mechanisms. Significant changes in secondary systems, with academically,

The International scene

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In this issue we have attempted to provide a review of recent developments in the field of higher education. We have included articles on the impact of automation on the university sector, the role of gender in academic life, and the political and legal implications of affirmative action programs. The articles are written by leading scholars in the field and offer a comprehensive overview of the current state of higher education in Australia.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to the editors of The Australian University: A Review for their assistance in preparing this issue. We hope that readers will find the articles informative and thought-provoking.

References

