

OUR READERS WRITE

Letters

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- ◆ What about the boys?
- ◆ "Men preferred"
- ◆ Still a not-so-subtle problem
- ◆ Nurses left out
- ◆ Sweet reminder
- ◆ Get one thing strait
- ◆ Invisible beauty
- ◆ Don't worry about us
- ◆ Golomb responds
- ◆ Ol' Baltimore
- ◆ Corrections

What about the boys?

Honestly, when reading "[Necessary Steps](#)" [November], I thought I was in a time warp, ca. 1973. The arguments made seemed that obsolescent to me.

What is worrisome to me now is quite different from the hot topics brandished about by the ERA movement in the early 1970s. One example in this article is that mention of the student body now being only 49 percent male, presumably on a continuing downward spiral for males, does not cause any inkling of alarm. Another far more dramatic example being that the percentage of "senior leaders" at the University of Rochester, Yale, and MIT was said to be respectively 75, 61, and 52 percent female. And this was mentioned in the article as a measure of virtue at those institutions. Another example is that enrollment in colleges today, from high school graduates, is also favoring the girls.

I'm astounded that such disparities aren't causing a stir. To my eyes, these facts show that we have new problems to address, and fast. I think President [William R.] Brody is right on target when he says that the math cannot sustain the sort of disparity this article is obsessing over. But that should cause only a temporary sense of relief. The problem is evident in the long-term trends, even if occasionally it doesn't seem apparent in a snapshot of the status today. The long-term trends in the United States are quite worrisome for the young males.

Albert Manfredi, Engr '73 (MS)
Alexandria, Virginia

"Men preferred"

Your excellent article "**Necessary Steps**" reminded me of my experience as a PhD student in the Experimental Psychology Department between 1955 and 1958. Fortunately, I had not read the catalog before applying to the program. When I discovered about six months after entering the program that the catalog strongly advised "*men preferred*" (yes, in italics), a faculty member explained that when women do apply they are treated equally in the application process and do as well as men in their graduate studies, but then they go out and have babies, and "we want our graduates to make a name for Hopkins." The advice in the catalog was reinforced by a faculty club that admitted women only at special times and, even then, only if accompanied by a man. On a more positive note, I always felt very much part of the Hopkins community and invariably was treated well and fairly.

Iris C. Rotberg, A&S '58 (PhD)
Research Professor of Education Policy
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Still a not-so-subtle problem

I wanted to thank you for your excellent article ["**Necessary Steps**"]. My husband, a Hopkins graduate, and I read it with great interest and were pleased that the magazine published such a strong critique of an obvious global problem at JHU. We have two sons who are currently Hopkins students and have spent some time since 2002 observing the campus culture. I do believe that a lack of policies for faculty and staff that would allow women to feel respected and recognized prevents them from flourishing at that level on campus; of great concern to me is that the problematic culture you describe filters down to the undergraduates and graduate students in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Both men and women suffer in an environment that does not nourish its women! I hope your article helps to catalyze rapid attention to this issue.

Laura Vogel
Amherst, Massachusetts

Nurses left out

"**Necessary Steps**" rings all my bells. You may hear the cry from other alumnae of the **School of Nursing** about the exclusion of the colorful story of Nursing's efforts to get its program into the university. As an alumna during the career of Anna D. Wolf, my whole career as a nurse educator reflects her role in insisting that