**Professors at Women’s Institution Sue Over Gender Pay Gap**

Six female professors at Mount Holyoke University are suing the Massachusetts institution – one of the oldest degree-granting campuses for women in the U.S. – alleging it engaged in decades of systemic wage discrimination by paying them less than their male colleagues.

The court document accuses the university of paying female educators less than men, along with making it more difficult to receive promotions. The women alleged in their lawsuit that the university has known about these discrepancies for years, but left them unresolved. They also said they worked with the university for more than 20 years to try to correct the matter before filing the lawsuit.

Founded in 1837, Mount Holyoke is one of the Seven Sisters, a consortium of historically women’s campuses that also includes Stephens, Barnard, Wesleyan, Radcliffe, Vassar and Bryn Mawr.

The plaintiffs are asking for back pay to 2013 on behalf of all women currently or formerly employed by Mount Holyoke as full professors. They are also calling for a new system for evaluations and promotion.

Twenty-five male full professors or associate professors at Mount Holyoke issued a statement of support for their female colleagues, calling on the university to “finally root out systemic discrimination and rectify the clear pattern of gender pay disparities.”

The six professors who are suing are from fields including English, Physics, Engineering, History, Microbiology and Public Health. They allege in the lawsuit that women are paid less when they are hired and then promoted at a slower pace based on a biased and objective evaluation process for compensation and promotion. During that time, the university has produced public and internal pay studies that affirm the professors’ concerns.

During the 2020-2021 school year, male professors earned an average salary of $153,238 while female professors earned $139,322 – or 10% less, according to the suit. The pay gap has ranged between 7.6% and 14.6% since 2003.

The lawsuit said that instead of taking steps to solve the problem, Mount Holyoke increased the level of pay transparency to make it harder to point out the disparities.