

# Glendon Students: 50 Years Later

## Introduction

The first group of students to earn a York degree entered Glendon College in 1963. At that point the Keele campus of York University was still in the planning stages. Thanks to the efforts of Glendon psychology professor D. Appley a great deal of information was collected on the '63 cohort

In your opinion, does our society still set separate standards for men and women by which to judge and limit opportunities and freedom of expression in the following areas?

	Male	Female
Occupation	53%	60%
Politics	45%	64%
Sex	37%	53%
Education	16%	22%

over their three and four years of study. This information included surveys of students when they first entered the College and later when they were ready to graduate.

In the half-century between 1963 and now a great deal has changed in Toronto. In 1963 Toronto's residents were primarily of European Christian origin. Now immigrants of various religions from all over the world equal their numbers. In those days students did not

worry about jobs upon graduation. Recruiters from major corporations such as IBM and the major banks annually invaded the campus in quest of potential employees. Students who had things other than getting jobs on their minds sometimes ridiculed the antics of these organizations. In 1963, while approximately half of the students entering Glendon were females, young women in other universities were a minority. When they did graduate female students at Glendon and elsewhere confronted a labour market frequently hostile to potential female employees. Many Canadians believed that a woman's place was in the home. While many problems remain today, female graduates can be found in several previously male occupational preserves. In 1963 English was the language of instruction at Glendon. Now it is English and French.

Despite these and other changes, much at Glendon has remained the same. Most importantly, the College remains a liberal arts institution. In addition, although it increased, the total number of students enrolled in the College remains small (296 entered in 1963 and 522 in 2013). In the last half-century only a few new additions have been made to the original buildings.

## Research Plan

In view of social changes over the past half century, and because many aspects of Glendon remain the same, I decided to conduct a study of the cohort entering the College in 2013,

exactly 50 years after the cohort followed by Dr. Appley. As a first step, using many of the same questions she used, I conducted a survey of all students entering the College in 2013. Similar to her I am carrying out a survey of students four years later, in 2017. I will be able to use the information captured in the surveys, in addition to other sources, in an examination of the nature and impact of the Glendon experience in two radically different time periods. In that way I will be able to compare the experiences of students then and now and to identify any enduring effects of a liberal education.

### **Initial Comparisons**

Initial comparisons based on the surveys of students entering in 1963 and 2013 reflect the changing nature of the family. For example, in 1963, only 5% and 6% of male and female students respectively indicated that their parents were divorced or separated. In 2013 the figures for males and females were 40% and 32% respectively. Whereas in 1963 14% of males and 15% of females reported no siblings, the 2013 figures were 41% and 40%. By contrast, in both periods, the numbers of students who reported that they were married were small: 8% of males and 1% of females in 1963 compared to 5% of males and 3% of females in 2013.

Although in 1963 approximately half (47%) of entering students were female, by 2013 the figure had swelled to 78%. While Dr. Appley asked students who were graduating in 1967 how they viewed opportunities for women, she had not asked it in 1963. In contrast, I asked the question of those entering in 2013. As seen in the accompanying table female students viewed slightly more limitations for females in occupations, politics, sex, and education than did males. Importantly, with the exception of politics, these small differences were not statistically significant. In other words, there were no differences between males and females for occupations, sex, and education. In politics, more females than males viewed limitations for females.

When Dr. Appley asked students in 1963 to state their most important reasons for attending university the most common reason given by males (24%) was to prepare for a chosen career. While a large number of

females also had this objective the most frequently given answer (24%) was a desire to increase their knowledge. By 2013 the most frequent response given by both males (38%) and females (37%) was to prepare for a chosen career.

In 1963 the single most common career choice for females (37%) entering Glendon was teaching. Law was the most often given choice of males (20%). In 2013 the most frequently stated career choice for males and females, 32% and 37% respectively, was teaching.

In 1963 both male and female students entering the College were overwhelmingly Christian and of European origin. In 2013 a majority of students (58%) identified as White. A further 9%, 12%, and 13% considered themselves Latin American, South Asian, and Black respectively. When asked about their religion the largest category, 31%, said they were agnostic or atheist. All Christian faiths combined included 49% of students. Eight percent (8%) of students were Muslim, 4% Hindu, 2% Sikh, and 1% Jewish.

Although similar figures are not available for 1963, in 2013 67% of students identified English as a first language. Nineteen percent (19%) selected French.

### **Conclusion**

Although it remains a small liberal arts college the nature of students entering Glendon has changed considerably in the past half century. Consistent with general social change in Toronto, although their numbers were always well-represented, female students are more visible on campus now than in the past. In addition, those entering Glendon are no longer mainly Christians of European origin from families with little history of separation or divorce. Considerable numbers of non-Christian students from a variety of backgrounds are now found on campus where instruction is given in both English and French. Despite these changes, as a half a century ago, substantial numbers of students report attending university to prepare for a chosen career. A career that continues to be attractive to a large minority of students is teaching.