

Report Says OSU Domestic Workers Suffer Employment Discrimination Because of Sex

Domestic workers at Oregon State University are being discriminated against because they are female, according to a report issued recently by the Office for Civil Rights—a division of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"Employees in the job classification of domestic worker constitute an 'affected class' who, by virtue of past discrimination, continue to suffer the present effects of that discrimination," the report says.

"An affected class consists of minorities and/or females who were placed, at any time in the past, into less desirable and lower paying jobs because of race or sex."

The HEW study found that "no substantial degree of difference exists among the duties performed by domestic workers and custodial workers, particularly in the physical plant."

It says a breakdown of employees by sex in the domestic worker 1-2-3 and custodial worker and custodial worker supervisor 1-2 job classifications at OSU shows that 95 per cent of the domestic workers are women, and 96 per cent of the custodial workers are men.

The job classifications of domestic worker and custodial worker both require as minimum experience and training "sufficient elementary school education to insure ability to read and write, or any equivalent combination of experience and training."

"An analysis of the applicant files for these two classifications revealed that of 108 applications for the position of domestic worker, 105 were from females," the report notes. "Eighty-three applications were on file for the position of custodial worker, 79 from males."

"However," the report notes, "under the 'Position(s) Applied For' section of the application forms in the domestic worker file, numerous female applicants had entered custodial worker, janitor, or housekeeper. This had been crossed out and domestic worker inserted."

The report says Oregon State University's failure "to afford appropriate remedies to affected class employees" is a violation of Executive Order 11246 issued by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965.

It prohibits government contractors from discriminating in employment practices because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

"The university must achieve salary equity between employees in the job classification of domestic worker and that of custodial worker," the HEW report says.

"Discrimination against the domestic workers continues until the victims are made whole by the provision of back pay. Back pay is required back to October 13, 1968."

In May, 1971 OSEA asked the Civil Rights Division of Oregon's Bureau of Labor to investigate nine complaints of sex discrimination in state employment filed by female employees at five Oregon colleges and universities.

All of the complaints were filed by women classified as domestic workers who claimed they perform the same work as male employees classified as custodial workers but get less pay.

Schools involved in the complaints are OSU, Oregon College of Education in Monmouth, the University of Oregon in Eugene, Southern Oregon College in Ashland and Oregon Technical Institute in Klamath Falls. All of the women work in housing departments, student unions and physical plants.

The salary range for a custodial worker is \$466—\$489—\$513. The salary range for a domestic worker is \$346—\$364—\$383. That's a difference of \$120 at the first step, \$125 at the second and \$130 at the third.

The complaints filed with OSEA were turned over to the Bureau of Labor's Civil Rights Division for investigation by staff member John M. Schoonover. Oregon law prohibits discrimination in employment

practices on account of race, religion, color, national origin, sex and, in some cases, age.

However, the HEW study of OSU's employment practices and policies was not triggered by the complaints, according to Larry P. Omo, a civil rights specialist employed by the agency's Office for Civil Rights in Seattle.

He said it is the agency's responsibility to conduct studies of employment practices of institutions receiving federal funds to make sure they are complying with federal law and executive orders.

He said the OSU study, which followed a similar study of the employment practices at the University of Oregon last fall, was a routine matter.

The HEW report says OSU has not made an "active effort" to recruit or hire minorities to fill academic and classified jobs, and has not actively recruited minorities or females for administrative positions.

It recommended numerous actions that must be taken by the institution to eliminate job discrimination against women and members of minority races.

"We pledge ourselves to actively recruit minorities and to delete any potential barriers to the utilization of qualified persons, independent of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin," OSU President Robert MacVicar said in answer to the report.

"Recruiting actions in the next decade will be severely restricted to financial exigency and to growth limitations placed on the university by the State Board of Higher Education and the legislature," he said.

He referred to the "inappropriateness of developing numerical goals and timetables at the department level" for minorities. He said, however, that the school would strive to reduce by one-third the "under utilization" of women employees by mid 1975 and completely eliminate the "under utilization" by mid 1979.

Study Held to Learn if Significant Differences Exist in Job Duties of Domestics, Custodians

A study of the domestic worker, custodial worker, institutional worker and housekeeper job classifications in Oregon state government is being conducted by the Personnel Division.

It is being done by Anne Moody, a researcher employed by the Public Service Careers Program.

"We want to find out if there are any significant differences among the four classifications in terms of the duties employees are required to perform, or if they are basically the same," she said.

She denied the study was initiated because of job discrimination complaints filed with OSEA last year by nine domestic workers—all women—who work at five state colleges and universities.

The women claim they perform the same work as men who are classified as custodial workers but get less pay. OSEA staff member John M. Schoonover turned the complaints over to the Bureau of Labor's Civil Rights Division for investigation.

"Various job classifications are reviewed by the Personnel Division every so often," Miss Moody said. "Domestic, custodial and institutional worker classifications were last studied in 1969."

She noted that various state agencies employ about 1,475 persons in the four classifications. Most of them work for state colleges and universities, hospitals under the Mental Health Division and the Department of General Services.

To begin the study she selected 33 employees who work for various state agencies to use as samples. They included 11 in the domestic worker series, 12 in

the custodial worker series, 9 in the institutional worker series and 1 classified as a housekeeper.

She spent an eight-hour day with each of the 33 employees to observe the various tasks each performed. On the basis of that observation she prepared a questionnaire that was sent to all employees in the four classifications.

It listed 81 different tasks and asked employees to indicate the tasks they perform and the amount of time they spend doing each task.

"We had very good employee cooperation and response to the questionnaire," she said. "In the Mental Health Division we got a 91 per cent return and that's fantastic."

She said the results of the questionnaire have been tabulated by a computer and she is now in the process of studying the results. She said she soon hopes to have a report of the study completed and submitted to William G. Hughes, administrator of the Personnel Division.

Discrimination in Employment By Federal Contractors is Illegal

"The contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin."

That paragraph is part of executive order 11246 issued by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. It applies to all governmental agencies and private businesses who are under contract to the federal government.

"Affirmative action means a vigorous and concerted effort on the part of the employer not to discriminate against minorities and females in employment

practices and policies," according to Larry P. Omo who works for the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Office for Civil Rights in Seattle.

"It means setting salaries on the basis of qualifications and not on the basis that the employer can hire a woman for less money."

Employees who think they have been victimized by discriminatory employment practices should contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1321 Second Avenue, Seattle, Washington, 98101 (telephone: 206-442-0473), or the Oregon Bureau of Labor, 115 Labor and Industries Building, Salem, Oregon, 97310 (telephone: 378-3285). It has offices in Portland, Coos Bay, Eugene, Medford and Pendleton.