Women in the Law

Can the race for equality be won?
BY VICKI SANDERS AND LEAH HERSCOVICI '18

For several decades women have been entering and graduating from law school in numbers almost equal to men. They have also been entering the legal profession at near equal rates for thirty years. Yet, equality in the legal ranks declines for women over time, and salaries for men and women in the field are not commensurate. Add to these realities the growing number of revelations about workplace biases and harassment—along with employers’ growing willingness to support diversity programs—and a picture emerges of an industry in transition, with all the challenges and opportunities that such change entails.

At numerous BC Law events this past semester, these issues were probed, debated, and debated at length. While all the participants were very clear-eyed about the hardships they’ve faced and the social norms and barriers that have hindered women’s progress, they were also optimistic, enthusiastic, and committed to pushing forward.

One conversation focused on the need for and impact of diversity. An Asian lawyer observed that finding role models can be hard for women of her race. She also offered a formula for change: “We’ve got to bring ourselves up and bring everyone below up with us.”

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