Gender Equity in Professional and General Staff in Australian Universities:

The Contemporary Picture

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Abstract

Most research on employment conditions of university staff has focused on academic staff and excluded all other staff, who now constitute the majority of employees in Australian universities. This article presents a snapshot of these professional staff using data from a 2011 national study of 19 universities, the Work and Careers in Australia University (WCAU¹) survey. Analysis of responses from 10924 general/professional university workers was undertaken and comparisons made where possible with a similar 1996 survey conducted by Probert. The article addresses the ongoing issue of women's slow progress up organisational hierarchies and presents an analysis of some of the mechanisms by which gender equity amongst university professional staff is produced and hindered. Specifically, it addresses questions of educational level, current position in the organisation, appointments, promotion and reclassification of positions, that is advancement through the hierarchy. The article concludes that despite equal educational attainments, women remain less likely than men to reach senior positions.

Key words: professional staff, higher education, career progression, gender segregation, gender

Introduction

There has been significant and long standing research into the academic workforce in Australian universities, including its gender dimensions and disparities (for example, Bagilhole & White 2011; Currie & Thiele 2002; Burton 1997; Castleman & Allen 1995; Chesterman, Ross-Smith & Peters 2003; Probert, Ewer & Whiting 1998). International research has also focused on academic staff, with a considerable body of work on gender, focusing especially on the dearth of women at senior levels (for example, Bagilhole and Goode 2001; Bailyn 2003; Benschop & Brouns 2003; Deem 2003; Groeneveld, Tijdens & van Kleef 2012; Knights & Richards 2003; Morley 1998; Simpson & Lewis 2007). In contrast, much less attention has been paid to the overall demographics, roles, working conditions and aspirations of other staff in the university workforce. Despite this group of staff constituting 54 per cent of the total full time equivalent university workforce in 2011 (DISSTRE 2012), they are largely ‘invisible’ in the research agenda (Conway 2000; Dobson 2000, 2010; Szekeres 2004, 2006). It is a feminised workforce, with 64 per cent being female (compared to 35 per cent of tenured academics) (DISSRTE 2012), and increasingly so, having risen from 58 per cent in 1996 (Dobson 2010). The sector has expanded markedly in the past two decades. Between 1989 and 2007, student numbers doubled and administrative staff numbers grew by 40 per cent (Dobson 2010). The growth of new public management (NPM) with its emphasis on top down control, efficiency and ‘measurables’, has added layers of complexity to administrative (and academic) work (Carvalho & de Lourdes Machado 2011; Goransson 2011).

There is debate about nomenclature for this group of staff. ‘Non-academic’ staff has frequently been used and is the term used by the government department which collects

university statistics. Other terms used are ‘allied’, ‘administrative’, ‘general’ and ‘professional’ staff. The term that will be used in this article is ‘professional staff’, as many staff are within the commonly recognised professions or are academically qualified staff performing sophisticated administrative roles and specialised in university administration. Nevertheless, the group is varied. All these staff are now classified as Higher Education Worker (HEW) in the relevant Modern Award. There are 10 levels in this structure, encompassing HEW levels 1 to 10, the highest level. The category of ‘above HEW level 10’ is used in the industry for the most senior managerial staff, and in some universities there may be a ‘below HEW level 1’ category, both of which levels are beyond the scope of the Award. This HEW structure (given a local name in some universities) was introduced in 1991 and persists in the relevant Modern Award which dates from 2010 (Dobson 2000; Wallace & Marchant 2011). It is used in all university enterprise agreements which regulate pay and working conditions.

After two decades of continuous sectoral change, this article offers a snapshot of the professional staff workforce in Australian universities using recent research from the Work and Careers in Australia University (WCAU) survey of 19 universities, undertaken in 2011 (Strachan, Troup, Peetz, Whitehouse, Broadbent & Bailey 2012). Where applicable, findings from this survey are compared with a smaller national survey undertaken in 1996 (Probert et al. 1998) and with current government statistics (DISSRTE 2012).

Following Roos and Gatta (2009) in their study of academic women in an arts and science faculty of a USA university, the article examines, from a gender perspective, four issues that are equally applicable to professional staff: access to positions (that is, position of first hiring); representation of women within the hierarchy; promotion; and access to leadership positions. We add 'educational levels' as it is a key element of human capital for staff within the knowledge-intensive context of universities. We omit 'salary' from our consideration since, with some caveats, hierarchical position (classification) is a good proxy for salary in the Australian public university context given the dominance and influence of enterprise agreements. We also examine levels of aspiration. The article is informed by a feminist standpoint approach (Harding 1991) that puts women in the picture, and also by critical realism (Denzin & Lincoln 2005), a belief that there is an independent reality, in this case supported by statistical information.

The Professional Workforce in Universities

The university workforce is employed by 39 Australian institutions. In addition to academic staff, it is occupationally diverse, ranging from maintenance workers to librarians, grounds staff to engineers, health workers to graphic artists. Many, however, do specialist administrative work not tied to a particular occupational qualification. The largest numbers of administrative staff are in academic departments (43 per cent), followed by administration and overheads (24 per cent) and academic support services (18 per cent) (Dobson 2010).

Universities have long been acknowledged as gendered institutions by virtue of their division and organisation of labour (Aitkin 2001; Benschop & Brouns 2003; Kantola 2008). Horizontal and vertical segregation have been found among academic and

professional staff in universities in a number of countries, including Australia (see Bagilhole & White 2010). Horizontal segregation is evident when women have different occupations from men; vertical segmentation occurs where both genders are in the same occupation and men fill higher positions (White 2011). At the same time, universities adopt strong discourses of meritocracy (Sliwa & Johannsson 2013) and, in gender terms, particularly in Australia, are considered to be at the forefront of organisational equity initiatives (Strachan et al. 2012: 1). It is this paradox that this article seeks to explore, to determine the degree of segregation that remains in the face of the sector's gender equity initiatives. For the purposes of clarity and for reasons of space, the article will focus on vertical segmentation, with analysis of horizontal segregation to occur in subsequent analyses.

Evidence of gender segregation is longstanding and persistent. Studies in the 1990s found that women were clustered into lower paying administrative ranks (Castleman & Allen 1995; McLean 1996; Wieneke 1995). The contemporary picture shows that only 18 of the 39 Australian universities reach the sector target of 50 per cent or more women at HEW 10 level (Jackson 2010). More encouragingly, however, the proportion of women at HEW levels 8–10 rose from 26 per cent in 1996 to 41 per cent in 2009 (Jackson 2010). The overall picture is therefore one of progress in terms of improving women's position in the general staff hierarchy. Such improvements have not however brought women to parity with men.

Qualitative studies of professional staff in universities have provided evidence of the impact of such gender segregation. Significant work by Eveline and colleagues explored the gendered hierarchy of universities, and how 'non-academic' or 'general' staff work is conceived and gender is 'done' in the case study university, using the 'ivory basement' metaphor to symbolise the position of general staff (Eveline 2004). Wallace and

Marchant (2011) found that professional women in middle management (from HEW 7) have a variety of concerns: ‘academic apartheid’ where administrative staff are seen as possessing less decision-making status than (especially male) academics; discrimination; homosocial cultures with hidden decision making processes; unsupportive human resource practices; lack of senior female role models; and work/family conflict. Long hours of work, pressure to return early from maternity leave due to the nature of the work, ‘presenteeism’ and performativity were all identified as part of the cultural expectations of working in more senior roles in higher education. Research on professional staff pay and the related issue of classification levels has been ongoing (Castleman & Allen 1995; McLean 1996; Wieneke 1995; Probert et al. 1998). In Probert’s study, the gender pay gap was nearly 19 per cent; controlling for ‘human capital’ and ‘job content’ meant men still earned \$37 more than women per fortnight (Probert et al. 1998: 64). As the system of awards and agreements largely prevents gender pay inequity between similar jobs (in the same institution) – with the possible exception of confidential merit or other ‘performance’ loadings which would only generally apply at the highest levels, and then not to all jobs – pay inequity in academia is largely the result of vertical segregation; that is, women’s jobs being clustered at lower levels.

In sum, the very limited literature shows that women in the professional workforce in universities are part of a feminised workforce (and becoming more so) and have lower representation than men at more senior levels. Despite the useful findings, much of the literature is exploratory and, with the exception of Probert et al. (1998) is set within single institutions, examines particular general staff occupations, and/or studies women only (not men). Thus the data set we use, described below, is unusually large and rich, and allows us to examine gender disparities with in some depth.

Theoretical perspectives

Women's slow progress within organisational career ladders has been a concern of feminist scholars since the 1970s. Some theoretical approaches focus on individuals, while others examine the organisational context (Tharenou 1999). Two commonly-cited approaches are 'pipeline theory' – where human capital is key – and 'the glass ceiling', which focuses on the organisational forces that keep women from progressing (LaPierre & Zimmerman 2012: 101). They are, respectively, 'supply-side' and 'demand-side' explanations (Stockdale & Nadler 2013). 'Pipeline theory' is based on the premise that education and other factors equip individuals with knowledge, skills and/or superior ability ('human capital'), which assist in enhancing their productivity, thus raising their current and future incomes (Becker 1964: 9; Spence 1973). The pipeline model was first invoked with respect to science occupations (Metcalf 2010) but is potentially applicable to all career hierarchies. Positivist and optimistic, the model predicts that women will 'eventually' progress to equality with men when they enter (and remain in) the career hierarchy 'pipeline' in sufficient numbers. However, even allowing for elaborations such as 'leaks' and 'blockages', the model is flawed as it is built on the assumptions that careers and people are homogenous (Hammonds & Subramaniam 2003) and individuals lack agency (Metcalf 2010), and that it is employees who need to change, rather than institutional practices (Husu 2001: 176, citing Schebinger 1999). The model thus ignores power relations (including male power) and the dynamics and mechanisms of gender inequality (Husu 2001: 179). The 'glass ceiling effect', on the other hand, while it shifts the focus to institutional practices, is somewhat static (although glass ceilings can be 'raised' and even 'shattered'). Like the pipeline theory, it restricts (or grossly simplifies) agency and the mechanisms that keep women in their place.

Beyond the 'pipeline' and the 'glass ceiling', there are approaches that explore more 'subtle sex biases' that are generally agreed to have replaced outright discrimination and

overt exclusion (Roos & Gatta 2009: 177). Such subtle biases can co-exist in organisations with active gender equity strategies and meritocratic approaches, because supposedly ‘neutral’ criteria can contain a gender bias (Bagihole & Goode 2001). Such is the strength of current discourses of meritocracy and choice that a number of studies have shown how women are ‘reluctant to locate [gender based inequities] within gendered organizational regimes’ in ‘[a] “denial” of gender discrimination’ (Broadbridge & Simpson 2011: 476-477, citing various studies). Biases include ‘nonconscious beliefs and attitudes that operate through workplace interactions, and through the use of subjective policies and procedures institutionalized in the academic workplace’ (Roos & Gatta 2009: 177) such as the mechanisms uncovered by Wallace and Marchant (2009). Such biases may explain why some studies have found women have lower aspirations than men; this may be in response to a lack of workplace recognition and advancement opportunities which sees women ‘adjust’ their expectations accordingly (LaPierre & Zimmerman 2012: 115).

Beliefs and attitudes are difficult to study in themselves. Our study, however, offers detailed data about the ‘mechanisms of inequity’ (Roos & Gatta 2009: 182), which often ‘do not require a conscious motive to discriminate’ but rather ‘reflect traditional ways of doing business, historical legacies, and/or the mapping of nonconscious attitudes, prejudices, and stereotyping about men and women onto organizational interactions and decision making’ (Roos & Gatta 2009: 195). Further, they are ‘multilevel phenomena’ (LaPierre & Zimmerman 2012: 101) and thus persist despite conscious strategising to eliminate them. Examining the mechanisms by which gender equity amongst university professional staff is produced (and hindered) is the approach adopted in this article although, because of the multiple nature of the phenomenon, choices need to be made about what mechanisms to focus on.

Adopting this theoretical stance our review identified several research questions regarding the mechanisms that affect gender equity amongst professional staff:

- What are the educational levels of female and male HEW workers?
- Where are women and men currently situated in the HEW levels?
- What is the relationship between educational qualifications and classification level?
- What are the respective positions at which women and men are first hired?
- What are women's and men's respective promotional experiences and career aspirations?
- And finally, what kinds of explanations can be advanced for any observed differences between women and men?

Data and methodology

The data reported in this article is drawn from the Work and Careers in Australian Universities survey (WCAU). Nineteen universities participated in the study which was undertaken in 2011. The overall aim of the project was to advance understanding of existing gender inequalities in Australian universities. Three separate groups of university employees were examined: academic staff, general/professional staff and casual teaching academics. Separate surveys were developed for each of the staff groups to enable comparison with earlier research in the Australian university sector conducted by Probert et al. (1998) (all references are from chapter 5: p 63-81, which hereafter will be referred to as 'the Probert study'). Each of the surveys contained approximately 200 questions on a broad range topics related to work and life, including demographics, personal characteristics, detailed job information (classification levels, working hours and

workload), career history and job attitudes. In this article we focus our analysis of the general staff responses only.

The current research and the earlier Probert study differ in scope. Probert conducted a randomised study of 18 universities obtaining a 41 per cent response rate from professional staff respondents. Probert's sample was relatively consistent with the national statistics at the time but slightly under-representative of lower HEW classifications (Probert et al. 1998: 63). A total of 2,192 professional staff participated, with 2,076 respondents providing information on their HEW classification. The WCAU dataset is larger but purposeful with 11,674 professional staff participating and 10,924 providing their HEW classification. An average institutional participation of 34 per cent was obtained from the 19 universities that participated. The respondents represent employees from large, metropolitan, regional, and research intensive institutions within Australia and from the major groupings proposed by Larkins (2011).

For this article a subset of 10,924 participants was selected, who provided their HEW job classification, which is central to examining our research questions. Consisting of 7,619 women (70 per cent) and 3,305 men (30 per cent), women are somewhat over-represented in the sub-sample compared to DISSRTE statistics.

A majority of these employees are Australian born, (69 per cent, $n = 4,898$ of women and 66 per cent, $n = 2,048$ of men), with only 1 per cent identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Straits Islander. Overseas born are largely from the United Kingdom (26 per cent), and New Zealand (9 per cent). The average age of professional staff in the sample is 43 years of age for women and 44 years of age for men. Only 10 per cent of the sample are under 29 years of age; 20 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men were aged 55 years and over. Two-thirds (71 per cent) of the sample reported living in a close personal

relationship (68 per cent of women and 76 per cent of men). Less than half reported that they had some kind of caring responsibilities (40.5 per cent, including care of dependent children less than 18 years of age and adults who needed regular daily care).

Over two-thirds of the professional staff are currently employed full-time (93.5 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women). Half of the part-timers work between 20 and 29 hours but nearly a quarter report they work over 30 hours a week. The majority of the respondents hold ongoing appointments (77 per cent of men and 71 per cent of women). The median number of years in the university sector since their first fixed-term or ongoing appointment is six years for women and seven years for men (combining full-time and part-time years worked at HEW level classifications). The majority of respondents have worked full-time only in the sector (85.6 per cent of men have worked full time for the whole period since appointment, against 65.2 per cent of women). Typically, more women than men have worked part-time only (14.9 per cent of women compared with 4.7 per cent of men), or have had periods of part-time and full-time work (19.9 per cent of women and 9.7 per cent of men).

The analysis used the chi square (χ^2) statistic to determine statistical significance between men and women within some of the tables in the analysis. Chi square tests the strength of the association between two categories and examines the distribution of responses in terms of the differences between observed and expected frequencies for each cell. Statistical significance at the level of $p < 0.01$, that is 1 per cent, is the cut-off point used to provide evidence that an association is significant between the two categories and not the result of chance. As the sample is large we use .01 to reduce the likelihood of making a Type 1 error, a false positive, more likely in large samples (De Vaus 2002).

Findings

We first examine educational qualifications, which are an important factor in human capital. We then look at sex differences in HEW levels, correlating qualifications with HEW levels. We then examine two important factors relating to advancement which are dynamic in nature; that is, sex differences in level of first appointment and decisions about, and attitudes towards, applying for promotion.

Educational qualifications

Professional staff in universities have always been highly qualified. Almost all (97 per cent of men and 96 per cent of women) have post school qualifications, making them much more qualified than the general population (Figure 1). Comparing the WCAU survey results with the 1996 Probert sample and the ABS census data for 1996 and 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012; Probert et al. 1998), two notable changes have occurred. The proportion of staff with qualifications has increased, and the qualifications gap that existed in 1996 between women and men has been eliminated.

Figure 1 about here

Details of the level of qualifications are set out in Figure 2, providing a useful comparison between the current study and the Probert study. Both women and men have increased their human capital between 1996 and 2011, a difference of 31 per cent for women and 29 per cent for men. In 2011 the number of women and men with degrees is equal (75.7 per cent of women and 76.7 per cent of men had bachelor's degree or higher). There is also a marked decrease in 2011 in HEW workers with secondary school only qualifications. Part of this change is undoubtedly due to increased human capital in terms of more education, but it may also be accounted for by the increased outsourcing of lower level jobs such as cleaning, catering and security (Paul & Leese 2009) which have now disappeared as 'higher education' jobs. Overall, the increase in post-graduate qualifications is

substantial, for both sexes, and the gender differences are now minimal ($\chi^2 = 9430$, $p > 0.05$).

Figure 2 about here

HEW levels

Given the increasing, and now identical, educational attainment of women, a key question is: has this translated into higher HEW classifications? Table 1 shows current HEW levels for women and men. While the proportion of women and men at HEW levels 6 and 7 are similar, women are more likely than men to be at HEW levels 4 and 5. Men dominate at levels 8 and above and are twice as likely as women to be at HEW level 9 and above. A similar pattern was recorded in the 1996 Probert sample wherein men dominated at the levels of HEW 7 and above.

Table 1 about here

Numbers employed at HEW levels 1 to 3 have dropped considerably (DEEWR 2010). There has therefore been a shift upwards in the level to which people are first appointed, an artefact of the changing workforce composition of the sector which is a result of contracting out since the 1990s of lower level jobs. Probert found that 70.6 per cent of general staff were clustered between HEW 3 and HEW 6, while in 2011 the WCAU survey found that 72.3 per cent were clustered between HEW levels 5 and 8. There may also be some effects from increasing technological complexity of some jobs leading to higher classification levels. Whatever the reasons, there has in the last 15 years been a 'shift upwards' of two HEW levels in the 'average' professional job in the sector. The average classification level of women, however, is still lower than that of men.

Educational Attainment and HEW Levels

Given that overall educational attainment is similar for women and men, how does education correlate with HEW level? Professional staff at HEW levels 8, 9, 10 are more likely to hold postgraduate qualifications (60 per cent for women compared to 51 per cent of men) and at the more senior levels (74 per cent for women compared to 63 per cent of men). However, Figure 3 shows that while increased post-school qualifications are associated with higher HEW levels, they do not necessarily translate into higher HEW levels for all. This is evidenced by the large proportion of women and men with postgraduate qualifications in levels 5, 6 and 7, albeit in somewhat smaller proportions than those with undergraduate qualifications.

Figure 3 about here

Level of first appointment

The literature on discrimination suggests that ‘allocative discrimination’ at first appointment can affect future career progress (Roos & Gatta 2009: 182, citing Petersen & Saporta 2004). Probert’s analysis showed that the level of current appointment was strongly determined by the initial appointment. Figure 3 shows data from our study with respect to the level of first appointment for women and men by the year and level of appointment to the university sector. Women were more likely than men to obtain their first position at the lower levels of the scale: first appointments cluster at HEW levels 3 to 5 for women, and men’s at levels 4 to 6. However, the breadth of the gap between women’s and men’s appointments has narrowed to some degree since the Probert study, although it is still clear that men are more likely than women to reach the senior levels.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 about here

Advancement

The survey collected an extensive amount of data on career history. We present here is a preliminary examination of some major issues progression from first appointment. Once entry to the sector has occurred, professional staff may rise through the ranks, most commonly by applying for advertised jobs, by promotion and less commonly by reclassification of their current job. Women not only aspire to higher level roles but also apply for them. Just over one half (53 per cent) of professional staff reported that they had applied for promotion to a higher appointment in the last five years at the university where they are currently employed. There are no differences between men's and women's application rates ($\chi^2 = .229$, $p > 0.05$). Further examination of this data found that one quarter had applied twice in the past five years (24 per cent), while 12 per cent had applied three times. Table 2 shows success rates of respondents who had applied at least once, indicating that women appeared to be slightly more successful in their applications than men. Further analysis among those who had never been successful ($n=1194$) found that 9 per cent had tried on six or more occasions in the past five years. Clearly women aspire to (see Figure 6) and apply for promotion to higher levels, have the human capital equal to men's in terms of educational qualifications and are just as, or slightly more, successful than men when they apply.

Table 2 about here

Some professional staff advance by means of classification review; that is, a detailed examination of the characteristics and responsibilities of their current position through a standardised internal university process. A successful review will usually result in an

advancement of one HEW level. Just over one third of the professional staff (37 per cent of women and 36 per cent of men) reported their job had undergone a classification review in the past five years. Of those who had had a classification review, almost two-thirds (59 per cent of women and 57 per cent of men) had their position reclassified to a higher level (see Table 3).

Table 3 about here

The data in the WCAU survey allows us to see what movement professional staff have made within the classification structure (see Table 4). Among women, 50 per cent or more appointed at HEW levels 5 remain at their appointment level. For men, high levels of 'no movement' are not found until HEW levels 7 and above. Interestingly, women appointed at higher levels appear to go backwards more often than men. Getting to the most senior levels is more difficult for women than men; only 20 per cent of women as compared to 50 per cent of the men appointed at HEW 10 moved up to the final level. We examined what had happened to employees who gained their first appointment after 2005 (see Table 5). Even in this case, men are significantly more likely to move up the hierarchy of HEW levels.

Tables 4 and 5 about here

Examining participants' current duties, women are much less likely to have experience in managerial activities such as managing staff and budgets. Thirty-seven per cent of women report supervising staff as part of their current role in comparison to 48 per cent of men; 47 per cent of women train other staff in comparison to 54 per cent of men; 25 per cent of women manage a budget in comparison to 31 per cent of men; and 34 per cent of women

authorise payments in comparison to 34 per cent of men. This may be related to current, relative HEW levels and the fact that 25 per cent of the women (in contrast to 7 per cent of men) report working part-time; however, further investigation is needed.

One of the vexed questions in the career advancement literature with respect to gender equity is the level of aspiration of women versus men (LaPierre & Zimmerman 2012: 104) which will potentially affect career trajectory. Our survey therefore asked participants where they would like to be in five years' time. Women and men aspire equally to higher level positions (see Figure 6). However, there is a preference among women, for a higher, non-managerial position in preference to a managerial position. In contrast, men with promotion/higher duties aspirations express a preference for a higher managerial position.

Figure 6 about here

Discussion and conclusion

This article has reported demographic and work related data for professional staff who participated in the WCAU survey in 2011. This data provides a snapshot of conditions. We are fortunate that we can make comparisons with data collected in 2006 in the Probert study, although comparisons are limited since the detailed data is no longer available and we must rely on the published report (Probert et al. 1998). This provides us with a perspective on some of the changes which have occurred over 15 years. There are some limitations as the sampling frames differed so we are not comparing like with like.

Probert's sample was smaller and was a random sample (n = 2,192, with only 2,076 providing information on HEW level) whereas the WCAU study consisted of a larger and purposeful sample. However, some comparison allows us to see both change and continuity.

The overall conclusion is that, despite women's predominance as professional staff in universities, they remain under-represented at the senior ranks. It is clear that vertical gender segregation still operates in Australian universities in the clustering of women and men at certain HEW levels, such that differences in HEW levels between the sexes still persist.

Educational qualifications have improved for both sexes, but more so for women such that there is now parity between the sexes. Almost all staff possess post-school qualifications. Men are more likely than women to be represented in the senior HEW levels. Women dominate the lower levels of the hierarchy in HEW levels 1-5, and are less represented than men at levels 8 and above, a similar picture to 1996. However, women are now equally represented at HEW level 7 and are more likely to attain senior levels than women were in 1996, although still less likely than men. More women than men at HEW levels 5, 6 and 7 have post school qualifications but this reverses at HEW level 8 and above, and further investigation is needed to discover the relationship between educational qualifications and classification level.

Women's level of first appointment continues to be lower than men's, and there is still a seeming barrier to women beyond HEW level 7. Some women are now moving through a 'pipeline' to positions above HEW 7 level in comparison to Probert's findings, which is an encouraging sign for the future. Indeed, women appear to have reached critical mass (considered to be 30 per cent by Kanter 1977) in HEW levels 8 and above (41 per cent),

but they are not yet at critical mass across the sector at HEW level 10 and above. It will be instructive to examine the 'pipeline' in different work sections (for example central administration, student administration, library services and information technology services) to see if there are differences. In addition, mapping the career trajectories of women who have risen beyond HEW 7 may also provide insights.

Women aspire to advancement in the same way that men do, and apply for promotion and reclassification of their jobs in equal proportions. Women and men have approximately the same success rates in both these routes to advancement. Women's career aspirations are also similar to men's, with 54 per cent of staff wanting a higher level position in their university. A difference appears, however, in the type of work desired. Women are more likely to aspire to a higher level non-managerial position and men are more likely to aspire to a higher level managerial position. There may be a number of explanations for this. It may be that women tend to get promoted in at lower classification levels than men, where managerial roles are scarce. It may reflect the current job positions of women and men where men are more likely than women to currently have a supervisory/managerial position. The data confirm others' findings that women often express lower (or different) career aspirations to men, but we do not know whether the reasons for this are endogenous to women, or shaped by the organisational environment (Broadbridge & Simpson 2011) in this particular case. Metz and Tharenou (2001) suggest that human capital supports progression to certain levels with the organisation, but social capital in terms of networks, relationships and organisational 'fit' are more important than educational qualifications for further progression. This is particularly so in a sector where employees' educational attainments are now universally so high, and may explain aspects of our findings. Relatedly, the difficulty of combining managerial work with family responsibilities leads women to 'choose' a non-managerial career path. Further

examination of the survey data and fine grained qualitative analysis is needed to probe some of the issues. For instance, the particular position of part-time women workers and the nature of their career trajectories will be the subject of further detailed analysis.

In sum, there are some promising indications that professional staff women are progressing through a somewhat 'squeezed' pipeline. Possible explanatory factors include the particular section of university administration in which staff work, and this will be the subject of future research using the WCAU survey data. Other possible explanations revolve around women's access to various forms of social capital in terms of in-house training, leadership development, networking and mentoring, and access to informal power elites that may support advancement to higher levels. Attention to organisational decision-making regarding levels of first appointment, and provision of part-time managerial positions, are areas where universities can proactively support administrative women's advancement by ensuring there are 'organizational catalysts' (Sturm 2006) to create change. Difficult as institutional change is, it necessarily runs alongside strategies to increase women's workplace social capital.

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Figure 1: Post-school qualifications: percentage comparison of university workers and general population, 1996–2011

Table 1: Current HEW classifications: Work and Careers and Probert comparisons

	Work and Careers 2011			Probert 1996		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
HEW 1 & 2	1.1	1.0	1.0	4.2	5.7	4.7
HEW 3	2.9	3.0	3.0	18.2	8.0	14.5
HEW 4	12.4	6.2	10.5	22.5	12.5	18.9
HEW 5	24.8	14.3	21.6	19.8	18.6	19.4
HEW 6	20.0	18.9	19.7	17.9	17.6	17.8
HEW 7	16.2	18.4	16.9	8.0	15.6	10.8
HEW 8	12.1	18.9	14.1	5.6	9.2	6.9
HEW 9	5.7	9.4	6.8	2.0	6.6	3.7
HEW 10	3.1	5.0	3.7	1.4	4.9	2.7
Above HEW 10	1.7	4.8	2.6	0.3	1.3	0.7
%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total respondents	7619	3305	10924	1322	754	2076
Total %	69.7	30.3	100.0%	63.7	36.3	100.0%

Figure 2: Highest educational attainment

Figure 3: Educational attainment and HEW level (Work and Careers 2011)

Figure 4: Year and level of first appointment (Work and Careers 2011)

Figure 5: Year and level of first appointment (Probert 1996)

Table 2: Success rate applying for promotion (Work and Careers 2011)

	Women %	Men %	Total
Have never been successful	22	28	24
Successful less than half the times I have applied	10	11	10
Successful more than half the times I have applied, but not every application successful	14	13	14
All my applications have been successful	54	48	52
% of respondents	100%	100%	100%
Number of respondents	3461	1522	4983

Table 3: Has the classification of your current job been reviewed within the last five years (Work and Careers 2011)

	Women %	Men %	Total
The job was not reclassified	28	31	29
The job was classified at a higher level	59	57	58
Still waiting to hear the outcome	6	5	6
Don't know	7	7	7
% of respondents	100%	100%	100%
Number of respondents	2278	990	3268

Table 4: Advancement by level of first appointment (Work and Careers 2011)

Gender		HEW level in first appointment							Total
		4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	
Women	Gone Backwards	.3	1.2	3.2	2.5	4.2	5.0	6.9	1.8
	No Progression	31.8	52.3	51.7	61.3	69.4	75.2	73.6	48.7
	Moved 1 HEW level	26.7	19.6	22.1	21.1	15.7	12.1	19.5	22.0
	Moved 2 HEW levels	19.7	13.8	13.4	9.7	7.0	7.8		14.3
	Moved 3 HEW levels	11.1	7.8	5.4	3.8	3.7			7.4
	Moved 4 HEW levels	6.3	3.3	3.4	1.6				3.7
	Moved 5 HEW levels	2.4	1.1	.8					1.2
	Moved 6 HEW levels	1.0	.9						.6
	Moved 7 HEW levels	.6							.2
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Men	Gone Backwards	.2	.9	1.0	.5	2.9	2.3	2.9	1.1
	No Progression	20.6	36.4	46.4	56.4	72.8	78.5	49.0	44.4
	Moved 1 HEW level	20.2	23.2	20.3	24.7	14.2	12.3	48.0	21.8
	Moved 2 HEW levels	22.4	15.5	19.1	9.8	4.2	6.9		14.6
	Moved 3 HEW levels	19.3	15.8	7.2	5.1	5.9			10.8
	Moved 4 HEW levels	10.8	5.6	3.1	3.5				4.8
	Moved 5 HEW levels	3.5	2.1	2.9					1.8
	Moved 6 HEW levels	1.9	.5						.5
	Moved 7 HEW levels	1.2							.2
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5: Advancement for people appointed since 2005 (Work and Careers 2011)

		HEW level in first appointment							Total
		4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	
Women	Gone Backwards	.3	1.2	2.7	2.3	3.3	2.8	5.6	1.6
	No Progression	51.4	66.8	66.6	74.7	80.6	87.0	77.8	65.5
	Moved 1 HEW level	28.7	19.1	20.5	15.8	13.2	4.6	16.7	20.6
	Moved 2 HEW levels	13.5	9.1	8.4	5.9	1.5	5.6		8.9
	Moved 3 HEW levels	3.9	3.0	1.3	1.1	1.5			2.5
	Moved 4 HEW levels	1.7	.7	.5	.2				.8
	Moved 5 HEW levels	.2	.1						.1
	Moved 6 HEW levels	.2							.1
	Column %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
Men	Gone Backwards	.4	1.1	1.1	.4	3.4	1.0	1.6	1.2
	No Progression	38.5	58.9	66.9	74.4	84.6	85.4	60.3	64.9
	Moved 1 HEW level	26.1	22.2	19.2	19.6	8.6	9.7	38.1	19.9
	Moved 2 HEW levels	21.4	11.1	9.3	4.8	1.7	3.9		9.2
	Moved 3 HEW levels	11.5	6.1	2.5		1.7			4.0
	Moved 4 HEW levels	2.1	.6	.7	.8				.7
	Moved 5 HEW levels			.4					.1
	Column %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

Figure 6: Career aspirations for the next five years (Work and Careers 2011)