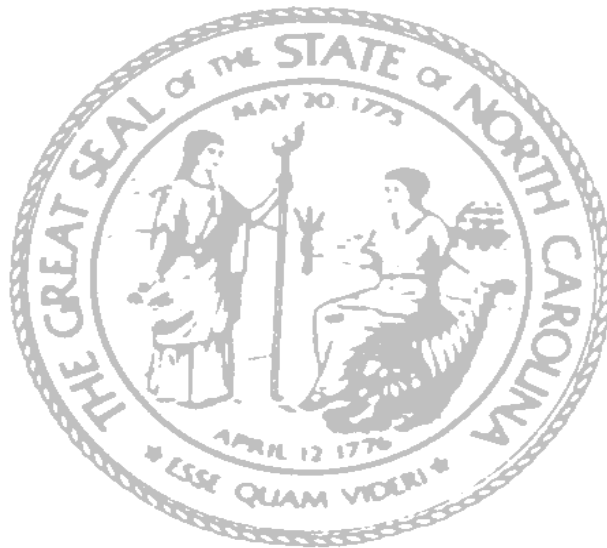


Special Emphasis Project:

Female Employment in North Carolina State Government

Project Report



NC Office of State Personnel
November 2004

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Raleigh, NC 27699-1331

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Section I: Introduction

Scope and Methodology

North Carolina State Government has a great responsibility to its employees to provide equitable compensation and a work environment free from discrimination. The North Carolina Office of State Personnel (OSP) provides leadership and supports agencies and universities in creating and sustaining dynamic human resource systems to attract, retain, develop, and motivate a diverse and competent workforce. In meeting this mission, OSP annually provides the North Carolina General Assembly with several reports detailing workforce representation data as well as promotion, new hire, grievance, disciplinary action, performance management, and compensation information. Over the years, the analyses of these reports revealed several trends related to various demographic groups. In order to address these trends and respond to concerns that are unique to specific demographic groups, OSP embarked upon a Special Emphasis Project (SEP) in 1999, which was designed to ensure a work environment in which all are treated in a fair and equitable manner. The initial focus of the SEP was on African American males and a report of results was presented to the Governor's Office in May 2004.

This report addresses trends for the next group to be under the SEP, females. The quantitative analysis in this report represents data for permanent full-time employees under the State Personnel Act taken from OSP's Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) as of 12/31/03 unless otherwise indicated. The qualitative analysis in this report represents data collected from focus group discussions of the following groups: facilitators of non-supervisory female employees comprised of only females; facilitators for supervisors of female employees comprised of a diverse mix of females and males.

Defining Pay Inequity and the "Glass Ceiling"

Several factors contribute to the trends for females in North Carolina State Government; however, one factor that necessitates a thorough investigation is pay inequity and the "glass ceiling". The term "glass ceiling" was made popular in 1986 when two *Wall Street Journal* reporters coined the phrase to describe the invisible barrier that determines the level to which a woman or minority can rise in an organization. Pay inequity is an issue closely associated with upward mobility but also merits its own study. The focus of pay inequity is to eliminate sex and race discrimination in wage setting. Subtle discrimination of this type is characteristically intangible. Many research initiatives have been created to better understand this phenomenon. Most of these reports concentrate mainly on the private or corporate sector and are available through the United States General Accounting Office (GAO), Department of Labor, the Census, and various non-profit organizations.

The findings of this report will attempt to provide some insight as to what limitations female employees may experience in their upward mobility within North Carolina State Government.

Section II: Data Analysis

Total Workforce Analysis

Females make up 48.9% of the total state workforce and comprise 71.5% of low wage occupations. Males make up 51.1% of the total state workforce, but only account for 28.5% of low wage occupations. The table below illustrates the distribution of pay grades by sex and race for all SPA employees.

**Pay Grade Representation
(All SPA as of 02/28/04)**

Pay Grade	White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female	Total Male	Total Female
No Grade	4902 58.7%	935 11.2%	1456 17.4%	636 7.6%	6692 80.2%	1655 19.8%
50-54	427 12.2%	640 18.3%	1017 29.1%	1215 34.8%	1519 43.5%	1970 56.5%
55-59	1986 13.1%	6464 42.6%	1546 10.6%	4802 31.7%	3630 23.9%	11528 76.1%
60-64	8633 36.3%	6404 26.9%	3796 16.0%	4248 17.9%	12809 53.9%	10968 46.1%
65-69	7106 45.7%	4708 30.3%	1402 9.0%	1752 11.3%	8806 56.6%	6745 43.4%
70-74	4683 41.9%	4290 38.4%	670 6.0%	1135 10.2%	5556 49.7%	5614 50.3%
75-79	2854 55.2%	1427 27.6%	287 5.5%	332 6.4%	3319 64.2%	1854 35.9%
80-84	819 58.1%	378 26.8%	77 5.5%	77 5.5%	935 66.4%	474 33.6%
85-99	156 67.5%	49 21.2%	16 6.9%	6 2.6%	174 75.3%	57 24.7%

Note: Other minority groups comprising less than 3% not shown

African American females clearly comprise the majority of all occupations compensated at pay grades 50-54. Women in general occupy the most positions in grades 59 and below. Starting at pay grade 60, white males become the majority. White males dominate every pay grade category from 60 and above by large margins except in the case of pay grades 70-74 where they lead white females by a little over 3%. In the next three pay grade categories, the representation of white males is double the percentage of the next closest race/gender group.

The non-graded classifications span the full width of the salary range pay plan from salary grade 50 through salary grade 96. The employees in non-graded classifications include those working in skilled based pay, career banding, flat rates, and trainees. The salary range for these employees' spans from \$16,896 through \$198,075.

**Pay Grade Representation by Average Education
(All SPA)**

Pay Grade		White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female
50-54	# Employee	457	695	1058	1267
	Avg. Edu.	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.9
55-59	# Employee	2027	6962	1584	4934
	Ave. Edu.	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.9
60-64	# Employee	8705	6607	3805	4284
	Avg. Edu.	2.8	3.5	2.9	3.4
65-69	# Employee	7142	4881	1405	1754
	Avg. Edu.	4.2	5.2	4.6	5.6
70-74	# Employee	4717	4396	672	1137
	Avg. Edu.	5.4	5.9	5.5	6.0
75-79	# Employee	2862	1499	289	324
	Avg. Edu.	6.0	6.2	6.0	6.2
80 & Up	# Employee	985	435	91	83
	Avg. Edu.	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.2

In pay grades 50-59, there is a relationship between average education level and representation. In pay grades 60 and higher, higher education does not always correspond with representation level.

In grades 60 and above, females have the highest average education levels.

Note: The education levels are set as: 0=less hs; 1=hs, non-graduate; 2=hs graduate; 3=hs+1 yr; 4=hs+2 yr; 4.5=assoc. degr; 5=hs+3 yr; 6=hs+4 yrs; 7=master degr; 8=Phd; 9=Md, JD, and others.

The table below shows seven occupational titles where females with the lowest pay are concentrated.

Average Salary & Distribution of Lowest Paid Female Occupations

TITLE/PAY GRADE	White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female	Other Male	Other Female	Total
HEALTH CARE TECH I (58)	\$21,301 310	\$21,185 582	\$21,324 661	\$21,090 1756	\$20,777 11	\$20,542 13	\$21,170 3333
CORR OFFICER (62)	\$25,527 2953	\$24,681 640	\$25,610 1592	\$24,749 1194	\$25,121 113	\$24,837 49	\$25,310 6541
OFF ASST III (57)	\$22,748 28	\$21,813 910	\$22,944 19	\$22,327 333	\$23,051 2	\$22,004 43	\$21,985 1335
OFF ASST IV (59)	\$26,500 69	\$25,988 1513	\$25,231 24	\$25,629 543	\$25,561 3	\$24,877 54	\$25,880 2206
PROCESS ASST III (57)	\$22,958 113	\$22,149 802	\$23,537 72	\$22,194 476	\$21,838 6	\$21,460 30	\$22,276 1499
PROCESS ASST IV (59)	\$25,897 154	\$25,341 843	\$25,313 64	\$24,784 524	\$24,704 4	\$24,059 31	\$25,187 1620
HOUSEKEEPER (50)	\$18,480 139	\$18,607 287	\$18,569 540	\$18,716 796	\$17,965 42	\$18,319 91	\$18,605 1895

Note: Further study should be conducted to review entry level salaries and the effect of years of service on salary.

Average Salary & Distribution of Occupations with Female Concentration

TITLE/ PAY GRADE	White Males	White Females	African American Males	African American Females	Other Minority Males	Other Minority Females
Accountant I (72)	40 \$43,306	88 \$43,356	10 \$40,687	47 \$42,227	1 \$40,000	3 \$44,291
Accountant II (75)	58 \$51,891	71 \$50,490	7 \$51,616	30 \$49,497	3 \$52,168	3 \$45,794
Personnel Analyst I (70)	13 \$40,527	43 \$43,329	5 \$41,328	20 \$40,779	1 \$34,256	2 \$39,418
Social Worker II (66)	7 \$34,396	37 \$32,370	5 \$38,020	18 \$30,652	1 \$30,603	0 \$0
Attorney II (79)	18 \$55,000	29 \$55,122	6 \$52,784	9 \$51,911	1 \$49,437	0 \$0
Registered Nurse (72T)	19 \$39,868	142 \$40,407	2 \$40,422	30 \$41,480	1 \$46,230	2 \$41,367

These occupations require formal training and there is large concentration of female employees. In general male employees earn more than female employees in classes that represent promotional opportunities (positions at level II). One exception in the table above is white females in the Attorney II classification.

In analyzing the entire state workforce, a high concentration of females and minorities in low paying occupations and a limited number of females and minorities in high paying occupations are at the heart of the pay inequity issue.

Female occupations are often paid less than male dominated jobs even if they require the same or a greater amount of education, experience, and responsibilities. This raises the question of gender as a determinant of compensation. Overall African American females experience wider disparities than white females. In order to preserve a discrimination-free workplace, gender and race should be ruled out as a factor when determining aspects of employment such as compensation. A cross-occupational analysis of two female and male dominated occupations reveals situations, which suggest further study. The following two tables are examples of male and female dominated occupations.

Comparison 1: Nursing Assistant II vs. Trades Worker I

Title/Pay Grade	Salary Range	Dominant Gender	Training & Experience
Nursing Assistant II (55)	\$17412-\$26189	Female – 90%	HS & 6month experience or equivalent combination, Board registration for continued employment
Trades Worker I (57)	\$18479-\$28426	Male – 84.7%	Grammar School & 1 year of experience or equivalent combination

The female dominated occupation requires more education than the male dominated occupation that is compensated at a higher grade. Nursing Assistants must also obtain a certification as a condition of continued employment. These titles are both manual labor

related and provide a basic basis for comparison due to the similarities of responsibilities. Occupations with these similarities are the easiest to compare.

Comparison 2: Paralegal I vs. Maintenance Mechanic V

Title/Pay Grade	Salary Range	Dominant Gender	Training & Experience
Paralegal I (65)	\$24761-\$39789	Female – 100%	HS & Certified Paralegal training plus 1 year experience OR 4 year related degree & 1 year experience OR HS & 5 years of experience OR equivalent combination
Maintenance Mechanic V (66)	\$25781-\$41569	Male – 98.6%	HS & 2 years experience in 2 or more complex trades or equivalent combination, May require special EPA certification

These titles relate to each other closely by pay grade and gender segregation. The female paraprofessional job is in a lower pay grade and requires a higher combination of training and experience. Comparison of these two jobs is not as clearly defined as comparison 1. Paralegals operate in an office setting and mechanics perform manual labor and repair.

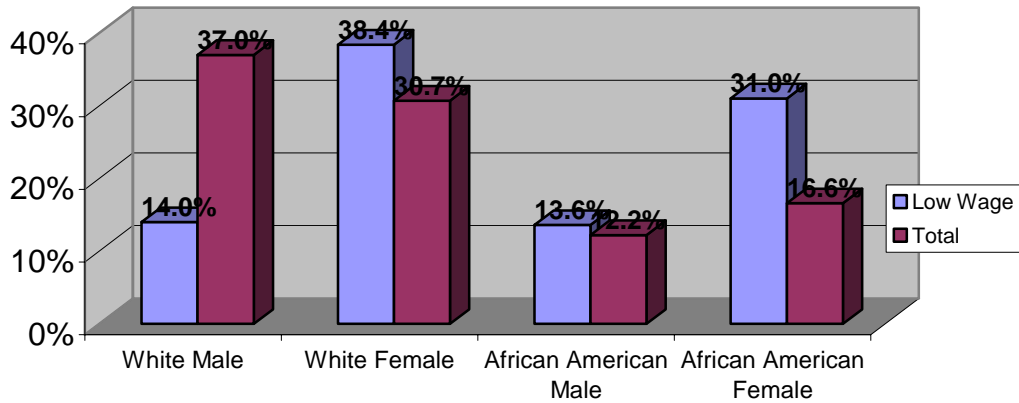
An objective compensation system should incorporate comparison of value and market conditions governing pay when setting salaries for similar jobs. North Carolina State Government is a large employer and resetting the wage structure could prove to be an arduous task. Testing of this system could be done as a pilot program in selected agencies or between certain occupational titles.

Agency Analysis

Demographic PMIS data produced by the Office of State Personnel indicates that female employees are not represented equitably in Official and Administrator occupational categories. Females account for 45% of the total state agency workforce and comprise 38% of Official and Administrator occupations. African American women are of particular concern because they represent 16% of the total agency workforce but only hold 7% of Official and Administrator positions. The limited representation of minority females in occupations that have decision-making responsibilities has been identified in research as one of the core problem associated with the “glass ceiling” and pay inequity.

The graph below clearly shows that white males are the only group underrepresented in low wage occupations pay grades 50-59.

SPA Low Wage Employees(Grades 50-59)Compared to Total Representation (06/30/03)



Some of the more highly compensated jobs in State Government are classified as “management related” or “professional”. These occupations require substantial education and experience along with offering better pay. In the following table are some examples of female representation levels in the management related jobs.

Management Related Distribution (Agency as of 9/30/03)

Title:EEO Management Subclass	White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female	Other Male	Other Female	Total Male	Total Female
Business	861	825	137	262	21	24	1019	1111
Human Resources	271	490	96	227	14	26	381	743
Finance	557	505	111	215	13	21	681	741
Marketing	3	34	1	3	0	0	4	37

For the most part, females maintain a higher representation over males in management related occupations. However, they make less on average than their white male peers. As the table below indicates white males in management related positions earn higher average salaries. However, service months and age may influence the differences in average salaries.

Statistics of Management Related Occupations (Agency as of 9/30/03)

Race-Gender	No.	Average Age	Average Service Months	Average Salary
White Male	1722	48.1	163.2	\$43,789.73
White Female	1811	45.8	166.0	\$41,523.31
African American Male	344	46.4	141.7	\$40,731.34
African American Female	675	43.0	154.2	\$39,691.34
Other Male	51	45.5	127.1	\$39,436.27
Other Female	68	41.8	103.2	\$37,339.99

In the table below, professional subclasses exhibit more industry segregation than management-related fields. Agency professional classes show the widest gaps in engineering, education, and health related subclasses. Females are represented well in professional positions, but are concentrated in social sciences, education, and health related occupational groups. These are considered “traditional” female jobs.

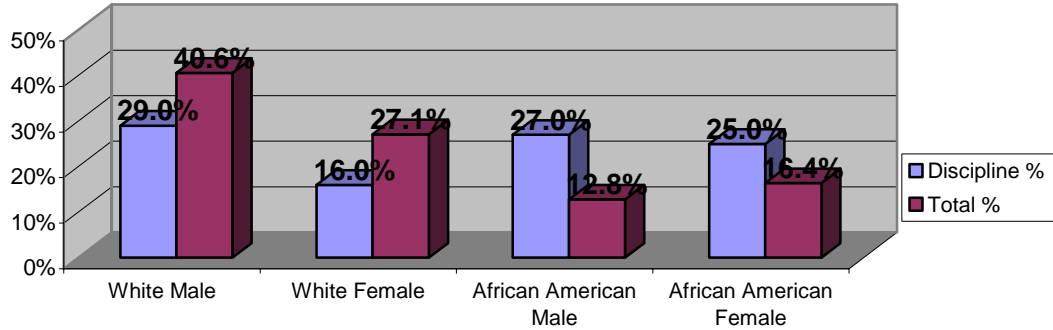
Professional Distribution (Agency)

Title:EEO Professional Subclass	White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female	Other Male	Other Female	Total Male	Total Female
Computer & Math	648	362	71	74	64	43	719	479
Architecture & Engineering	1543	277	127	53	117	39	1787	369
Life, Physical, & Social Science	946	606	56	117	34	27	1036	750
Community, Social Work, Religion	1711	1971	992	1205	81	76	2784	3252
Legal	213	201	19	70	5	5	237	276
Education & Library	495	802	99	269	21	17	615	1088
Entertainment, Art, and Media	92	161	4	23	1	7	97	191
Healthcare Practitioners	282	516	84	141	31	32	397	689
Registered Nurse	119	817	24	275	6	31	149	1123

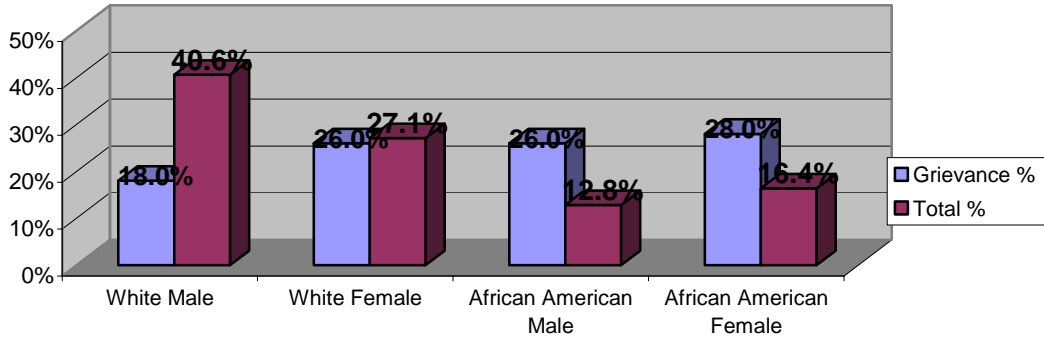
The 2003 *Personnel Function Report (SB886)* gives insight to promotional practices of the state. Promotions come with better salaries as well as more decision-making responsibilities. White males received 39% (representation 40.6%) of all the promotions in agencies in 2003. White females received 29% (27.1% representation) African American males accounted for 11% (12.8% representation) and African American females comprised 17% (16.4% representation) of agency promotions in 2003.

Disciplinary action and employee grievances reflect on employee performance, satisfaction, and working environment. It is important to create a secure and discrimination-free work environment for females and minorities. Grievance and discipline are two areas where females and minorities are not underrepresented as depicted in the next two graphs.

**Disciplinary Action Taken Compared to Total Representation
(Agency)**



Grievances Compared to Total Representation (Agency)

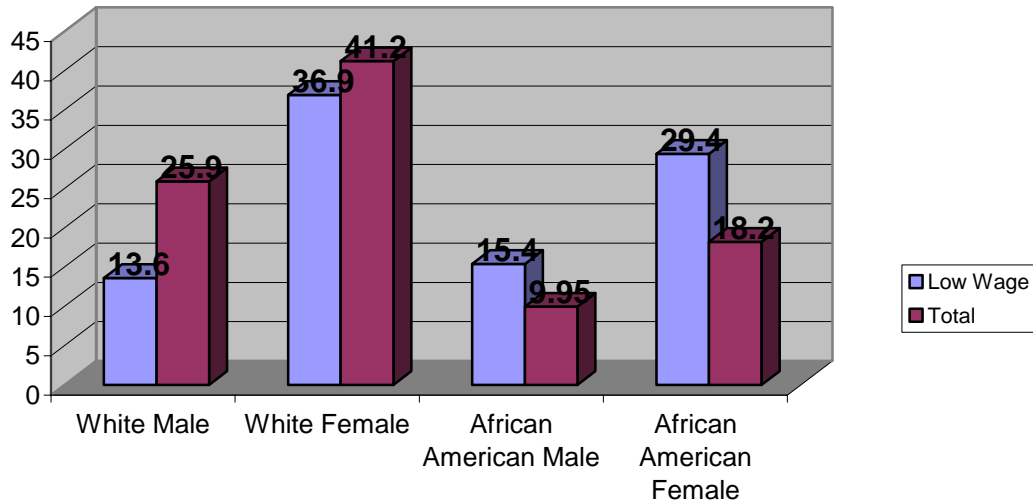


Grievance and disciplinary action taken against employees does not vary by wide margins between demographic groups. However, when compared to their overall representation we can see that minorities have more instances of disciplinary action and claim more grievances than any other group.

University Analysis

The university system trends show a wider gap for females representing 61% of the total workforce but only accounting for 34% of Official and Administrator positions. African American females represent 18% of the total university workforce, but only account for 3% of Official and Administrator positions. This may indicate that many females are cut off from the decision-making processes in the university system. In the following graph, white females become slightly underrepresented in the lowest pay grades along with white males in the university system. Minority groups remain overrepresented.

University Low Wage Employees (% in Grades 50-59) Compared to Total Representation (06/30/03)



Management related occupations represent a small group of people working for the universities. An interesting fact is the overrepresentation of females in finance and marketing occupations as shown in the table below.

Management Related Distribution (University as of 09/30/03)

EEO Management Subclass	White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female	Other Male	Other Female	Total Male	Total Female
Business	129	137	34	39	5	3	168	179
Human Resources	22	74	6	35	0	5	28	114
Finance	88	190	14	66	3	5	105	261
Marketing	34	86	8	30	0	2	42	118

Females have a higher representation in management related occupations. On average all female employees make less than white male employees. The higher salary may be due to age and years of service as depicted in the table below.

Statistics of Management Related Occupations (University as of 09/30/03)

Race-Gender	No.	Average Age	Average Service Months	Average Salary
White Male	298	44.7	122.7	\$46,273.37
White Female	536	44.6	147.7	\$42,748.46
African American Male	64	44.9	114.4	\$42,333.30
African American Female	178	43.1	137.5	\$39,698.60
Other Male	10	44.1	77.0	\$48,467.30
Other Female	15	43.2	129.5	\$40,616.20

Professional Distribution (University as of 09/30/03)

EEO Professional Subclass	White Male	White Female	African American Male	African American Female	Other Male	Other Female	Total Male	Total Female
Computer & Math	791	381	103	82	67	50	961	513
Architecture & Engineering	197	18	15	3	13	2	225	23
Life, Physical, & Social Science	163	403	15	48	17	44	195	495
Community, Soc Work, Religion	90	261	35	102	2	16	217	379
Legal	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	5
Education, Training, Library	58	169	27	82	3	4	88	255
Art, Design, Entertainment, Media	186	208	34	26	7	10	227	244
Healthcare Practitioners	33	94	0	8	1	5	34	107
Registered Nurse	8	237	1	25	2	3	11	265

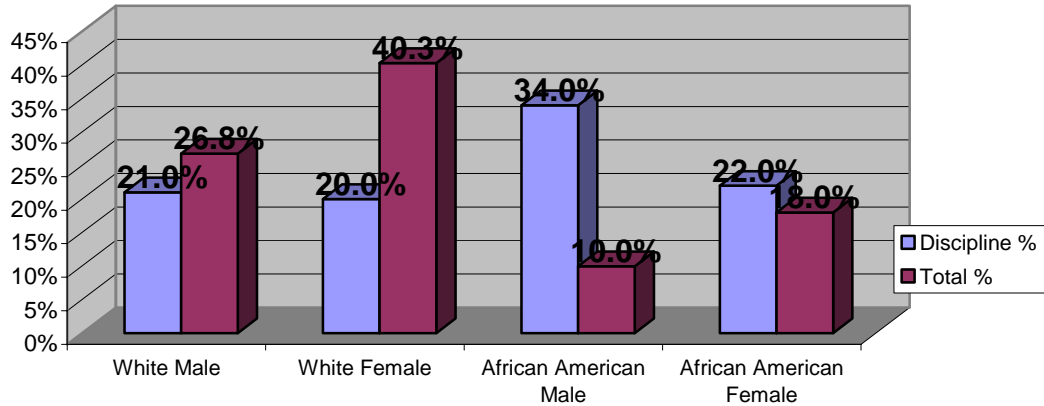
Industry segregation is a point of concern for university employees as well. The university system has females making up its largest demographic group. Males still dominate the professional computer and math classes as well as architecture and engineering, which are considered traditionally male jobs as shown in the table above.

Note: There is a SAAO category in the university system and the information for the university may reflect different totals in the official and administrator category if PMIS could access information on the SAAO category.

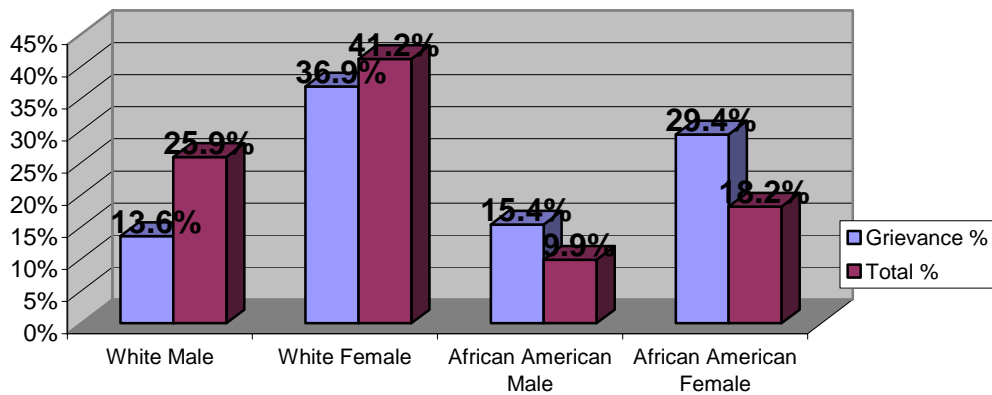
Promotional data for universities show that white females received 46% (40.3% representation) of promotions within the system in 2003. White males accounted for 30% (26.8% representation) of promotions, African American males received 7% (10.1% representation), and African American females accounted for 12% (18% representation) of promotions in 2003. Minority promotions in the university system fall slightly short of their representation in agency promotions.

The 2003 *Personnel Function Report (SB886)* also shows disciplinary actions taken against employees as well as grievances filed by employees who feel they have been treated unfairly. Minorities again are overrepresented based on their total representation as shown in the next two graphs .

Disciplinary Action Taken Compared to Total Representation (University)



Grievances Compared to Total Representation (University)



Section III: Qualitative Analysis - Focus Group Discussions

Methodology

In preparation for the focus groups, five sessions of facilitator orientation were held in June and July 2004; the focus group coordinator facilitated this orientation. These sessions served as training for the facilitators and as data collection on the experience of female employees and their employment within State Government. Along with these five facilitator focus groups, 37 focus groups were held with non-supervisor female employees

and 13 focus groups were held with supervisors of female employees. Thus, during the period of June 23, 2004 through August 13, 2004, a total of 55 focus groups were conducted.

A participation rate of 41% was met within the non-supervisor female employees group with 217 employees attending out of the 527 letters of invitation. A participation rate of 38% was met within the supervisor of female employees group with 56 supervisors attending out of the 147 letters of invitation. The participants were comprised of a random sampling of employees from the university system and within the agencies of Administration, Commerce, Correction, Cultural Resources, Health and Human Service, Justice, Public Instruction, and Transportation.

Qualitative data is a perception of persons participating in focus groups and does lack the strength of quantitative data.

Findings

Along with the focus group coordinator and three members of the Special Emphasis Project –Females project team; individual reading of all of the comments from the 55 focus groups was completed. A meeting was held with these individuals to synthesize the main points from the ten questions across the three distinct groups. The data was analyzed from each question across the three distinct groups and the statements from each question have been summarized into themes and categorized into six areas of employment: work environment, recruitment, career advancement, performance management, compensation, and disciplinary action.

Summary

Qualitative data is a perception of persons participating in focus groups and does lack the strength of quantitative data. The following represents a summary of the themes within the six areas of employment:

I. Work Environment

Across all three groups, the level of communication and respect were dependent upon the supervisor or manager. The level of education and the position held by the employee also impacted the work environment.

Female Employees

- The work environment is fair and some female employees enjoy their working relationship with co-workers.
- Female employees are being heard now more than in the past and are encouraged to give feedback; this may be partly due to the small increase of female managers.

- The utilization of e-mail has improved the communication channel; however, the effectiveness of communication is greatly dependent upon the supervisor.
- The work environment is frustrating and challenging especially since female employees are the primary manager of family life issues.
- Female employees feel as though they are taken for granted and credit is often given to male employees for their work and ideas.
- Often, females are excluded from the full continuum of communication, i.e. they are not included in the meeting before and after the “official” meeting. In some instances, information is shared with a “select” few; the “good ole boy” network and the “good ole girl” network exist in the workplace.
- Females are viewed as aggressive if they voice a different opinion or they may be viewed as a troublemaker.
- Females continue to play a nurturing role in the workplace by being asked to do things that males are not asked to do, such as, setting up meetings or getting coffee.
- Female employees are harder on or treat other females differently than they do male employees.
- Within the university system, female employees covered under the State Personnel Act (SPA) feel that employees exempted from the act (EPA) are more valued and there is a lack of understanding of the policies applicable for SPA employees by EPA staff members.
- Female employees feel that there is a hierarchy of fairness in the order of WM, WF, BM, BF.
- Female employees feel that there is a lack of respect from the public and from contractors doing business with State Government.

Supervisors

The statements expressed by supervisors were based upon their experience with female employees.

- Female employees are dependable, responsible, detailed-oriented, and are the backbone of the agency.
- Female employees follow the chain of command for communication better than male employees.
- Female employees are well respected when they work hard and have good performance.

- Female employees have to prove themselves more than male employees.
- Female employees are more of a challenge to supervisors than males and can be “moody”; the younger generation of female employees are even more demanding.
- Feedback from female employees is not provided because it is not valued and some females are afraid of reprisal.

Facilitators

- Female employees are hard-working and work in a positive environment.
- The communication for female employees is open and they are listened to with equal representation.
- Some female employees feel pushed and repressed to the degree of angry.
- In order for female employees to be accepted, they have to take on male behavioral characteristics.
- Within the work environment, exist a double standard for emotional reactions expressed by females and males; for the same reaction, the female is viewed as emotional and the male is viewed as showing leadership.

II. Recruitment

Across all groups, the recruitment process was viewed as lengthy and slow with temporary employment as the mechanism for entry into State Government.

Female Employees

- Hiring decisions are based upon skill set and the selection committees are balanced.
- Hiring decisions are sometimes based upon favoritism [who you know], family and friend connections [“good ole boy” network], and/or politics.
- Female employees are hired into lower level positions and they often remain in those positions.

Supervisors

- The same hiring process is utilized for female employees and they are hired evenly throughout State Government.
- It is more difficult for females to obtain jobs in male dominated fields just as it is difficult for males to obtain jobs in female dominated fields. Additionally, females do not apply for male dominated jobs on a frequent basis.

- There is some inconsistency in the screening of applicants and applicants may not be completely familiar with the overall hiring process.
- The physical demands of the job and family life issues present challenges for females in applying for jobs.

Facilitators

- It is easy to get hired and letters of reference help in the hiring process.
- Females are hired into lower level positions even if they have a degree whereas males are hired into mid-management level positions.
- Females do not represent themselves well on the application, which may pre-determine their salary and level of position.

III. Career Advancement

Across all groups, it was viewed that training opportunities were made available to employees.

Female Employees

- Vacancy announcements encourage minorities and females to apply.
- There is the presence of “glass ceiling” in the workplace since there are limited opportunities for advancement of female as opposed to males. Males are privileged with mentoring and grooming more than females and it is even harder for black females to be promoted.
- Career paths have not been developed for female employees and training does not always mean advancement.
- If a female employee is a high performer, she is not encouraged by her supervisor to seek advancement opportunities.
- Even if a female has more longevity in service than a male when competing for advancement opportunities, the male is at an advantage.
- Family life issues impact career advancement opportunities.

Supervisors

- The promotional opportunities for females are equal if they are willing to “suck up”.
- A female’s education is overvalued and training does not always provide the necessary skills to perform the job duties.

- Female employees must prove they can do the job and pay their dues for advancement opportunities.
- There are limited opportunities of advancement for all employees.
- The “good ole boy”, “good ole girl” networks, and politics are factors in promotional opportunities just as they are in hiring decisions.

Facilitators

- Female employees may get the title and responsibilities of advancement but no additional compensation.
- As a female, you have to take a lower position to get in the door and then have an ally at a higher level to advance.

IV. Performance Management

Across all groups, the performance management system is believed to be fair if utilized properly. Additionally, all groups believed that the system could be subjective, it is cumbersome, and there was neither connection to rewards nor accountability.

Female Employees

- Supervisor exhibited rater bias in the evaluation process and ratings are sometime inflated for “favorite” employees.
- The system is utilized to justify disciplinary actions after the fact and not utilized as a progressive method of performance and evaluation.
- Some employees are required to write their own expectations and provide their own rating; or mid-level management change evaluations that are completed by supervisors.
- A 360-degree evaluation is needed for supervisors and employees.

Supervisors

- The system needs to be a continuous process, not just an annual event.
- The system is utilized only as a punitive process and not to recognize good performance.
- Female employees are held to a higher standard of evaluation than male employees; however, female employees have higher expectation of the system.

Facilitators

- Gender and race issues impact the distribution of ratings such as female employees being held to higher quantitative standards than males and ratings are more inflated for males than females.

V. Compensation

It was common among all groups that compensation within State Government is low; new hires are often paid more than current employees; and there were numerous statements about the inequities within the skill-based pay system.

Female Employees

- Pay is equitable in State Government for female employees if they are patient and learn the compensation process.
- Female employees are not skilled in the art of negotiation in establishing their hiring salary.
- Female employees are compensated lower than males who have less experience, less knowledge, less education, and lower performance rating for the same job or even a lower level job.
- In-range inequitable [in terms of who gives them and who gets them; favoritism exist in decentralized locations; time frame]

Supervisors

- Management attempts to address and correct pay inequities when it is within their control.
- Traditionally, jobs dominated by females are paid less than those dominated by males.

Facilitators

- The wage gap between females and males is broadening; however, minority females have greater pay inequities.

VI. Disciplinary Action

Across all groups, it was felt that there was inconsistent application of the discipline system.

Female Employees

- There is no preventive measures exercised in the disciplinary system; employees are not provided any coaching to correct improper performance and/or behavior.
- Discipline is avoided even if necessary partly due to the fear of employees filing grievances.
- Some believe that female employees are provided more opportunities before discipline than males and some believe that males are provided more opportunities.

- Lower level employees are disciplined more frequently and/or more stringently than higher-level positions; however, black females are held to a higher standard of conduct than others [e.g. made to sign-out, account for time].

Supervisors

- Female employees view the disciplinary system as unfair.
- Female employees resent being disciplined by other females and accept discipline more readily from males.
- Female supervisors are stricter on other females than males when carrying out disciplinary actions

Facilitators

- Female employees are disciplined for infractions whereas male employees are disciplined for personality conflicts. The personal relationships of females with supervisors impact how they are disciplined.

Recommendations from Focus Groups

The following are recommendations made across all three distinct groups in the six functional areas of employment: work environment, recruitment, promotion/training, performance management, compensation, and discipline:

Work Environment

- work life programs [on-site daycare and after school care; parking; wellness and fitness; better healthcare; telework; flexible work schedules]
- better communication [channels, two-way, timely, accurate, complete, and credible]
- public campaign to enhance respect for state employees
- address EPA vs. SPA disparity within the university system
- diversity accountability for managers especially appropriate use of EEO plans
- interpersonal relationship training for supervisors, managers and employees
- sisterhood support/network [allow females to deal with internalized oppression]

Recruitment

- target recruitment across traditional gender roles to increase female employees in male-dominated jobs and males in female dominated jobs
- streamline the hiring process
- initiate programs to recruit females into professional and management-related positions

Promotion/Training

- provide supervisory training on: discipline, interviewing, diversity, communication, gender discrimination, diversity, sensitivity
- create professional development programs for support staff

- establish a career development agenda for females [career paths, developmental plans, academic assistance, challenging job assignments]
- provide more funding for career and personal development
- design leadership training for females to include negotiation skills
- create empowerment training program for females in communication, being proactive, presentation to eliminate second-guessing and self-censoring
- design a mentoring program for women

Performance Management

- revamp the performance management system
- include 360 feedback for managers as an accountability measure for the performance management system

Compensation

- award merit pay on an annual basis
- review in-range increases to determine if applied in a consistent and fair manner
- review skill-based pay process to determine if applied in a consistent and fair manner
- establish a method to determine explanations for unfavorable female and minority trends
- establish a new wage structure, centered on knowledge, skills, and competencies of similar jobs

Disciplinary Action

- establish a monitoring process for grievance, disciplinary actions, etc.

Section IV: Conclusion

As with the first Special Emphasis Project for African American Males, the trends shown from the data analysis and recommendations offered from the focus groups will provide the foundation for the development of future initiatives to address concerns and issues identified for female employees. The policies and procedures developed from these recommendations will be implemented as pilot programs within pilot agencies and universities.

In reviewing the data analysis and focus group comments in totality, some of the following observations can be made:

- While not accounting for experience, a wage gap does exist between females and male, since:
 - Female employees make-up 48.9% of the total state (SPA) workforce and comprise 71.5% of the low wage occupations. As expressed in the focus groups, females are hired into lower level occupations even if they have a degree and tend to remain in those occupations.

- Female dominated jobs are often paid less than male dominated jobs even if they require the same or a greater amount of education, experience, and responsibilities. As shared in the focus groups, female employees experience difficulty when applying for male dominated occupations.
- There is limited representation of females in occupations that have decision-making responsibilities. Within the focus groups, some female employees felt that there were limited opportunities for their advancement.
- While females collectively are underrepresented in specific occupations, the experience of African American females and white females is different in several aspects of employment such as:
 - African American females hold the majority of the low wage occupations.
 - African American females within the agencies only makeup 7% (with 16% total representation) of the positions with decision-making responsibilities; however white females makeup 38% (with 45% total representation).
 - During the focus group sessions, African American females indicated that they were held to a higher standard of conduct for disciplinary actions than other demographics groups.

The answer to the question: “does the glass ceiling exist in North Carolina State Government for female employees” was not fully answered in this report; therefore, this question should be further explored by reviewing the “Patterns of Pay in NC State Government” report produced in 1982 and updating it with current information for female employees.

In looking at the above data, the highest priority is to study the impact of raising the wages of the lowest paid employees as well as considering the potential initiatives below.

Potential Initiatives for Pilot Programs

The following initiatives are ones for which pilot programs may be developed:

- Develop a Women Leadership Development Program, which should include a Career Advancement component.
- Develop a Mentoring Program for female employees.
- Develop a Support Network for female employees.
- Design Work Life Programs to address issues that impact employment for female employees and study the emotional/psychological challenges for females within State Government.
- Design training programs for supervisors and managers to include information on cultural issues, sensitivity, and communication.
- Review the Career Banding Policy and implementation to determine its impact on compensation for female employees.
- Review the human resources practices within the university system to examine any disparities between EPA and SPA female employees.
- Review in-range adjustment increases to determine the impact on females and other demographic groups.

- Update the 1982 “Pattern of Pay in NC State Government” report with employment data for female employees.

These particular initiatives will be available for all departments and universities that are interested in participating in any potential pilots.

Female employees in the focus groups reported that they have experienced unfavorable employment trends in relationship to their work environment, recruitment, promotion/training, performance management, compensation, and disciplinary actions. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report reflect experiences reported from various focus groups and have not been independently verified by the Office of State Personnel. However, this is an excellent opportunity for North Carolina to continue being a leader by addressing the potential initiative recommendations for female employees.

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