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Editorial

Looking for a Few Good Companies

Gender issues continue to be a source of heated discussions. Most recently in the news is the debate about changes being made to Title IX, a portion of the Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding. Although most of the discussion is focused on athletics, it's a clear example that women still continue to battle gender inequity issues.

In the realm of engineering, the percentage of females is continuing to grow (85% male to 15% female), albeit lower than other areas such as business (70% male to 30% female), medicine (55% male to 45% female) and law (56% male and 44% female), according to the 2002 U.S. World and News Report. Many milestones have been achieved. Just take for example our very first female president, Dr. Dianne Dorland. Also, I can still remember how proud I was attending Cooper Union, where Dr. Eleanor Baum was the first female dean of engineering (she is an electrical engineer). And although Fran Keeth is not a chemical engineer, she heads one of the largest global chemical entities, Shell Chemicals LP.

With this in mind, we will devote a special section in August to cover the achievements of females in engineering. We will provide analysis of where females stand in industry and academia. Furthermore, we will take a look at the careers of several women who hold high-level positions in industry and academia. As a complement to individual profiles, we want to offer profiles on companies who have advanced women's careers. This may not necessarily mean promoting them or giving them higher salaries. It could come in the form of improved work-life balance. How many companies have in-house daycare centers? In some cases it's impractical, but in others it may make sense. How many companies offer flexible hours or telecommuting programs? How many offer generous disability benefits? All of these added benefits make a difference.

If you think that your company is at the forefront of leadership in retaining female engineers, then we kindly ask that you nominate your company for coverage in this special section of *CEP*. We think that it will be a great way for you to show your appreciation for your company, as well as give other companies ideas as to how to retain the valuable female workforce. Please send all nominations to cepedit@aiche.org. Thanks for all of your input into what I'm sure will be a special and interesting August issue.

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