

## 2.5 Women's Restrooms

Problems with women's restrooms in College buildings are an ongoing source of frustration for students. Says a recent University of Illinois Engineering alumna: "Being unable to find a restroom in some buildings is really more of a problem than it sounds like it should be. I finally discovered the very simple algorithm that the women's bathrooms are always located close to the administrative offices (where the secretaries are) and that made me feel less welcome. Also, there is often a women's room in the basement or hidden at the very end of a hallway (e.g., Mechanical Engineering)." Worse, in some locations no women's restroom is accessible after business hours. To alleviate the situation, we recommend the following actions:

1. *Newmark*. Current restrooms: S201, S301, S401—women; N203, N303, N403—men. The second floor Newmark CCSO site is available after normal business hours, but no women's restrooms there are accessible. The committee recommends that the second floor Newmark men's restroom, which is very large, be remodeled to contain both men's and women's restrooms. The committee also recommends putting a sign on the first floor of Newmark, with directions to both men's and women's restrooms:

Men's Restroom in N203  
Women's Restroom in S203

2. *Mechanical Engineering*. Current restrooms: 129, 267—women; 167, 229—men. Add signs on all restroom doors:

For 129: 'Men's Restroom in 167'  
For 267: 'Men's Restroom in 229'  
For 167: 'Women's Restroom in 129'  
For 229: 'Women's Restroom in 267'

3. *Everitt*. Current restrooms: 138, 266, 332, and near 168 (no number)—men; 239, next door to 138 (no number)—women. Put a sign on the door of the men's restroom near 168:

Women's Restroom by Room 138

4. *Loomis*. Current restrooms: 162, 268—women; 134, 214, 368—men. Add signs on all restroom doors:

For 162: 'Men's Restroom in 134'  
For 268: 'Men's Restroom in 214'  
For 134: 'Women's Restroom in 162'  
For 214 and 368: 'Women's Restroom in 268'

5. *MRL*. Current restrooms: B05, 255—women; 109, 209, 309—men. Install signs on the men's restroom doors:

For 109: 'Women's Restrooms in B05 and 255'  
For 209 and 309: 'Women's Restroom in 255'

6. *CSL*. Current restrooms: 1-140, 270—women; 170, 117, 2-140—men. The committee recommends that signs be installed as follows:

For 2-140: 'Women's Restroom in 1-140'  
For 1-140: 'Men's Restroom in 2-140'  
For 170 and 117: 'Women's Restroom in 270'  
For 270: 'Men's Restroom in 170'

7. *Hydrolab*. Currently the only women's restroom is on the third floor. We recommend that the women's restroom be moved to the second floor.
8. *Talbot*. Current restrooms: 110, 128, 222, 304—men; 203, 320—women. All restrooms are hard to find in this building. We recommend that signs be placed on all restroom doors:

For 110, 128, and 222: 'Women's Restroom in 203'  
For 304: 'Women's Restroom in 320'  
For 203: 'Men's Restroom in 222'  
For 320: 'Men's Restroom in 304'

We also recommend that one of the two first floor men's restrooms be converted to a women's restroom.

9. *Metallurgy and Mining*. Current restrooms: 118, 218, 311—men; 225, 316—women. Like *Talbot*, restrooms are hard to find in this building. We recommend that signs be placed on all restroom doors:

For 118 and 218: 'Women's Restroom in 225'  
For 311: 'Women's Restroom in 316'  
For 225: 'Men's Restroom in 218'  
For 316: 'Men's Restroom in 311'

10. *Transportation*. Current restrooms: 108, 311—men; 213—women. We recommend that signs be placed on all restroom doors:

For 108 and 311: 'Women's Restroom in 213'  
For 213: 'Men's Restrooms in 108 and 311'

11. *Ceramics*. The *Ceramics* building has restrooms on all three floors; however, the only women's restroom in the building is on the third floor. We recommend that the second floor men's room be changed to a women's restroom, and that the third floor women's room be changed to a men's restroom. Signs should also be placed on all three doors, directing people to the nearest restrooms for the opposite sex.

12. *DCL*. Current restrooms: 1402, 1414, 1522, 2104, 2418, 3301, L222—women; 1404, 1421, 1520, 1524, 2301, 2520, 3104, L224—men. *DCL* has many restrooms, and directions to them are posted on some of the signposts on *DCL* walls. But because *DCL* is such a confusing building, its restrooms can be hard to find. We recommend that some of the restrooms be equipped with signs:

For 3104: 'Women's Restroom in 2104'  
For 2301: 'Women's Restrooms in 2418 and 3301'  
For 2104: 'Men's Restroom in 3104'  
For 3301: 'Men's Restroom in 2301'

## 2.6 Women in the Classroom

Study after study has shown that teachers treat males and females differently in the classroom. To clarify the problem, we quote at length from [Spertus 1991]:

In [Sandler 1986, Sandler 1988, Hall 1982], there are summaries of several studies of subtle, subconscious bias — that is, people observably acting in a biased manner but unaware of their doing so. I was apprised of the importance of subtle bias by the number of respondents who objected to my call for “egregious examples”, stating that they thought the subtle behavior to be more damaging. [Hall 1982, Sandler 1988] report the following biases, of which both men and women are guilty:

- Women are interrupted more than men.
- Faculty members make eye contact with male students more often than with female students.
- Faculty members are more likely to know and use the names of their male students than of female students.<sup>1</sup>
- Women are often asked fewer or easier questions than males.

As Sandler writes, “Singly, these behaviors probably have little effect. But when they occur again and again, they give a powerful message to women: they are not as worthwhile as men nor are they expected to participate fully in class, in college, or in life at large” [Sandler 1988, page 149]. Unfortunately, the message appears to have sunk in. Studies have shown that, when engineering students are asked to predict the academic performance relative to that of male and female colleagues, “both sexes anticipated that men would outperform women. This was paradoxical, since the average female student had both a higher grade point average and higher class rank from high school than the average male” ([Ott 1975] in [Zappert et al 1984, page 4]). Another study found that, when male and female college students were asked to predict their midterm test score before taking it, men had higher expectations for themselves than women did for themselves, even though the two groups actually performed the same [Erkut 1983, page 229]. Studies have found that women are more likely than men to attribute success to luck instead of skill [Deaux et al 1974] and to attribute failure to lack of skill [Ernest 1976, page 599]. Women’s lack of confidence, and one consequence, is illustrated by an incident at Columbia, reported by Professor Joan Birman:

I learned last year, to my astonishment, that for about four years running the honors calculus course had been all male, in spite of the fact that admission was based on an open competitive examination. This fall, one of the senior mathematics majors and myself made an intensive effort to encourage women to try the exam! The typical answer was, ‘I know I won’t pass it,’ — to which we replied over and over, ‘Well, if you try it, at worst you will confirm what you already know, and only an hour of time will have been lost.’ After three days of such advising, the big day came, the exam was given, and this year the class has five men and five women! [Ernest 1976, page 604].

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<sup>1</sup>The experience of women I have talked with is that if females are in an extreme minority, they stand out so much that the teachers are likely to know their names.