

# *The Gender Revolution*

*'Boys are falling behind girls in education -- what will it mean for our future?'*

by

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The May 2003 issue of Business Week magazine phrased it this way, “For 350 years, men outnumbered women on college campuses. Now, in every..income bracket, every racial and ethnic group, and most industrialized Western nations, women reign, earning an average 57% of all BA (degrees), and 58% of all master’s degrees...”

Less than a generation ago, college classrooms were dominated by men. Furthermore, young men comfortably assumed leadership roles in every aspect of society demanding such roles. Within the academic realm, they led test scores and maintained leadership positions in co-ed student organizations, leaving the girls only to aspire to achieve such coveted status. Fast-forward now to 2003, and the educational landscape looks strikingly different. In every industrialized Western nation, and peculiarly on the island of Dominica, girls are running away with the best test scores on scholastic exams and higher percentages in advanced placement programs; and when they proceed to college campuses, they command the strongest leadership positions, and continue to maintain higher grades.

A recent controlled visit to the Dominica State College nonetheless showed an interesting pattern in the percentage of students preparing for advanced degrees in the science and engineering disciplines. Although this is not a scientific study, it was visually apparent that roughly 90% of the engineering body were young men. This statistic presents a stark contrast between the trend in Dominica towards these disciplines versus the global trend, which shows that the percentage of boys entering college, master’s programs, and most doctoral programs in fields like engineering and computer science has leveled off, whereas for women, it has continued to rise at a phenomenal pace.

What will such a dramatic educational trend mean for the future? While in most aspects of our society it may still be a man's world, our boys may not have such a privilege when they become men. It is clear now that more girls are enrolled in college than boys are. That, combined with the age-old statistics that boys are more likely to drop out of school and get into trouble with the law, furthermore adds fuel to the premise that our economic future is poised to be led by today’s generation of young, intelligent women.

The struggle still continues for women to catch up to men in the business climate. Although the statistics show a dramatic shift in leadership in education, one can hardly claim that the business world has been normalized. Overall, men continue to dominate the highest paying jobs in lead industries like engineering, banking and high tech – the industries that are expected to lift the global economy out of recession, and lead us into the 21st century.

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