

Colleges Have a Guy Problem

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American colleges and universities now enroll roughly six women for every four men. This is the largest female-male gender gap in the history of higher education, and it's getting wider. Last year, U.S. colleges enrolled 1.5 million fewer students than five years ago, [The Wall Street Journal recently reported](#). Men accounted for more than 70 percent of the decline.

The statistics are stunning. But education experts and historians aren't remotely surprised. Women in the United States have earned more bachelor's degrees than men every year since the mid-1980s—every year, in other words, that I've been alive. This particular gender gap hasn't been breaking news for about 40 years. But the imbalance reveals a genuine shift in how men participate in education, the economy, and society. The world has changed dramatically, but the ideology of masculinity isn't changing fast enough to keep up.

For decades, American women have been told that the path to independence and empowerment flows through school. Although they are [still playing catch-up](#) in the labor force, and leadership positions such as chief executive and senator are still dominated by men, women have barnstormed into colleges. That is the very definition of progress. In poorer countries, where women are broadly subjugated or otherwise lack access to regular schooling, girls enjoy [no educational advantage whatsoever](#).

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