

ITEM D.203
FOR INFORMATION

STUDY ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The Office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries will engage in a Study on the Status of Women: a church-wide study of the status of women at all levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The purpose of the study is threefold: 1) to assess the presence, participation, and effectiveness of women at all levels of the PC(USA), both elected and employed; 2) to explore and analyze attitudes about women in leadership; and 3) to describe the treatment of women in leadership positions including how they are compensated as compared with men. Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries is working with Research Services to utilize research methods to streamline the cost of this study.

This comprehensive study will be conducted in two main research areas: theological and sociological. Questions to be addressed will include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

1. Where are women doing the work of leadership and how do women themselves define their own leadership within the PC(USA)?
2. What is the status of women in these positions, relative to men?
3. What factors support or hinder women's level of representation and participation in decision-making?
4. In what ways are our perceptions of leadership in the church shaped not only by gender but also by race, ethnicity, class, and age?
5. How do our current definitions of leadership reflect the Reformed theological traditions of the church, and how do these definitions of leadership specifically impact women?

The Office of Gender and Racial Justice will collaborate with the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and Research Services for this project. There will be a theological consultation, where women scholars and clergy will collectively explore the above questions. Research Services will analyze existing data as well as collect new findings, both quantitative and qualitative.

Current statistics reveal that this study is timely and critical (as per a study conducted by the Association of Theological Schools [ATS]). By closely examining the existing data and insights gained by new findings, we anticipate that the church will have a significant opportunity to learn and teach more about women's leadership at all levels of church life, as well as achieve a better understanding of how definitions of leadership for women in the church and society are changing.