II. Appendix - Background

Efforts to address the special problems of women in EECS can be traced back at least to 1976. They are documented in Table II-1. Many members of the Computer Science Area have made significant efforts to integrate women into the academic and professional community on an equitable basis. Had the women who produced this report not been certain of the commitment and support of those members, they would not have felt it possible to publish a document of this nature.

The statistics presented in Tables II-2 and II-3[4] indicate the continuing scarcity of women in Computer Science at MIT. The low ratio of women to men contributes to many of the problems described in this report. As discussed in Section 1 and shown in table II-2, the percentage of female graduate students in the EECS Department has risen very slowly over the last decade. In particular, the increase has been slower in Computer Science than in the rest of the Department; the number of women in Computer Science has grown less than threefold in ten years, while the number of women in the rest of the department has grown almost tenfold. In addition, the number of women in the Computer Science Area appears to have reached a plateau over the last five years, whereas the remainder of the department continues to increase both the number and the percentage of female graduate students. Table II-3 shows that there is a smaller percentage of women in Computer Science than in any other area of the EECS Department.

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[4]The numbers in both of these tables include women in the co-op program. No female co-op students in our Area were on campus in the autumn of 1981. For this reason they did not participate in the original list or this report. This accounts for occasional inconsistencies between the figures in the tables and other figures mentioned in the report.

Table II-1: A Partial History of EECS Women at MIT

1976	Prof. Arthur Smith, Graduate Officer in EECS, held a meeting with female EECS students to uncover issues concerning the female students.
1978-79	Ms. Marilyn Pierce, Administrator in charge of EECS graduate students, met individually with the female graduate students to continue the discussion.
1979	Ms. Marilyn Pierce produced a report documenting the female students' complaints and making suggestions for improvement.
Spring 1981	Ms. Candace Sidner, third female recipient of an MIT Ph.D. in Computer Science, published a paper about the difficulties encountered by women at MIT and the prevailing attitudes that make it hard for women to succeed.
Fall 1981	Ms. Marilyn Pierce and Ms. Emily Weidman, Special Coordinator for Women's Students' Interests, sponsored monthly lunches for the female EECS graduate students, at which the severity of the problems facing Computer Science women became apparent.
Fall 1981	Female graduates student and research staff members of the Laboratory for Computer Science and the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (the report authors) began meeting weekly to discuss their common problems in greater detail.
Fall 1981	From their experiences as EECS graduate students, the report authors compiled a list of representative incidents and comments that had contributed to an inhospitable environment for women. Items on the list were phrased so as not to reveal the identities of the participants.
Spring 1982	The report authors met with Prof. Peter Elias, the Associate Head of the EECS Department, to discuss the list and investigate future courses of action.
April 1982	The list was distributed to the Computer Science faculty and was the topic of two of the weekly faculty meetings. As invited guests, Ms. Marilyn Pierce attended the first meeting and Ms. Mary Rowe, MIT's Special Assistant to the President, attended the second.
May 1982	The report authors met with Prof. Peter Elias, Prof. Michael Dertouzos, Director of Laboratory for Computer Science, and Prof. Patrick Winston, Director of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, to discuss the impact of the list and the need for further action. It was proposed that: (1) the list be circulated among all members of the two laboratories; (2) an open forum for discussion among all members of the community be held; and (3) this report be written.
May 1982	A revised version of the list was circulated to all Computer Science faculty, staff and graduate students.
May 1982	The MIT Computer Science community came together in an exceptionally well-attended lunch meeting to discuss the issues raised by the list.

Table II-2: Fall Registration Statistics for Female EECS Graduate Students

Year	In all of EECS %	Number	In CS %	Number	In EE (Non CS) %	Number
Increase in women in 10 years	558%	55	286%	13	940%	42
1982	11.9	67	12.1	19	11.8	48
1981	10.8	61	8.8	13	11.5	48
1980	9.8	54	12.6	20	8.6	34
1979	9.5	50	12.7	17	8.3	33
1978	9.2	45	13.7	18	7.5	27
1977	6.1	29	10.2	14	4.4	15
1976	5.2	26	8.0	12	4.0	14
1975	4.5	21	6.3	9	3.1	12
1974	4.6	21	4.1	5	4.7	16
1973	2.8	12	6.0	7	1.6	5

Table II-3: Fall 1981 Enrollment of Graduate Students
in the Six Areas of the EECS Department

Area	Number of graduate students: Total	Women	Percentages of total who are women
Area I (Systems, Communication, and Control)	97	9	9.3 %
Area II (Computer Science)	149	13	8.7
Area III (Electronics, Computers, and Systems)	120	12	10.0
Area IV (Energy and Electromagnetic Systems)	55	6	10.9
Area V (Materials and Devices)	70	8	11.4
Area VII (Bioelectrical)	55	9	16.4
Other (Operations Research)	14	3	21.4
Other (Technology Policy Program)	5	1	20.0